

Heikki Ruismäki & Antti Juvonen

Searching for a better life through Arts and Skills
Research results, visions and conclusions



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<http://hdl.handle.net/10138/28076>

Research Report 329

ISBN 978-952-10-6853-9 (nid)
ISBN 978-952-10-6854-6 (pdf)
ISSN 1799-2508

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ISSN 1799-2508

Unigrafia

2011

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The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science.

Albert Einstein (1879–1955)

Helsingissä ja Joensuussa 23.2.2011

Heikki Ruismäki & Antti Juvonen

PART I

Background

A significant discussion about the modern way of living and especially the good life has been taking place recently in Finland. The public debate has been accelerated by the terrible school shootings which in their horrific way showed the mental health level among some young people today. It seems that they either cannot express their bad feelings or they have no channels of discharging them which leads to this kind of disastrous behaviour. Our starting point for writing this book is the conation to find out different connections between a better life and both art and skill subjects, making art, creating things with our own hands, and finding new meanings from the many sided field of arts and skills. The aim of finding a better life includes well-being also as an element of school life called “pedagogical well-being”.

There have been plenty of projects trying to find the essence of happiness, a good life or the *raison d'être*, the meaning of human existence. Still, it seems to be something which disappears just when you think you have reached the understanding. For decades philosophers have searched for knowledge about happiness in each individual's life, and there are many answers to the question. Some find happiness in money, some in religion; some find it from art and some from being loved. Still, there may be some aspects of becoming happy which have not been mentioned, and they are the ones we will try to find in this research report. The book contains research results of a large research project, divided in many smaller parts, which aims to find the experiences and meanings of art, skills (in different areas and especially hand skills) for Finnish university students. They were questioned from the beginning of 2004 with simple, but important and meaningful questions, which they could voluntarily answer using their own words. Most of the data was qualitative, thanks to open-ended questions, and it was analysed and classified by both of the authors. These analyses gave birth to many fruitful discussions, which also led to the preparation of this book. We hope that it will open readers' minds to understand the necessity of art education generally (including skills-education and especially, the importance of hand skills) and point out some of the important basics in practical school and university education, too. A human being forms a wholeness that needs the brain to be able to think, a heart to be able to feel and hands to be able to create things.

This book is the result of a long-lasting cooperation and sharing of research interest by the authors. The basis for the thoughts presented in the book was laid in late the 1990s as we started cooperating in the field of music, music education, and art education research. Both of us have done a long life work in music education and in general art education teaching both in music institutes, conservatories and the Sibelius Academy, as at the university level, especially in classroom teacher and kindergarten teacher education as well as music subject teacher education. In long discussions we have ended in mutual understanding about the many problems in art education, especially in music education, as it is our common speciality of the art subjects. In Finland people in art education area talk about the so-called *art and skill* subjects that usually mean the group (school subjects) containing: music, visual arts, sports, home economics, handicraft and shop (meaning the technical work at school). In other words, these school subjects deal with learning different skills mostly through a pragmatic (non-theoretic) point of view. They are learned usually by doing things, not only by reading about them. Of course, these subjects have their theoretical and scientific background as well as other school subjects. Although they are here presented as school subjects they have much larger connections with the normal life of modern man. These subjects include theoretical substance, but it is usually harnessed to promote the practical aspect of achievement. This starting point is also a base for the existing paradox between different school subjects. In this book the concept *art (subjects or) education* mainly means two school subjects: music and fine arts. When we mention *art and skill (subjects or) education* it includes all the previously mentioned (school) subjects.

One of the reasons for writing this book is the current economic situation (in schools in Finland) where art and skill subjects are always the first to be put on a shoestring budget. To us this seems strange because the economic expansion in Finland between 1990–2007 after the former regression was faster than in decades. What has gone wrong as the resources in the art and skill subjects has remained as low as before, or even lower? The answer may be found from the spiritual and mental values among the politicians and decision-makers in local administration as well as in the leaders of the schools, universities and other institutes. All these policy makers deal with money somehow. For them only economic and commercial values rule when decisions are made. Mental, emotional or educational values have already lost the fight with profit-making products which are easy to sell; mobile phones, motors, cars, ships, paper or electronics. These products bring good profits and fast. This is why school subjects leading to an engineering education (math, science) are supported widely and without counting money. Who would put their capital in the welfare of a citizen when it cannot be changed

directly to money? The answer seems to be: no one. This is seen in the budgets of schools, universities and many different art institutes when the money for teaching simply is too little. Teaching and learning in art and skill subjects is easily seen as an unprofitable area. At the same time the politicians give great amounts of money to make the commercial companies bring even more money.

These hard values have become typical after the 1970s when the first really serious economic recession took place in decades and “profit responsibility” became magic words for company managers and chiefs. In employment situation this development has meant losses to thousands of workers whose work has been moved to the countries where the labour costs are cheaper. This has undoubtedly reduced the level of common welfare among citizens. Life without work may seem not worth living if there are no other sources of meaningfulness. At the same time the ‘big bosses’ in largest business enterprises make millions of Euros in profits.

This development has led to a bloody fight between school subjects where every stone is turned to show why some subjects are more valuable than others and why they should receive more teaching lessons, more equipment and more money for salaries for new teaching posts. All this has led to a situation where the general development of a human being has become twisted: the soft values loaded with feelings, creativity, self expression, experiences, cooperation, emotions, use of senses social values etc. have been put aside in favour of hard values: competition, success, production, winning, self-promotion, pushing others aside etc. Arts and skills as a part of the natural development and growth are almost forgotten as nature, science and culture are put to fight with each other. Still, each human being has both sides built inside: the experiences, concepts, values and appreciations rely on the schemata which is dependent on the education. Thus, the circle closes and we easily can see the way things are going.

During the last year of writing this book, we noted that, the Finnish government has shown some interest in art and skill subjects at school. A group of curriculum developers has been making a new suggestion for developing and strengthening the subjects mentioned. The suggestion includes new school subjects: drama education in addition to the old ones, which leads into new problems, as the classroom teachers do not have the abilities to teach drama as they are not yet part of their education. The suggestion also leads to new problems as it takes teaching lessons away from traditional subjects like music and fine arts. In the new suggestion physical education has been seen as a provider of health, which it absolutely also is, but physical education also

contains significant cultural and artistic elements offering broad new experiences.

In our book we also have to discuss the essence of art itself, the definition of the concepts and values and attitudes connected to art. This makes the whole field a little tangled. Traditionally philosophy has been seen as a field of science that explores real life. For that reason the philosophy of art should reveal the essence of art generally. We might say that a human being must willingly or unwillingly straighten out his relationship with art. Art may be approached in many ways. Ongoing research and many theories are built around art. Even if an individual had no theoretical or aesthetic knowledge about art, he or she could still manifest his point of view: "I don't understand anything about art, yet I know what I like". To adapt Kant's viewpoint, beautiful is what pleases without preconceptions.

Although the enjoyment of art based on knowledge may not be as genuine as enjoyment experientially and immediately experienced, knowledge may enrich our ability to enjoy art. On the other hand, it is well known for example, that knowing a composition thoroughly may sensitize the listener to hearing all the mistakes and in this way reduce our ability to enjoy music. Many craftspeople involved in art as well as artists are often impatient with theories about art. In art the most important thing is to produce it, not to theorize about what was done. We must remember that aesthetics is merely the philosophy of art; it is not an empirical science that could offer all the right answers. Aesthetics never gives final answers to questions, but moves in general fields that try to answer conceptual questions such as "What does interpretation mean?"

The task of defining art began during the seventeenth century. In those days different types of artistic skills were clearly distinguished: the aim was either beauty or purchase of aesthetic enjoyment. (Vuorinen 1993, 389; Vuorinen 2001.) The positive function of many different conceptions of art is that they focus on the essential elements of art. Many theorists, for example Kennick (1958) and Weitz (1956), see art as such a many-sided phenomenon that one definition alone will never suffice to explain it completely. Only some identification marks will transfer from one art object to another. Art is an open conception, which makes it unnecessary to formulate a comprehensive theory of its essence. (Sepänmaa 1991, 142.)

The field of art is continuously widening; it is constantly seeking and creating something new, and ongoing through perpetual transformation in the context of changing cultures, which makes its essence impossible to define unambiguously. It is also interesting to note that Plato's imitation theory (later taken up by his student Aristotle) does not exist as such in the students' comments. They are more involved in imitating their own subjective experi-

ences and underlining the intention of the artist. Plato's view of art as imitation was widely adapted as the dominant view as late as the nineteenth century. Plato's imitation theory mainly concentrates on the objective qualities of the art object. (Dickie 1990, 34; Kuisma 1991.) On the other hand, Plato supported the emotional theory about the origins of art and its effects. According to his way of thinking, time imitates eternity. Among other things, Plato explored the problems of making art and of imitation and inspiration as well as the relationship between the artist and society. (Kuisma 1991, 2.) Plato also saw music as the skill of imitating. Music imitates human nature or, more precisely, human characteristics. (Kuisma 1991, 36.)

Plato's thoughts on art are quite negative. Plato also enforced his ideas about the nature of art by presuming that art somehow belongs in value degrading distance of reality. (Kuisma 1991, 3.) Artists enchant the souls of observers by using shadows of the silhouettes. Plato viewed art as a kind of perversion, a substitute, a distorted achievement engaged in by those who cannot themselves be the thing that they imitate. Inspiration as an explanation for the starting point of art has a negative value. According to Plato, inspiration has a dark side that invokes insanity and injudiciousness. Plato saw value in activity that could be thoroughly explained and rationalised. He thought for example, that in their inspired state of mind, poets worked just like madmen.

Medieval culture (400–1400) was homogenous by nature. Religion and morals were essential. Beauty was seen as an instrument for executing these intentions. Art was not separated from other skills or beauty from other values. All values were basically one: everything was seen in the context of the hereafter, God and the way to heaven. The enjoyment of music was seen as a foretaste of heaven's euphoria. (Vuorinen 1993, 100–109; Vuorinen 2001.) Augustinus (around 400 AD) explored the problem of beauty: Are objects beautiful because they attract us, or do they attract us because they are beautiful? Why are the objects beautiful, if not because their parts are suitable to each other and because they have suitably been joined together and form a perfect entity in harmony with each other? Augustinus was trying to form a concept for defining the origins of beauty. In the beginning of the eighteenth century Francis Hutcheson wrote: "The word beauty means the ideas of beauty growing inside us, and by the expression 'sense of beauty' we mean our ability to receive these ideas". John Locke saw beauty as an idea inside the mind; the target of the senses, thoughts and understanding.

Since the eighteenth century the diversity of beauty has been widely emphasized: artistic works are impressive and aesthetically valuable in their own way. Here we should remember that not only romantic comedy, for example,

may be aesthetically valuable, but also a tragedy may be just as valuable. The development of expression theory in the nineteenth century can be seen as part of the emotional theories (those explaining the origins of art) changing to a general theory of art. After the expression theories, the focus turned from artistic work to the artists themselves. Plato's imitation theory was object-centered, while the expression theories were artist-centered.

We must emphasize that hearing, seeing and sensing overall always include interpretation. Psychologically-oriented art research is especially focused on the development of sensitivity to artistic structures and qualitative qualities. (Saarnivaara 1993, 4.) According to that, perception is a part of cognitive activity, and an aesthetic reaction is seen in much same way. In the background is Goodman's (1988) idea of art as a system of symbols. Art may also be seen as a form of communication in which the composer, the music, the listener and the performer form an entity dependent on each member. (cf. Reimer 1989, 58; Regelski 1996a; 1996b; 1998; Swanwick 1992a; 21; 1992b; 1998; Elliott 1991a; 1991b; 1993; 1994; 1995; 1996a; 1996b; 1997a; 1997b; Elliott & Regelski 2003.) Interpretation depends on one's objectives and expectations. An object or an achievement is used as an artistic work only when it is seen as a symbol and is being interpreted.

Beardsley underlines an aesthetic view of art. (Lammenranta 1987, 14–34; Haapala 1990, 54; Lammenranta & Haapala 1987.) The stronger the aesthetic experience, the better the art work at hand. An aesthetic object is not dependent on the receiver's qualities. The essential elements in aesthetic experience are consistency, polymorphism and intensity. When dealing with education, aesthetic qualities especially need to be practiced in order to be noticed. Although aesthetic experiences may be found in nature, sports, science and elsewhere, according to Beardsley, art objects especially are made for this kind of experience. They may also be valuable for other reasons, for information, moral and educational instruction, but their value as an art object depends only on their aesthetic value. This is why the aesthetic experience is excuse enough to justify the existence of art. Art has its place among the finest aspects of human life. (Beardsley 1958, 8; Vuorinen 1993, 380; Vuorinen 2001.)

Many of the arguments in the aesthetics discussion were already pointed out in the classical period, but the basic borderlines were drawn later. Beauty was essentially defined in medieval times and art was separated from other types of achievement in the eighteenth century. (Vuorinen 1993, 387; Vuorinen 2001.)

Beauty is often seen as a synonym for aesthetics. Aesthetics and beauty are always equipped with a positive value, an idea that could be seen in some of the students' statements. We may say that if an art object does not bring

the receiver any kind of enjoyment, then it is aesthetically worthless, ugly. Beauty is often defined also as harmony, symmetry, harmoniousness, abstinence, control or regular form. Experiential and enjoyable experiences in connection with the artist's personal joy in producing and creating art were also emphasised in the early definitions of art.

In the history of art philosophy the problem of artistic taste was often brought up in the eighteenth century. Almost everyone has an individual point of view in judging and evaluating art works. (Bourdieu 1984; Synteesi 1991). The question is, who has good artistic taste and who does not? What is really valuable in art? How could these questions be examined? We may, for example, explore phenomena that have pleased people throughout history and around the world. On the other hand, we may discover what kinds of art have survived for centuries. Whom can we trust in matters of good taste? Or is taste as subjective as we often suppose?

To David Hume (1711–1776) beauty is not the quality of an object, such as roundness, which can be proved by measurement. Beauty is a matter of emotions and sentiments. Thus, he approved the phrase “beauty hides in the eyes of the beholder” which also appeared in one of the students' comments. Hume speculated whether it would be possible to find a standard for good taste, meaning a principle to separate good taste from bad. Hume's idea of the standard was, that beauty is a matter of emotions and sentiments, but there are objects that are truly beautiful. These can be found by identifying people who are equipped with good artistic taste. (Vuorinen 1993, 167–169.) In this way, Hume transformed the problem and shifted the focus of the discussion from emotional and sentimental questions to the ability of the critic.

It seems that in all art—literature, music, drama and so—on there is always the matter of a human being's ability to wake up, to open the mind and process the stimuli encountered. Art offers experiences of emotions and feelings, not exact information about the feeling. In many of the students' comments artistry was seen to occur in the interpretation of the music. The interpretation uplifts the performer and interpreter as the essential elements in mediating music as art. The interpretation is also connected with the emotional life of the performer as a form of expression. Although art as a concept is broad, it seems to be connected to classical music more often than to popular music.

Highlighting emotional aspects emerged in the expression theories of the nineteenth century and replaced the idea of art as imitation. When the philosophies of Romanticism were formulated in the world of art, new opinions arose about the artist's task along with interest in artistic creation. The creative process was described as discharging emotions at the same time as it was

connected to reaching for higher knowledge. First the expression theories tried to show that art can offer something important to human beings. Secondly, the expression theories tried to connect art more closely to people's normal lives. Emotions can be experienced in some way, and their importance is quite obvious to everyone. Thirdly, the theories tried to explain emotional qualities in art by the way art interacts with emotions. Music had quite a remarkable position in the philosophers' thinking during the Romantic era, which opened the way to expression theory in music. (Dickie 1990, 39–40.)

Georg W. F. Hegel (1770–1831) expressed three central ideas about art, which he thought to be right and generally approved: First, an art work is not a natural product; it is a man-made artifact. Secondly, art works are made for human beings and more specifically for their senses or from a material that cannot be sensed so well. Thirdly, an art object has a purpose in itself. (Hegel 1968, 136; Vuorinen 1993, 249; Vuorinen 2001.) The first two points separate an art object from natural objects: a work of art is man-made and has a significant function. Nature may be beautiful, but a work of art is made for other people. Finally, the third point separates art from other human achievements. Art is not just a means of teaching morals or something else; it clearly has its own aim: beauty.

Arthur Schopenhauer explored this problem in the early nineteenth century: “When we say something is beautiful, we simultaneously manifest that the object is being aesthetically observed”. The significance of a work of art adds to its structure. Beardsley was very strict about this. He thought, for instance, that in instrumental music there is almost no addition, because “music does not express anything nor does it mean anything”. (Beardsley 1958, 337; Vuorinen 1993, 369.) Music may include “local human qualities” such as gloominess, tranquility, determination, peacefulness, sensuality, insecurity, but we should not speak about significance or expression because it may draw attention outside the art work itself, usually to a composer's psychic life or to the listener's associations.

Art or artistry as a concept has often been used to classify, to separate or evaluate. We may speculate on whether an object is a work of art. Often a work of art means a good, high standard work of handicraft. At the same time the concept of a work of art also means a positive evaluation of the object. This is why when we speak about art, we actually mean good art. Leo Tolstoy broadened the conception of art so that the aim of the art work changed from beauty to expression. Reimer (1989) too, describes art as moving the emotions. Tolstoy saw the expression of emotions as an achievement in which the emotions were transferred to another person or “infected” them. (Reimer 1989, 19; Vuorinen 1993, 297–305; see also Vuorinen 2001; Swanwick 1988, 1992a, 1992b, 1996, 1998.) Tolstoy also added an ethical point of

view by saying that the emotion the work of art reflects should be similar to the highest ideals of the era or at least should not oppose them. Tolstoy's ideas were quite close to Hegel's: both thought that good art reflects the highest aspects of humanity in an enchanting way.

According to Hegel, entertainment and enjoyment are not essential to art; they are signs of work insufficient to fulfill all the qualities of great art. If a work of art has had significance in developing human self consciousness, it shows the possibilities for art that entertainment has left untapped. (Hegel 1968; Vuorinen 1993, 254.) Tolstoy said that if art is to be really significant, then it has to be understandable to everyone. (Vuorinen 1993, 305–306.) A work of art may not be incoherent; otherwise, it only offers the recipient bad feelings. This means that if we wish to spread our own emotions widely, then we should make simple works of art. Tolstoy was convinced of the importance of such art. He believed and hoped that in the future the current value of beauty in art would vanish and be replaced with the good art he suggested. The art of the future will not be a continuation of current art; it will be based on totally different, new essentials that have no connection with the current art of the upper class today. (Tolstoy 1894, 208; Vuorinen 1993, 311; Vuorinen 2001.) Tolstoy's prophecies about beauty-based art changing or disappearing have mostly come true. It is easy to draw an analogy between Tolstoy's ideas and popular art as well as media-arbitrated art. The aesthetics of beauty has changed into the experiential aesthetics experienced by the masses, including the subjective viewpoint of each individual. Perhaps that is one reason for the popularity of pop and rock music, not to speak about other modern media arbitrated art. Music also carries aesthetic values other than those based on beauty. The essence of all art has even further broadened, become an everyday achievement and changed into a cultural and artistic industry, which has its own rules and orders.

Tolstoy's concept of art was emotional and communicative. Through a work of art, the artist expresses his emotions, transferring such emotions as humility, love, hatred to the recipient. By expressing emotions, an artist raises an emotion into consciousness. Although the concept of classical art survived the three first decades of modern times, it slowly stiffened into academic life and lost a certain part of its absoluteness. Along with beauty governed by rules, "unexplainable splendor" became important. Through different artistic styles it became obvious that there are many kinds of beauty; imitating nature may be beautiful but so are miracles performed by human beings. Highlighting artistic diversity replaced the traditional idea that certain numerical relations could be beautiful. More often the recipient's pleasure was in the spotlight instead of the qualities of the artistic object, the idea being that there

may be many valid rules and many good artists, all good in their own way. The opposites might also be good art. (Vuorinen 1993, 125–126.)

Artists were required to show individuality, creativity, talent, imagination and intuition. In the seventeenth century beauty was considered a phenomenon of the emotions and imagination; it had no rules. According to Descartes, the same stimulant may be pleasant or irritating, beautiful or ugly, depending on what kind of experiences had been connected with the stimulant earlier. These points of view offer interesting ideas for modern educational research as well. Artists saw many purposes to art and various means of measuring values; exposing truth directly or indirectly, promoting virtues, arousing emotions or reaching for beauty or sweetness. (Vuorinen, 1993, 129.) With the side lining of the task of making art, the focus shifted to the aesthetic value, as quality is what makes the difference. The aesthetes of the twentieth century were of the same opinion as Tolstoy, as they connected beauty closely to pleasantness, a decorative environment, joy and enjoyment and they also connected “aesthetics” not only to beauty, but also to art, where the aesthetically valuable did not have to be beautiful. (Vuorinen 1993, 312–313.)

All cultural experiences are valuable to education. “The starting point of education is art”, wrote Herman Read. Only through aesthetic education may a human being become free and morally creative. According to Puurula and Väyrynen (1992, 9), art education has a strong connection to aesthetic education because it offers both opportunities for self expression through art as well as skills and information about the field of art that is being taught. The main goal of art education has often been to teach certain values. Art education has never tried to promote a self-congratulatory understanding of art.

According to Plato (Vuorinen 1993, 44–45), art also has a negative effect on the human mind: “Where the arts flourish in a society, enjoyment rules instead of law and order”. Art is bad for young people when it promotes persons who cannot be held up as model examples. Plato said that in music only Dorian and Phrygian church modes imitate good qualities of mind, which makes them suitable for education. (Platon 1981, 399.) Plato viewed art as dangerous because it directly affects the emotions, not the intelligence; it feeds the emotions, blurs thinking, and that makes the arts an obstacle to those who aspire to wisdom.

Aristotle supported the arts. He did not view the stimulation of emotions by the arts as a bad thing. He saw people coming from dramatic performances of tragedies not excited, but calmer and more balanced. The drama raised emotions of pity and fear, but also quieted down these emotions. In the field of music, the suggestive Aulos music stimulates and excites the listener, but through stimulation, also balances. Aristotle answered Plato’s condemnation of art by emphasizing that in connection with general truths and provid-

ing enjoyment through arousing emotions art is not harmful, but healthy. (Vuorinen 1993, 64.) The Aristotelian view of art is to see it as an opportunity to influence emotions and feelings.

In the seventh book of *The Politics* Aristotle explored art as an element of education and gave several reasons why music should be taught to young people: "... musical activities should not be done for only one reason, but for several, namely 1) for education (Greek: *paideia*); 2) catharsis 3) to pass the time (diagoge) 4) to relax and refresh (*anapausis*).” The ideas of Aristotle are still current. (Aristoteles 1991, 1341; Vuorinen 1993, 65.) According to Aristotle, music is not only pleasant, but also a serious achievement and thus, an essential part of a happy life. Aristotle also speculated on why young people should be taught to draw and play an instrument. On playing music Aristotle noted that most people do it “because it brings pleasure” and that playing should be practiced to the extent: “that one is able to enjoy beautiful melodies and rhythms” (Aristoteles 1990b, 1337–1341; Vuorinen 1993, 65–66.) These statements show that Aristotle jumped to broad, many-sided conclusions about music as a means of education. He accepted the use of music as a means to develop temperament and character, but also focused on catharsis, relaxation and refreshment together with beneficial ways to spend leisure time. According to Beardsley, the aesthetic experience might help with psychic tensions, calm thoughts of self destruction and offer a harmless way of achieving excitement; it may solve internal contradictions and help clear the mind so that it is less fraught by many external problems.

Music as well as any other field of art ennoble the ability to sense and power to resolve resolution and might help in human relationships; it also helps develop the imagination and break routines. These factors help in retaining mental health and connecting people through similar experiences. Finally, music (as well as all art) represents one virtue in human life. (Beardsley 1958 8; Vuorinen 1993, 380.)

From the viewpoint of education it is important that teachers and educators offer information as well as concepts about the world of art through language. Following the research of Saarnivaara (1993, 101), there is a danger of looking at art from the elitist point of view or the art specialist’s, which might lead to a situation in which one’s own interpretation of an artistic experience would lose its significance. This can be avoided if students can be shown that specialist’s statements are only interpretations. Exploring together has provided the clues to understanding the art of different times and different traditions with artists and art specialists explaining art. Discussing the relationship between art and real life in order to understand the nature and significance of art might mean a new alliance between producing and under-

standing art, which would deepen both in connection to learning abilities, as well.

After all this more or less philosophic speculation about the essence of art and aesthetic experience, we believe that the reader can make the right connections between our thoughts and the subject area (school teaching, general speech of art or art and skill subjects etc.). From our point of view the concept *Art education* represents a scientific discipline which is trying to understand the many sided processes of art, its effects, dimensions and aspects on both the individual and societal level. Often art education has been divided into four sections: 1) education through art (art is used as an instrument or means of education); 2) education for art (trying to gain artistic competence to understand art and its dimensions); 3) education into art (targeting gaining artistic competence and skills on all levels: as an individual experiencing art, as an individual understanding art and as an individual as an artist), and 4) the art of education (the teacher is able to ennoble the teaching process to a level considered as art. During the process the creativity, enthusiasm, level of expressive elements, the substance skills and didactic solutions of the teacher are strongly involved). Usually in school teaching only the first two of the four levels mentioned are reached.

The teaching of art and skills education subjects always includes the development of creativity. In most of these subjects the appearance of creativity demands some kind of resistance or difficulty; there must be some problem to be solved, a task to be done, something new ahead that demands new solutions from us. A challenge might be a good name for what is needed to raise the dormant creativity. Meeting the challenge: resistance or difficulties makes overcoming them worthwhile. It strengthens self-confidence, helps to build a more positive self-concept, and it also makes it meaningful to make one's own decisions. Mere anarchical freedom in any area of art does not lead to creative solutions. We also must remember that the aim in art and skill education should be leading pupils to make their own creative solutions, not to imitate the teacher's given model. This clearly leads to the conclusion that the teacher cannot have (the only) right solutions for the problems, the idea is to lead and help the pupil to find a way to evaluate the work him/herself. In doing this evaluation of succeeding in an appointed task, a teacher may be a gentle guide or helping hand when needed.

Art and skill education may also appear as "a collection of points of view" in didactical, pedagogical or educational areas. This way each subject in art and skills education would have its own field of pedagogy. Although there are common conformities to law within the subjects, each has its own methods and specialties. In this approach the meaning of subject didactics become very important and they offer solutions and knowledge of art and

skills subjects. There are different scientific-philosophic-epistemological backgrounds behind the didactic approach chosen, and they form a kind of art-skill educational backbone for these subjects. Our approach highlights the cognitive psychology and its conception of teaching and learning.

We also may consider art and skill education as a part of general education. From that point of view it is necessary to remember the importance of art and skill education as representatives of building, shaping or developing multiple dimensions of personality. When we discuss art and skill education at school, it is easy to divide the area in two: 1) Substance know-how and 2) Didactical or “teaching-related” know-how. The first includes a teacher’s own skills and knowledge in the substance area, and the other one includes didactical solutions, working methods specialities and the demands of the subject area (for example equipment) etc.

If we think about Art education as a possible way to influence social and cultural questions, we must always concentrate on the question: what kind of people are we educating and fostering for our future society? This was one of the main questions we wanted to ask and discuss in this book. We also very soon found the answer to our question: Our most important aim as art and skill educators must always be to educate and foster happy citizens who are satisfied with their lives in general, and who can enjoy the many different areas of life. This purpose does not exclude the idea of giving those who have a special talent (in arts or skills or any other area) a change to develop their speciality as far as possible. It may lead the way to a happy and satisfactory life. Still, when we are constantly speaking about all-round education at school, we always have to remember the fact, that not everyone must become a writer, musician, painter, craftsman, athlete or sportsman on the professional level. The aim of all-round education should be the same which we proclaimed earlier: growing up to become happy citizens, who can enjoy their life in a modern society. An individual who is able to express him/herself, who is able to enjoy different arts, who is able to express him/herself through hand skills or who is able to get enjoyment from physical exercise, is an ideal we seek. This, of course, leads to the name of our book: a good life would be something worth searching for although we might never be able to find it.

We also see art and skill education as a very important part of education also because of the increasing meaning of the media. Without decent skills in “reading” the media pupils are in danger of becoming passive consumers of the entertainment industry. With these skills we mean the ability to transcribe the visual, audible and other messages with which we are surrounded today. Thus, art and skill education may widen the borders of our senses and consciousness about the world and everyday life. Our vision of the current situ-

ation in art and skill education in Finland is poor because of the many tangled conceptions about it: what is art and skill education and what it should be? In recent art and skill education the main focus seems to have been forgotten; it is the development of natural human sense perception and the reception of sensory impressions. Through seeing, feeling, hearing, conceptualising space and other senses we build the whole consciousness and mind. The developmental stage of the mind is connected to the stage of ability to use all senses.

Changes in society have reflections in art subject teaching

Although there are many opinions about what art basically is about, it is also easy to see the many effects of art in people's everyday life. We could as well ask what it is to be a human being, as to ask what art is? Art has a stimulating effect on us, it awakens the senses, it stimulates the brain, makes us feel deep emotions and it makes us think in a new way. Art has its effects as well on emotional life as in the cognitive and intellectual stimulus. A further definition of art may lead to a statement that art is achievements, products or activities with which we try to awake in other individuals the same experiences, feelings and emotions that we have lived through ourselves. This is usually done by using the senses to discover the focus. The senses and sensory, eidetic or sense perception-based experiences are in a key position to explain the essence of art. A human being is invariably seeking a contacting surface to reality and actuality (so to say real world) through his own hands, by touching and by doing tasks by hand. Art is manifesting a reality in which the individual lives; it mediates and supplies human experiences and at the same time it perceives the different aspects of being a human being. Art and skill subjects widen the conceptions about the surrounding world at the same time as they offer moral, aesthetic and ethical values through personal experiences. The opportunities for a modern child or even older students to learn these values have decreased through the decades at school as well as in university level education. These values are missing in the worldview of many young people today, as we easily can notice from newspapers and other media. Some international comparative research has shown clearly that the Finnish school system is succeeding excellently in teaching information (or should we say transporting cognitive facts from teacher to pupils) and theoretical knowledge to pupils (cf. PISA results). Also topical, wide analysis of a hundred countries in the journal *Newsweek* shows Finland as the best country in which to live in the whole world according to the following important criteria: education, quality of life, economic dynamism, and political environment. (Lewis, 2010.) In the same research it can be seen that Finnish pupils do not enjoy being at school as much as pupils from other countries. For

this result there may be many reasons, but one of them surely is connected to the situation of the art and skill subjects' poor situation at school compared to others. Also, we must remember that the data, information and knowledge become out-of-date very fast these days. Therefore we may ask: is the success in PISA research really of great value? Would it not be more valuable to teach children such skills which would help them learn not only knowledge, but also the important skills for life? For the future it would be more useful for students to learn to find adequate knowledge themselves, and also to learn skills of self-expression through which it also could be possible to learn long-lasting values and conceptions that cannot be changed by some short-lived fad.

Also, we think that the art is always connected to a culture: it shows the functions and operations of human behaviour and achievements in the areas of techniques, arts and religions. The culture shows the mental, spiritual or intellectual triumphs and achievements reached inside human race or a single nationality as it shows in habits, beliefs and worldview of people. The human ability to observe, discover and explore is fundamental in understanding the world, but it is also the road to the world of science and arts. Both culture and art contain profound value significance. Art and skills subjects are also useful in building processes in thinking, logic, learning strategies, social behaviour and cooperation but they also show an individual the historical development process through which man has come. This is done through the practical activities in these subjects which, at the same time, also give a view of the changing end developing processes inside a personality.

From our point of view, the world of art (including all the earlier mentioned elements) is multidimensional with differing aims among the creators and actors in the field discussed. The knowledge and the interest fields of the performing party and the receiving party may differ from each significantly. It is not always possible to make difference of the two parties and it may not always be necessary. These experiences are mostly based on images, ideas, visions or even on mental impressions of the task in which we are engaged. Because experiences vary widely they also differ from each other. The only thing in fine arts is not to recreate the reality but to make us see everything in a new light. This may also happen while dealing with the skill based subjects in school.

Art and skill subject teaching in (Finnish) school has suffered drastic changes in the last few decades: the number of lessons has dropped year after year, at the same time as there has been an increase in the number of pupils in one teaching group. Such subjects as music and visual arts have become optional and even substitutes for each other. The same development has taken

place in all the art and skill subjects. This means that the children today have fewer opportunities to learn the art itself, to learn through the art, not to speak about the connections to learning skills through these subjects. It is clearly an impairment in the curriculum and in the education of future citizens. The lack of teaching lessons has led to a degenerating situation in art and skill education: the teaching groups are too large and all kinds of dysfunctions among the pupils are becoming more common. More and more time must be spent on keeping the order. It is partly because pupils are no longer used to work diligently during these lessons. It is also partly because of the different conception of learning and knowledge itself within different subjects. In the science subjects, the conception of the knowledge is based on learning "*knowing that*" which means usually knowledge about different facts of nature, science etc. (This is often called declarative or conceptual knowledge). In the art and skill subjects, the knowledge more often involves "*knowing how*" which usually means learning skills by doing different tasks in practice. (This is often called procedural knowledge).

Other changes also demand a new attitude towards these subjects. The world of music, as well as the world of pictures or drama, has changed drastically and the same has happened in all arts (formation, sculpture etc.) because of the super-fast technical development. The new computers enable music making to everyone without a need for a proper background in music education. In the same way the new computer based picture or film processing programs provide great possibilities in the field of visual arts. Nowadays it is even difficult to distinguish between the composer, producer or even the singer of a new piece of music. It may include parts borrowed from other artists, composers or musicians. This may also happen in visual arts area in quite similar ways.

If we think about music education (or even fine arts education), much has changed since the real gurus of the education era lived: Suzuki, Kodaly, Jacques-Dalcroze, Orff and most of the other masters in the area were born before 1900. This means that most of the technical equipment used in the music business today was not even invented (radio, TV, tape-recorder, record-player, CD-player, computer, amplifiers, electric instruments etc.). Also most of the main modern music genres did not exist at that time (different types of jazz, rock, pop, computer music etc.). This makes the basis of current music education intolerable: in most countries music education (as well as the other parts of these school subjects mentioned earlier) has been traditionally placed under aesthetic education in the curriculum. This means that traditional music aesthetics should form the basis for music education. Because music aesthetics is totally formed considering so called "*classical music*" (meaning every style and genre of artistic music) it makes it impossible to be the basis when

we talk about the music of today. Each modern music style has its own conformities to law and they cannot be discussed as a whole. The paradox between the aesthetic and pragmatic approach has become increasingly critical and finally culminated through the takeover which rock music with all its genres has achieved during the last three decades. Pop music has become the main music genre and it has taken the place of artistic music. If we believe in the old masters of music education, the whole education should be based on the culture in which the child has been adapted and socialised. The music of today is based on totally different thinking than aesthetic education.

The same paradox has appeared in visual arts education. The gap between life and the ways in which art appears today and what it was in the nineteenth century has totally changed the paradigm of art and new manifestations of art are seen every year. Profoundly new thinking is needed in the whole field of art education to make it correspond to the challenges the modern day has brought. The children of today cannot be brought up the same way as children a hundred years ago. The whole conception of art should be taken under reconsideration and new definitions and determinations must be made to make the conceptions answer the needs of today.

General art and skill education vs. subject based art education

Lately, it has often been said that it is not necessary for each and every classroom teacher to teach all the art subjects. In many comments it is often seen, that these subjects could easily be replaced with a properly prepared series of lectures about general art education. This idea starts at the wrong point: art and skill subjects cannot exist without the substance skills. Without proper substance skills it is impossible to teach any of the art and skill subjects. In these subjects we may as well include other skill-oriented school subjects like sports (physical education), visual arts (fine arts), handicraft, home economics or widely speaking even reading. Although there are some common lines which may be found in teaching the art and skill subjects, these lines can be found in the basic teaching and learning conceptions, not in the main substance of the subjects mentioned. This makes the general speech of art education a fuzzy and complicated, multi-dimensional area. It also helps the enemies of art and skill education (whoever they might be) to build the wrong images of this whole section of education. These false images about art and skill subjects and art education are being created at every turn for the purpose of winning the battle for diminishing economic resources at schools, universities and other institutions concentrating on different parts of education. The

same problem has lately been seen in the operation of orchestra institutions all over the world. The continuing lack of money (for musicians' salaries) has led to a new culture: forcing orchestras to find new channels of income instead of playing artistically valuable music without caring about the audience, as they did earlier.

Art and skill subjects vs. theoretical subjects

In all fields of education, in universities, at schools and also in different specialised institutes there is nowadays a persistent fight going on between the teaching subjects. The theoretical subjects like math, physics or science are often on a collision course with more practical or artistic subjects as well as they are with foreign languages. Still, we should always remember the fact that neither of the participants can survive without the other. We could say that they form both sides of a coin, which means that they live and die together with each other. A simple picture may illustrate the connection between the two parties involved.

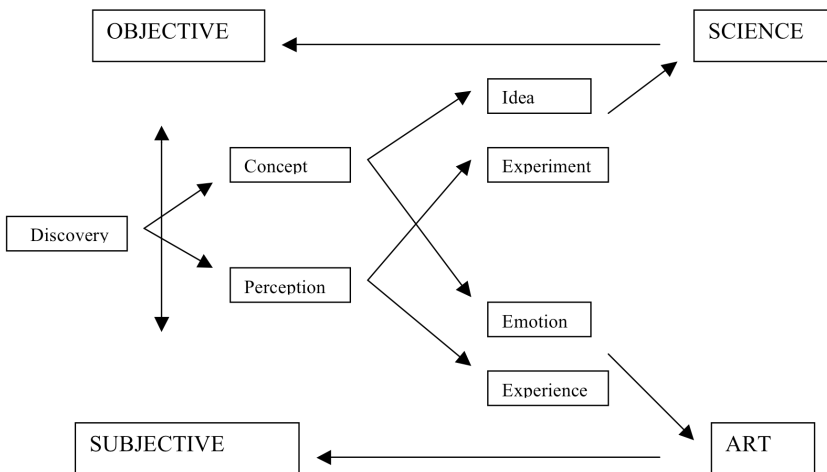


Figure 1. Relation of science and art

The idea of separating science from art is doomed from the beginning because of the development processes of man. It is impossible to acquire knowledge without an existing skill. It is easy to find that the consciousness of a child starts building on simple discoveries about the surrounding world, sounds, and feelings of warmth, smells, etc. Those are noticed through the senses which give the child information about the outside world. Slowly

these separate discoveries begin to make sense, they remind the child of something he/she has experienced earlier, they begin have to emotional content and the child starts to connect certain smells and sounds to his/her own mother and father, home, food, sleeping, etc. Thus, the infant forms and builds his/her own experiences based on the emotional connection between the perceptions of discoveries through his/her senses and the stage of the wellbeing he/she experiences at that very moment.

Still, at the same time he/she is building the route (upwards in the Fig. 1.) by forming conceptions about everything he/she discovers about the surrounding world. Through the developmental processes of the language he/she builds a vocabulary at the same time as different social processes take place in the developmental processes. Of course, these processes do not happen simply as described, but the idea follows these main lines which are based on cognitive psychology and development theories of Piaget and Erikson. Because this book is not meant to be about cognitive psychology, we will not thoroughly throw ourselves into that stream although our ideas are largely based on this field of thought.

The most important point is to remember that both scientific and artistic thinking need an emotional charge to succeed. If we think of learning processes, it is easy to find that emotional atmosphere is one of the most important factors when the affectivity of the process is evaluated. Emotional factors are also involved in the creative processes as well as in the flow-experience. The emotion has also to do with the process of learning skills. Learning to do something is closely connected to the feelings, emotions and experiences which are going on inside one's own head. The emotional load of the experience has a direct connection to forming the self-concept of a child. Repetitive failures may lead to a negative self-conception in certain areas of achievement. We may distinguish many types of achievement categories in the area of learning or development, such as art-skill or knowledge-science. For a developing child, balanced learning in all of these areas is most important and this is one reason to argue that it is no use putting these areas against each other. These problems will be more closely focused on in the next chapter.

Points of view behind the conceptions of knowledge

Although earlier in this book we declared that there must always be mastery of the substance skills present when we are dealing with art and skill subjects (here: also including sports, home economics, shop or handicraft). This means that the teacher should have the ability to play the musical instruments he/she is using at least on the basic level. The same is true when dealing with the other subjects mentioned. General art education does not provide the abilities to teach these subjects without substance skills.

Schemata, self-conception and worldview

Still, there are common factors in all art and skill education of which we should be conscious. Cognitive psychology has built a theory on schemata, which are built in our minds through the socialisation processes. These schemata form a basis for reception of new information, attitudes and values. Schemata form a system which guides a developing personality to adapt new ideas or reject them. A schema may also be defined as a mental model of a person, object or situation. Schemata include cognitive maps which may be described as mental representations of familiar parts of one's world; these are images, concept schema meaning categories of objects, events, or ideas with common properties, event scripts (here we can imagine a schema about familiar sequences of events or activities) and mental models (clusters of relationships between objects or processes). *Schemata* can be described as higher-level cognitive units that use propositional networks as their building blocks. These are often of an abstract or general nature which allows us to categorise objects or events as belonging to a particular class and to draw conclusions about them. Schemata are composed of *conceptional knowledge*, *plan-like knowledge*, and *causal knowledge*.

The first, *conceptional knowledge* consists of schemata which help us to classify objects or events by their characteristics. Persons with different knowledge use different levelling processes: an expert has more possibilities of labelling the information coming in. The second, *plan-like knowledge* tells us how different events are related to each other in time and space. Without that knowledge we would not be able to understand or organise functions and actions or even to understand routine sequences of events. This knowledge could also be described as a kind of script for events which we are used to see occurring in the same way. *Causal knowledge* is complex schemata which tie principles and concepts to each other forming *cause-effect* relationships. They allow us to interpret and understand different complex events, providing explanations and building predictions about them.

The formation of schemata starts at the very beginning of our lives, and they start building on the experiences each individual has when growing. Early childhood experiences are very important for the emotional contents and charge of the schemata. These schemata guide new experiences through attitudes and values and thus have a strong effect on an individual's everyday life and decisions in life. A negative attitude against some of the art and skill subjects is usually based on experiences from early childhood. In some cases the schemata of music, physical exercise, painting or drawing has become so depressing that we may even call the phenomenon a restriction in the specific area. We can define groups like musically restricted (one manifestation of which is singing shyness), sports restricted, etc. This definition of groups has been made in the last few years and it has not yet been profoundly researched, because the proper research is just beginning. The existence of these restrictions shows clearly how sensitive areas the schemata of art and skills subjects represent. Bourdieu says that criticism of our musical taste is much more hurtful than criticism towards some other area of our behaviour. It is because the musical taste is an important part of our personality and music has very strong and close connections to the emotional life of an individual. These schemata are so vulnerable because any kind of activity in this area (singing, playing, drawing, painting, jumping, running, etc.) can immediately be criticised by others. If you sing out of tune, almost everyone can hear it; if you play a musical instrument wrong it is easy to hear and notice it. Also if you paint something, everyone may see if it is similar to the model or not; the same notion applies to sports activities. Activity in art and skill areas is like stripping oneself nude in front of others: an individual shows something very personal to all those present. This makes art and skill subjects a most sensitive area of the school curriculum.

If it happens that an individual generates a negative schema in some area, it is very difficult to change. Still, the change in a schema is not impossible, but it requires long-lasting, continuous work with a clear target orientation. All the schemata are closely connected to personality, self-conception and worldview.

Declarative and procedural knowledge

At school the teaching subjects have many differences which are based on their nature coming from the mother science to which the subject is originally related. This means that some of the subjects are characteristically focused on social and sociological matters, cooperation, or paying attention to other people, while the others naturally focus on logical thinking or finding general conformances with the law. This is richness to learning and every activity

within it because both elements should be present in good learning. The elements are not to be separated unnaturally by trying to find classifications showing the importance of different subjects.

Scientific or mathematics knowledge may be easier and more effective to teach and learn because of the nature of the knowledge: the subject contents are beyond the control of the learners. It is independent and objective which makes it easier to learn and understand. Also the benefits and profits are easier to be shown immediately: if you master addition, you cannot be fooled in shopping for a bargain. The benefits or profits in areas of arts and skills are more difficult to show immediately. If you have a strong emotional experience from music, how can you show the benefit from it? Also, if you reach a flow-experience in sports, how could you possibly show the direct benefits from it? It is obvious that the kinds of satisfaction just mentioned are important for a child's development, but they cannot be used to bring profit immediately. The payback for this sort of "investment" is received later in the form of happier and more satisfied citizens, who do not have major problems with their personalities or self-conceptions. Their mental health and inner balance is better, and they can express their feelings better which also has connections to well-being.

The knowledge we are teaching and learning at schools is usually declarative by nature. This means that it is supposed to be objective; it consists of facts, which means that the details in it may be verified through research. Declarative knowledge also requires the ability to generalise; it should also be neutral and true. We can say that this form of knowledge is knowledge about something: it is "*knowing that*" something is the way it is (or should be). This way of thinking corresponds with the conception of knowledge connected directly to (natural) science in the way that it is very general and it is the same for each person dealing with it. It is quite easy to teach this kind of knowledge, and sometimes it is called "*book knowledge*" to separate it from more practical areas of knowledge, abilities or skills.

When we are training complex cognitive skills there will hopefully be so called "procedural overlap". This means simply that the skills and knowledge that have been compiled while practising in the learning environment are later applicable back on the job. That is, we are assuming that a transfer from the learned task to the new task will be positive in that the underlying set of "productions" overlap.

Procedural knowledge may be called knowledge of "*knowing how*" something is done. It sometimes is also called "*silent knowledge*" or knowledge based on instinct. Sometimes it is called "*tacit knowledge*". This means personal knowledge rooted in individual experience; it involves intangible factors like personal beliefs, perspective, and an inner value system. Tacit know-

ledge is said to be hard to articulate with formal language, but still not impossible. It contains individual insights, intuitions, and hunches. Before tacit knowledge can be communicated, it must be converted into words, models, or numbers that can be understood. In addition, there are two dimensions to tacit knowledge: technical and cognitive.

This part of knowledge we cannot learn by reading books; it is usually based on our own experiences which also have formed emotional connections inside our schemata about the task concerned. It is non-verbal by nature and it is shown in practical activities and operations. This part of knowledge is not only difficult to learn and assimilate but when you have learned it, it does not easily disappear.

Constructivist conception of knowledge

The constructivist conception of knowledge is behind the modern teaching-learning conception. Often it is connected to a humanistic view of man. This point of view is based on a conception of a learner as an active provider of knowledge who autonomously handles and evaluates incoming information while simultaneously building his/her own conception and structure of knowledge. This viewpoint also includes the idea of learning as situation and context-bound. Therefore learning environmental surroundings have an important role in learning. All of these elements are in constant interaction with each other.

The constructivist conception of knowledge sees knowledge as a social phenomenon. This also means that knowledge is built inside the learners as mental structures of information (and knowledge). This leads to the notion that there is no one truth about the things we are learning, but the truth is dependent on the personal history and the schemata structure of each learner. Earlier knowledge is used as a building brick to form new knowledge and all learning is connected in understanding the focus of achievement while learning. Furthermore, different learning orientations may be connected in the processes of learning. Learning can be seen in connection with four areas: 1) former experiences of the current theme; 2) motive structure and orientation of the individual; 3) expectations which the individual has about the task and, finally 4) the conceptions the individual has about the learning area.

If we wanted to describe the constructivist concept of knowledge briefly and simply, it could include the following elements. Knowledge is not independent of the individual; it is not an objective reflection of the world. Knowledge is processed within each individual using his/her schemata based on former experiences. Knowledge is connected with the emotional, social and cognitive processes by which it is constructed: receiving, discovering, select-

ing, storing, interpreting, and evaluating, active developing processes. It is not the increasing amount of knowledge which is meaningful, but the changes taking place in the schemata. The changes are qualitative and they focus on the cognitive and emotional structures as well as on the development of the thinking processes, in learning how to approach knowledge. They also concentrate on metacognitive skills which guide those areas mentioned before.

These elements typical of the constructivist concept of knowledge are elementary for the knowledge we deal with in all art and skill subjects. The most important element is the individual nature of knowledge: when we deal with arts and skills the concept of the task is always based on earlier experiences and the already formed schemata of the individual.

Self-concept and worldview

Behind all conceptions and values there is always a complex structure which is based upon the self-conception and worldview of an individual. These important parts of the personality could be also called schemata. In the cognitive psychology based theory which upon which we are building our thinking, the self is seen as a subject on whom the world (the object) is being observed. Thus, the world is subjugated as an object of the conscience of the self. Between these two elements there is a consciousness-producing system which produces information through the activity of our sense-, nerve- and brain systems. Through these stimuli we observe, evaluate and explore the world both inside and outside ourselves. These two conceptions are objective in the sense that their contents have been specified. On the contrary the information we get through our senses is always subjective: it is dependent on the schemata structure within ourselves. Science tries to produce objective knowledge by seizing on discovery, perception and conception through experiments and methods and processes of thinking and assessment. As an opposite, the art and skill mode grabs the discovery and concept using emotions, feelings and experiences trying to produce a subjective, egocentric or self-bound worldview.

The self-conception may also be divided into smaller parts in many different ways of which we mention here only one division: 1) conscious self-conception, 2) comrade self-conception and 3) ideal self-conception. The first means the self-conception which an individual recognises as realistic and true about him/herself. The second means the conception which friends and close people have about him/her. The third is the desired self conception (viewed both from inside and outside). These three parts of the self-conception should be in balance to form a lasting basis for the entity of self conception in differ-

ent areas of art and skills subjects. If the balance is attained, the self-conception grows stronger and positive; if not the consequences will be the opposite.

Teachers' Responsibility

The teachers in art and skills subjects carry a heavy responsibility as builders of the schemata of their pupils, especially in the preschool education and elementary instruction. Particularly in these subjects it is important to create experiences which are positive by nature, filled with feelings of success, and carried out in an atmosphere of encouragement and motivation. The feelings of success are closely connected with the self-conception and the forming of attitudes towards different activities areas in it. As a part of self-conception it is possible to separate different parts of it: musical self-conception, sports self-conception, handicraft self-conception or drawing-painting self-conception. All these are a part of the general personality and general self-conception. Every individual needs success in some area of activity to develop a positive, strong and long-lasting general self-conception. In this area the art and skills subjects may appear most important because they offer an opportunity to get experiences and feedback.

As we noted earlier, the teacher is always also an important builder of the child's worldview. His/her own attitudes, conceptions and values about arts, music, sports etc. are strongly transmitted to the pupils, especially at an early age. The teacher is being admired and looked upon with respect during the first school years which make him/her even more important to the developing pupils. Every teacher should recognise this responsibility and become conscious of the transfer of the values, attitudes and conceptions about different phenomena surrounding the pupils. Also he/she must be aware that his/her unconscious attitudes and values will be present in the process of teaching.

The meaning of the teacher is also based on the fact that he/she is the one who chooses the contents of the teaching (of course using the curriculum as a guide). This should be done so that it leads the pupils to a situation where they are able to understand art and skill subjects through their own actions. In this process the teacher represents long-lasting values, attitudes and he/she also is the proctor who sees the teaching-learning situation from both points of view (teacher-pupil) while the pupils see it only as one-sided, from their own point of view. This offers teacher a chance for his/her growth as he/she notices the progress in the pupils. He/she may in addition notice the moments in teaching where he/she has already reached the point where there is nothing more to give the pupils.

Feedback and the ways to give it form the basis for good art and skill education. The first thing is to remember that the teacher must always take the output of the pupil seriously in whatever area it may occur because children need the feedback and appreciation from adults concerning their products in all areas of art and skills. While doing this a teacher also has an opportunity to present the essentials of his/her own subject of teaching. At the same time we must remember that good teaching in the art-skill area is not necessarily based on an academic degree, a single system, method or any kind of general didactic. The emotional atmosphere of teaching is always in focus when the results are estimated. The ability to empathies and a goal at which he/she is aiming in the educational process through the values, attitudes and appreciation in art-skill subjects are the main factors in building a good teaching process. In this process the personality of the teacher stands in the most important role.

In art and skill subjects teaching, a teacher needs to throw him/herself into the process of teaching much deeper and more emotionally than in the science subjects because these subjects differ basically in this specific area: their learning is done more through emotions, expressions, experiences and feelings. The interaction of receiving processes and creativity are typical in these subjects as they concentrate on raising stimuli, thoughts, ideas and meanings while discussion continues between the teacher and the pupils. The tools used in discussion may be diverse (in addition to language) in different subject areas (music, fine arts, sports etc.).

The social aspect of art and skill subjects should always be remembered: working in groups is typical in many of them. Also the connection to social surroundings, culture and the society are important. The knowledge reached should be put into active use immediately in many kinds of practical exercises outside the school environment. This practice should lead one to tear oneself away from the usual solutions and customary actions. It should similarly encourage active thinking processes.

The responsibility of a teacher is also connected to the relations between the teacher and the pupils: a genuine relationship means that the teacher is able to notice his/her own feelings, emotions and thoughts and to show them. Such a relationship helps a child to develop the emotional part of personality because he/she can also deal with his/her own feelings and emotional challenges. The emotions and feelings which have differentiated in diverse areas of life enrich life. The experiences from art and skills give more colour and variety to everyday routines. We must also remember that the development of emotional part is a prerequisite for the development of intellectual intelligence. A good teacher leads a pupil to see his/her own will so that he/she will not be dependent on the opinion of the surrounding group of friends.

Practical points of view

From a practical point of view, there are some common elements between all art and skill subjects. First, they all need a lot of practice to obtain a good level of skill. Second, the essence of action is usually totally different from any other subject, which leads to different methods and special techniques in each of them. Third, the products and the achievements are totally different in each of the subjects; there is a sign of personality present all the time. Fourth, self expression forms an important part in these processes, because the individual's own feelings, emotions and beliefs are shown in the product. Fifth, these subjects all engender strong feelings of success as they are based on an individual's phenomenal experiences which very often are also connected to cooperation. Sixth, art and skill subjects offer a way to see the world in a new light and through experiences like aesthetic experience or flow experience. Seventh, all these subjects lead to development of skills in one way or another. Eighth, they also communicate without language by using the signs typical to each of these subjects.

In the modern world it is most necessary to find one's own identity and to become a self-accepting, balanced and self-assured. Strengthening the positive experiences is one of the important factors in building these parts of personality. The experienced emotion and feeling becomes more important when it is found to be life-building and is connected to friendship and love. Negative connections (hatred, vengefulness or envy and jealousy) make these feelings less meaningful. This also means that as a human being it is most necessary to always ask the why-questions. By doing that it is possible to find the activities of life which are meaningful and significant for the whole life; it also helps to recognise real feelings, what is really important in general.

Defining good life

A good life is something everyone should be able to live. The future always includes both good and bad accidents, but what is important is the inner strength of each individual. How happy a person is, depends on many different factors. There are personal factors and social factors connected to the happiness of an individual. The search for the good life has been and will be one of the main philosophic questions of all mankind. The ancient Greek philosophies tried to figure out the way to live a good life. Aristotle (in the *Ethics of Nikomakhnos*) wrote that every move we make we are trying to aim for the best possible result. He goes further in this thought and ends to think that the greatest purpose of human life is happiness (*eudaimoia*). In Aristotelian philosophy the way to reach ultimate happiness is connected with virtues (*areth*). Being a good human being is the ultimate way to reach happiness, and it cannot be taken away. This can be called ethicalness, which means virtues (good thinking) showing in one's actions in everyday life.

Happiness and a good life are mentioned in the most important manifestations in history. Still the answer to a good life is not easy to find. It depends on cultural, social and individual values and conceptions; it is related to religious and moral thinking and the whole lifestyle of a human being. It may happen that the answer is never found, it may be that there are many answers to be found.

What might the good life really mean? It must have something to do with the individuals' morals and ethics: feeling safe and appreciated; being able to earn one's living and bring up children without fear. It must have something to do with belonging in society, communality and social surroundings. Living a good life must have something to do with our everyday life and feelings our emotions, intelligence and habits. In the following chapter we put some of the elements of a good life in some kind of order trying to stretch the idea of a good life a little bit further.

Art has been said to be one well of good life, a fountain which may open our eyes to see old things of life in a totally new light. Also, in philosophy and psychology there have been many theories, ideas and models which may have something in common trying to explain the good life. Aesthetic theories use terms like art experience, aesthetic values, aesthetic evaluation, etc. The aesthetic approach brings us to new problems: we must ask right away what is the central issue of Art or artistic experience.

The good life in light of a post-modern society

The post-modern society is rapidly changing. There are many new ideas pressuring the social, cultural and economic structures in our times. The financial institutions of government are in trouble as the needs of the population keep growing and the sources of money diminish. The health care institutions have been driven to their limits and psychological problems are rapidly increasing among young children and adolescents. An individual citizen has closely seen the rapid shift from an industrial society to an information society. We have reached the situation when the global threats known from TV and media seem much more frightening and larger than local possibilities. It is important that in a situation like this we could live in belief of possibilities and positive challenges while living through these changes. On the other hand, our decisions may cause trouble on the other side of the world. The past, as well as this moment, form the framework for planning for the future and making decisions about it.

It is often said that this moment has drifted into a crisis of the values. We speak about disappearing values and at the same time about too many values, which lead to difficulties in deciding which of them we should choose to guide us through the life. It is often thought that old values collapse and new ones grow up to take their place. Still some research shows that the basic values change very slowly, if at all. The changing process concentrates more on the importance of the values, beliefs and preferences. Principles, needs, hopes and expectations form the basis of decision-making.

A modern citizen still has the old basic values: health, nuclear family, good standard of living, work, etc. These values cannot easily be connected to one clear value system. Of course, all these mentioned values are typical for middle-aged Catholic or Lutheran parents—but nowadays also for an adolescent example in Finland.

The ongoing change in the society reflects especially in peoples' needs. We are floating away from a society fulfilling only the basic needs to a society focusing more on social appreciation and self-fulfilment. The general view of reality becomes increasingly fragmented in the middle of the tide of information. That is why the world view of young people easily becomes splintered and fragmented. The public discussion and the knowledge offered by media become more focused on global problems and threats of wars, new diseases or famine. Life is more concentrated in a short-term thinking: narcissistic hedonism easily takes the place of a tranquil, long period of planning and decision making. We all need more ability to consider, plan long periodically, analyse the situations and outline the entirety of life and society. Also the causal relations between the accidents are most important to notice.

The picture of the future among the young people in our post modern societies is dependent on the common hopes, expectations and fears of us all. The media and school also project these cultural expectations of our society. At the same time, the modern media newspapers, radio, TV, movies or literature is preparing the way for new thoughts about the future and how it might look. The same dialectical modelling goes also with the educational and school strategies and targeting.

Having a positive picture of one's own future is one of the basics for a good and happy life. If you have something to look forward to, it is easier to overcome the usual difficulties of everyday life. Many young people have positive expectations about their own life, but they are more pessimistic considering the global situation. This may cause difficulties and contradictions in focusing on the future. The young people are aware that today we are making decisions that have an influence for hundreds of years to the future. It is sometimes called the coping-competence (or coping-ability).

What makes everyday life good?

Wittgenstein wrote that ethics is a research which tries to solve what is "good". Ethics is also research of what is really valuable or what is really important. Ethics researches the meaning of life and what makes it worth living. At the same time it is a research about the right way to live. This is what connects everyday life situations to a good life. These questions are like looking at a sculpture from many different points of view. Terms indicating values (good, right, important, valuable) are used in two different meanings. The first meaning is comparative value (relative value) and the other is absolute value (ethic value). (Wittgenstein 1996, 24–25). The relative values are used when some standard exists and we try to fulfil it. For example, a person is a good pianist if he or she can play pieces of a certain difficulty with a certain fluency and dexterity. Ethical values cannot be connected to any standards—they rather form a standard of their own.

Ethics is often confused with the concept morals. Ethics is a wider concept and we can say that all moral statements are basically ethical, but all ethical statements are not always moral.

From ethics to aesthetics: Aesthetics in different art forms

In the latest discussion on aesthetics there have been new winds blowing. In the field of music education there has been active research taking place about the philosophic and practical tasks of how to teach, what to teach and what the aims are of teaching music. The basic approach in this conversation has been the difference on basic philosophy in pragmatic music education phi-

losophy and aesthetic music education philosophy. (Elliott 1995; 1996a; Regelsky 1996a; 1996b; Swanwick 1988; 1996; Anttila & Juvonen 2002, Juvonen & Anttila 2003). The same conversation has also been occurring in the field of aesthetics and it has been approached more widely. For example Shusterman (1995; 1997; 2003) has been writing strongly about the gap between a theoretical and a pragmatic approach in arts education. He has widened the entire definition of art to contain elements of everyday life and popular culture. Shusterman's point of view is quite important in modern societies ruled more and more by different types of media. These ideas form a basis for this article, too.

In this article we will not use lot of space in philosophic dialogue about the good and bad sides of an aesthetic or pragmatic approach, or the definitions of hermeneutics, interpretation, unity or identity. Still, a brief definition of our point of view is necessary. In a nutshell our ideas are based on the pragmatic aesthetics of Dewey, the approach which was earlier suppressed and almost buried by analytic aesthetics. This deliberately chosen approach also gives an option to use both European and American aesthetic traditions when considering the experiences of the respondents. The last-mentioned concentrates more on the art experience, cognitive and ethical power and the social historical contexts of the experiences. One focus in our article is popular culture and the experiences welling up from it. In analytic aesthetics, popular culture represents a degenerate, aesthetically worthless and vulgar phenomenon, which should absolutely be kept outside the real art and artistic world—and aesthetic experiences, too. One of our theses is that popular culture can be and often is popular without indicating the earlier mentioned bad qualities at all. Our leading idea is that works of art in all meanings are instruments, means or tools of getting enjoyment and experiences; they are not—and they should not be—targets of adoration. The multiplicity of the contexts, the popular forms of philosophic expression and everyday life experiences are to be concerned strongly in the pragmatic approach. This is also seen in Dewey's writings and even the more popular Peirce (2001). That is probably one of the reasons that pragmatism is often considered as an American philosophy representing the pluralistic and democratic values so much admired in America. Our focus is to discover the basis of the experiences and to contemplate the values behind the experiences of our students, who represent here a whole modern generation.

Aesthetics is a part of philosophy which tries to show what beauty really means. Aesthetics is a philosophic approach; it concentrates on problems trying to determine what art basically is and what it means, or what difference there is between aesthetic values and values of observed or empirically

verifiable knowledge. The starting point for our research project was to find out what experiences the students count as art or artistic experiences (or even aesthetic experiences). It is often stated that an aesthetic experience is close or even includes some kind of “flow-experience”, which is a dynamic state, a holistically or comprehensively stimulating experience that does not create anxiety about what is happening or what might not happen (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson 1990a, 4; 1990b; Csikszentmihalyi 1997). In any case, emotions and feelings are usually present in all kinds of severe experiences, and that is why the events are often remembered even after many years. Naturally the intensity of emotions and feelings is dependent on an individual’s personality structure. Also it is often thought that enjoyment (pleasure) is one of the feelings connected to aesthetic experience. Both concepts: experience and enjoyment, cannot be easily specified as they are usually very personal experiences. The intensity of the experience is consequently hard to measure. An experience can be enjoyable, if it has a positive charge. Enjoyment usually lasts only a little while, when experience can even change the whole life of a person by bringing new sensations and feelings into his or her emotional sphere (Ruismäki 1995, 2). The joy of success in doing something demanding easily brings experiences which are enjoyable. This is one important connecting point linking arts experiences and aesthetic experiences to education. In arts subjects at school it is possible to create an atmosphere where a pupil can and will process artistic work which both provide challenge and give the joy of success. The genuine (*bona fide*) values are named to be truth, beauty and goodness (Turunen 1990; 1992). Ideals, targets of appreciation and humanly valuable experiences can also be named as elements of human growth. In this article we focus only on the last one mentioned here (humanly valuable experiences). The reader must remember that the experiences of the students are not necessarily located at school; the presentation of the inquiry only guided them to mention powerful (and first) art or artistic experiences.

The different sectors of aesthetics have been researched considerably. Inside the arts aesthetics can always be thought to be subjective, like ethics. Often aesthetics focuses on individual elements or effects of an artistic experience or artistic ways of expression and the beauty in it. Inside art there are often separated elements like symmetry, heart of the art object, rhythm, movement, dimensions, perspective and relationships to other art objects. There are two basic lines for specifying art focusing on different uses for it. The first one is art including portraying or picturing elements and the other is one with values of appreciating. In this article we do not focus on this difference between existing art conceptions. Thus, we will only briefly describe the aesthetic elements of different arts starting with music.

Music surrounds us almost all the time as modern technology develops with escalating speed. It is very difficult to live without hearing music in the present society, because it is a means of marketing using the emotions and feelings which individuals connect in particular pieces of music. This is also one of the important reasons for developing music education: new generations must be able to esteem, evaluate and estimate music so that the marketing forces cannot rule their behaviour.

Music has a capacity to touch upon our feelings, emotions and intelligence. The words of the songs may lend comfort in loneliness or give new fire to our passions. Often in music aesthetics the target of the research have been the words of songs, the lyric elements, harmony, feeling, dynamics, colour, shape and other basic elements of the music itself. Sometimes a kind of hypnotism can also be found in music presentation. Music is said to be the most abstract of all arts because it only exists in a live performance for a limited time: the time the performer is actually playing his/her instrument. Many problems have appeared after the recording technologies have evolved: how to differentiate the experience of listening to a CD from that of a live performance? The same question can be aroused considering music styles: is an aesthetic experience possible only in a concert of classic music? This article gives some examples of arts experiments in music among young people living in a post-modern society as Finland is today.

Music has many qualities in common with architecture. In architecture aesthetics is also considered as an aim of research although money and other resources often dominate the outer looks of a building. This is emphasised especially in a relatively young culture like Finland. Also in architecture, as in music it is fairly easy to define qualities like symmetry, colour, harmony, light and shade and pattern or figuration. We often forget the beauty of architecture surrounding us, but when we travel to new places, the architecture often becomes the first experience we receive.

In drama or cinema aesthetics can be found in narrative elements, in the balance or the counterpoints of the story, timing, energy or power of the storytelling, shock elements, humorous elements, irony or sensuality in the story. Often young children find the outer exterior most important element in drama. The level of the actors putting their soul into the act has a corresponding response in a young audience. In drama the interpretation may also be one of the most important artistic elements from both the actor's and the audience's point of view.

Many the same elements in drama, theatre or movies, are also found in literature. In literature there are aesthetic elements in all categories beginning from poetry and leaning towards novels and prose. A good written work of

art may use rhythm, analogies, allegories, metaphors, shape, timing, description, fantasy, excitement, analysis, comedy, cynicism or sarcasm and out-loud thinking as means of aesthetic focus.

Aesthetics can be experienced in nature and as well as in cultural surroundings like cities. Different plants, the changes of the seasons, lighting and repetition of different elements can form a framework for an aesthetic environment.

Aesthetic elements can also easily be found in many other sectors of life (sports, science, love, food, animals, etc) but in this article we will not touch on them. Also the associations between ethic and aesthetics are a very common fountain for argumentation in literature comprehending thoughts of epistemology, the ethics of good and the aesthetics of beauty. The question is often aroused about the domination among the two subjects mentioned. In this article we will not try to respond to that question, even though it seems evident that aesthetics cannot appear without an ethical and moral point of view.

Art and artistic objects

Traditionally, philosophy is defined as a common science researching reality. From that point of view the purpose of art philosophy might be the research and discovery of the real essence of art. This is what every individual must sometimes and to some extent determine for him/herself. For teachers teaching young children this is essential. One can approach art in many ways: it can be researched, interpreted and expressed through many traditions and through many theories. Although an individual may not have acquaintance with art theories, he/she can still explicitly state his/her thoughts about a piece of art. Usually these judgments are expressed as: *“I don’t understand anything about arts; I just know what I like!”*

Although the enjoyment based on knowledge of art may not be as genuine or authentic as instantly and experimentally (phenomenally) experienced art is, knowledge and awareness can increase our ability to enjoy art. Also it is a known fact that knowing a music piece by heart may cause sensitivity to notice all the mistakes in the performance and that way one might not be able to enjoy the music as much as before (Ruismäki 1995). Many artisans, hand-craftsmen and artists look at theorising about art quite impatiently and even suspiciously. From their points of view, what is most important is making the art, not talking about or theorising about the essence of art. The history of defining art began in the 17th and 18th centuries with the distinction of some skills involved in art; the main target was beauty or achieving aesthetic enjoyment. The positive tasks for many artistic and art theories and conceptions

are to focus on the meaningful elements of works of art. Some researchers even jump to the conclusion that art cannot be defined in one easy way—it can only be described from different signs changing from one piece of art to another (Kennick 1958; Weitz 1956). Sepänmaa (1991, 142) has also highlighted that art is an open concept which is impossible to exhaustively describe. Still it always gives new points of view when you research and classify empirical data.

Art and aesthetics are both expressions of multidimensional and complicated concepts. In some literature sources this phenomenon is called an aesthetic attitude or an aesthetic approach (Krohn 1965, 72). In this discussion it is often mentioned that there are two different kinds of knowledge: intuitive knowledge and logical knowledge. Of these two, the first comes from our imagination and concerns private, personal matters. The other sort of knowledge comes through our intelligence and concerns universal matters. The connection of these two kinds of knowledge can be a source of infinite contemplation, if so desired (Tarasti 2004, 120–122, Kinnunen 2000, also mentioned in the writings of Sesemann), but it is not our aim in this research project. Often the problems in aesthetic research focus on finding answers to questions like: How is representation different from expression? What is the value of aesthetic education? What is the significance of art in modern society and culture? These questions rise from reality, and from the everyday problems of our students. The society is changing rapidly and the school system must be able to answer the needs of the new generations in new cultural and environmental surroundings. This is why the knowledge of the reality which the teachers of the future are experiencing right now is extremely important and valuable.

Aristotle as a guide

These questions which we have found important are not in the least our own inventions; they have been considered already for thousands of years. Already Aristotle (384–322 BC) (1989a; 1989b; 1990) speculated about the same problems in his book *Ethics of Nikomakhos*. “Eudaimonia” as he called happiness, prosperity, blooming or generally the good life was the main theme in his writings. The virtues were building blocks of a good life as they concentrated in building a good life, showing the right way to live, a way which is good for a human being. Aristotle thought that education and upbringing make it possible to reach a good life in case an individual has not totally become unable by virtues. By learning it is possible to achieve virtues. He states that things which must be done are learned by doing them. This is in many ways the same idea which Dewey pointed out. They both find mean-

ingfulness in practical doing and the active production of things. Aristotle also saw the importance of intelligence and he pointed out that it is necessary to feed one's intelligence and talents which together improve the personality. He wrote that people are mentioned as good for the reasons of their achievement or for the characteristics of their personality.

Aristotle had the courage to speak about the greater significant questions like "a happy life" or "a successful life". He considered man from the noble point of view: "How will I be a better man?" together with the ideas of intelligence as the ultimate dimension of god for a human being. He also stated the virtues as the basic elements for becoming a good man. Aristotle saw the human being from a practical point of view where the good life was built on the things a man does in the real world and life, in the contrast to the Judaeo-Christian point of view which emphasises life after death. He also connected the life of an individual to the community and thus he brought the social aspect as an element of the matter. Aristotle saw the virtues not as limiting elements of life, but as a positive productive power in life. Virtues do not rise from some an authority's rules; they come from inside a man. Virtues are inbuilt potentials for living a good life and they are a part of the real essence of a human being. This is often called the "naturalism" of Aristotle. Virtues may be seen as the extraordinary talents of a human being who is able to live skilfully and they have become an inseparable part of his personality and behaviour. Aristotle stated rather pragmatically that the aim is not to research and gain knowledge about a good life; it is to make a good life. Thus, he meant that we do not examine virtues only to know what they are; we examine them to become better human beings by assuming them. This thinking we share with Aristotle.

The structure of the book

This book is divided in two parts. The first part forms a background for the other part. It explains the ideas on which we have built our project and carried it out through different research projects. The second part of the book is built on several (refereed) articles which have been written for international scientific conferences in the fields of music and art education. Most of them have been previously published in conference publications or books. They are separate results of our long-lasting research project. Still, all the articles focus on the same theme: art and skills education.

The second part of this book consists of articles which focus on different approaches in art education. The first article explores quite broadly the first and the strongest artistic experiences of teacher education students. It gives a wide perspective to different areas of arts and creates a vision of the modern Finnish society as a starting point of experiencing art. The different fields of art were analysed and reported in the order of frequencies. As there were more experiences of music, theatre and visual arts they get more attention than the others.

The second article handles art education in the school, the time after school beginning while the first article focused on first-ever experiences. We also centred our article on music and visual arts as they were mentioned most often. In this article we wanted to reveal the possible negative side of art education at school as we asked for good and bad memories from school music and visual arts teaching.

In the third article we wanted to explore the meanings of art in everyday life. Again we decided to present all the subject fields to offer more information about the task. In the earlier articles we got information from the first experiences, from the good and bad experiences at school, and now about the meaning in the whole life to deepen our knowledge about the phenomenon.

The fourth article concentrates on the most important factors in small children's art education based on the conceptions of kindergarten teacher students. The idea of a good life is in the background as we asked the students to describe the most important elements of small children's art education. The ideas were observed mirroring them to theoretical ideas and reported.

In the fifth article we began to figure out the most important qualities of a good art educator trying to build a model showing the elements of growth. The relationship with art, the balance of self conception and motivation to work with the children appeared to be the ideal factors.

In the sixth article we focused on the paradox between knowledge and skills. The students were asked to define both the conceptions and to specu-

late about their importance. The data was analysed and reported in light of theoretical background.

In the seventh article we took the idea of the earlier article even further to deepen the idea through empirical data. The students were asked to explain what doing things with their own hands meant to them. The results were convincing.

The earlier articles led us to try to build on the declarations of children's rights to good art and skill education in a multicultural environment. This was done in the eighth article, which is a kind of conclusion or summary of all the other articles. It is built on empirical data, like all the other articles, and we also used the ideas from the other articles in it.

After the articles the second part of the book ends with the chapter "Finally" in which we try to join all the loose ends of the strings together summarising of the main ideas of the book.

The target groups consist of kindergarten and classroom teacher students and updating education students from the Finnish capital city Helsinki and the smaller towns of Joensuu, Lahti and Kotka. Most of the respondents come from Universities of Helsinki and Joensuu. Although the students study in the cities mentioned they, of course, come from all over Finland as these are only their studying places. This makes the results describe more the thoughts of typical Finnish young adults and future kindergarten and classroom teachers. The updating education students are already qualified teachers who are working at the same time. Because we concentrate on qualitative examination, we do not use many descriptive numbers like average, mode etc. Still, in some articles we decided to mention the number of answers in classification because of the phenomenographic approach. For example Partanen, Juvonen and Ruismäki (2009, 15–26) describe in detail Finnish music education as a part of school education in their article: Finnish music education-structures and lines.

This book is meant to offer belief and joy to anyone interested in art and skill subjects'. We hope it offers new points of view and brings new evidence about the importance of different areas in art and skill education.

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*There are two values,
which you can give your child
as a present for Life.
First of all: Roots,
and then: Wings*

An American Indian proverb

PART II

The articles

Artistic experience: ways of experiencing and thinking—Student teachers first and strongest art experiences

Abstract

This part of the research focuses on art experiences of students of two Finnish universities: University of Joensuu and University of Helsinki. The data was collected during the autumn 2004 through e-mail. The target group consisted of kindergarten teacher students and classroom teacher students (N=70). They described the first and the strongest art experiences in their lives. The results show that the first art experiences were often sourcing from kindergarten concert or theatre visits or the children's own art making or painting, drawing, etc. The strongest art experiences rise from creation and reception. Both have a strong influence on the attitudes and conceptions in the field of art in common and also in field of specific art forms. Both fine arts and popular culture are common sources of art experiences in this data. The results clearly show the need to broaden the definition of art also include different forms of popular culture. The article gives new information about the art experience among modern university students and it shows new lines for developing education in the right direction.

Our first and most important aim is to describe the multiplicity of phenomenon which participants in our inquiry consider as art experience. In a way it can be coupled to the last problem mentioned in Part I. The aesthetic experience is always connected to cultural background, which is continuously renewable and transforming. This is the reason for researching the aesthetic experiences of future teachers: in an ever-changing world it is most necessary to renew all education to correspond to the demands of change. Experiencing art is one of the important values which can, and must be transferred from

one generation to another. This can only be done in ways which are familiar to new generations and to which they have already become acculturated. Of course, the definition of art would be important if our aim was different. In this project we let the target group themselves define what they think of as art. This makes the data interesting; it also shows the many sides of the concept “Art” among future teachers.

The method used in this research is quite similar to what one of the most important semioticians of our time, Professor Tarasti used in his newest book (“Values and meanings”, 2004), except that our data is collected from other people (students), while Tarasti uses his own strong experiences as a basis and example for his reasoning (Tarasti 2004, 122–123).

After analysing, categorising and classifying the collected data, we compared the elements of the experiences to those mentioned in art theory, and those describing aesthetic experiences. The methods used in this research were mainly qualitative and result from the essence of the subject. Still, some quantitative elements are included when considered necessary and useful.

As it is commonly known, the aesthetic experience is something which is continuously under research and analysis. This has been the case since the concept was first named and determined in the early 19th century. There have been many attempts to “push aesthetics aside” by explaining it in a more realistic and objective way (Tarasti 2004 116–117), but with poor luck. The semiotic approach has also been used to explain the aesthetic phenomenon with different concepts of its own without definitive success.

Target group and the aim of research

This article describes different art and artistic (aesthetic) experiences of university students in two cities in Finland. The students were future kindergarten teachers (Helsinki) and future classroom teachers (Joensuu). The number of participants was 70 (35 in Joensuu and 35 in Helsinki). The answers were sent through email after a presentation given during their lectures. Most of the students involved did send an answer to the inquiry, which shows a strong personal interest in the subject. In the presentation the students were asked to describe an art experience which has had a strong value or effect on them. The students were also asked to try to remember the all-time first art experience from their childhood.

In the first part of our article we determine our starting point and some basic lines of aesthetic approach in different arts to build a solid ground to understanding the experiences in the empiric data collected among the students of the two universities. Artistic (aesthetic) experience can, and must be a very important element in teaching the arts subjects at school as well as in

teaching preschool-aged children. The way the future teachers experience the arts can be essential to the way they teach arts at school or at kindergarten. Experimental learning in arts subjects includes artistic experiences as a natural part of teaching. Experimental learning also has close connections to the constructivist learning theories in common education. The scheme of an art subject at school can be built on spontaneous artistic and other experiences at preschool and during the first years of the elementary school. In art subjects, the elements of experimental learning can be much more easily seen, shown and utilised for teaching and learning than in mathematics or natural scientific subjects overall.

The inquiry was targeted to kindergarten teacher students in the University of Helsinki and to classroom teacher students in the University of Joensuu (n=70). All participants were from the same starting group in each university. The age of the target group was between 19 and 25. That situates them in the so-called “Floor ball” generation which is the newest in generation dissection originally constructed by J-P. Roos (Roos 1985a; 1985b; 1986; 1988; 1990). The other Finnish society generations defined by Roos are (starting from the oldest): (1) the generation of nation building; (2) the generation of war and depression; (3) the generation of fundamental changes, and (4) the rock and roll generation. After the rock and roll generation, the “Floorball” generation has been mentioned in some articles giving the idea of the important values and the focus of that generation.

The presentation of the inquiry which was used in this research was given to the students at the end of a lecture held by Professor Ruismäki and Adjunct Professor Juvonen in each university during a series of lectures in the autumn 2004. The total sum of the target group was 83, but (in time to take part in this research) the number of answers was finally 70. There were 65 females and 5 males among the respondents. The distribution describes quite well the gap between the genders especially in kindergarten teacher education but somehow also in classroom teacher education in Finland. In Joensuu University the relation between genders is females 75–83% and males 17–25% depending of the year of beginning the studies (Vihermäki 2004).

The aim of the research was to get more knowledge of the nature and meaning of artistic experiences among future kindergarten and classroom teachers. Information about their thoughts about art and artistic experience show even more widely the thoughts of their generation, at least of those studying in universities. The way in which the students write and describe their experiences is directly connected to their conceptions about art. The experiences raise question both in quality and in quantity about their conception of the origins of artistic experiences: do they mostly concentrate on fine

art objects or do they include popular culture elements as well? If the research shows that students also consider clearly popular culture as a real source of art experiences, we have to reconsider the definition of art. The definition of art is most necessary when we start talking about arts education or the artistic experience or even the aesthetic experience. If the reality shows to be something different from former definitions, it is to be redefined so that the real world is included in the definition. This point of view has recently been present in the discussion of music research. (Stålhammar 2003; Aguirre 2004; Girod & al 2003; Matravers 2003; Shusterman 2003; Goble 2003; Lim 2004; Juvonen 2000; 2002a; 2002b; 2003).

The information this research offers can be used in many ways in planning the rapidly changing teacher education on both lines and both universities. At the same time, we will gain information on the modern society art fountains, here significance the sources of artistic experiences in this sense the artistic experience as the students understand it in their own frame of reference. Of course, the artistic experience was discussed in the lectures connected to this research, but it was not strictly defined so that the respondents could decide themselves what the experience they write about would be like. The questions asked were stated based on many sources (Reimer 1989; Dickie 1990; Puurula & Väyrynen 1992; Langer 1976; Koroscik 1992) and also practical themes which came up during the discussions at the lecture series. The students wrote their answers independently and intuitively reflecting their points of view to bring new knowledge to the focused field of problems. The answers were their own versions of reality and in that sense personal, individual and subjective. This article presents a small window into their thoughts more than a systematic description of their ways of thinking. A larger forum is needed to represent and generalise the results from this research project more widely. In our article we will represent only a few of the many stories to illustrate the substance more vividly. Although every answer could be thought to be a piece of art itself: an essay, almost poetry, there are still common themes rising from them. Because the answers and the stories are all different and subjective, individual conceptions about the questions asked, the reader has been left the freedom to form his or her own ideas about the material. The answers contain different kinds of language; they are multi-storey and multi-interpretative.

The culture and society have changed in recent decades, and therefore our problems to be solved were: Has fine art been able to maintain its meaning? Where does a modern adolescent find art experiences, or does he or she have them at all? What meaning does he or she give to the experience? On what is the meaning of the experience based? Does the experience have connections to older aesthetic theories of arts education?

Method and results

First the answers were classified using the fields of arts as a basis for the categorisation. The Sources of artistic experiences of the respondents could be divided into the following nine sectors:

1. Music	40 descriptions
2. Theatre	21 descriptions
3. Visual arts (Fine arts)	17 descriptions
4. Nature (everyday experiences)	7 descriptions
5. Literature	3 descriptions
6. Architecture	3 descriptions
7. Ballet	2 descriptions
8. Museum	2 descriptions
9. Handicraft	1 descriptions

The total number of descriptions became more than 90, because many of the respondents described more than one artistic experience in their answer. Also both the first artistic experiences and the most powerful experiences were put in the same classification to save space.

The experiences could be divided into two basic sources: (1) making art, the creative process (being the artist, performer, musician, actress, etc.) and (2) experiencing the art made by others, receiving process (being part of an audience, spectator, listener, and viewer etc.). Many of the respondents considered all or most of their experiences in performing music or theatre or creating and constructing something with their own hands, as an artistic experience. This shows the great meaning and significance of reaching into something demanding, and the enjoyment which comes when the aim is finally attained. In this field of experimenting arts there must be some amount of creativity present in the process. The reception of arts, of course, also demands elements of sensitivity. Also in most of the arts there must be some kind of knowledge about the subject to be able to enjoy the experience.

It is interesting to notice that most of the experiences were concentrated in the field of music. It may be because nowadays music is all around us almost day and night. In department stores, restaurants, hairdressers, taxis and even in public offices there is often music playing in the background from radio or other media. Also music is used as a marketing tool, especially when adolescents are in the target. Using popular music, which is close to the experimental life of young people, can be a very effective marketing policy. Also one reason for the many music experiences can be that music is easy to reach.

Usually many more music performances are available compared to visual arts or theatre.

Theatre was the second experience mentioned in number of the experiences. It seems that especially the first remembered artistic experiences have come from theatre performances. Many of the respondents say that they often still visit the theatre because of the nice experiences they experienced as a child.

Visual arts came third in comparison of the number of experiences. It seems quite a strong source of artistic experiences still in modern society. Nature, literature and architecture received a few mentions. It is quite interesting that nature or everyday experiences did receive some mentions.

Museums, handicraft and ballet were mentioned only once or twice in the stories of 70 students, so it can be said that these arts are not especially important to the respondents in this inquiry.

Music as a source of artistic experience

Music as a source of experience can be divided into two sectors according to the nature of the answer (productivity or receptivity). In this division 28 answers were of receptive, and 12 of creative nature. The receptive experiences could be divided into:

1. Classical music concerts
2. Musicals or theatre pieces with music
3. Opera and operetta
4. Pop/Rock/Jazz concerts
5. Situations of teaching and learning
6. Experiences through media (Radio, TV, Movies, Records)

Receptive experiences in music

Classical music concerts

When asked about the first artistic experiences, it is usual, that the respondents at first say that they cannot remember anything. After a little while they start remembering nice experiences from their early years.

Classical music concerts have been a source of artistic experiences for many respondents. They mention some composers by name (Vivaldi, Bach, Sibelius) and some concerts by name of the performers (Joensuu city orchestra; Leipzig Boy's Choir; Lahti Philharmonic Orchestra). The first memories were usually from ages 4–6.

Person 1. ... I was 6 years, when my parents took me to a concert. They were playing Vivaldi: The Four seasons. My parents were afraid that I would not be able to sit nice and quiet the entire concert, but that was no problem. I listened, fascinated, to the whole concert and I'm not sure if I even dared to change my position during the music. The changes in tempo and the tone put my imagination working hard. I travelled everywhere in my imagination and I completely empathised with the music. When the music stopped I was surprised: why did it already stop?

This example clearly shows the power of music. The child became totally enchanted by the music and she was carried away by her imagination. The experience was something unprecedented and totally new. The child did not even make a move while listening. This can easily be estimated to have been an aesthetic experience. The respondent reports that she wanted to try violin playing later, thanks to this experience, which proves that even one single experience may, in some cases, change the direction of a person's life.

Person 3. One remarkable artistic experience in my life was the concert held by Orthodox cantor's choir. The choir consisted of men and women and the music was Orthodox Church music. It had an influence on me, because I like the mixed choir music generally and I also have been singing in choirs myself. The performance was high-level thanks to the professionalism of the singers. Also the music was conventional, and I don't like modern music... I just have grown up inside classical choir music, which is together with classical music, one of the most important elements in my life...

The listener analyses the performance and the music she has heard. Her own experience as a choir singer gives her good basic knowledge about estimating the skills of the choir. She also recognises the music and makes judgements based on her own musical taste. In cases like this the musical taste and the whole situation comes naturally to the person who has grown up in a climate positive towards classical music. This is the luckiest and best way to understand the art of music (Bourdieu 1984; 1985; 1986).

Person 23. It is not difficult so say what has been the most devastating artistic experience for me. It was the (obligatory) visit to a symphony concert by Joensuu City Orchestra as part of our basic studies of music. I had never before been to a symphony concert, so even going there was something totally new to me. Overall I enjoyed the concert a lot, but every now and then I also had some distressed moments when the music did not sound good in my ears. Most of the concert was enjoyable, and I started to wonder and marvel: How can anyone have such a skill in playing an instrument? I was full of admiration and the concert was definitely a positive experience... I know arts poorly, so I don't think that going to concerts will be my hobby,

but my attitude towards it is now positive, and that is most important when I think of my future as a classroom teacher.

There are numerous young people living in Finland who have never gone to a classical music concert. It is because not every little town has an orchestra of its own. In most towns there is a music school, which arranges some kind of concerts, but in the countryside it is not usual to go to concerts of classical music. That is why it is most important to give an opportunity to experience concerts during the studies at the university. The example also shows that the writer has noticed the importance of the positive attitude towards the art subjects as a future classroom teacher. It seems also obvious, that the writer has a good musical ear, so that she could hear the false notes played by the orchestra or some members in it.

Person 31. I have been hearing spiritual and classical music since I was a baby because both my parents work as cantors. That makes music the most important source of art experiences. I have had very many powerful emotional experiences from different styles and different composers. Nonetheless, there is one composer whose music has had an indelible effect in me. The compositions of Johann Sebastian Bach have an extremely strong effect on my emotions and feelings. Especially I can remember last summer when I travelled to Leipzig with my sister. We went to listen to a Cantata made by J.S. Bach sung by a boy choir originally founded by the master himself. Tears started flowing from my eyes—which I could not help. My body was taken over by an extreme good feeling and the music played divinely with its deep warmth and finesse and full expression. In addition I was touched by the clear and fresh sound of the choir and the multidimensional music. Although the church was filled with an audience, the silence was complete even after the singing stopped. Afterwards the priest read a prayer of the Lord to give the praise where it belonged. The whole experiment was awesome and powerful and it still gives me power in my everyday life when I think about it.

This is another good example of a person who has grown into understanding classical music: both mother and father were cantors. With that background it is easy to understand the deep meaningfulness of this experience in the Leipzig church. Connections to her own childhood together with the love of J.S. Bach's music made many emotional connections, memories and maybe even dreams fulfilled in the experience. It is also quite clear that religious feelings can sometimes be very similar to aesthetic experiences. In the example the religious load is immense but it can only be seen as subordinate.

Musicals or music theatre

Many of the answers show that theatre plays (pieces or dramas) can have an extremely strong influence and effect on small children. The light, the scenery, the clothing costumes, the make up in the changing faces of the actors and of course, the effect of music and songs make the experience powerful and full of emotions, effects and feelings. The words of the songs in the play can often still be remembered at a later age. Almost all theatres make one or two children's plays each year. It seems to be a good way to offer artistic experiences to young children.

Person 2. The earliest art experience I can remember is when I was taken to a music play in the theatre with my day care group. The play was a story about three good-hearted thieves. I still can remember some scenes of the musical, the music was captivating, the dresses were beautiful and colourful and the feeling was glorious. After that experience, I was (as a child) always asking to go to theatre.

Another respondent (person 5) writes about the musical Hype which was presented at the Helsinki Swedish Theatre (*Svenska Teatern*) around 1995. It has been mentioned in four different answers which shows the effect of that particular musical, which was even sung in the Swedish language. Swedish language is taught in Finnish schools, but very often it is considered as an obligatory subject which does not motivate students at all.

Person 5. Till today the most efficient art experience so far has been the Hype musical at the Swedish theatre (in Helsinki) when I was twelve years old. I had seen earlier other musicals like *Oliver Twist* and *West Side Story*, and liked them, but Hype just swept me off my feet. The storyline was appealing to youngsters and also the actors were young adults so that I could identify myself in the story. Two gangs, love, drugs, school teasing, and death were the sources (to a 12 year old) to fall in love with. Hype was quite a success around 1995 and the greatest thing about it was the crossing of the language border between the Finnish and Swedish languages. I bought the soundtrack made of the musical and I could sing all songs by heart. I also collected all the newspaper stories about the musical and collected the autographs of the performers. I was a real fan and I also bought the video made from the show—I still can sing all the songs by the heart. Hype made me want to sing and perform myself but it was not until upper-secondary school that I had the chance to be a participant in a musical performance.

The writer was totally astonished to even think that something like this show would exist. The spell, charm and glamour of the performance were some-

thing she had never experienced before. Her attitude and opinion towards Swedish language changed totally (as they were speaking Swedish in the play). The writer thought later: What have I been missing? This shows a new attitude towards the musical as a form of art and Swedish language. The changes in attitudes seem quite significant and permanent as she writes this way now at age of 21 years.

Person 17. The most impressive art experience was the Jesus Christ Superstar—musical, which I saw with my mother in London. That was a very awesome experience because the music was very effective and emotional and the actors were spectacular. The experience was very meaningful; it forms (with other arts experiences) a relaxing counter-balance to everyday life. It also gives material for imagination and new ideas for my future work.

The spectacle which includes wonderful actors and emotionally effective music can form new ideas through the imagination and give strength for a long time afterwards. It seems that the respondent can really use the arts as source of relaxation and even use it as a source of new ideas for her work.

Opera and operetta

Some of the respondents connect the art experience to opera or operetta. The glamorous surroundings and glorious sound of singers have had strong effects on the minds of the respondents. This example also shows that sometimes even the obligatory music visit is worthwhile.

Person 13. ...Most of my time I have been taken away from arts by sports. Anyway music has become a way of relaxation for me. The most powerful art experience I had during upper-secondary school. Our music teacher took us to Helsinki to visit the opera. I was in a group listening to Mozart's Magic Flute sung in Finnish. The whole opera was touching, but the Aria sung by the Queen of the night made my skin crawl. That was the first time I experienced that music can express emotions and feelings. The whole 400 kilometres way back home on the bus I was wondering why I had not earlier experienced anything like that before. After this experience I started looking for similar experiences... Nowadays this is not exceptional; I often have such experiences almost anywhere when the right kind of music is played.

The power of experience is not connected to the age of the person having the experience. The example shows that even in upper-secondary school it is possible to have totally new experiences of art. This example also shows the way the experience changed the person's thinking. She started looking for similar experiences and nowadays finds it easy to get thrills from music. The

following example also shows the rapid change that can be caused by one extreme experience.

Person 18. The most important experience in art, which also made me find my way into these kinds of situations and performances later, took place when I was 14 years old. I was visiting my relatives in Vienna, and my aunt bought us (me and my mother) tickets to the operetta “The Beauty and the Beast”. I had the most breathtaking experiences ever. The whole spectacle was like a Disney movie about the same story, so it was really imposing. The songs and the dance scenes made my stockings go round in my feet and I really put my soul into the show although I could not understand a word of German... After this I have always been ready to come along not only to the theatre, ballet or operetta, but also to art exhibitions and museums.

Here the operetta with its glamorous surroundings, dances and beautiful singing made ineradicable marks on her mind so that the attitude toward all theatre, ballet, operetta and even museums changed. There was no language barrier during the experience because the music and the acting did the storytelling in a way which made it understandable. The deep emotional experience was still effective after many years of life.

Pop, rock, and jazz concerts

Pop music, rock music and jazz concerts can form a very effective experience for a person, who is socialised to that culture. The effects of the light music genres are quite similar to those of classic music. The power and intensity of experience are always dependent on the personality and the meanings the pieces formed in a person’s life. The aesthetic values of music are totally different from classic music in these music genres, but the strength and meaning of the experience can be similar.

Person 19. I have always been listening to music which is somehow different. That is why I got very excited when listening to the singing ensemble Rajaton. The possibility to hear to this kind of music comes very seldom, and that’s one reason for getting so tizzy. The idea of doing something which is really their own is very important. The humour and extreme skilfulness are other aspects which pleased me in the performance. Musical talent, versatility and the way the ensemble could create the feeling through their appearance were the most important factors in the experience. Also knowing that the performance was the first on their tour gave new excitement to the whole event. The concert was a most comprehensive experience and it took a little time to be able to even discuss it. I cannot analyse any distinct feelings or emotions in it, what was important in the experience was that it raised many kinds of feelings and emotions as long as it lasted.

The feeling of skilfulness is one important factor in these stories. The listener can sense the musical talent and the natural-born instinct and feeling which transports the emotions from the songs into the listener's mind. The personal way of singing connected to professional attitude made the experience very strong for the respondent. She also had much previous knowledge about the ensemble which gave an extra thrill to the event. The mind seems to be full of emotions, which the respondent cannot analyse separately; she is seemingly trying to describe an aesthetic experience by saying that the emotions were something which cannot be described. She probably does not know that the experience was of an aesthetic nature.

Person 20. So far the most impressive artistic experience was the concert of Tina Turner in Oslo in the year 2000. At least in that situation in my life it was most valuable and important. The outside stadium filled with people, the stage ready for the STAR, the audience impatiently waiting for their idol, everyone surprisingly tranquil. You could feel the expectation... The first parts of a song... Do I recognise the song?... YES... The star comes to stage and lets her voice touch the audience. The lights, the sound, the stage show—everything is just wonderful. In the dark of the evening the feeling goes up and the audience starts singing along with the group. Music takes us away; I can enjoy this moment, my freedom and my being here in Norway, my new home country. I don't have to worry about anything; everything seems to be all right in my life.

Person 21. My most impressive art experiences have been in music concerts. I have been in some big concerts, but the most impressive was Tina Turner's concert in Helsinki in the year 2000. I was 18 years old at that time. I and my friend got good places in the front row. We had to queue quite a long time to get there, but the prize was enormous. I liked the music very much, but the whole show was gorgeous. More excitement came from the knowledge that this concert tour was the last Tina Turner ever made.

Tina Turner seems to have given a lot of good experiences, because two respondents wrote about her concert. In large concerts the light system and the amplifiers form a major part of the experience, the music comes out loud and the lights make everything seem unreal. The dancers and the backup group musicians are also important but most important thing is still the music: the listeners know what songs the artist usually sings and they know most of the songs by heart so that they can sing along. The feeling of congruity when a large group is singing can cause very strong emotions and feelings as the first writer states (person 20). A live performance of a world-class star made her feel like her whole life has gone in the right way, living in a new country felt like the right decision. Seemingly the writer describes a flow-experience as music makes everything seem right. The feeling is good

and positive; no worries bother her. The other writer (person 21) has quite the same kinds of feelings at the concert in Helsinki. The extra value comes from knowledge about the artists' thoughts of stopping concerts after that tour.

Here the respondent describes the show and all the effects in a similar way to the two respondents who told about Tina Turner's concert.

Person 26. I have been listening to Nightwish for many years now, and I have seen them perform live about five times. The last time was at the Joensuu Arena. It was absolutely the most spectacular and awesome show I have ever seen or heard. It exposed both musical and visual experiences. The experience was very strong because the group played some songs which are really important to me and also because I could get a good place to watch the show near the stage. The pyrotechnics, the water wall, the lights and the explosives offered visually strong experiences. These experiences in connection with music made cold thrills go through my spinal cord in a positive sense. My whole family likes Nightwish and we often listen to it and discuss the music.

Seldom does the whole family like the same group—there usually is a gap between generations. But in this case (person 26) the group has made the whole family fans. The experience with cold thrills comes close to the aesthetic and the emotional feeling is connected to the music and can quite strongly be seen. In the following example, the writer values the experience in almost religious way.

Person 29. The most important and most effective artistic experience so far in my life has been seeing the Pixies at the Roskilde rock-festival in 2004. Although I have seen many wonderful and indelible performances of rock groups, this one was above them all. I had never even dreamed seeing and feeling something like that, it was unbelievably great...The experience woke enormous emotions and feelings inside me—how is it possible to make such beautiful music? I believe that when you get a very strong art experience (in any way or form) you forget everything else and what is the best, you can even forget yourself. After this kind of intense experience I feel to be little closer towards what really is important to me. The most important parts in this experience were the emotions, feelings and the music which I could live through in the situation using my senses of sight and hearing.

She feels that the experience makes her a little better. The idea of forgetting oneself, the time and place brings the experience very close to an aesthetic experience.

Person 37. After long thinking I came to the conclusion that my deepest artistic experience was seeing the performance of Erykah Badu at the Pori jazz festival in 2001. I had been listening to and digging the artist quite a lot. In

this gig everything went just perfect. Ten minutes before beginning the clouds went away and the rain stopped. We had all gone close to the stage and the tension was overarching. The gig was just wonderful and the audience was thrilled to bits. The playing lasted for two and a half hours, but during that time had no significance... Never before or after that have I been so taken by music. We still go on talking about it.

Losing the sense of time is often mentioned in these stories. It is also one of the features of an aesthetic experience. In this story also the pre-existing knowledge of the artist and her music gives meaning to the experience. It is always a strong experience when you see your idol live and hear his or her music. The large audience also has its effect when everyone is packed in front of the stage together. The feeling of unity among other fans strengthens the experience even more. In this experience there can clearly be noticed emotions of tension and relief.

Following story (person 40) describes same kind of feelings and emotions as person 9 as she described the experiences about Nightwish.

Person 40. I start from a thought that a strong art experience is something that awakes strong emotions and feelings inside me, let it be a sound, touch, picture or all these together. It is possible to feel something strong and tough just by watching the play of light on a wall. In music I have had many powerful experiences like the concert of a Finnish rock group Sir Elwoodin Hiljaiset Värät. I have been listening to their music for many years. Especially I can remember one gig in the church of Turku which took place several years ago. I will never forget their beautiful arrangement of an old choral song *Suvivirsi*. The melancholic and rich music of the group often starts an internal visual process in my mind. Pictures, colours and whole paintings are created in my mind. Visual emotion has a very important role also in concert situation. The lighting, the play of colours on the wall and ceiling and on the faces of the musicians makes the effect of the music much stronger. At the best the emotion and feeling building up from the music is so strong that I feel almighty for a short time!

The feeling of power and the illusion, of being able to do just anything seems quite strong and important. This writer is clearly a visually thinking person as she sees lights, colours and pictures (or paintings) when music plays. Some kind of musical experience might be involved because she also analyses the arrangements and the music style a little.

In spite of inconvenience the next writer describes the good feelings which she had from seeing her idols on stage.

Person 22. Oh no! I have so many art experiences. The last strong experiences are connected to girl duo Nylon Beat and their performances. When I was about 20 years old I used to visit many of their gigs for a couple of years.

The funny thing about it is that the duo was not really good playing live and the places were always full of drunken people and crowd pushing and pulling. Still these gigs gave a wonderful feeling which lasted for many weeks afterwards. It's nice to remember what happened. I was always there with a same friend and usually we got into front row. Remembering the gigs raises energetic and happy feelings and emotions. I believe that I will be enjoying these memories for many more years to come.

She is quite critical of their music, but still, there has been something which has given her satisfaction, because the memories are still so bright and happy after a couple of years. The experience had some elements to give energy for many weeks. In some way this story seems to show some details indicating elements of growing independence and maturity.

Experiences through media (Radio, TV, Internet)

In a modern society we are surrounded with media full of music. It is impossible to live even one day without hearing music through some form of media: radio, TV or internet. The urban surroundings are also full of music: music and radio channels are turned on in almost all the public places, restaurants, taxis, bars and cafes. Can art experiences rise from listening to these music sources? Movies belong in the field of modern art and in some cases they may give effective art experiences.

Person 67. One of the most important art experiences was seeing the movie “Breaking the waves”. This happened when I was in upper-secondary school. The movie was skilfully made and it immediately pulled me into it. The landscape was beautiful, the actors were just great and the feeling was real and true and touching.

Person 34. The trilogy “The Lord of The Ring” was a most impressive art experience. The music was wonderful. I watch a lot of movies and listen to a lot of music, also soundtracks of movies.

Person 14. I saw the movie “Passion of Jesus Christ” in spring 2004. I guess it was the most effective art experience of my life so far. It was most impressive. I was not the same person when I came out of the theatre as I was when I walked in. I have never been crying as much in any movie as I did there. The love Christ showed towards all the people in the world really touched me—He really died for me! This movie is something totally different from all other movies: it is not entertainment. Many people ask about the border between art and entertainment, I think that this movie cannot be called as art—it is much more. At least it is to me.

Obviously movies can be a source of artistic experience. The large picture and effective sounds may give the viewer the feeling of being in the middle of the story. The mixture of reality and imagination can also cause effective experiences for the viewer. Many of movies' soundtracks have nowadays a life of their own as CDs. Sometimes they sell thousands of copies. The story of Person 14 has religious elements in it. The experience was so impressive, that the writer states that it changed her totally. This must have been a religious awakening. Surely the aesthetic elements in the movie have had a strengthening effect on the experience.

The respondent (person 9) describes how she started liking the group which she earlier had hated.

Person 9. Many years ago I could not tolerate a group named Nightwish. Once, maybe four years ago I heard one of my friends playing a record by Nightwish. A couple of the pieces made my skin shiver. I did not care specially about the words of the song, but the melody line and the sound of the singer really touched me. Next day I had to go to a record shop and buy the record to myself. Suddenly a group I used to hate became my favourite. Maybe it is the peculiar melodies and personality of the music which tempt me in Nightwish. It is something new when you hear heavy music and opera at the same time. Guitar sound, drums and the choir bring flamboyance to some songs. Hard and heavy music making is lightened by the female singer's high soprano voice. The group is individual, authentic and at the same time symphonic and heavy metal stylish. The music gives me energy and soothes me. When I listen to the group, the music leaves me emotionally strong and gives me psychic strength so that I feel like I could do whatever I wish, just anything. The music of Nightwish helps me to take in use all the energy inside me and even more. At the same time the music is a bomb of energy but also something relaxing. Some songs may feel like tickling on my skin while the melody is playing inside my head. That shows that the music has great effect in me...

In some cases one individual experience can change the music taste significantly. The respondent describes the feelings she gets when listening to Nightwish and says that the music is a source of power and energy. She analyses very nicely the reasons she likes the music and she can even find different genre styles in it. The emotions and feelings seem to be very strong while listening and the psychic effects are quite close to the flow-experience (feelings of power, energy and the ability to do just about anything while still feeling relaxed).

Creative experiences in music

Creativity causing artistic experiences is quite common. Many of the respondents consider their strongest art experience to be one of their own performances. This also shows that future kindergarten teachers and elementary classroom teachers are quite active in their hobbies.

The stories of the respondents could be divided into the following classes:

1. Making music
2. Performing
3. Experiences of music instruments
4. Learning experiences

Making own music

Many of the respondents report on their feelings when they have made music themselves. Performing their own songs has also been important for many writers. These feelings are somehow connected to succeeding in doing something; the enjoyment often comes in realising that one really can make music and create something oneself.

Person 68. ... My most important art experience might be the making of a song when I was only four years old. I made both the lyrics and the melody. Then I taught it to my sister and we performed it together for our parents. This has stuck tightly in my memory; I still can recall the words, but not the melody. I can remember the excitement connected to making this song. Making songs and lyrics has affected my attitude towards music and made my orientation in music positive.

Person 65. I remember once when we were playing with a tape recorder and I decided to sing. The song was totally new, meaning that at the same time when I sang I also made the melody and the words. I was singing with a strong feeling with a vibrato in my voice. Later I have been wondering how I could sing without interruptions making a song with words and melody. I still remember the song and every now and then I hum it with a smile on my face.

Small children often make up their own songs (Sundin 1977; Fredriksson 1994) with their own words, but very seldom are they remembered afterwards. The experience must have been important in both cases, because the writers still can describe the feelings they had at that time. The second writer can even sing the song today, which is quite extraordinary. For both of the writers the making up of a song was something new and the creation process gave strong enjoyment and excitement which still can be remembered.

The following writer describes beautifully an artistic process where the creative element is strongly involved.

Person 35. When the words start coming out from your mind, you have to attack the piano before the flow stops. You have to grab it at that exact second of time. If you try a little later to come back it has already gone away. As its best it is living right now and here, throwing yourself into the process where something comes from inside your mind. You just let it come and try and give it a form most describable to its nature, maybe giving it a new beautiful colour. Maybe sometimes someone can understand what you have wished to express... Giving a song a possibility to be expressed through me is one of the most impressive experiences to me. Finding a way to express the feelings and emotions inside myself is something valuable. Sharing my thoughts with others is most important to me. It is even more important to share the feeling with others and to bring joy to their lives makes the whole thing better. Art is most of all interaction between the artist and the audience.

She also has visual elements in her description. The respondent has a real artistic attitude as she describes the interactivity between artist and the audience. This process described is obviously aesthetic by nature.

Performing

Early childhood performances have been a source of joy for many of the respondents. They still remember the songs and the feelings which they experienced as small children. Although every note and melody have not been just correctly sung, it is easy to note, that these children have not been laughed at or made fun of. That has made these experiences have a positive impact and they have clearly had an effect on their attitudes to music and other arts.

Person 62. When I was three years old I was singing at my sister's school. I sang poorly an old children's song but no one let it bother them at all. That is why my will to sing did not stop. My first musical memories were quite funny, but the attitude to them was severe, and that is why I only have positive memories from them.

Person 11. I was working as a school assistant and once saw all the schoolchildren coming down the hall of the school. They started practising the songs and it was just marvellous to hear small children sing from the bottom of their hearts. At my own school only the teachers used to sing.

Person 15. We were on a school journey to Riccione, Italy in the 9th grade. We walked through a dark night on a little street singing with our choir in four parts. The singing sounded really powerful and wonderful. We were sing-

ing *Finlandia* (Sibelius), and just as we were in the most impressive part in it there were Italian army helicopters flying above us. Still over forty young voices could be heard above the sound of the helicopters... I can always remember that moment.

The attitude toward singing is very much dependent on the first experiences: if a child is laughed at or embarrassed somehow, a positive attitude toward singing may change and become negative. In the first example this did not happen and the writer has luckily kept her positive attitude in singing. In the second example the powerful singing of children had a strong influence to the school assistant as she remembered her own school days when no one used to sing except the teachers at the school celebrations. The third example has a lot of tensions in it. Young people outside their homeland were singing a song which is directly connected to the independence of Finland. The singing echoing over the noise of the helicopters made the situation even more exciting, and gave them feelings of togetherness and built strong bonds inside the group.

A little child pretending to be a violinist sound quite normal; have we not all looked in a mirror as children pretending to be stars? In this story the main thing is that the little boy imagining to be a violinist could keep the image without being laughed at.

Person 70. When I was about three years old, someone made me a paper violin. I felt like being a great violinist when I played it—much greater than when I actually started playing violin a couple of years later. Especially my brother treated me as a star: he never made fun of me playing my paper violin. That gave me positive experiences although I could not make music with my playing. The music was playing inside my head, of course a paper violin cannot be played wrong, and so the experiences were positive.

This shows nicely the power of the imagination: the music playing in little boy's head and the feeling he got from this performance. The brother was extremely kind and wise towards his little brother.

Being in a big public performance has been a source of enjoyment for a long time. For this respondent the challenging training and learning has brought the enjoyment of the success.

Person 66. My strongest art experience is connected to music. In addition to playing music instruments I started to sing in a choir in the early 1990s. In 1995 we made a big musical project in my hometown: "Drilled hearts". It was performed in the location of an old mine. I was one of the lucky to get a part as a singer in the project. The experience was extremely thrilling. It is so nice to remember it afterwards, also. There were some well-known

Finnish actors in the main roles but also local amateurs both playing music and acting. The old mine gave the performance harsh but monumental surroundings. Together with the lights and shadows, the voices of the singers and musicians playing the music of Kairamo made the performance an altogether unforgettable experience. It connected the personal enjoyment and excitement with mutual togetherness and enjoyment of the whole performance. The musical had both feelings of sadness and happiness and I lived strongly through the emotions all the time. It felt like the time and place had disappeared; I just lived with the experience here and now with all my heart. At the end of the performance there was a very touching scene and I had to try my best not to burst into tears. But after the performance the emotions were shown freely, and you can just imagine what kind of hodgepodge: tears and laughter there were in the back stage rooms. It is nice to remember the experience and every now and then I take my notes and play and sing the melodies for my own joy.

Clearly the young performer has been impressed by the well-known actors and the possibility of working with them. The emotional tension from the storyline has touched the writer deeply, and she nicely tells about the feeling of losing the sense of time and place which is often connected to the flow experience as well as to the aesthetic experience. This example shows the meaningfulness of large scale artistic projects: participating in such a project connects the whole group strongly together and gives togetherness new value.

The flow-experience connected to performing also occurs sometimes as the following person reports.

Person 30. I had been playing violin for many years in the Helsinki “Juniorijouset” (Junior strings) orchestra. We made many tours to Europe. It was in 1999 when our tour went to Ireland, England, the Netherlands and Germany. We were playing 13 concerts in two weeks: Schubert, Vivaldi and Shostakovits. It was in Düsseldorf when we already were quite tired from working so hard and sitting in a bus never sleeping well and so on. In that particular concert something happened which I never have experienced before and never after that time. The feeling was strange already when we sat in our places: it was maybe because no one looked anymore at the notes; we could play everything by heart, and it was like a secret contract had been made among us musicians to play as perfectly as possible that last concert of our tour. We played like never before, everything went beautifully and we found new dimensions in our music. We all 50 players were so much present and so attuned only to the music and playing that the experience was totally something new. We all were like in a collective trance... Also the audience could feel the special charge and tension in our playing. We never had experienced anything like that before: after the last piece of music nobody made a move and the silence was total. It was like we all were having a silent moment and many of the players and audience had tears in their eyes. When the applause began they felt like never end-

ing. The concert was recorded and put on CD without any cutting or correcting which nowadays happens quite seldom.

Still it is quite extraordinary to get this on record. The Helsinki *Juniorijouset* orchestra is a very high level orchestra although all the musicians are young and all in the middle of their studies. This writer is studying to be a music professional and a classroom teacher at the same time. The experience she got from the performance is clearly a flow experience, but at the same time an aesthetic experience. The tension of performing in front of a large audience always gives an extra kick to the playing. The common experience connected the audience and the musicians together strongly and clearly the performance was something extraordinary. That is proved also by putting the concert on a live record without any corrections or cuttings.

Experiences connected to music instruments

Some of respondents describe their art experiences through the instrument itself or the talent of someone playing extraordinarily well. Sometimes the music taught in lessons has been in a style which did not interest the respondent. The musical taste of the pupil has a lot to do with the motivation to practise the skills.

Person 33. The strongest art experience has to do with a group I heard a couple of weeks ago in Helsinki. They were students of the Sibelius Academy and they were playing in a restaurant. The group had three members, piano bass and drums. The music was jazzy including original pieces and covers. What made the experience so strong was that three excellent individuals were playing together so nicely. They all were professionals and had an extraordinary talent with each instrument.

Person 36. The experience I tell you about happened in a restaurant called Cantina West in Helsinki. Two years ago there was a group called Ben Granfelt. The bass player was two-time champion in bass playing Lauri Porra. He played a solo during that gig, which had an unforgettable effect on me.

The exceptional skill of musicians can have a strong effect on listeners. Sometimes the connection of three skilful musicians becomes more than the sum of three factors. The bass is an instrument which is often the aim of jokes. Especially bassists solo playing is one of the sources of jokes. That may be one reason for the extreme experience of Person 36—a bass solo. The instrument itself works as a piece of art in the next story.

Person 6. When I got tired of missing my parent's piano at home, I finally decided to invest in a piano of my own. My strongest artistic experience so far was

the moment when my own new piano came from Germany to my apartment. I looked at it and touched it. There is not any instrument more beautiful than your own instrument. You may play with it and it rules you as well as you rule it. Then I pulled the keys down and the piano started playing music to me. The feeling was incredibly comprehensive. I knew at that moment that never again will there be a moment when I could not play. At this moment I live through a time filled with strong emotions: I have been playing my piano for a few months against my doctor's will. The uncertainty about the state of my hand, the burning will to play music and the fear of losing my dearest hobby are the emotions that make me realise how important the role of music really is in my life.

The writer has been missing the possibility to play piano whenever she wanted, and after a while she bought her own instrument. She describes the feelings and strong emotions when touching the new own instrument beautifully. The knowledge about being able to play any time she wants made the moment extraordinary to her. The troubles with the hand show that a lot of playing and training has taken place. In spite the doctor's orders the writer is playing her piano, and she is afraid that the hand might not get well, which would mean an end to piano playing. This emotional connection shows unusual love of music and playing; other respondents did not have quite such a close connection to their instruments.

Learning experiences in music

Many respondents connect their art experiences to learning situations, music lessons, instruments, learning, etc. Music-making at home: father, mother or sister playing or singing has also had a strong effect on the respondents. The wonder of learning or creating music can hit you while hearing your friend playing, sister composing or teacher teaching. The response the teacher gives to a pupil is a highlighted in these stories. Only one answer includes negative experiences about the music learning process.

Person 61. Ever since I was very little my father used to play guitar and sing for me in the evening. I remember that it was incredible to watch his fingers moving. I don't know if I understood anything about the music, but I was almost hypnotised by the movements of the fingers.

Hearing and seeing an important person do something nice like playing music or singing has often a very sensitive and touching effect even though the artistic or professional level is not too high. For a small child even the technical completion may cause experiences like in this story (Person 61).

Person 43. I had been forced to take piano lessons without any particular success. Once I spent some time staying with my friend in his home. I must have been 8 years old. He played Für Elise for me (he had just learned it) and it had a strong effect on me. So strong was the effect that I asked him right away to teach it to me, too. I remember how difficult it was. What a trouble and bother it was trying to learn to do different things with both hands. At the end I learned the piece. I was so proud, and I played it for many years with my little electric piano at home... I still like Für Elise after all these years and I have never tired of it.

The example from a friend is sometimes a good base for motivation in instrument learning. The skill of others may give a kick to a person's own ambition. The situation when a child is sent to piano lessons is very common among the teacher training students and kindergarten teacher students. Often it is girls who are sent to learn piano playing, but without any interest. The example also shows the importance of the challenge: when there is enough challenge in the job, the satisfaction we get after learning the challenging task is enormous. This shows the importance of the wise teacher. A wise teacher can put the right challenge into the right place, so that the pupil will always be in front of the right pieces of music at the right level in his or her studies.

Person 42. It was just a usual weekend morning; I was still living with my family, when my little sister shyly asked me to come to her room and she told me that she had something to show me. My sister was at that time 12 years old. She had found my mother's old guitar about one year before this happened, and she had been playing it just by herself—only her school teacher gave her some tips about guitar playing. She made me sit on the floor, took the guitar and told me that she wanted me to hear something. Then she played and sang a really beautiful song and right away I understood that she had made it herself. There we were sitting in our night-gowns: She singing, and I listening surprised almost out of my mind. I listened to her beautiful, tremendous performance and I wondered how on earth she could make such a wonderful song just by herself—and the words! I marvelled at the maturity of her words: I am 5 years older than she is, but still the words touched me deeply. She seemed to be singing about my own life, and even giving new light to the events. The moment was something unique, I had never known about her talent in singing and music-making... The emotional experience in this event was very strong, and I think that I learned something about art in it: Art doesn't need fancy museums or an expensive stage. It is something you can experience in the middle of everyday life; it is something that stops you and puts you to think about more important matters. I was at the same time surprised, imposed, proud and totally taken to be the first to hear that tune. The emotion was strong indeed. How can someone create something new like that?

A wonderful description about little sister's song writing shows nicely the elements of surprise, love, trust and understanding between two sisters. The wonder of creation made the older sister feel an even greater effect as it came from her little sister. The words of the song touched the listener deeply partly because she wrote also that she never could write any poems herself.

Many of the respondents describe in a peculiar way their experiences of instrument learning. Also university teaching may cause artistic experiences by discussing the art and aesthetic experiences: it may open new channels for understanding arts and even make some changes in attitudes towards arts.

Person 7. Although I enjoyed playing piano, it has not always been easy. Later, when I got to piano lessons in conservatory the pieces I played became more difficult and all kinds of tests and course degrees became obligatory. I remember many tears flowing while training. At the beginning at the conservatoire I could not choose the piano as my main instrument; I had to choose guitar instead. I played it for one year before I could get the piano lessons.

Hard work is needed to learn to play an instrument. The bitterness of the writer is clear when she could not start right away the piano lessons in the conservatoire. The many tests and degree courses in piano (and also other instruments) are one of the Finnish conservatoire system's criticized sides. The pupils are forced to take course examinations every year. That makes many even stop the instrument playing.

Person 27. My strongest art experience may sound a little odd, but to me it has brought much comfort to the sorrows in my life. I have been playing piano since I was 5 years old. I went to lessons when I was eight years old, but I stopped the lessons after half a year. I was never forced to play and I have no negative experiences about the piano teacher. The reason I stopped the lessons was simply that I wanted to play what and when I wished it myself. I made my decision independently and since then I have been playing piano without any borders! Nothing has been obligatory and nothing have I been forced to learn. When I sit in front of the piano I forget everything else. I love piano playing and it means to me a great feeling of freedom. I think that this would not have been possible if I had taken the lessons. I am not especially talented, and I cannot play whatever I want. Still I have learned that I don't have to be Mozart to enjoy the sounds my own fingers control.

The writer describes the most important art experience to be the decision of stopping the piano lessons which she made at the age of eight. Still, the piano playing did go on after stopping the institutional lessons and it seems to be very valuable in mind of the writer. Often it is said that the process of learn-

ing becomes too tight or constricted if guided by an instrument teacher. This may be true in some cases if the teacher is not good enough. Usually the teacher is wise and makes the learning of an instrument much easier than trying to learn all by oneself. Still in some cases self-learning has succeeded and music has become a dear hobby.

Person 51. I am now 36 years of age. I can really say that the piano lessons here in the university have had a strong influence on me. The response I have got has been always motivating encouraging and cheering. I have never been more motivated about piano playing and also, I have practised more than ever. I am going to go on playing after the university lessons when my other studies get a little lighter. I am also going to try and get music as my speciality subject as a classroom teacher!

Person 38. A strong emotional experience was when I was trying to learn a piano piece for my lesson here in the university studies. There was something going wrong in my playing, and it was in the rhythms. When I finally found out myself what the mistake had been, and learned to play it right I got the experience of art learning.

Person 32. My strongest experiences about arts have been in university piano lessons. So I was already an adult. The lessons, the practising and the performances afterwards have been the best in the whole studies. The teacher was just wonderful. I remember the emotions, excitement and the enjoyment of learning new things in piano playing—it was just wonderful.

The obligatory piano lessons in teacher training can sometimes be very difficult as a grown up person starts piano learning from the beginner level. In this case (person 51) there obviously have been earlier piano lessons in the past, which have made the learning easier. Still, the meaning of the teacher giving feedback to the student shows to have been positive and successful. More than an artistic experience, these examples seems to have been positive learning experiences. Still, they include elements of an aesthetic experience. However, the following example shows the worst that can happen: a student is put into obligatory singing and playing examination without the teacher knowing what kind of frustrations there were in her background.

Person 50. My artistic experience is negative. It all happened at school on the fifth grade. I had always tried to sing along with the others, although I never succeeded well. My music number was always 6, but I did not think that it was a catastrophe. The catastrophe happened when once again we were singing with our teacher playing the piano. The teacher told us to sing loud and clear and I did! Then my best mate (a wonderful singer) turned around as she was sitting in front of me and said, “Don’t sing that loud, because you just mix me...” After that I never have been singing loud again, not

when I was in a crowd of people and not when being alone. Even today I will not sing loud. That is why the worst experience in art was our piano examination where we also had to sing. Now as 20 years old, I was so much afraid that my feet were shaking still 20 minutes after the exam...Inside me there is a part which I cannot recognise at all—I don't even surely know if it exists at all. That part is called musicality.

The situation could have been made much easier just by talking about the earlier experiences in music. The teacher must always be aware of situations where a pupil gets embarrassed or ashamed of his/her skills. It is proven by research that everyone can develop musical skills although they originally would be little. The practice and the support coming from the teacher are the most effective factors together with the development of the musical self-concept. Sometimes it may happen that the arts' teaching becomes art itself.

Person 39. The most effective arts experiences in my life have been so far these lectures by you, Mr. Professor. I am not trying to get a good grade by saying this. My opinion is that your lecturing about art is art itself. Never before have I been so interested in lectures and the time just passed away. You made me think of art quite in a new way already in one and a half hours! I could say that you opened my eyes to the art! Now I do not close my eyes and ears when I hear the word art, as I did before.

This example could maybe represent the highest level of teaching process—the art of teaching art. In the example there are elements of aesthetic nature and the lectures have opened new ways of thinking and have even affected the attitudes of the writer. The following section on theatre will show us another venue for art experiences.

Theatre as a source of experiences

The theatre seems to have given quite a number of art experiences. As many as 21 responses were written about theatre. The answers can be divided into receptive and creative experiences, in the same way as music experiences were divided. In music experiences there were some, which as well could have been situated in this chapter, because the gap between music play and musical is quite non-existent.

Receptive experiences in theatre

These stories focus on the experiences which have come from a theatre play. Usually the writer has been quite young while experiencing these plays. To many of the respondents the story they write tells about their first theatre experience, and what made it so valuable.

Person 52. The first artistic experience I can recall and which clearly had an effect on me was when I was 9 years old. I went to Turku City Theatre with my mother and they were playing *The Magic Flute* musical at the time. I was totally taken by the play and everything in it. To a small girl the lights and the set up, the sounds and effects together with the costumes were most exciting and beautiful. The actors were good and made the illusion seem very real.

The experience was important to the respondent and she writes more about other theatre experiences, too. Little children often live and empathise through the play they see, and that is what happened to this writer also.

Person 44. I think that I was about 3,5–4 years of age, when there was a theatre play in a playground near my home. I went there with my father and little brother. From the actual play I remember the funny faces of the actors, the costumes and some other properties. The theatre had built a little circus-like tent in the middle and all the storylines took place around that. The movements and the sounds of the actors I still can remember, but not the story. I was much excited seeing the play and I watched it intensively. I lived through the play, shouted and stepped standing in the middle of the play, I remember that I had been waiting for the play a while and that was one reason for our expectations about the play.

He describes the enthusiastic feeling he felt in theatre. The most important things were the movements and sound the actors made.

Person 4. I remember when I went to see a play called “*Ronja Ryövärintytär*” (Ronja the robber’s daughter) in a theatre. I was under the school age. It was a marvellous experience, and everything seemed beautiful and unbelievable in the eyes of a little girl. I remember well how true the people were in the play and I was taken by surprise when the stage suddenly turned around for another scene. It was a new experience, and maybe that is why I still can remember it. Everything looked nice and very big. I must say that afterwards I have seen many plays in theatres with great expectations, but I have only had a good time there, so the first experience was the best so far.

It often happens that the first experience puts the hopes to such a level which cannot be reached afterwards. Such experience happened with this respondent. She was waiting to get as strong experiences from theatre as she had as a little girl, but never succeeded. That is, of course a pity, but maybe the enjoyment still is there, only in another shape.

This example shows nicely how one individual experience may have a permanent effect in attitudes toward an arts form.

Person 8. I remember one trip to Imatra Theatre with my mother when I was not even at school. I suppose I was about 5 years old. The play was about Winnie the Pooh and his friends. The costumes were wonderful and the feeling was imposing. It was nice to get inside a theatre. I empathised strongly with the story and enjoyed it deeply. I still am interested in theatre thanks to this single experience.

Here the writer describes the aesthetic experience which she had from a music play in theatre.

Person 12. Although I have been acting myself my strongest experiences come from the audience side of the stage. It happened four years ago. I went to see a play at Tampere Theatre with a friend of mine. I thought I would like that kind of a music play, and so it happened. Right from the beginning I was stomping my feet and the drive of the play took me totally in it. I still can remember some of the music after these years. The experience was excellent but difficult to describe. I was so strongly present in the play and I threw myself into the story and I let the music take me. It was immense and very strong art experience. Many elements were touching me: the story, the roles, the music the picture of a time etc. It is difficult to analyse something connected to feelings and emotions: it is partly unconscious and such a comprehensive process. I think that the empathising was the most important aspect which made the experience so strong.

She connects the emotions and feelings with the unconscious or subconscious processes which may be difficult to describe. She can analyse many elements which enabled the experience and she estimates the ability to empathise as the most important element of the aesthetic experience. She also describes the feeling after such experience as “positively astounded”. The fascination of theatre can start quite early as following examples show.

Person 63. The first art experience I had took place when I went to see the play “Three happy robbers” with my family. I was about 5 years old. The experience was happy and nice in all ways. The theatre has always somehow fascinated me.

Person 60. The strongest art experience took place when I went to see the music play Peter Pan in the Turku City Theatre. I can remember especially well the fighting scene of Captain Hook and Peter Pan. The stage was full of smoke, and the captain was raging and a little frightening also. Because we were sitting in the first row and in the middle of the stage the captain was hitting around with his hook right in front of us. In the middle of the fighting captain would turn to the audience just like he was pointing at us and threatening us with the hook. Peter Pan was flying in the play (actually!) as they had put a wire in the ceiling. It was incredibly wonderful. Many weeks after the play we talked about that flying. Also the lyrics of

the songs (composed by Jukka Virtanen) were wonderful, and I still can remember them by heart.

Person 16. I remember when I was watching the play *Mr. Huu* with my father. I was about 4 years old. Following the play was exciting but at the same time really enchanting. It was also different from anything I had experienced before. The only thing I was wondering was the actors running out from the stage in one scene. I still remember the feelings of that play every time I go to the theatre nowadays.

At 4–5 years old, a child can understand a play nicely. The experiences may have an effect for the rest of their lives in forming positive attitude towards the theatre. Of course, the fighting scene must have been most exciting for a little boy (person 60). The element of fright connected to the play gave a little extra to the experience. The flying of Peter Pan has had an unforgettable effect on the viewer. The effect has been used from antiquity (*deux ex machina*) until this day.

Person 64. I remember seeing the Peter Pan play when I was on the first class at school. It was in Oulu City Theatre and I had never earlier been to the theatre. It was simply wonderful and I remember starting to play theatre right after that experience with my friends. The artistic experience was at the same time very exciting and fine. The music, the lights, the sounds the properties on stage, the roles of the actors—everything was very impressive to me. I did not concentrate on the story, but on the movements of the actors, their expressions, gestures and the magnificent set. I still can remember that theatre visit well. Nowadays theatre has become one of my passions.

Person 69. Theatre has opened new perspectives to me and made me think of all consequences people may cause with their thoughtless activities. Just the mere amount and spectrum of emotional feelings during a play is enormous not to speak about the set or musical effects.

The idea about theatre has clearly struck Person 64 quite hard because she immediately started to play theatre with her friends. She did not concentrate on the story, but on the outer elements of the play. This particular experience seems to have led to a deep interest and love for the theatre as a grown-up. The other example tells about theatre giving a new perspective. The amount and spectrum of emotions gets the writer excited. Young people often tend to mix feelings with others. The next example shows that the emotional tension can sometimes go off in an embarrassing way.

Person 16. The most impressive art experience I have had happened when I was at the high school level. Our school had practiced the play *West Side Story*. I

was in the audience. I was hopelessly in love with a three years older boy who was in the role of Tony in the play. I knew that he also had some feelings for me, but he never showed them in public. I was totally excited during the whole play, but when the song “Maria” was sung I started crying like a river. The piece of music had an extraordinary effect on me. The experience was that strong partly because of the attraction of the boy, and when he was the one to perform the song, that was enough for me to cry.

On the other hand, the song “Maria” is emotionally appealing and beautiful. No doubt elements of aesthetic experience may have been involved in this example.

Person 57. This happened in summer 2003. We were visiting Turku rock festival. On Sunday after the rock festival we decided to go to see a summer theatre play, it was a western musical, Oklahoma. The actors were unforgettable and my good friend was acting as a dancer in the play, which gave it even more value. A good musical must include, in my opinion, spontaneous humorous elements, a great set and energetic, massive dancing and singing scenes. These elements were all in this particular musical and the play was entirely wonderful. The good feelings from that sunny day at the theatre are stuck in my memory.

Person 28. A couple of years ago I went to see a play by The Q theatre. The idea of the whole play was not to speak much. The talk in the play was just nonsense with no meaning in the words. So it was based on visual expression and circus-like elements. In one particular scene the darkening summer evening suddenly was full of soap bubbles of different sizes. There was background music playing and everybody was admiring the scene. That was all we needed. The play was a refreshing experience in all its simplicity. I have often felt that there is too much speech in plays.

Personal connections to performers often give an extra meaning to a play. The opinions of the first writer are quite widely shared about musical and what it should include. Broad dancing and singing scenes often are what people come to see in musicals. Another example shows that sometimes a good idea can carry the play even when the expression is made only with visual effects.

Person 53. The most important art experience was absolutely the play *Pessi and Illusia* which I saw in Rovaniemi City Theatre when I was in school in the third grade. I really liked the performance and somehow it touched me and spoke to me. I think that the reason for that was the fine performance of the actors and the good storyline. It had tension, laughter, joy, truth and fairytale in a nice combination. The set was glorious as well as the costumes. The make-up and the way the roles were performed were something special. The nearness of the actors was something magnificent and

different, unprecedented—in movies people never get so close to you as in theatre. After the play I dreamed for a while of becoming an actress.

Person 54. I was deeply affected by the Seinäjoki City theatre play *Oz The Wonderland* sometime in the late 1980s. It was my first theatre experience, and therefore most important. It made an unforgettable effect in my mind because all the elements of the performance were in the same place and room. Comprehensively I could put my soul into the play totally different to that in movies because it was possible to sense the presence of the actors and the set yourself. Especially some of the actors made magnificent roles which were at the same time funny and somehow frightening, too.

Person 55. I remember a theatre visit which I made with my Grandma. It was a play about *The Big Bad Wolf and Three Little Piggies*. It was the first theatre play I ever saw and I just loved it. The audience was taken nicely within the play for example by singing the song which saved the piggies from wolf. The play was also thrilling because now and then it seemed that the wolf would also attack the audience. By that time I was 5 years old. The fact that I was there with an important person, Grandma, made the event even more valuable. When I was scared I trapped her by the hand. The main feeling from the play was positive as the play made me laugh in many places. I still like the theatre although too seldom do I go there.

The first theatre experience is very important because it often shape the attitudes toward and opinions of the theatre world. The first example shows the great effect: the writer wanted to become an actress. The next example shows that the live performance has its strengths compared to a movie. The presence of real flesh and blood actors is something different to movies. The magic of theatre lies just in the things happening in real time. The interaction between the actors and the audience is important in many ways. The children's singing the saving song for the piggies was a good idea of interactivity. Also the presence of an important person like Grandma gives safety from the wolf and the new situation over all.

Creative experiences in theatre

A couple of respondents said that their art experiences came from making a play themselves or acting. The effect focuses mostly on the challenge and the great relief when the performance becomes ready. Artistic problems and solving them is a part of the productive theatre making. Producing the whole thing, music, set and costumes for the roles is a large production which requires much patience, work and money together with a great amount of creativity.

Person 56. A couple of years ago we built up our own theatre with a group of ten young amateurs. We made everything ourselves, the manuscript, directing, the set, music, make up and, of course we were actors, too. The whole process was not easy from the beginning till the opening night; it is difficult to make something out of nothing—that we learned the hard way. It was impossible for us to get any economic help. We were laughed out of many offices. But we did not give up as we were willing to produce a theatre play. For half a year we wrote and planned and rehearsed, swallowing tears but going on all the time. To me the project was very challenging: I was acting, but also responsible for the music for our music play. I had to compose and train the songs with the singers and the backing group of musicians. It was an awful lot of work. The whole project was an artistic experience itself: to make something out of nothing, to see how everything gets its form and solutions. My work was to be heard in each song. Our belief in success became stronger every day. The strongest and most important experience to me was when the curtains went down after the opening night and we went to receive the applause from the audience. The feeling of the audience standing up applauding your work all the time... It is one thing to make art and feel the enjoyment of making it, but it is even more important to see the people understand your ideas, the things you were trying to get through. It touches you in places you did not know existed. Art is here for us, if we only have time to take it.

The writer describes beautifully the difficult project of making a play in an amateur group. The great challenge and the rewards while doing it have made the success even more valuable. The play was clearly a success and the young theatre makers got their prize in the end from the audience, which loved the play. The writer becomes almost philosophic when she writes about the strong feeling and emotional state which you get when you notice that the audience really understands the ideas you have tried to put in the play and songs. The interactivity in the form of understanding may be very enjoyable and rewarding.

Person 25. I often find the productive or creative side of making art more effective myself. Those experiences are the strongest. Performing art makes hormonal changes in your body and that is one reason for remembering those situations so clearly. Excitement and tension build the effect of the experience even more. Also often these experiences are very personal. A human being is basically very sensitive and self-protective. That is why the performing arts are always in some way risk taking; there is always the possibility of failure. Maybe it is this tension which makes theatre and music the most important arts to me. As an example I must mention a monologue made out of Julia Voznesenskaja's play "Decamerone of the women" which consisted of ten women's life stories. Why was this such an important experience? Theatre is, I think, the most sensitive way of making art. The border between yourself and the role character may some-

times be very weak especially for amateur actors. That makes amateur theatre extremely honest art. The emotions of the role character come from inside you, your own emotions and feelings, and often it takes the whole play to a totally different level. Sometimes I noticed that I got new energy from the reactions of the audience. An audience which lives and feels the storyline is very important to theatre, without sharing the emotions and feelings there does not exist any theatre—only poor acting.

The writer has been performing a play with touchable fortunes. She very skilfully analyses the process of acting itself, the excitement with the hormonal changes in body and the tension craving relief. Also the interactivity on the level of emotions and feelings can be seen as important in this story. The writer puts the emotions and feelings in the key position in theatre expression. These stories go very deep into making the theatre or drama a real artistic experience and trying to explain it.

Live role plays have become very popular in Finland today. Young university students play them in real surroundings as in the next example. The roles are divided by organisers and each of the participants get their own costumes weapons and everything needed. The live role play allows the actors to really feel the emotions of the role being played. It also has an element of surprise as the manuscript never can be totally planned beforehand. The role play forms itself as the playing develops further, and it may last for several days sometimes.

Person 28. In summer 2004 I organised a live role play in a big country house near Helsinki. It was about people from the 1800s who had come to the imaginary place to have a summer seasons ending party. In themes of the live role play there were historic themes about the Russians tyrannising the Finns and the autonomy of Finland being strongly defended. The whole live role play ends in a scene where all the participants get together in the big hall of the house and start singing *Finlandia* (Sibelius). For a moment in the faces of participants could be seen their own emotions and feelings but also those of the character they had been playing. The situation was extremely sensitive; many were laughing or crying at same time in the middle of strong emotional storm. But at the same time the situation was like a fairytale; for a little while I really was working as a simple kitchen maid whose life and worries were really mine. It is difficult to say, but the experience stayed for many days afterwards in a euphoric reality of my own.

Of course, the theme in this particular live role play was very sensitive to all Finns even today: everyone has read in history lessons the history of our country and the troubles and wars we have had with the Russians. Also *Fin-*

landia is once more taken as an example of a song making all participants sensitive and showing their emotions.

Person 10. I enjoyed the most acting in my aunt's theatre group in another town in front of a strange audience. It was totally different from the plays made at school. In my aunt's plays I played the main role nicely and smoothly, but at school play I played the easiest possible role panic-stricken.

Sometimes it is easier to perform before a strange audience than to in front of familiar people. The last example shows the effect nicely. In another town there was no panic seen, but at school in her own town everything went badly.

Visual Arts (Fine Arts) as a source of artistic experiences

Visual arts have been inspiring people for thousands of years, but in modern days it has somehow been pushed aside by easier means of art: for example music, theatre or movies. In this research there were 17 stories written about visual arts. Many more mentioned especially that they had no experiences of visual arts (paintings, sculpture etc.) It is not very often children that are taken to an art exhibition, of course, there are exceptions, luckily. The Visual art experiences could be divided into the following classes:

Receptive experiences:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Art exhibitions and paintings | 5 |
| 2. Sculptures | 3 |

Creative experiences:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 3. Own painting, (sculpture etc.) | 5 |
| 4. Important people making art | 3 |
| 5. Teacher drawing | 2 |

Receptive experiences

Art exhibitions and paintings

Some of the respondents were taken to art exhibitions as children. It seems that just looking at paintings has not been as important a source of art experiences as something which can actually be seen being done. The nature of visual arts does not touch small children also because there is no movement, sound or very many stimulating effects in the pictures. Parsons (1989; 22–25) has analysed the levels of understanding art with his five-step theory. The steps are described below as viewers would comment on the paintings:

1. Favouritism: (kindergarten age)

- It's my favourite colour.
- I like it because of the dog.
- It looks like a big pickle coming down from the sky.
- I don't believe in bad paintings. They're all mostly good.

2. Beauty and realism

- It's really ugly!
- You expect something like a beautiful lady in a boat, or two deer in the mountains.
- You can see how carefully it's done. It's really good!
- It looks just like the real thing.
- It's really just scribbling. My little brother could do that.

3. Expressiveness

- That really grabs me!
- You've got to have a gut feeling for it. It doesn't matter what the critics say about form and technique.
- You can see the artist felt very sorry for her.
- The distortion really brings the feeling out more strongly than a photo would.
- We have all a different experience of it. There's no point in talking about good and bad. It's all in the individual.

4. Style and form

- The way the paint is laid on here, and lets the bottom colour show through—it sings!
- See the grief in the tension in the lines, the pulling on the handkerchief!
- Look at the way light strikes the tablecloth; the colours are varied and yet the overall effect is white, and the cloth still lays flat on the table.
- There's a quirky humour in the face. It's basically frontal, but the eyes are done in a Cubist style.
- He is painting with the eyes. They are more like cups or boats; it's a visual metaphor.

5. Autonomy

- It seems to me that it breaks out of the limitations of the style by emphasising the flatness of the surface.

- It has a kind of tired feel to it. I can't be sure if it's because I'm tired of seeing that kind of thing, or if he got tired of painting it.
- In the end the style is too loose, self-indulgent. I don't like that, I want more self-control.
- I go back and forth on this. I used to think it too rhetorical; now I vibrate to it again.

The understanding of paintings may differ greatly so that the response to the same painting is quite different depending on the age, sex, or other background of the viewer. The method Parsons used to get his classifications was to interview people over a ten-year period about eight paintings in different styles and by different artists. Parsons concentrates strictly on Fine Art, so there are no photographs or other media involved in his research work. Though, the classification seems quite nice describing the levels of reception of art.

In this example the writer describes the widening of her artistic conception. She started slowly to understand the idea of Picasso's works. If we judge her action using Parsons' ideas, it seems like she was just moving from the second level to the third.

Person 45. When I was 12 years old our family made a summer trip to Eastern Finland. As my mother likes art very much we went to the Retretti Art Exhibition. There were Picasso's works on the wall. That exhibition opened my artistic thinking. So far I had been fascinated by the pictures' photographic nature. But when I looked at the pictures in the first room, I thought: what is so special about these paintings? I was reading the texts beside the paintings trying that way to find the idea. In the third room I was stuck to look at a work which described a cafeteria table. I took my time, but finally I started to get the idea and the originality of the art. After that experience I started to be interested in other kinds of art, not only photographic. The experience broadened my thinking so that nowadays I eagerly go to art exhibitions.

Parson has not mentioned strict ages in which people usually are at different levels, because the development in this area can vary. It is quite difficult to talk about an experience in this case, because the writer says nothing about emotions or feelings. Still, she tells us that the attitude to art changed and also that she is willing to see art exhibitions nowadays. Another respondent has also been to Retretti:

Person 32. I was 5–6 years old when we went to see an art exhibition in Retretti during our summer holiday trip to Savonlinna. The trip to the art exhibition brings me memories of wondering and marvelling. I don't remember anything about most of the works, but in one big room there was a carpet

hanging from the ceiling. It was rather thin and many meters long and it was hanging by some wires from the roof. I was wondering about the idea. I had never seen anything like that before, and maybe that is one reason for my astonishment. Also my parents were a little embarrassed because the whole exhibition was made of art objects which did not imitate reality—it was a non-figurative exhibition. Our home didn't focus on any art especially, which shows the meaning of home surroundings, attitudes and world view, when we talk about art.

It is important to have artistic experiences at a young age, but maybe the best way of having them is not always through an art exhibition without any preparation. Of course, it may happen that a child gains enormous excitement and experiences from an exhibition just by looking at the arts objects, but it may happen as in the last example: the visit reaches only the level of wonder and embarrassment.

Person 17. Sometimes in the 1980s my mother took me to Ateneum to see the Ars exhibition. I was around ten years old. I remember the strong effect the exhibition had on me overall, but there was one particular work of art which I remember best. In the centre of a room there was a suitcase. Everything in the room was painted with colourful stripes including the suitcase. I almost could not distinguish it from the rest of the room. I think that the effect was so strong because I had never seen anything like that. Art was always, I thought earlier, just boring paintings with no movement of “rock'n roll” in it. The exhibition opened my eyes to see that everything must not look exactly like reality. My opinion is that modern art demands more imagination. That (imagination) I always had a lot, but never could use it at school.

This example shows the movement from level two to three in Parsons model. It is obvious that these two examples (persons 32 and 17) show somehow the opposite sides of an artistic experience: the first one ending in confusion and the second ending in a widening art conception and attitude. The reason for the difference may be in the background of the writers: the first one says that her family never was especially interested in the arts and the other one says that she earlier considered art only as boring paintings hanging on the wall. This shows that the later person had some earlier art experiences although she had considered the boring. Still, she had something on which to base her experience. The next two examples are from respondent who considers herself as a non-artistic person.

Person 25. I am not an artistic person in any ways, I never have been. Actually I think that I don't really understand art at all—at least I cannot produce anything like that myself. I have been to art exhibitions, but I don't feel any special

enlightenment by observing the art. I remember a couple of exhibitions although the effect or influence on me wasn't especially strong. One exhibition I remember was Kaj Stenwal's Duck picture exhibition. I like them a lot and I have had some printed copies of them on my wall. It was nice to see the original paintings, but it didn't have any special effect on me.

Person 25. Another experience I can remember was the opening of a photo exhibition made by a friend of mine. It was about a trip to Cuba, and the photos were beautiful and touching. What I remember more about the exhibition was the atmosphere overall. Afterwards we had a party where Cuban music was playing and cigars were smoked. This art experience had some influence on me, but it was because it was my first time at a photo exhibition and because the artist was my friend.

The first example shows that she has been to many art exhibitions, but she feels like art does not touch her. This is, of course, possible, but as she has experiences of art exhibitions, there exists a basis for understanding art. She would need maybe another kind of art experience from other types of art, maybe drama, movies or even music. The attitude to arts may be a little negative and she somehow tries to explain her feelings with other than artistic ways. A negative attitude against art alone may cause this kind of coolness to art experiences. It may also be because of the personality; some of us are more sensitive than others.

Person 13. The first art experiences I remember are the paintings of Hugo Simberg in the Cathedral of Tampere. I was under the school age when I went there for the first time and saw the paintings. The strongest influence on me was from the painting Garden of Death (Kuoleman puutarha). I suppose that at that time I could not understand the painting and its idea and it felt kind of frightening. Somehow I can remember that I connected the painting to graveyard—is that the Garden of Death? Even now when I look at the paintings I often wonder how it was possible that the artist painted so many wonderful works of art in the same cathedral. In each painting there are so many details overarching all people and their life.

Some of the paintings in Tampere Cathedral can be frightening to a little child, but this respondent seems to have started thinking about the work of art and its meaning. The idea of a graveyard being the garden of death shows the concrete paths her mind followed to try to solve the question. This example shows that art really can hit you anywhere it is seen or placed. The strength of the experience, feelings, emotions and thoughts form the deepest idea of these experiences.

Sculptures

A small child touching a piece of art, a sculpture sounds nice, but usually it is not possible. To avoid the destruction of the art it is not usually allowed to touch pieces of art at all. Still, the feeling you can get through your own senses about a sculpture can be revolutionary. The senses connect us all to the outside world, and the knowledge we gather through them is immense and reliable. It comes directly into our mind without any intermediary elements.

Person 24. My first art experiences are connected to my hometown's library. I have been visiting there all my life so this memory is more than twenty years old. In the hall of the library there were some statues which I always rushed to touch. They were of different animals, but especially I can remember the willow ptarmigan and common otter statues. I always wanted to stroke the statues, because their surfaces felt different to my hand. The willow ptarmigan was totally smooth while the surface of the common otter was rough and textured. Again and again I wanted to feel their surfaces and feel the difference between them. This was my first art experience as the statues woke questions in me and also I was fascinated with the experience. I still can recall the feeling of the statues.

Usually parents guard their children against touching statues, but in this example the little girl had the chance to feel the statue's surface and have an artistic experience from them. The effect of differences between the statues has been strong to a little girl. This example shows how the bodily senses are used in receiving the information about art—the experience would not have been the same without touching the statues. The writer also gives other examples where she had been touching statues so this was not an individual occurrence in her history. The aesthetic experience is sometimes connected to sports happenings, and undoubtedly they both include some of the same elements: challenge, overcoming difficulties, enjoyment of the success etc.

Person 4. My art experiment is something different and I'm not quite sure if it is suitable answer to this question. My art experience comes from a work of art which is in my living room right now. It is designed by a Greek called Andrea Varotsos and it's made of modern aluminium and olive wood. It is the official Olympic torch from the Olympic Games in Athens this year. I had the opportunity to carry Olympic fire in it 400 metres in July. The torch gives me a strong emotional launch because it symbolises unity and peace among all countries. It raises questions about why people fight and kill each other, why must there be hatred between people? The form of freely flying fire in the torch will always remind me about tolerance and understanding between people and nations.

In this example the writer connects the Olympic torch to moral and ethical questions and to peace and war speculations. These moral and ethical questions resemble aesthetic questions. The possibility to carry the Olympic fire is an once-in-a-lifetime experience itself. Whether the experience is aesthetic or something else is not so important in this case; the strength of the experience is important. Sometimes studies include some exercises which may work through the aesthetic experience as openers of new ideas and they may even change the attitude of individual student. If you have to concentrate on art, it may give you a surprise and open your eyes to look at the surroundings in a new way as in this example. We often see art, but we seldom look at it with a though.

Person 46. One significant experience I have had took place when I was in the first year of studies here in this university doing my visual arts studies and taking photos of three statues in central Helsinki. I chose the monument (in memory of Urho Kekkonen) “the Well”, “Nereid” (situated in Forum) and “The Bear” (in the National Museum). I had never before paid attention to the works of art, but this work made me realise, that the whole city is full of art. After this broadening and widening experience I have looked around in a totally new way. Nowadays I stop and look at the works of art in peace, even from a bus window. Stopping in front of these fine works of art gave me new experiences. Afterwards I also made a trip to Ateneum and National Museum of Art enjoying the art with new interest.

Creative experiences

Making art

Many of the memories in this classification date to the early years before school begins. They include activities in kindergarten or at home with mother or father. The challenge and the difficulties and the enjoyment of success and overcoming the difficulties are easily found in these stories.

Person 53. I went to visual arts school as a kid of 7 years. Once they had put an arrangement on the table. There was some fruit in a jar. I panicked immediately: should I be able to draw something so difficult? That kind of stuff is for real artists! The process of looking at the arrangement and how we were taught to sketch the outlines of the figures was something great to me, it was just wonderful!

In this example the writer has been able to go to visual arts school. The example show nicely the successful arts education and learning happening: the writer finds the sketching process and the progress in the outlining the painting (or drawing) most interesting and he seemingly learns a lot while doing it.

Person 47. The first art experience I can remember comes from the kindergarten, which means that I was about four years old. Mother's Day was approaching, and all the children could make mother a necklace from given material. At first we had to make a round disc from the clay, and pull little holes into it with our little fingers. After a few days when it was dry and hard we could paint it the way we wanted. I painted the bottom bright blue and the little finger holes I painted red. At the end a string made of leather was put into it for wearing it around the neck. The result was quite kaleidoscopic, but I was so proud when I put it round mom's neck! Maybe this experience has become so strong because it was the first Mother's Day gift we ever made in kindergarten. It is unbelievable, that still, after 20 years I still can feel the extreme tension itching in my shaking hands when I put the paint into the necklace.

A gift given to mother—could there be something more valuable to a little child? Mothers' day is one of the most important feast days in the calendar for little children. The preparations for the celebration are careful and long lasting; for weeks children make their gifts in the day care centres. For many children this is the first time to be able to occupy themselves by doing something beautiful. That makes the experience most important: new kind of creation probably with new materials and guided by the nursery school teacher. The long lasting process even makes the tension and excitement grow bigger. The example describes nicely the experience of a child giving a mother a hand-made gift. Is the experience of an aesthetic nature? Surely some elements belong to that category, but the enjoyment came from succeeding in something and from giving something to the dearest person in the whole world.

Person 49. My first memories of art experiences were in preschool. I spent it in kindergarten. In springtime for the celebration of the first of May we made funny animal theme masks. We made the bottom on a balloon of newspaper and paper paste. After that everyone could paint into the mask the head of the animal they wished to be. It was a lot of mess, but everyone had artistic freedom. I got excited for the possibility to create just the animal I wished, I guess that gave me the art experience in the situation. I felt like creating something totally unique. The kindergarten nurse also supported that feeling. The experience was that the whole group of children noticed that everyone can be an artist, because the artist has artistic freedom—no one may say that the work of another child is no good.

This story is a good example of successful arts education in kindergarten. The nurse clearly could make the children notice something important about the existence of art. The freedom of expression connected to the children's excitement and brought good results. The children had their first art experience

from their own job, which surely provided them with a great deal of courage for future art experiences.

Person 56. The first remarkable art experience painting with finger paints on our bathroom walls. I, my sisters and our mother decided to make our bathroom a little more colourful—a piece of art. Dad was not informed about our plans and he had quite a surprise finding us naked in the bathroom painting the walls. We were all naturally painted, too. The walls were full of artistic silhouettes and pictures. I think my father might have planned total reparation in the bathroom at that moment. I was under school age, probably 5 years old. I believe one of the reasons for the experience being so strong must have been the astonishment of my father. Mom was also very excited about our secret and she didn't let father wash these paintings away from the wall for a long time. The togetherness in doing the painting left warm memories in my heart.

Doing something totally new is one way of getting experiences. In this example an inventive and creative mother could make up an idea, which surely gave her children a chance to be creative and artistic. Painting with finger paints is a nice way to learn to paint, however doing it in the bathroom is surely not the most common way to practise it. The example has a lot of elements of emotional tension: doing something without telling father, painting in the bathroom, being nude while painting in the middle of the day—they were all something extraordinary for the children. The surprise and astonishment of the father gave the situation extra value, which can easily be seen in the story. The understanding father and mother let the paintings stay on the walls for a while, and gave the children a signal of the value of their work.

Person 56. I am right handed and I was 5 years at the time this happened. I had burned my right hand in the oven trying to find if it was hot or not—it was. That is why I had to use my left hand doing anything for a while. In kindergarten I painted a left-handed blue rabbit which was in my opinion extremely well done. I thought that it may even be better than my earlier rabbits. I was very proud of the painting—so proud that this instance must have had an effect on me building my conception about myself in fine arts.

Person 58. My experiences are situated mainly in drawing. I always liked to draw very much. I still have lots of drawings from my childhood left. Now I can notice the skill developing in these drawings. I used a lot of yellow and red and other bright colours. At the beginning of school I also liked painting with oil colours because our teacher was a real artist. I painted pictures with the oil colours.

Person 59. I remember well the first time I was painting with my mother using finger paints. We were at our summer cottage with mom and dad, this remembrance is strongly connected to the atmosphere and the smells of fireplace etc. Somehow this finger painting is together with the memories of being in the summer cottage. I was around two years old and my mom was sitting on the floor with me on the paper on the wall. The painting was more like muddling up the floor and the paper. I still can recall the smell of the colours and their extremely bright colour. It was nice to paint using my fingers and the colour felt thick in the fingers. I don't remember if I could actually paint something, but anyway these outputs were given to all possible relatives.

The success in painting a rabbit with the left hand became an important experience for a right-handed writer (person 56). Sometimes a particular event may influence the development of the self-concept as this writer supposes. The second example shows the meaning of teacher: a real artist also encourages children in oil painting. The description of bright colours situates all of these examples at level one in Parson's classification.

Important people making art

The importance of home, school and friends is clear in all developmental areas. The example which an artistically oriented parent can give to a child can be valuable for later development. This is seen in the following examples: if the experience had no meaning, the writers would not have remembered these art experiences described below.

Person 53. My mother was eager to paint when she was having me. When I was 3–4 years old they told me that the paintings on our walls were made by mom, it felt kind of strange. My mom making art? That I had been wondering about a lot!

Person 57. As a child I believe I got excited when someone important person to me could do something that I had not imagined. My father, also a classroom teacher, wasn't especially interested in drawing pictures. My mom did draw a lot with us. Once it happened that my father did draw me a picture of a horse. I had no idea that he could draw like that. It was the best horse picture I ever did see, it just couldn't be any better!

The wonder of finding out the skills of a close person in something you did not know earlier may surprise anyone. But still, it gives more value to the paintings to know that it is your mom or dad who has made them. Of course, the horse picture, drawn by the student's own father is the best in the world.

Person 11. I was 5 years old at the time when mom was sitting by the kitchen table with her back to the window. She was painting a flower arrangement. It was the only time I ever saw her painting. It was exciting. I got to see how a painting is born right from the beginning. The most interesting part was when mom sketched the picture first with a pencil on the paper. I never had known it was done that way! The picture is now situated on the wall so that I can look at it whenever I like.

A child learns about art and art creating best while watching it. It can clearly be seen in this example where a girl could be seeing the whole artistic painting process from the beginning to the painting hanging on the wall. This is probably the best way to learn about art.

Person 45. My father and brother have always liked drawing pictures. That's why my first experiences are connected to drawing. I admired the works of the family artists and always wanted to watch them draw. My little brother charmed the nurse in our day care with his auto and animal drawings. My father used to paint aquarelles and oil colour paintings in our kitchen in the evenings. That's when we were not allowed to be running and shouting in there: an artist needs his peace to express himself. Especially when mom was in evening shift and dad was minding us he used a lot of his time in painting. I never have felt like being able to paint or draw like them, but I had the nerve to wait until the painting or drawing become ready. It was interesting to see them work. This art work usually happened in evenings when it was peaceful. I still can recall many of the semi-finished and finished paintings.

Observing of artistic work can be most interesting experience, as in the example above. The gift of drawing had started flourishing in the little brother of the writer. The ability to appreciate came to the other brother. He clearly could value the ready paintings and drawings. In this kind of situation it often happens that the other child dares not start painting or drawing: the example he has seen has been on a high level. That is why he is satisfied just to look at the ready paintings.

Teacher drawing

A teacher has a strong influence on his or her pupils. The teacher is an example of everything. In earlier examples it has been seen, that when a teacher gives good advice or acts as an example, pupils also start to take an interest in the same kind of things.

Person 28. I think it was one of my first days at school, I was six years old, and I remember it well. The teacher was telling us about goblins and trolls living in the forests and draw at the same time on the blackboard. I never had

seen anything as wonderful before. I still remember a big fly agaric and the troll on “Mörri-möykky” walking the path. Remarkable in her drawing must have been that I saw her create and produce art right in front of my eyes. I actually saw an empty blackboard turn into a storytelling beautiful picture.

The school beginning is a sensitive situation which we all often remember. In this example the teacher used her skill in such a way that gave the pupil an experience he still remembers. This experience seems to be the first time he actually saw someone making a drawing in front of his eyes, and that moment had a spell-binding emotional load in it. Arts education at its best.

Person 57. When I was 4–5 years old I used to watch *Kylli-Täti* (Aunt Kylli) who always told nice fairytales and at the same time drew the storyline with water colours on paper. That was a “holy” moment at our home, nothing else could be watched on TV at that time and everyone had to be totally quiet. I was enchanted by the easily drawn pictures which were so beautiful and good looking. The most interesting thing was that she could make such wonderful figures using only a couple of lines on the paper. I still can remember some pictures from the stories. When I think of it now, I believe that this has had a lot to do with my interests in visual arts. I have been in oil painting courses and I still draw a lot. My dad draws a lot and he is also good at it.

Kylli-Täti (Aunt-Kylli) was a legendary fairytale-teller and painter on Finnish TV in the late sixties. Her painting made the paper full of nice figures and threatening animals if the story needed them. The TV program has clearly had an effect on the writer, as she took oil painting courses and still is interested in the visual arts. *Kylli-Täti* was an arts educator for all the children in Finland.

Nature as a source of artistic experiences

Beauty belongs to nature as well as to aesthetics. There is beauty in all parts of nature in plants, animals, landscapes, etc. There is nothing unnecessary in nature and where there is appropriateness, there is also beauty as the appropriateness also belongs to beauty. Nature has also been a target in many of the best works of art in literature and the visual arts. The Stoic said that nature is the greatest artist of all, and as art, nature is the only one which is completely perfect. It is said that nature loves the beauty. When Plato said that a painting is imitating nature, he meant that the picture is like a mirror (*ars imitator naturam*). Everything in nature has also been seen to have its symbolic meaning set by God.

Environmental aesthetics concentrates on the real world's aesthetic and it looks at the environment as a whole. There are some differences between nature as art and other works of art. Sepänmaa (1978, 14–33) has pointed out some of these: the environment is realistic and a work of art is fictional. Traditional art is static and the environment is ever-changing. The environment is connected to multiple senses; it is comprehensive. The principles of evaluating nature and environment are also defined, and they include: (1) elements of harmony (which means concordance and unity of the parts); (2) elements of contrast (opposites fulfil each other); (3) elements of richness (meaning diversity and variety; also in time); (4) elements of economy (appropriateness); (5) elements of reduction (modesty, simplicity); (6) elements of majesty (wildness) together with (7) elements of knowledge.

It seems that every day events may often be a source of aesthetic experiences for postmodern society. Of course, Finland is a country with beautiful nature with thousands of lakes and large forests near the cities. That is why it is no wonder that some of the respondents put nature experiences very high on their list of aesthetic experiences or art experiences. To a modern student it may be sometimes strange to notice the wonders of the nature.

Person 42. After becoming angry with my father I decided to take a walk in the forest near our home. I was still living at home and this happened about four years ago. I needed space around me and a bit of privacy and solitude. I walked deeper and deeper without thinking about anything. Suddenly I noticed that I was in a place where I had never been before. It was just beautiful! The sun was shining in the middle of the trees and as I walked further I found some lingonberries and blueberries and a raspberry bush. Nearby I saw a beautiful chanterelle for the first time in my life I was in the middle of nature. I sat for a while on a rock with the sun shining on me. The plants around me looked as pretty as in a florist's shop. I saw small animals, squirrels and a little snake. Different kinds of butterflies were flying around like I didn't bother them. I felt like I was a part of everything. These couple of hours have stuck in my memory because I found peace of mind and a good mood in the forest. In that particular place in forest you just couldn't be angry; I found a moment of peace and privacy. It was easy to forget the quarrel with my dad.

In this example the writer has had a quarrel with her father earlier. Maybe her mind was somehow set on a sensitive mood because of that. Then in the peace of the woods she started noticing the little things which make nature wonderful. She also wrote in her long story that even the snake and the flies did not feel disgusting as usual because of the easy and peaceful feeling in forest. She started finding berries and even a mushroom. The whole story

sounds like a fairytale with nature smiling on a princess. The following example also sounds like a fairytale.

Person 33. The most effective art experience I remember took place last weekend when I was collecting mushrooms and lingonberries in the woods. I was there with my aunt and we were near our summer cottage. We had been listening quite a while for strange birds' voices and we tried in turn to guess what birds they were. The weather was cool and clear and there were lots and lots of lingonberries all around. After a while we were ready to go home, when I heard really strange noises close-by. They were birds, but what on earth could be that kind of birds? The noise was quite different from anything else I knew! I looked back and I saw big white birds coming at us—they were turkeys! Our neighbour had gone for a walk with his turkey-girls and that's where the strange voices came from. He had 18 bright white turkeys with him and the sight was worth seeing. I felt that this is an artistic experience. The environment and the birds made me speechless and at the same time I became very glad and happy!

The elements of a good story are all there: woods, weather, something strange and a surprise. Something unexpected happened and the writer felt it as an artistic experience. The surroundings were described beautifully and the atmosphere of the situation can be imagined through the story well. The whole event filled the writer with joy and happiness.

Person 31. Nature is very important to me and I can truly say that it is an art experience which has strongly influenced me and it still does. It provides unbelievable visions, sound and smells and they are the best aesthetic and artistic experiences to me. I really think it is art. The most beautiful works of art in nature that I have seen are the magnificent views in Northern Norway and the enormous rocks and cliffs and the sea in Portugal. We also cannot forget the clean nature in Finland when talking about the beauty of nature.

Person 7. As art experiences I would also name many wanderings in the woods with berry picking, sausage frying by the fire and canoe rowing. We also made adventure trips with a packed lunch. The landscape, places and the atmosphere have all been impressed in my mind.

Person 11. The first thing that occurs in my mind is the landscape I saw when I was visiting my friend's summer cottage. About a month ago we were spending a weekend with a couple of my friends there. The cottage is situated by a beautiful lake in a quiet very peaceful and tranquil place. It was a Friday night and many of us were very tired after a week's busy work. We sat on a rug by a grill making food. Each had a cold bottle of beer in hand and we were talking this and that. The sky was violet and orange. The lake was calm and the atmosphere was relaxing and easy. That moment I really

enjoyed the peace of nature, the wonderful landscape, good food and the company of best friends. Nature showed us its best.

Some people can really sense the surrounding beauty of nature. Eino Krohn (1946) describes those who can feel the beauty in every day life, in the singing of birds and the beauty of nature in its many ways as aesthetes.

Person 9. It was already dark outside. The streetlights were shining brightly and the wind was humming in the treetops. Every now and then I saw a birch full of yellow leaves. There were also leaves on the ground, already. I looked at the sky, and saw stars after a long period of time. There was a familiar but still somehow new atmosphere in the air. A breath of change could be sensed everywhere. I realised that in exchange of warm and light summer nights there had come surreptitiously darkness and crispness of the autumn. I took a deep breath. After walking a while I went back home thinking about candles bringing light into darkness and about the beautiful colours of the trees to be enjoyed in the daytime. I felt refreshed, and the mood in my mind had turned from bright green of the summer into autumn display of colours.

The changing colours of nature in the autumn can easily be understood as nature's playful game. The comprehensiveness of the experience in the example can easily be seen. Noticing the change in autumn caused the writer a change in mood simultaneously refreshing her mind. The way the story is almost poetic. Undoubtedly there are elements of aesthetic experience in this urban nature experience described.

Literature as a source of art experiences

Literature was earlier one of the best sources of art experiences, and it still is. Only the other sources may seem easier to enjoy for people in modern society. Radio, TV, internet and many other sources pull entertainment and also art to us everywhere. What could be easier than to put on some music? Reading a book takes a lot more time and trouble. Still, to some people the enjoyment of literature may offer unforgettable artistic experiences. Even the use of libraries has gone down in countries like Finland nowadays (Mutanen & Laitinen 2004) and the typical user of the library is an elderly lady today. Reading as a hobby has become more unusual even among classroom teachers (Juvonen 2004).

Person 66. I have experienced the strongest art experiences in literature. I still can remember many books which have strongly influenced me as a reader. For example Ivan Turgenev's *First love* was a book that I didn't like in the beginning at all. Afterwards I read the same book again and it was just a

trembling experience. Many books have had an effect and struck me with their message, style, and magic. They have given me strong experiences. I still read a lot.

The example shows that literature does not always open easily. It sometimes needs lot of work and thinking. Maybe the reader was too young to understand the idea of the book when he read it the first time. There may also be a question of immaturity. The example shows the qualities the writer puts to a good book.

Person 2. Lately, I have been interested in children's books and picturing the fairy-tales and stories. Actually I'm in the middle of writing my own book right now. The work proceeds slowly, but maybe some day it will be completed... My brother whom I have always admired is somehow silent type and a little distant to me. He is really skilful drawer and painter and a couple of years ago he published a book he wrote and illustrated all himself. I especially like the pictures. They are aquarelles, tender and beautiful—quite different from all other children's picture-books. I have got to know my brother in a totally new way. The book has opened many new sides of him, the kind I had never known to exist before. Through the book we have become more close to each other and my brother also helps me with my own dream: publishing a book of my own.

A close person doing something surprising—the theme is the same as in painting or drawing. This example also shows nicely how a work of art may open new knowledge about the artist. Even the writer's own sister finds out new aspects about her brother through the art. This suggests, that a piece of art could open new points of view even if one did not know the artist.

Person 19. I seldom fancy books giving direct answers of advice for living. In spite of that I cannot forget the experience I had reading Paolo Coelho's book "Alchemist". The idea of the book is that there are no right answers to the questions of life: a human being must accept the fact that he is ignorant about the truth and the only way of finding the right answers is to listen to one's own inner voice and believe it. That is how I experienced the message of the book. It was a strong experience. The story itself is quite simple and even boring, but it is more about the language and the thoughts the book brings to the reader. The language of Coelho is so beautiful that it makes me become sensitive even thinking about it. The book gives you some kind of relief and comfort which is difficult to describe with words. It gave me peacefulness and tranquillity which was more powerful than I usually get from literature. I felt like living through something, my own story began to live besides the story of the book: I realised that I may never know the things I most wanted to, but still, I cannot stop searching after the knowledge.

The writer has clearly had a very strong experience reading the book. It made her think about her own philosophy and life, and even helped to find some answers to the deepest questions. The writer describes the language and the story beautifully and it seems that she is a diligent reader. The experience has clearly had a strong influence on the person's thinking and attitude to life and this shows the power of touching literature nicely.

Architecture as a source of art experiences

Although we are surrounded by architecture, it quite seldom seems to be a source of aesthetic experience. Maybe an urban man is so used to seeing city surroundings that he needs a radical change in environment before he notices the great works of architecture. One fact is also, that Finland is quite a new culture and we do not have numerous beautiful old buildings, castles, etc. and maybe that is one reason for lacking experiences in architecture.

Person 64. So far the most important art experience took place about a year ago. We were travelling in Spain with my family and we went to see a local sight in Granada: the Palace of Alhambra. The Arabs had built the castle in the 13th century and it is wonderfully well-preserved. The style of building is magnificent and the ceilings and the walls have been decorated with small figures and hieroglyph-type markings. The experience was most effective to me because I always have been interested in history. Nowadays it is easy to connect experiences into meanings after I have seen good examples in concrete.

The beauty of old palaces may easily cause strong experiences. At the same time they include some elements of fairytales about princesses and knights, strange cultures and earlier times. The flamboyance and size of the buildings may cause wonder. The difference in contrast to buildings of one's own country may be one source of experience. Historic knowledge is clearly involved in this example.

Person 5. I have been to Barcelona twice. I never stop admiring the unbelievable and wonderful buildings of Antoni Gaudi (1852–1926). When I saw them they totally blew my mind. How could an architect who was born in the 1800s design and create something so unbelievably glorious? The buildings are like directly from a fairytale: wonderful colours and the shapes and figures of the buildings... On the other hand, it is a wonder that these buildings overall have been built—and luckily they have survived for us to see. The most magnificent and unbelievable building is the church of Sagrada Familia. The building was started already in 1882, and it is still going on! My earlier profession was a clothes designer, and that is why everything in design is in my interest. Still, I have noticed that it is just architecture, which brings me the most efficient experiences. The buildings

have a life of their own, someone has designed them; old architecture is something unbelievable and also mystic: how could they carry out such plans with the tools of that time? I can easily imagine the people of olden days, their life. I stop often wondering: what on earth have these buildings seen?

The writer's background as a designer explains quite well the interest in architecture. Still, she describes the elements and sources of experience in architecture: colours, shapes of buildings, the size and the fairytale-likeness are important things. She also puts the idea of building such magnificent churches and other buildings in a historical context: the technological solutions of the time, the wisdom of the architect cause wonderment and admiration in her.

Person 34. On my trip to Russia I noticed many other things: I came into a totally different culture where there were massive beautiful buildings. Most of all the churches were richly decorated and beautiful to see. We took a trip on a boat to see an old church on the island of Kizh. It was made of wood and gave me a strong experience with its many cupolas and skilful decorations.

A different culture and religion are sources of wonder to many. The Russians belong mostly on the Orthodox Church while Finns are mostly Lutheran. That makes the churches look very different from each other.

Ballet as a source of art experiences

Only two of the respondents have mentioned ballet in their stories. The ballet is a quite rare source of experiences even for students of the University of Helsinki, though Helsinki is the only city in Finland where ballet exists.

Person 8. One of the first art experiences I can remember is the Nutcracker Suite—a ballet in the National Ballet of Finland. I was under school age and watched the ballet with my sister and mother. My father was in a hospital just at the same time, and it may be that I remember the ballet just because of that sad time. Other feelings or emotions about the ballet I cannot recall.

Often art experiences are connected to nice memories and a safe atmosphere. In this case the writer tells about his father being in hospital at the same time he went to ballet, and he may be right in his thought. Negative feelings can also be connected to art experiences. The following writer had an extreme experience in performing and watching the ballet. It includes many elements equal to other art experienced described earlier.

Person 2. I was watching the ballet performance *Swan lake* from the set. The smooth polished movements and the beautiful and deep portrayal of the performance made my skin shiver. When the wing of the swan made the last move I almost cried. Of course, the reason for this surge of emotions was mostly aesthetic: the beauty of the art of ballet, but I also knew how much work, blood, sweat and tears had been shed to make the result what it was. I knew how exact each turn, bend and movement must be. The performance was given for a large audience which added to the excitement. Also the knowledge of one's own performance closing, made the moment very special and emotional. I have been dancing since I was little. In Oulu ballet school we had a spring performance each year. Although I was very young at that time, I still can remember many things from those performances. There are but few facts among the memories, but more about the atmosphere and the severe attitude everyone had in the performance. The excitement of the day was huge: many small girls were waiting to get their hair done; no one should forget the choreography under the tension. It made us all give our best. The excitement is probably one important reason for still remembering the show so well. One other reason for the strength of this remembrance must have been that I was both receiving and performing myself. I admired the older girls performing the main roles and also was proud of my own little part. I still can recall the excitement I felt that day, the emotions were powerful and they had a strong influence on me. We had been working very hard for the ballet and that made the experience even more important. Even nowadays when I hear the music of the ballet it is easy for me to go back to those feelings and emotions back in childhood.

The element of hard work and careful preparations made the experience valuable and the success felt just wonderful. A possibility to perform with older girls whom the writer admired made her feel good. The knowledge of the hard work every movement requires gave extra enjoyment and emotional tension to watching the dance of the ballerinas. This experience has been engraved into the mind of the writer so deep that she can even as adult go back to the atmosphere and emotion of that day. Her own knowledge about the ballet was one of the most important elements in this experience.

Museums as a source of artistic experiences

It is quite rare to go to a museum nowadays. Still two of the responses concentrate on an experience from a museum.

Person 55. The first of my art experiences was situated in Stockholm. I travelled there with my mother to meet relatives and at the same time we went through all the sights of the city. The visit to National Museum of Sweden has stuck well in my memory. I was about 4–5 years old and I remember when I was watching excited the beautiful dresses and crowns in the glass show-

cases. The jewellery in the crowns was astonishingly pretty and shiny, and every time I run into the next room to see what new I could find there (usually I was a beautifully behaved child). These dresses and jewellery raised respect in me, and I wondered how it was possible, that someone actually had been wearing them! I imagined what it was like in glorious parties among the kings and queens and how it must have felt to dress in such wonderful clothes.

The glory of the royal family in all countries is something mythic and full of story-like elements. To us Finns, queens and kings are quite strange; we never had a king of our own. Of course Finland has been under the rule of Sweden and Russia in history, but those emperors were never really our own. That is one reason the crown jewellery and dresses seem so fascinating. In early childhood a little girl may often imagine the life of the royal princesses and fairytales feed the imagination even more. Seeing the actual dresses made the usually well-behaved child get excited and even run in a museum to see more.

Person 45. I have often visited in different museums and I have learned to be open to all forms of art. One of the most wonderful experiences was a glass exhibition in the Art museum of Joensuu. I don't remember what the origin of the exhibition was, but the glass objects were just wonderful. The jars, the cups and pots were lighted nicely and they were shining like jewellery. When I close my eyes I still can see all that beauty. The vases were of different shape and colour and they shone like diamonds in my eyes. The sight was just impressive; a high room beautifully lit, full of works of art—it left an indelible impression on me. I was filled with wonder, admiration and peace; the beauty of the collection made me silently look up to it.

The works of art in museums may sometimes take you by surprise. An everyday object may turn into a piece of art just when it is put in an exhibition. Something like that happened in this example. Dishes which may have been meant to be used were put in a museum and it had a strong effect on the viewer. Of course, the surroundings, lighting and all other environment also formed an important base for the experience.

Handicraft as a source of artistic experience

It is very difficult to tell the difference between well-made handicraft and art. Both include skill, emotion, hard work, struggle, difficulties, devotion and many other common elements. Art may be impossible to achieve without the hand skills but not everything well done is art. The meaning of this article is

not to define art, and that is why we concentrate on art—or artistic experiences. There was only one answer focusing on handicraft among the 70 in this research.

Person 17. My grandmother was a very artistically talented lady; signs of her talent could be seen as well in visual arts and handicraft. It was admirable. Many times in my childhood, and also today, I admired and wondered at her paintings and other objects she had made. One day when I was about four years old we were sitting in a garden swing with grandma and my big sister when she taught us to make a whisk from a stick of a tree. I can remember the atmosphere in the situation. The sun was shining and the day was warm, while I and my sister watched attentively her instructions. Finally after trying hard I managed to make some kind of a contraption of which I was very proud. Silently we listened her telling us how in old times people used to make all kinds of useful things with their own hands. This experience has been important to me, because it was really wonderful that grandma guided us to make something out of natural material. It made us see, that these materials are valuable and also useful in a way we never had realised before. Because the teacher was my own grandma the situation had both joy of learning and a warm emotional atmosphere.

Once again it is easy to see that the presence of a close person makes this experience more valuable. In this example there are elements of learning, struggling and finally succeeding in doing something difficult. Also the connection to history makes the experience important: the writer notices the new ways to use nature materials in a way never seen before. The use of one's own hand in making things is most important for developing children, which is one way to learn motoric skills. The writer mentions the atmosphere, which seems one of the most important elements of all artistic experiences: nice weather, warmth, safety and relaxed feeling are important elements of this experience.

Conclusions

Most of the artistic experiences among the respondents of this research came from music (40 experiences). There were almost twice the number of music-based experiences than the next group mentioned (Theatre 21). Visual arts and nature were next, and the former very popular means of art: literature had only a few descriptions. This classification shows the changing world of today: the modern media has its influence on the sources of artistic experiences. Music is maybe the easiest art to reach: we hear it everywhere; it is not expensive and within anyone's reach. It is also interesting to notice, that the theatre comes after music on the list. This may be caused by the target group: it may occur that the theatre as a hobby would be more common among ele-

mentary classroom and kindergarten teachers than among other people of the same age.

The two sources of experiences among almost all different arts were built on either receiving art and experiencing it, or performing or creating in some other way artistic activity and experiencing art through that. The first way mentioned might be the traditional way of experiencing art: receiving different works of art with eyes, ears, sense of smell or touch. The art experience coming from one's own performance or creation process is more like that of an artist. As the respondents were not professional artists their experience seems honest and sincere descriptions of the feelings and emotions they have had in their different kinds of performances. Our basic idea is that the respondents in this research are future elementary school teachers and kindergarten teachers—not professional artists. This is why we handle these (creative) experiences not as pure artistic expression manifestations, but as artistic experiences like receiving experiences. The work of a professional artist includes many more elements, skills, research and studies than that described in this research. However, it may happen that some of these writers will later act as artists and maybe even make their living with their own works of art.

Of all experiences there were 56 of a receiving nature and 27 of a creative nature. Learning elements were seen in 14 of the experiences. Important people (mother, father, sister, brother) are included in many experiences (13 times). These numbers show that the traditional receiving of art is slowly but surely losing its station as the way of experiencing art. New ways are taking its place. One-third of the experiences were creative by nature. This shows the strength of a pragmatic approach in art: learning arts by doing seems to be working quite nicely in this target group. Also the learning elements are part of the pragmatic approach: the pupil starts doing and making artistic objects his or her self and starts constructing his/her own ways of thinking about the art. The experiences may be intense and strong by nature. The influence can still be seen clearly years later in the writings of the students. Many of the writers' stories show that the art experience has strongly affected their attitudes and self-conceptions.

The first art experiences concentrate on the theatre experiences (13) and individual creativity (painting, drawing, making things, singing) (11). Opera, ballet or classical music concerts are mentioned six times as first art experiences. The fine art seen in exhibitions, in churches, etc. was mentioned seven times. An important person painting, drawing or playing a musical instrument were sources of art experiences six times. A person's own learning and performing was mentioned three times and sculpture as a source of first art experience was mentioned once. It seems that the theatre as an art experience

has been the most efficient measured my number of memories. The second was individual creative activity and success in doing something new.

The age mentioned in describing the first art experience memories varies from 2 years to 14 years. The average of the situation of first art memories was 6,239 years. Most of the memories are situated in age between 4–7 years old. That gives us an idea of the importance of the work which is done before school starts: the first art experiences can already be experienced and the influence is already taken from that experience before the pupil arrives at school.

The multiple visual and auditory stimulants in theatre seem to be very effective for small children. Together with music and lights, beautiful costumes and good roles performed by actors, the theatre makes an indelible effect on the mind of a little child. This is why operetta, opera and musicals both with music theatre plays are often mentioned in the answers. The importance of painting and singing in kindergarten are also great: the first experiments with finger paints and making masks etc. can often be remembered even as adult.

Aspects which connect art experiences

Music as a source of art experiences is quite important. In many cases a strong experience has led to a desire to try to play a musical instrument. A small child can surprise the parents by listening silently throughout the whole concert. In a concert one important thing is the professionalism and the skill of the performers; in some stories the writers describe classical music as the most important thing in their lives. The experiences have many common elements although the means of art may differ. In receiving experiences there is often some kind of knowledge about the field of art they are experiencing. Personal basic knowledge gives the experience more depth and more meaning: when one can connect the ongoing experience into with one's own experiences of the world; it helps in understanding what is happening. In some cases even the obligatory concert trips made by school or university have been most important sources of art experiences. In some cases an individual experience can open the whole field of art to a person. Of course, the childhood experiences especially in classical music may lead to a deeper understanding of the music. This often happens in cases where there are musicians in the family. The socialising into music happens in that situation naturally, which gives the person an inbuilt mechanism for understanding music, which is difficult to achieve in other ways later.

Spiritual connections to music and other arts are quite common and they add passion to the experience. This was mentioned in some of the music experiences (Jesus Christ Superstar) and in movie experiences (The Passion

of Jesus). Sometimes it happens that music makes the experience so strong that even the language borders can melt. This was mentioned in several answers concerning the Hype-musical (sung in Swedish). A good experience makes the person involved wonder what might have been missing so far in life. It stimulates the imagination and gives new ideas about life and art. The relaxing and at the same time the energising power of music is often mentioned. Usually the early experiences influence the attitudes more easily than later experiences. Some of the examples show that an effective experience can take place also at the age of 14–17. Still, that age is usually more the age when different art hobbies are being stopped. Many of the respondents were taking piano lessons from under the age of ten, but say that they stopped the lessons in their teen age years.

Usually in this data the strongest art experiences sourcing from jazz or pop concerts were mentioned by older respondents or they have taken place recently. That means that either the respondents go to such concerts earlier or that they have somehow matured to understand the music better in the last few years. The skill of the performers, the common feeling of unity within the audience, knowing most of the songs performed make the concert an experience long remembered. The glamour of the world famous star is, of course, another important element. The whole atmosphere in the concert situation is most important connecting the lights, music and audience as one unit living together in the moment. The emotional feeling is often described the way a flow-experience could be described. This experience is often described by losing the sense of time and the feeling is so strong that it is easy to relive the thrill afterwards. Music gives some persons visual illusions with colours and the emotional experience is long-lasting. The meaningfulness of the moment is connected to the emotion and the common situation in life right at the time of the experience.

An important close person is often included in the descriptions of the experiences. Because there is a strong emotional connection between the viewer and the one who is actually doing the artistic work (singing, playing, drawing, painting, etc.) it is easy to understand that the experience in a situation like that may be stronger than it would be in other circumstances. This person has in the stories of the students often been the mother, father, grandma, sister, brother or a good friend. In some cases the schoolteacher has had the same effect when she has drawn or painted something on the blackboard or done something else surprising. This is natural, because the first teacher usually becomes a very important person to young pupil.

The movies are modern works of art and they are easily accessed. It has a couple of advantages compared to expression possibilities of theatre or opera.

The set, the landscape and other environments can be made to look authentic as the story demands. The big screen makes everything look alive and the amplifiers allow extra sound effects to make the experience even more impressive. The movies, as a source of art experiences were a rather small part of this research data. The elements of religion were connected in one of the answers while the other two concentrated on the beauty of the story, landscape and music of the films.

Some of the respondents seem to be real experts in the music genre they admire. For example there were some descriptions about a group which were analytical and clearly written by an expert in music. The writers are also good in classifying and specifying their own feelings and emotional connections to the music genre in total and in particular groups within a specific genre.

Performing in some way has given many of the writers an art experience. Many of the experiences might be described more as experiences of success in doing something which felt difficult. The relief of succeeding in some kind of performance is similar to that of a sports performance: after a great deal of work in practising the skill, one goes to performance excited and anxious about the audience. The feeling of succeeding well in that kind of a situation may be like an aesthetic experience in many ways. Enjoyment is one thing easily connected to experiences; much practice and hard work is demanded for success in both of them.

A creative element is one of the elements, which connect all different means of art. Often in this data the first art experiences concentrate on doing something artistic for the first time. It may have been going to the theatre or to a concert with the kindergarten group. In some examples even different kinds of hobby activities in kindergarten have brought art experiences for the children. This happens especially when the nurses have shown appreciation to the artistic results. The examples also show that children need some kind of artistic freedom so that they do not build too high walls around their own drawing, painting or other activities. This clearly shows that the first introduction to an artistic occupation wherever it occurs should be done lovingly, affectionately and sensitively. This should happen so that the child does not feel embarrassed, ashamed, or ridiculed. If the first experiences in art are of a positive nature it gives a good starting point for later arts education.

Creativity in early childhood may appear in many ways. Song making is quite common (Fredriksson 1994; Sundin 1977) among all children as well as in this data. What is not common is the fact that many of the songs are still remembered by the respondents. Some could still remember the words and the melody of the songs they sang as small children (aged 3–5 years). The emotional excitement the respondents have felt while making their own songs has seemingly been strong and effective because they remember the events

long after (often more than 20 years). Some of the respondents clearly have a real artistic approach for song writing and they describe it in terms which are usually used in aesthetic conversation or by music critics. These professionally-oriented art makers form a very small minority in this data. The same minority is also found in the fields of literature and theatre in this data.

Creativity sometimes gets new appearances among experienced musicians, too. In some cases the respondents write about their tours with a choir or with an orchestra. In these concerts during the trip there have been most affective experiences while singing or playing music. It sometimes happens that the performers get some kind of strange collective “flow” effect from the artistic performance, and that cannot happen without leaving marks. The collective flow-experience is clearly closely connected to the art experience and it seems to have close connections to aesthetic experience, too. In the data collected most of the flow-experiences seem to be situated in a person’s own performance activity, not so often in a receiving art activity. These experiences have come from singing in musical productions, playing with orchestras or acting on stage in the theatre. They all have been quite professionally produced productions which have needed a lot of practice and hard work.

Interpretation or rendering in artistic expression is often mentioned in the answers: a skilful and personal version of a piece of music or maybe a personal point of view in a role in a play may cause admiration and aesthetic experiences. On the other hand, we must remember that hearing, seeing and overall sensing is interpretation inside our mind. First and foremost the psychologically oriented arts research is interested in how the sensitivity for artistic structures and qualitative properties develops and evolves (Saarnivaara 1993, 4). Sensing something is a part of cognitive activity (process) and an aesthetic reaction is thought to be about the same.

Talking about art often leads to a discussion of taste. This is a conversation we will avoid in our article, because it easily leads to long discussions about the qualities in different types of music or forms of art. That is unnecessary if we point out that each art form (may it be fine art or some form in popular culture) has its own qualities which can be judged only due to the cultural, artistic, expressive or other means which are included in that particular art form. This is sometimes called authentic art conception: each art form has its own laws and rules.

In the end

The writings of the students show nicely the open and multi-dimensional nature of art. It is something the artist feels and it has to do with the emotions

of the receiver of an art experience. Sometimes it is the artistic expression (performance) in which a person takes part which gives the experience, sometimes it is passive receiving processes renewing thinking and giving new conceptions of life. The creative and productive elements in life give birth to artistic expression which becomes concrete in art objects (may they be songs, pieces of music, paintings, drawings, plays, musicals, sculptures, etc.). This shows that art clearly connects the artist and the receiving person emotionally and affectively together. It was seen in many of the examples of our data. Art experience raises the subjectivity of a person to heights often giving a feeling of almightiness and the meaningless of time (here are seen close connections to the flow-experience). Art teaches us something about ourselves: what we are, what we want and what we are connected to. It is said that art shows us something we always have known to exist, but never have noticed before. Sense perception, feeling, sensuousness and all sensory actions giving enjoyment and pleasure are more closely connected to art than even the conceptions of beauty and experiencing beauty, which were paid much attention in aesthetics in past decades and even centuries. In history all beauty and expression were sanctified for praising of the God.

The continuing widening and expansion of the concept of art; the perpetual seeking of something new; the constant creation processes; the endless transformation processes connected to cultural linkage makes it impossible to define art faithfully, finely or unambiguously. Still, it is not too difficult to start widening the whole art concept in the direction of liberality and popular culture. This can be justified with the new kind definition of the art—artistic and aesthetic experience. Why would the Tina Turner concert experience not be an aesthetic experience? Why would a Nightwish fan not experience an aesthetic experience when getting strong emotional and affective experiences from the music and performance of the group? These experiences were described in this research data in just the same way as the experiences which came from “real” artistic sources (like opera, classical music or art exhibition). There cannot be some particular reason to distinguish the two experiences mentioned from each other just by judging the source of the experience, which has been the traditional way.

It is interesting to notice that Plato’s *imitation theory* is not seen clearly in the answers of the students. What rather can be seen is an expression of subjective experiences emphasising the intentions of the artist. Plato’s theory was widely spread in 1900s and it focuses mainly on the objective qualities of a work of art (Dickie 1990, 34). On the other hand, Plato supported the emotional theory about the origins of art. That idea leads to the expression theory in the 1700s (in which the artist is in focus). Beardsley (1958; 1967; 1976) points out the meaning of the aesthetic approach in art: the stronger aesthetic

experience an art object may cause, the better it is as a piece of art. He thinks that an aesthetic object is aesthetic in spite of the qualities of the receiver. Still, he describes the elements of an aesthetic experience: unity, multiplicity and intensity. All the mentioned qualities can easily be found from the data collected in this research—but they do not exist only in experiences coming from fine arts!

If we turn the definition from Beardsley into modern language, it means that the experiences coming from popular culture are as valuable as those coming from fine arts. That means that the popular culture may include many of the same elements with fine arts. Beardsley (1958, 8–10) comments that although aesthetic experiences may rise from nature, from sports events or even from science, real works of art are originally made especially and explicitly aiming to these aesthetic experiences. He also finds other qualities for the arts objects: they may be good for giving knowledge, raising up one's morals or they might have even educational value. Still, the value of these works of art is in their aesthetic qualities. Beardsley thinks this will give the authorisation and justification for art. Conclusions from this research show that all the extra values Beardsley mentioned are found in the experiences of the target group. The only thing separating the results from Beardsley's thoughts is the source of the experiences.

The art experiences seem to be very difficultly defined or specified phenomena, which may be approached in multiple ways. Art experience may occur equally in creative and in receptive achievement, which means that not only the receiver (audience) of an artistic performance is always the active explorer. The performers telling about their experiences in this data often seem to be in the middle of a strong emotional storm. The experiences they are living through (during the performance) may even be stronger than those of the audience. This is, of course, partly due to the fact that this target group does not consist of professional artists. The emotional load in a performance of a professional (inside the artist) must be better controlled and concentrated in fulfilling the artistic performance in the best possible way—not experiencing or processing his/her own art experiences at the same time.

Many examples show the strength of the first art experiences: these experiences have clearly influenced the life of the target group in many ways. The main effect mentioned is seen through attitudes and conceptions which can be read between the lines of writing. The positive experience in art subject may impress the whole attitude towards arts in common and the specific field of art especially.

This data also shows the increasing power of mass media and popular culture as a source of art experiences. This requires new approaches and defini-

tions inside art. We must be ready to reevaluate and redefine the substance and manifestation of art as well in music culture as in all other fields of art. Only then it is possible to develop and evolve the teacher education systems both in kindergarten teacher education and classroom teacher education to answer the increasing demands of modern society.

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All you need is love

John Lennon

The good, the bad and the ugly: Memories from school art subjects' education—The teaching of art subjects in narratives of kindergarten teacher students

Abstract

The article focuses on the experiences and emotions of art subjects (sports, music, visual arts, handicraft, home economics) at school in narratives of kindergarten teacher students at University of Helsinki (N=71). The questions were given on a lecture and the answers came via email. The students describe the subjective experiences and emotions of school time art education situations and lessons. The answers emphasise the teachers and teaching as a source of artistic and emotional experiences. In this article we focus on the experiences from music and visual arts.

The article brings out themes for the development of visual arts and music education and more widely all art subjects at school. The questions raise a question about the meaning of school art subject education: what emotional experiences do the pupils get at school and how should the teaching be developed when the resources are constantly diminishing? What effect do the art subjects have on pupils' life and development and what are the connections between learning art subjects and learning other subjects at school? Why would art subjects be worth teaching to all pupils? This presentation is a part of a wider research project which focuses on the artistic experiences as a way to lead a good life.

Keywords: Skills and Art subjects, kindergarten teacher education, art education, visual arts education, student narratives, student experiences.

Background and method of the research

This research focuses on positive and negative experiences from art subjects (music, visual arts, sports, handicraft and home economics) at school. The research questions were: "You must try to remember one lesson in art subjects at school. It was a very positive/negative experience to you. What happened during the lesson? Why was the experience positive/negative to you? Describe the lesson as well as you can". This instruction was given to students in University of Helsinki faculty of Education, Department of Applied

Education during autumn 2004 and 2005. The answers were sent by email to professor Ruismäki. The research group consisted of Kindergarten teacher students who were at the time studying their art education and art philosophy courses. Most of the group were women (66 female and 5 male). This research is based on critical classification and levelling of the data. The qualitative approach forms the main method of this research. Quantitative analyses are made to enrich the qualitative data.

The narrative writings of the students are used to describe the actual reality as it is experienced by the respondents. The comments which are chosen from the data are meant to help the reader form a realistic picture of the experiences of the writers.

Theoretic approach

In this article we call visual arts, music, handicraft, dance, theatre, drama, sports (physical exercise) literature and different performances or connections with them art subjects. These are usually the ones which are taught in Finnish school. Other forms of art like cinematography or architecture are seldom taught at school although they partly belong in the curriculum. The whole concept of art as well as art education has many meanings and connections and is not easy to define perfectly.

The subjects mentioned are being taught at school based on: a long tradition of education; different philosophic points of view; changing educational focuses; different social factors, and humanistic, commercial, competitive or utilitarian points of view. The arts have both individual and wider social and cultural meanings. They may lead the way to understanding people's mind, thinking, emotions and deepest feelings. The value and position of different arts in an individual mind may change widely. The modern idea of art education includes the concept of every human being's right to art, a right to feel, react, experience or make art (Kaartinen & Viitanen 2000). A philosophical discussion about the essentials and focuses of art and art education in connection with its many manifestations is occurring in many forums. For example Shusterman (2003) has been writing strongly about the gap between the theoretical and pragmatic approach in arts education. Many of the core conceptions and points of view are equal, opposite or competing with each other (Elliott 1995; Regelski 1996; 1998; Swanwick 1994; Reimer 2000; Sloboda & Davidson 1996). These different background philosophies are embodied in the teaching and learning processes of individual teachers either knowingly or unconsciously. There has been a great deal of research done about the development of a single learner and his experiences; this is quite typical in post-modern society.

The dissertation of Karppinen (2005) represented a basic conception model for handicraft (textile works) teaching. This model also suits well other art subjects teaching. Inspiration (animation), initiative and appearance are the core components of the art concept model. Inspiration (animation) is a power, which sets in motion and begins a willingness to create. But, that is not enough to guarantee the appearance; it needs human initiative, intention, to make the process meaningful. Art means not only producing items, but also bringing something forth from the self. That means there must be an appearance of an Art process so that other people can see and assess it.

Arts education can be described as a creative Art process, which aims at finding individual ways to approach creativity and artistic quality by exploring artistic and cultural items from inside and outside. In other words, that implies exploring the self and one's own relation to the world through sensate experience. After all, the meaning of Basic Art Education is to support children as active human beings and to enrich their future creative initiative. Aspects of culture and environment, utilised as sources and objects, are the strength of the creative crafts process in Basic Art Education (Karppinen 2005).

As art education at schools means teaching individual school subjects its position may become problematic. Often they are evaluated from an utilitarian point of view or compared to theoretical subjects like maths, reading and writing or foreign languages. Eisner (2004) says that arts and the educational advances belonging to them were left especially aside when hard science and pure rationalism were taken as the leading points and values in school teaching. The practice of education has been formed using the scientific point of view and the place of art is in such questions which cannot be answered by science (Kallio 2005, 99).

Eisner's subject is what the practice of education can learn from the arts. He describes the forms of thinking the arts evoke and their relevance for reframing conceptions of what education can accomplish (Eisner et.al. 2003; 2004). Arts subjects are seen (McPherson 2006) to be fundamental to a quality education and an essential component of all children's education. In contrast, the lack of valuing of arts subjects in schools is evidenced by the low numbers of students who undertake these subjects in school systems around the world.

Eisner (1999) is critical of the researches which show art education courses helping other subjects learning. According to him these courses may not have developed skills but certain attitudes which enable risk taking and hard work. He says that what is needed is a theory which connects art experiences to success at school. Eisner sees art subjects as valuable to general life, not

only as an instrument helping to learn other subjects. As a whole, there is too little retrospective research being done about art subjects at school. Most research concentrates on students' perspectives on their high school experience (Certo & Cauley, and Chaftin 2003; Marks 2000; Cothran & Ennis 2000; Osterman 2000).

What are the students' own starting points? How have these been informed by the earlier opportunities they were provided when they were younger? What about the experiences the students have had in schools now? Are they seeing quality experiences being offered to children? It is important to explore this aspect for a number of reasons—not least to enable reflection on the art education the students are offered within their training programmes. But there are others too.

Gregory notes (2005) that the impact of education reform over the past 15 years has not always been intentional. The cycle of the National Curriculum is now “coming of age” as students in training were themselves taught using this framework. What lessons can we learn? Have we successfully built on previous opportunities, or are there inbuilt flaws? Are there implications for the experiences we should provide for young children? Does the reality in schools and early years settings match the rhetoric of the Foundation Stage curriculum?

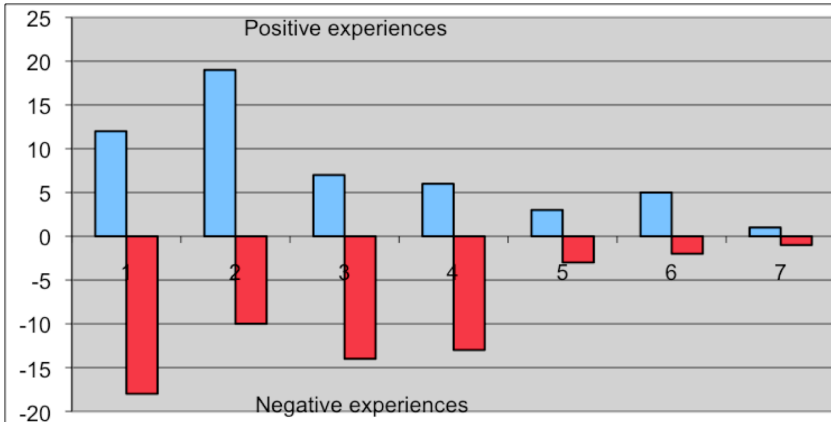
Wide international interest has occurred in school environments and learning since Finland once again came out on top in the OECD's latest PISA study of learning results among 15-year olds, with high performances in mathematics, science, mother tongue and problem-solving. Maybe PISA-type research should be broadened to also include art subjects. International research also shows that Finnish children are not especially happy at school. (<http://www.jyu.fi/ktl/pisa/index.html>).

Results

In results we focus only on music and visual arts to delimit the number of results. This clearly shows that these art subjects are very sensitive areas: they offer strong experiences, both good and bad. It is because in these subjects every pupil is dealing with his personality and abilities which can easily be judged by other pupils and the teacher. The achievements in music, sports and visual arts are for all to be seen, heard, evaluated and criticised. They are closely connected to the developing self confidence and self concept of a young child. This matter is so important that in research literature musical self concept or physical exercise self concept are differentiated as separate areas of self concept research. (Juvonen 2000; 2003; 2004a; 2004b).

In this article we analyse and focus only on the positive and negative experiences from the two most mentioned subjects, music and visual arts. We have also analysed the whole data thoroughly regarding the rest of the subjects. The subheadings used later are formed via the qualitative analyses of the data.

Table 1. The number of positive and negative mentions of art subjects



The mentions of positive and negative experiences in art subject lessons were as follows. (The subjects from left to right).

Subjects in table 1	Positive mentions (+)	Negativementions (-)	Total
1 Music	+12	-18	30
2 Visual arts	+19	-10	29
3 Sports	+7	-14	21
4 Handicraft (girls)	+6	-13	19
5 Home economics	+3	-13	16
6 Mother tongue	+5	-2	7
7 Handicraft (boys)	+1	-1	2

The student's experiences seem to focus mainly on music, visual arts, sports, handicrafts (girls: textile works; boys: technical work). All experiences included both positive and negative points. Music and visual arts were the subjects which collected most of the comments. Many of the respondents remember best their negative experiences. In this article we focus on the themes of the experiences in light of the general development of the educa-

tion in art subjects. This is the reason only a few quantitative analyses were made. We try to focus only on essentials of the data mainly concentrating on experiences of music and visual arts as they had the most mentions in both good and bad.

It is surprising to notice that music, sports and handicraft have more negative elements than positive in the memories of kindergarten students. The data also shows that the strongest experiences arise especially from the lower comprehensive school levels. Most of the strongest positive experiences come from both lower and upper secondary school and there especially from the optional courses; this is clearest in music. Our titles used in this article come directly from the data analyses.

Positive experiences in music

Positive experiences from music lessons could be divided through classification and analyses in three categories: the skilfulness of the teacher, the motivation of the teacher and music's ability to raise strong emotional feelings.

The teacher's skills

Many teachers are very skilful in general music teaching but also in psychological way of thought. Wise solutions in building musical performances may give pupils positive experiences especially in putting challenges to pupils. This is clearly seen in many of the answers in data. One respondent tells how her teacher would wisely emphasise the solo part sung by one girl from the group. This shows that the teacher could use the strength from one pupil pointing out the positive part of the performance.

- A1. When I was on the third grade at the lower comprehensive school I was chosen to sing the solo part in the spring break celebration of our school. I was very happy to be singing the solo as at that time I was quite eager to perform in public especially singing. I was proud to be chosen to sing the solo part due to my voice.

The teacher must always have an eye for putting the pupils in work where they have enough—but not too many—challenges which they are able to achieve. This reach for a good performance gives great satisfaction to pupils. It must also be remembered that every pupil deserves the opportunity to develop his/her own special skills and to enjoy the resulting achievements. This means that the teacher should observe pupils thoroughly to gain knowledge about their personality as well as their special skills in different subjects. At the same time with the challenge a good teacher must remember not to feed

the rivalry and competitiveness among the pupils. This can only be done by being fair and righteous to all pupils. Everyone should be treated equally.

A teacher's skills may be used also in the way he or she acts in music making, but when we think about a usual Finnish elementary school classroom teacher the musical personal skills are usually on quite a low level. This gives more challenges to the educational and psychological area of teaching, which is also the main focus in our research. Of course it is clear that it is much easier to teach music in a classroom if you are a good musician yourself.

The teacher's motivation

The motivation level of the teacher and the great effect it has on the students can clearly be seen in the data. In the best examples, a wise teacher arranges for the pupil meaningful and reasonable projects reacting to changing situations in the class. One of the respondents notes that her teacher one day noticed that almost half of the group was absent from the school due to an influenza epidemic. He decided to use the situation in advance because there were only a few pupils in the class. He gave pupils an idea to make their own song in the group. At first it felt almost impossible and they did not believe that they could resolve the challenge at all. Finally the teacher suggested that one of the pupils sit by the piano and start forming some kind of a melody. This made the whole thing work: the result was a four-part melody which they sang together. The teacher was working together with the pupils, but wisely in the background giving tender advice and guidance. This song writing led to idea of making pupils' own musical "The vampires", which was performed three times in the spring of ninth grade. Most of the songs in it were composed by the music group, and it all started from the teacher's wise idea. A skilful teacher is also able to give realistic, positive feedback to pupils allowing them to succeed and surpass themselves. One of the respondents described the situation:

- A2. On the sixth grade in the lower comprehensive school my teacher asked me to play in the spring break church service of our school. All the pupils from other schools came to the big church and it was totally full of people. I was almost scared to death and I was sure that I would make the performance a catastrophe. I was not especially announced and I just had to walk on the stage during the priest's sermon and wait until he stopped preaching. I had been told in which part I should start playing. I walked to the stage at the right moment and started in the right place, but my hands and feet were shaking so hard that it was difficult to place the fingers on the right keys. Finally I pulled myself together and finished the performance. Afterwards I think that I never have

played so well in my whole life. The feeling after I had played my piece of music without making any mistakes was something unbelievable.

This example shows the wisdom of the teacher. He could evaluate the skills of the pupil correctly and give her a challenge which was big but possible to overcome. The challenge offered the pupil great satisfaction after the task had been completed. When she still, after sixteen years, can remember the performance it must have been very important to her whole development and especially to her musical self conception.

Music raises strong emotions

Sometimes positive experiences in music may have occurred in otherwise negative situations like a singing test which is quite often used in Finnish schools even today. One of the respondents wrote that she was not especially nervous about these situations although they would have to go to the teacher waiting in the classroom alone one by one and the situation felt most artificial or man-made. This respondent studied in special music classes and the teacher was his music teacher, a familiar man. It was Christmas time and that is why she sang a well known Finnish Christmas song by Sibelius called "Sylvia's Christmas Song". The song tells a sad story in which the dead little brother comes to see his sister in the form of a bird.

- A3. I started to sing the song as well as I was able. Suddenly the teacher started crying and took off his glasses sweeping tears from his eyes. First I was afraid wondering what was happening because naturally I connected crying to something bad. The teacher said he was sorry and apologised for his tears and movement immediately saying that everything was alright. He also thanked me for my singing and told that it was just excellent. Afterwards I understood that the teacher was crying because of his own child who was handicapped. The story and the singing brought these strong moving emotions to my teacher. More than understanding this reason I was taken by the notion that I actually could touch the minds of people with my singing. I believe that this notion has motivated me to go on with my singing hobby.

In the best situations music has been able to strengthen pupils' self confidence and musical self conception greatly when the music lessons have been really nice and waited. This is how music has given new meanings to pupils' life. This may happen when a teacher is able to teach music matters to pupils by coming down from the teacher's platform to the pupils' own level, but still maintaining the substance of teaching. In some cases music has formed a way to control the pupils' group behaviour. Many of the respondents describe

these experiences which also led many of them to choose to studying in special music classes.

Negative experiences in music

Negative music experiences may be divided roughly in two sections: singing tests and music theory. Singing tests are widely used by teachers in Finland. They have been the cause of horror for many generations at Finnish schools. A lot of hatred and bitterness has been caused by them, but many teachers still use them as a means of evaluation and a basis for giving music grades to pupils. Much research has been written lately about the negative effects of this testing, but this has not caused much change in teachers' attitudes. Even in teacher training universities there are singing tests used today.

In the early nineteenth century music was one of the most hated subjects at Finnish school. The reason for this was the attempt to make everyone sing directly from the notes. This is, of course, a mission impossible and also unnecessary and it caused a lot of trouble for the whole school subject of music. Luckily, this is no longer the main target in music education at schools, but still there are old-fashioned teachers who try to teach music theory in the usual music classes in unnecessary amounts and with negative teaching methods.

Singing tests

One of the clearest results in our data was the negative meaning of singing tests. It was determined to be a clearly traumatic and humiliating experience by most of the respondents. They used many different definitions of the horror experiences connected to singing tests, which shows the importance of this negative experience. It is obvious that the singing testing should be stopped at schools immediately to avoid these emotions and feelings among pupils.

- A4. I still can clearly remember one specific music lesson on the second grade of comprehensive school; I was nine years old at the time. Our teacher used to have singing tests every now and then. Each pupil had to sing while all the others were present and listening to the singing. One of the boys in my class had not a very good musical ear and these music lessons must have been even more tormenting and embarrassing for him than they were for the others. When it was his turn to sing the teacher treated him like dirt humiliating him cruelly in front of all other pupils. I believe that he never could enjoy music after that. The boy was standing in front of us saying in a monotonic way the words of a Finnish folk song and the teacher kept demanding: sing it again and again. In the end the boy was totally embarrassed and red in his face and

ready to start crying. Finally the teacher let him sit down saying: “There was not any kind of melody in your singing”. When this boy moved to another school I hoped that he would get a teacher who would be equipped with other methods and attitudes than this one. At the same time I decided that if I ever became a teacher, I would never use methods like my teacher did.

Showing one’s own voice and the inability to sing in front of the rest of the class has caused many of the respondents great mental injuries, feelings of humiliation, embarrassment and other negative emotions.

- A5. My most negative experience took place in the lower comprehensive school music lessons. The singing test which was once every year was executed by singing in front of the whole class, everyone in his/her own turn. This test was hated by everyone although singing was otherwise quite nice. I had chosen an old dance music song called “Tiger shark” which I then sang. After my singing the teacher who normally tried to find something nice to say said laconically: “It is strange that you sing so badly out of tune although you play piano usually quite well”. The whole class broke out laughing and I had to walk to my place feeling humiliated and embarrassed. There is no need to tell that I have never sung since then.

These examples show the teacher’s total failure in the basic and most elementary principles of music teaching. They have ruined pupils’ musical self confidence and self conception probably for the rest of their life. Many of these badly treated respondents may never be able to enjoy music like the others. These experiences have been so strong and so humiliating that they will probably affect their music relation and orientation for the rest of their life. It also often happens that this negative attitude or conception is later transmitted to their own child which makes the catastrophe even worse.

Music theory

Music theory is another common cause of negative experiences in music lessons. It is something which is quite difficult to understand if it is taught separately from everything else and not directly connected to practice. If it is taught to pupils who do not play any musical instruments it may be impossible to understand. We may also ask why should everyone be able to read music? What is more necessary is the ability to understand and enjoy different music styles and traditions; not everyone should become a musician.

- A6. I remember one music lesson where every pupil had to read aloud the notes from a song. Most of the pupils did somehow know the names of the notes. I happened to be one of them who didn’t know them. That is why I waited for my turn with a growing fear inside because I knew that I would fail in the task. When my turn came I said nothing. The time when other pupils and the

teacher waited for my answer felt like an eternity to me and I wanted to disappear underground. Unfortunately the music teaching in the 3rd and 4th grade totally ruined my motivation for music learning. After that I always replaced music by choosing the visual arts in my studies as they were optional. Still today I feel myself lousy in music subjects and the threshold in music learning is very high for me. In this kindergarten teacher education I feel it hopelessly difficult.

In addition to these two groups of respondents there were mentions of unsuitable materials being used in music lessons, humiliating attitude of the teacher and the differences in musical worldviews of the teacher and pupils in the data collected. Orientation research has been exploring some of these problems lately. (Juvonen 2000; 2003; 2005). Most of these negative experiences from music lessons took place in the lower comprehensive school music teaching which is mostly done by elementary classroom teachers. The basics of musical development are created in early childhood, though. (Ruismäki & Juvonen & Tereska 2004). The amount of music teaching for the elementary classroom teachers varies nowadays from 3 to 35 study points depending on the university teaching programme and profile of the options of specialising in that area.

Positive experiences in visual arts

In the area of visual arts, a skilful teacher was the most important factor which could be seen from the data. In some cases the respondents estimated their visual arts teacher to be excellent. This excellence could be seen in different types of situations, for example in contests which, when done in the right way, may sometimes be good learning situations which give teaching and learning a positive meaning.

- A7. My teacher's attitude to my eagerness was incredibly great although she knew that the task would not be easy. What made the situation even more difficult was the fact that our communication was based mostly in hands because my skills in the Danish language were close to none and her English was lousy. I admired her patience in doing her job. Only the treating of the fat clay suitable for shaping took a lot of time. And the time was her free time! The techniques used in shaping the clay took long to learn but she never left me alone until I had learned enough to continue alone. In the end I had to force her to go home. I was left to work in a manic mood to express myself. The hours passed by and my failures could not be counted but still, I enjoyed every moment of this working process enormously. When I finally stopped totally exhausted and started to clean the room which seemed to have been overrun by a hurricane I felt wonderful satisfaction. I could not say that the technique of shaping clay pots would have become clear to me, but I felt like I had learned a lot. I

had learned to feel the clay and to form and shape it somehow. I had had an experience of fine teaching situation where I could feel the importance of my own will to learn to be respected by the teacher. When I later that night walked home through the dim Danish little town I felt myself strong and renewed.

The feeling of doing something, the encouraging atmosphere in lessons joined to active achievement were often mentioned as parts of positive experiences in visual arts. The visual arts lessons in which every student could feel satisfaction from succeeding in his or her own way show the teacher's skills at planning. Also the evaluation of the creations in the lessons is important (compare with Zupancic 2005). Not only the beauty of the art subject may be evaluated, the challenge and responsibility as elements which lead to positive experience when the task is accomplished were also often mentioned by the respondents.

- A8. Luckily I can remember more positive experiences than negative. One very strong positive experience was making the upper-secondary school visual arts diploma. It was a very challenging job and I had to take quite a bit of responsibility for the whole task: no one was watching the timetable or giving advice about what would be a wise way to achieve. I had to make my own decisions and experiments for the whole task. It was most interesting and something new to me. As the entity was a success it left me with a positive conception of the whole course.

Negative experiences in visual arts

One of the most important reasons for negative experiences in visual arts teaching and learning is the attitude of the teacher. Some teachers were not able to give feedback from the works done or the feedback was only negative. Some of the respondents felt that they were not taught at all in visual arts lessons.

- A9. Visual arts' teaching has always been close to nothing in my opinion. Usually the teacher thought that I already had the skills to do everything that we had to learn at school. As the others were painting and drawing I had a possibility to go through books about art history or paint whatever I wished by myself. It was quite nice not to be doing all paint mixing practices, but I still would have wanted to have some advice and decent feedback or even some critique of my works. I suppose no one can be a real artist already at the comprehensive school level.

On the other hand, teachers also may have many limiting factors in their own personality or world view. One of these may be relation to religion or other spiritual ways of thinking. A good teacher is able to keep his own worldview

out of his teaching at least in such subjects which are not in direct connection to the subject taught; it is also not polite to push pupils to any religious thinking during the lessons.

A10. On the upper level of the comprehensive school our visual arts was taught by a teacher who originally was a religious education teacher. Because a qualified teacher could not be found she was doing the teaching in visual arts. Her enthusiasm for religious subjects was so great that each and every one of our works were connected to the bible stories. That year our visual art skills did not develop at all and the tasks were something like "Paint a picture of Jesus when he was put on the cross using water colours". The whole year was frustrating and when in the next year a qualified teacher was found we had to hurry through everything totally too fast because one year had been lost in learning things. This gave no time to enjoy making paintings, drawings or sculptures. These events left a negative attitude towards the visual arts learning for a long time for me.

Children at school are very quick to notice unjust treatment from the teacher. A good teacher always treats his pupils equally and gives all feedback in the same way. Also the numbers and evaluation behind giving them should be done properly and in a positive and just way. Teacher's despotism should be out of the question in lessons. When it is sensed it may cause most negative experiences for the pupils.

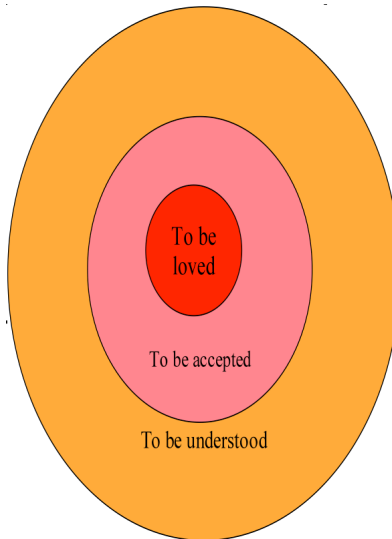
A11. We were in the upper secondary-school on visual arts lesson. Our task was to choose some of the great paintings and make our own version of it. I took some painting from 18th century and started making my conception about it on the paper. I remember being very satisfied with the result, I thought that I never had been able to draw so well before. Everything crashed when the teacher arrived to me. He came to see my work and suddenly said "What the f#*k are you showing off with your painting?" Then he took my work and ripped it to pieces and gave me a new paper and told to start from the beginning again. I felt very bad after that incident.

This experience shows a teacher who could not control his behaviour at all. He did not show any respect for the pupil's work. This kind of behaviour shows that the teacher was not in the right line of work. Unfortunately these stories are not rare. The humiliation of the pupil may occur in any school subject, but this research shows them to be quite common in the art subjects. The subjects demand the use of own abilities and skills and they can also be seen, which gives a bad teacher an opportunity to use his or her power in the wrong way causing pupils traumatic experiences.

Conclusions

In this research the art experiences are seen in both a positive and negative light. Music and visual arts were most common of all. This is natural in connection with the school system in which they have largest volumes in lessons compared to all other art subjects. The negative experiences in music are connected to singing tests and music theory. It would be too early to make too strong conclusions based on this data although it clearly supports earlier researches in the area. The meaning of the teacher was very important in art subject memories. The devotion to art subjects is born in early childhood in this data.

The values and attitudes are formed through different experiences of life. There are always two polarities in each experience, negative and positive. Satisfaction and enjoyment form a polarity to anxiety and disgust. Joy and happiness form a polarity with disappointment and sadness; success in doing something is a polarity to failure.



Picture 1. Three goals for student experiences at school

The basics for a deeper interest and orientation in music and visual arts may lay in the school's art education. The individual experiences from school form the essence of the mental and emotional relationship with the arts. A single positive or negative experience may lead to starting a hobby or in negative cases to total rejection of the subject. At its best the experience leads

through feelings of success, feelings of overcoming the challenges and feelings of satisfaction and enjoyment to forming positive attitudes in connection with positive self conception and strong self confidence in the subject area. On the other hand a negative experience may consist of failures to fulfil the given task, disappointment and sadness, anxiety and disgust. These feelings often lead to negative values and attitudes towards the subject. They also have direct connections to self confidence and self conception in the same area.

The value of a skilful teacher can never be over accentuated (see White 1990). A good teacher is in the most important position in all school subjects and he or she holds the keys to the experiences which form the essentials of the pupils' values and attitudes. The teacher must be polite, tender and discreet especially in all art subjects. The fundamental experiences of a pupil at school may be divided in three main dimensions, which are: to be understood, to be accepted and finally to be loved. Whenever these fundamental experiences are achieved in the process of teaching, we can call the art education successful.

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Every child is an artist
The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up

Pablo Picasso

Meanings of art in life

Abstract

This article focuses on the meanings University of Helsinki kindergarten teacher students give to different art subjects (N=34). The students speculate on their own relation to one chosen art subject which is the most important to them. The research question was: **What does (music, visual arts, sports, handicraft, and shop) these particular art subjects mean to my life?** The student focuses on the meaning of an art subject through his or her own life. The research question was given at a lecture and was answered through email. It was executed in University of Helsinki faculty of education, Department of Applied Education in the spring 2005 during a lecture course Art education and philosophy. The percent of the answers was over 90%.

The research is a qualitative analysis of contents which includes phenomenological points of view. We focus on the meanings which the students describe in their narratives as significant to their life. We show the differences and similarities between the experiences rising from the ontology of each art subject and from the experienced world of art subjects. The research is connected to the problems of art education at school as a part of a wider project focusing on the meaning of art experiences as a means to a good life.

Keywords: Meaning of art, art subjects, school art education, kindergarten teacher students

The target group, method and the aim of the research

The target group consisted of 34 kindergarten teacher students from the University of Helsinki. The data was collected through email. The instruction which was given to the students during a course was: “*What does (music, visual arts, sports, handicraft, shop) this particular art subject mean to my life?*” The respondents had then one week’s time to answer the question. The response percentage was good, over 90%.

The aim of the research was to focus on the different experiences from the art subjects at school. The respondents had a chance to tell in their own words their feelings, emotions and experiences from lessons and from their voluntary hobbies in these areas. These experiences may show a path from early childhood experiences which could lead to meaningful and valuable appraisal of the art subjects. This research is a part of a larger project focusing on the

different parts of early childhood art education, art education at school and art education in the university classroom teacher and kindergarten teacher education (Ruismäki & Juvonen 2005a; 2005b; 2005c; Juvonen & Ruismäki 2005a; 2005b; 2005c; Juvonen & Anttila 2006; Anttila & Juvonen 2005; Juvonen & Lasauskiene 2004; 2005).

The method used in the analysis of the data was qualitative including ideas of phenomenographical research. This means that we focus on the conceptions of the target group. Although the group is small, it represents one class of kindergarten teacher students at the University of Helsinki. This is why we also mention the numbers of different mentions of the art subjects although the real results come from the substance of the narrative writings. The data was classified and categorised in thematic areas which were then analysed and named. After this the data was thoroughly analysed and specified to find the real essence of the writings. Then the results were recorded and added with direct quotes from the answers. Many of the answers were written in an artistic way; they were like poetry or artistic literature as the respondents described and stated reasons for their experiences and thoughts. The many meanings of these experiences arising from art subjects at school and elsewhere show the rich and fertile area formed by art subjects. Art subjects actually have meanings and emotional touching points in the minds of kindergarten students.

Results

First the answers were analysed and classified by their art subject areas. This showed that the importance and meaningfulness is quite evenly divided between different subjects.

Visual arts	8 mentions
Music	8 mentions
Handicraft	8 mentions
Home economics	5 mentions
Physical exercise	5 mentions
Literature	1 mention

What is surprising is the lack of mentions in literature. It seems that modern society is going towards the use of more and more technical devices in the field of art subjects. Literature is more time consuming than music or the visual arts. One has to centralise and concentrate more when reading a good book than in other art achievements. The number of mentions in different areas may also be dependent on the respondent's gender. Usually kindergarten teachers in Finland are women, and so it is in this group, too. Because this

respondent group consists mostly of female students (only 3 male) it may have some effect on results. But as we are not making a quantitative analysis, this is not fatal to our research. It may be that male students would have mentioned more physical education in their experiences.

Visual arts

The respondents wrote beautifully about their relation to art subjects. In many answers there was more than one subject mentioned at the beginning of the answer. Then the respondents focused on specific areas and told about the emotional and mental connections to the selected art subject.

Drawing has been a hobby for many respondents from early childhood. Some respondents even mention artist as a dream occupation when they were children. They often mention visual art as a source of aesthetic enjoyment and one of the respondents even studied to be an architect. She noticed after five years of working in an office that architecture had very little to do with art, it was mainly drawing straight lines with a ruler. She wrote that drawing and painting with children is real artistic work instead. Some respondents mention modern art as an example of something which they do not especially like in the visual arts. This is because the works of modern art do not seem sincere or true in their eyes. One of the respondents thought that they had been made only to give some relief to the artist's own bad feeling.

- A3. My secondary school visual arts teacher Ms. D.S. made me like visual arts so much that I wanted to choose it as an occupation. So I went to study as an architect. I worked as an architect for five years drawing straight lines with a liner and computer in a world full of articles and instructions. That was far from art.
- A1. I have been going to modern art exhibitions for years and I have jumped to the conclusion that these works are made only to relieve the bad feelings of the artists themselves.

The relation to visual arts has often its roots at home. The atmosphere and the attitude towards the visual arts in the childhood home have direct connections later in adulthood. Some parents have even sent their children to art school. One respondent describes nicely the moments at home when she and her siblings were drawing and painting together with their mother. She also had positive experiences in the school visual arts lessons and she has taken visual arts as a speciality subject at the university.

- A6. Visual arts have always been a part of my life. Together with my siblings and parents we have always been drawing, painting, shaping and doing things with our hands...
- A7. As a child my parents always promoted my visual art hobbies. They sent me to an art school when I was 10 years old.

Some respondents report that the relationship to visual arts has changed during their life: in the beginning it meant only a joyful way of spending time, but later they noticed that making visual art is a way of thinking and problem solving, a window to totally new worlds; they mention it as a source of seeking, realisation and discovering. Many of the respondents also mention painting and drawing as a kind of self therapy. It offers a channel to disgorge bad feelings and emotions and find new solutions to problems. One respondent sees painting as a way to focus on the essence of herself, a way to look inside her own little world.

- A2. As a child the painting and drawing was a joyful killing of time. Nowadays it means a lot more to me. With more knowledge I have been able to understand the totally new worlds which arts open to me... Painting is a relaxing experience where I can get relief for my emotions and find solutions to my problems.

Very often the respondents mention exhibitions and museums as a source of enjoyment and excitement in experiencing visual art. Museums and exhibitions are still often visited by these students in their free time. They show gratitude to their wise visual arts teachers who have taken them to exhibitions during their school time. Many respondents connect the knowledge about visual arts to the ability to enjoy that: the knowledge gives them an opportunity to deliberate their own relationship to arts, the relations between art and modern times, the effect the art objects have on different people, etc. Some of the respondents write that their life would not be the same without visual arts:

- A7. In museums I can speculate on my relationship to art, time and to other people... Art objects are not just pretty pictures on the wall.
- A3. Art is still a big part of my life. I paint, draw and go to exhibitions in my free time.

One respondent calls herself a visual person at heart. She always wants to sweeten her environment with colours, shapes and forms and materials making it look more beautiful, harmonic and cosy. She writes that her own prosperity is strongly connected to colours of the surroundings. She also looks at

nature as an art object and enjoys noticing beautiful shapes and details in the landscape. Exhibitions and art magazines give a great enjoyment to her eyes. Another respondent writes that colours are therapeutic to her and she wants to dress in bright colours (see Anning 2005).

The challenge in doing paintings in upper-secondary school is mentioned in some answers. The success in doing them gave much enjoyment. Visual arts are often mentioned as a source of self competence and it has helped to form a positive self conception. They help to fulfil one's own ideas, a way to dare and to interpret, a way to use creativity and to experience different emotions and feelings. One respondent sees visual arts as a way to contemplate herself.

A8. Through art one can become conscious about one's own experiences, hopes and conflicts and enrich one's own world.

Music

Many respondents see music as large part of their life; they cannot imagine a world without music. This is natural in a modern world where music is always present. It is almost impossible to live without hearing music. Still recent research has shown that there are about 3–4% of people who have a music restriction: their music orientation has not developed. (Syrjäkoski 2004.) This response group included only students with a positive music orientation.

The basis of music orientation is formed in early childhood and the first years at school. (Ruismäki & Juvonen & Tereska 2004). This is why the experiences from that time are very important and they are often described in the responses. Listening to music at home together with parents is a lovely memory for many of the respondents. One respondent even mentions that her mother used to listen to music while pregnant, waiting for her birth. Another says that her father always used to sing old dance music at home; these songs still evoke beautiful emotional memories. Another says that she had a lot of musical experiences when she was young. Her mother sang to her before the birth, because she had singing as a hobby. Music became very important to her life already in early childhood. She started piano playing at the age of seven and she had also been going to a school for special music classes.

A9. My father has a lot of records which we often used to listen to together.

A11. My mother listened to music while she was pregnant waiting for me. (The Four Seasons by Vivaldi). She thought it might be good for me.

- A12. My father always used to sing old dance music songs, and he still does. Those songs became familiar and they sound good in my ears.

One of the respondents mentions music as the most important art although she says that she cannot sing or play any musical instruments. Still she uses music as a means to handle her emotions and feelings. She often compares her own life with the stories in songs she hears. This respondent is an exception: most of those who mention music as the most important art subject play a musical instrument as a hobby.

- A13. It is strange that music is the most important art subject for me although I cannot play any musical instrument or sing, compose or even make lyrics to music. Music is a way to handle my emotions and feelings. I often hear my own life in the words of a song, I connect different songs to different situations, and mostly they are somehow sad.

Making up songs is an activity for all children. One of the respondents writes that in her childhood she always sang her own songs during playtime. She imagined playing the piano when she was sitting at a table as a little child. When she grew older she started piano playing, and has been playing ever since. She also uses playing as self therapy when there are troubles in her life. The divorce of her parents was one situation where piano playing could take her thoughts to something else. The therapeutic use of music is very common in this group of students. They often see music as a way to relax and get away from the hectic everyday life. One respondent describes his life which was sometimes lonely and dark; heavy music (Nightwish) gave him some relief.

- A14. I remember that I was quite a singer as a child. All the time I sang my own funny songs while playing.

- A15. At that time, I was quite lonely. I was shy and had only one friend. I was quiet and walked alone in the darkening streets and forests. I used to listen to music and it inspired me together with nature. Then I found the new record by Nightwish; it raised an interest in heavymetal music. That lasted for two and a half years.

One of the respondents describes music listening as something which reminds her of the excitement which she experienced while reading books when she was 12 years old. This way music raises literary memories beautifully connecting the two arts. The words of the songs have many meanings for the respondents. Many of them have started to write their own poems for songs to be made. Song writing is one of the music hobbies mentioned in the responses.

Many respondents have had beautiful experiences from playing music or singing in different concerts. These experiences have given them positive feedback and have strengthened their self conception. The growing musical competence has given many respondents a good attitude to music teaching and a deep love for music. Some of the respondents sing in a choir because they do not wish to perform alone. One respondent described negative experiences from piano lessons at music school, but after leaving it she found the joy of music making again when she herself could decide what music to play. Some other respondents have also found music learning and teaching focusing too much on completion and success instead of creativity and imagination.

- A16. In music classes we made a lot of songs and gave lots of different concerts and performances. We also played many instruments and even made our own record of our programme. There I had a lot of experience of performing as a musician.
- A15. What a day of joy it was when I passed my examination at the music school: never again would I play Etudes or prima vistas in front of an examination jury.

Handicraft

The skill of making objects by hand must be one of the essential sources of enjoyment for human beings. It has connections to our survival as a species and to success compared to other animals. Traditionally the handicraft skills have been highly respected in rural societies where everything had to be handmade. This respect may be still seen in the writings of our respondents. The enthusiasm for handicrafts often arises at home. If the atmosphere at home is suitable, the respect for making things by hand seems to continue in children. Many of the respondents report about their grandmothers and grandfathers who have taught them handicrafts. Seeing mother, father or grandparents doing handicrafts is a very efficient way to develop interest in the same actions. One of the respondents pointed out the meaning of the time used in learning handicraft skills from her grandmother; the activity also has a social aspect.

- A22. The time I spent with my grandmother when she taught me knitting has been irreplaceable. Handicrafts have also had a social point of view for me although knitting may well be done alone, too.
- A23. My aunt has a small handicraft enterprise in which also my mom works and this is why hand skills have always been present in our home.

"I learned to weave before I learned to read" wrote one of the respondents (A17.) She tells about the enormous amounts of needlework and other handicraft products she had made already before kindergarten. Handicraft has always been very important to this respondent and it gives her a way to relax and realise herself. Her grandmother taught her to weave as a small child and her mother made clothes herself. Another respondent describes how the crochet hooks and knitting needles just fitted in her hands. She always helped other pupils in handicraft lessons. This respondent clearly had her heritage from her father who was a handicraft teacher (wood-work). She wrote in her answer that she was totally engrossed in her knitting work so deeply that she had forgotten everything else in the world. This is a feeling which has been described by Csikszentmihalyi (1990a; 1990b; 1996; 1997) as a flow-experience. It is something which can be achieved in doing something (usually artistic) deeply devoted and concentrated so that the rest of the world just seems to lose its meaning: the only thing that matters is the activity at that very moment; everything seems to go just the way it should go and everything seems clear and right.

- A17. In upper-secondary school my teacher sometimes marvelled at my concentration in knitting: it looked like nothing else mattered.
- A18. I would have liked to do more knitting if it would have been possible... my grandmother taught me to knit and weave... I started doing handicraft before school.

Another student writes about her enthusiasm in handicrafts writing that these activities have always been easy and joyful for her. She dreamed about becoming a textile artist but never succeeded to manage in incoming examinations to get the education. Being a craftswoman means more to her than being an artist. The respondents often underline the importance of the action itself: it builds self-confidence when you notice that you are able to create something with your own hands. One of the respondents focuses on the idea of making something three-dimensional and beautiful by hand. She thinks that this idea has arisen from both his father's and mother's relatives as most of them have been craftsmen. The appreciation and respect for hand skills had always been present in her home. She thinks that for example knitting clears the mind as one must concentrate on the exact action and count the loops. It is most important to be able to create something visible and salient. It is necessary to see what has actually been made. Being able to express oneself concretely and to be able to deal with different moods, emotions and feelings seem to be the most important factors in loving handicrafts. One point is also the feeling of making something solid and useful (for example, socks) and

giving it to someone else makes handicrafts joyful. One of the respondents dreams of living in a big house where she could place a bench for woodwork, a sewing machine, a painting set and lots of different materials for handicrafts. Another respondent writes about the good feeling she gets from touching different materials with her hands. This seems to lead to the essential and indigenous origins of being a human being: sensing and touching things, feeling the presence of things with one's own hands.

- A18. The magic of making something with your own hand has not disappeared as I have grown older.
- A19. I believe that there is some kind of inborn need inside myself to create something with my own hands.
- A20. This need for handicrafts I have inherited from my parents whose relatives have always been craftsmen.
- A21. Through knitting I feel like I am able to fulfil my own needs... handicraft is for me a way to express myself and to deal with different emotions and feelings.

Many of the future kindergarten teachers have already had an education in some kind of handicraft skill. There are machine sewers and textile planners among the respondents. Some of them have found the industrial work too uncreative for them and that is the reason for getting a new education as a kindergarten teacher. This gives them an opportunity to join both handicrafts and childrearing.

- A22. After upper-secondary school I studied to be a textile sewer but working in the field never felt right for me and I wanted to educate myself more.

Home economics

Home economics is an area which has the deepest connections to the home. It is something in which we all have been raised all our lives. Still there are many different ways of dealing with the area, and the experiences from school strongly also colour the attitude to home economics especially among men. As this respondent group consisted mostly of females, it is obvious that the attitude towards home economics is different than it would be if there were as many male respondents in the group.

Home economics have always been important for little girls. One of the respondents (A23) writes about her plan for an occupation: "*I will be a mother*". She had always been a mother's little helper as a child and later she had a dream of becoming a home economics teacher. Many of the respond-

ents tell lovely stories about doing things together at home with their mother and siblings. One of them says that in all the pictures taken when she was young she always had an apron on. She also notes that their home was always clean and smelled of plain coffeebread. The cleanliness was due to the cleaning which was done every Friday evening by all the family members. The respondent writes about her lovely memories of cleaning for Christmas, making food together or baking cookies in the evenings. She clearly connects home economics to happiness and joy at home.

- A23. I have been told that when I was asked “What will you be?” as a child, the answer was “I will be a mother”.
- A24. When I was six years I already made cookies and Swiss roll and in every picture taken I had an apron on
- A25. I have lovely memories of Christmas cleaning when we were shaking carpets in the clear white snow.

In home economics many respondents have the enjoyment of seeing the results quite fast: cooking, baking or cleaning are all processes in which you see the results of your efforts immediately. Some of the respondents have home economic teachers in their families, too. This shows clearly the meaning of the atmosphere at home: the common appreciation of doing duties concerning home has clearly led to the interest in this area. It is easily seen, that also in home economics many respondents see a possibility to create and impress themselves. Imagination is often mentioned as well as relaxation while doing things at home. One more point mentioned is the healthiness of home-made foods:

- A25. I love to see the results of my job as soon as possible. This happens when you make bread or cookies.
- A23. In addition to love I need a smell of fresh baked coffee bread and a feeling of cleanness in my home.
- A25. When I was on the lower classes at school I always wanted to go to see my mother’s (a home economics teacher) lessons. I have lovely memories from them; sometimes I could participate in working, too.
- A26. In the future I am going to also teach my own children to take care of the home and make food because I have been taught all this by my parents.

Physical exercise

Physical exercise is one of the most popular or most hated subjects among all art subjects. It is probably because of the nature of the activity itself. Some

people are naturally sportier than others and this causes differences in everything concerning physical exercise. The experiences from school and other sport events build a self conception focusing on this specific area which leads to the everyday habits in adulthood. If the experiences are negative by nature, the attitude towards physical exercise becomes negative, too. Usually young people are quite sporty and boys even more than girls. This data (five mentions) may show sports as less popular than it would have been if there were more boys among the respondents.

The basic attitude towards physical exercise is built in early childhood at home. Many of the students point out the parents who actively took them to different kinds of gyms and physical games etc. A natural source of physical exercise is in children's games and playing. Many of the respondents mention the joy coming from putting themselves totally in the game, and being able to find their own limits and maybe even surpass them. One respondent states that one important reason for continuing the physical exercise hobbies was the friends and the social connections. Also the need for competition was mentioned several times in the answers. Winning in a sportsmanlike and decent competition gives satisfaction to anyone. One respondent describes his development from a competitor to an entertainment physical trainer, who tries to enjoy everything he does in physical exercise.

- A27. Of all art subjects, physical exercise is the area in which I am the best. This is why it is also the most important to me.
- A28 Thanks to eager parents I have been all my life taken to different types of physical exercise hobbies, gyms and sports teams. I had athletics, handball, football and judo as my hobbies on the upper level of comprehensive school... The most important reason for continuing the hobbies were probably the social relationships between the team mates.
- A29 I still do sports for competition, but lately I have noticed the growing need for enjoyment and joy from my exercises, not only the need for winning.

One of the respondents writes about the feelings he gets from physical exercise: it is hypnotic and easily becomes an addiction at its best. The exercise gives him a wonderful feeling and relieves all stress. One important point is also the team spirit which forms strong and long lasting friendships between the team members. Many of the respondents say that they have noticed the change in themselves from a need for success to a need for enjoyment from the physical exercise.

- A30. Earlier I thought that I was not good enough in physical exercises and sports, but lately I have learned just to enjoy it.

- A31. The atmosphere in the team was just great and everyone was positive to me. I played football for several years and I notice how hypnotic and addictive it can be. The feeling was fantastic and all the stress just went away with the exercise. Now afterwards I have noticed that the competition is not the most important thing; the physical exercise and enjoyment is.

Dancing as a physical exercise was the focus of one respondent. She started as a ballet dancer as a little girl and then moved into show dancing as a teenager. Dancing led to performances.

Another respondent tells that she never could stay still for a long time. Different environments during physical exercises have brought her joy and enjoyment. She has nice memories of going to Lapland for downhill skiing and cross-country skiing in childhood. One of the respondents tells about playing basketball until it became too serious. Evidently a certain kind of joy connected to physical exercise is needed to keep the job enjoyable and to avoid too much stress and pressure for the achievement. The feelings of success are very important in every sport. These give a strong self competence and help to develop one even more.

- A32. I never enjoyed performing in public but in ballet it was natural. I moved to show dance when my teacher started putting more pressure on me in ballet: the hobby became too serious. Nowadays I go to aerobic group which connects nicely the physical exercise and music.
- A33. I played basketball in the upper level of secondary school but then it became too serious and took too much time. The feelings of succeeding in sports kept me going for a long time. Also developing myself was part of my motivation.

Literature

Earlier literature was one of the most important art areas in the life of young people. In a postmodern world things have changed rapidly. Modern media has taken the place of reading and partly also writing. Modern youngsters would rather play with their computers or cruise around the Internet than read good books. This change is also seen in this data: only one of the 34 respondents mentioned literature as the most important art area.

The respondent states that literature has always been a part of her life. When she could not read as a child her parents read a lot to her. She learned her favourite fairytale by heart and corrected eagerly every time someone tried to take a short cut in the story. She learned to read before going to school: while scanning an old primer she suddenly noticed that she understood everything in it. It was an exciting experience for her and ever since she has been reading all the time. Reading gives her a hideaway from the real world: for a moment she can imagine being another person living life in ano-

ther world. She writes that it is possible for her to submerge herself into a good book so deeply that she does not hear or see anything else. A good book may also raise thoughts and offer insights which otherwise would not be found. Literature has had a strong effect on her life and personality as a whole. She said that lately she has become interested in poetry and it has given new experiences.

Conclusions

There are several points which connect all the mentioned art subjects no matter what the focus is. The first common point is that most of these attitudes and values have started from early childhood in the homes of the respondents. The influence of the attitude at home towards different art subjects is strong in all of the data. If the attitude and appraisal points to some art subject the child easily adopts it and adopts it in his or her own life. It is due to strong emotional and cognitive bonds, to the warm and happy memories from doing things together with siblings and parents. This leads the way to interest in the same area later in life. Especially home economics, handicrafts, music and sports are areas in which the transfer from home is obvious in this data. Parents' activity in these areas has had a direct response in their children.

In each art subject there are the following possibilities: challenge, overcoming problems, surpassing oneself, developing skills and achieving success. All these elements are in strong connection to a pupil's self conception, self confidence and through them, his or her world view. This makes art education extremely important in a child's development. Some of the art subjects include elements of competition or rivalry. For example sports may easily turn to serious rivalry if the teacher is not careful enough. Competition may sometimes also be a good way to motivate pupils, but if it always has winners, it also consists of losers. Losing in any area may cause trouble if it is consistent for some of the pupils.

A challenge is always a good way of motivation when it is within reach. Too large challenges jeopardise good aims of the teacher because they may lead to failure and disappointment. This is why a teacher always must thoroughly consider the targets he or she sets. This is only possible through good knowledge of the pupils' skills, abilities and personal characters. It may only be built via continuous evaluation in different situations of art education. A good teacher knows each and every pupil well; he or she knows the weak and strong areas of a pupil's self conception and self confidence. This helps a teacher to build these elements of personality stronger and make a growing

child become self confident and brave when meeting new and sometimes frightful tasks in life.

A possibility to overcome problems in art subjects also prepares a child to do the same in other areas in life. Art subjects offer a play-like environment to deal with problem solving. They also provide a space in which to handle one's own problems at a symbolic level and find solutions to them. Many of the respondents saw art subjects a way to look inside themselves; they also often used art as a means of self therapy. Especially music and visual arts were mentioned in this sense many times in the data.

When a challenge is set up, it includes the potential to surpass one's earlier achievements in the same field of action. One is always able to do things better and more strictly and obtain better results than earlier. An awareness of one's own development gives satisfaction and enjoyment on intellectual, emotional and physical achievement levels.

The feeling of success is strongly dependent on the challenge setting: a wise teacher is able to set challenges in a way that leads to maximal satisfaction when the target is reached. Too low challenge does not raise motivation and on the other hand too high challenges make the task seem a mission impossible which can easily make a pupil give up trying. A pupil should always be able to believe in the success of solving the problem or meeting the challenge well enough. This is one of the measures of a good teacher: it demands good skills and abilities in both evaluating the pupils and planning the lessons and the tasks and assignments.

The most important element in all art education is to use art subjects in a way which leads to the development of a whole personality which includes positive, healthy and strong self-competence and a multiply strong self conception in different areas of art subjects. This is a great challenge to all teachers and first of all to all teacher trainers in art education (cf. Ruismäki & Juvonen 2005).

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**CHILDREN LEARN WHAT
THEY LIVE**

Dorothy Law Nolte

*If a child lives with criticism,
he learns to condemn.*

*If a child lives with hostility,
he learns to fight.*

*If a child lives with fear,
he learns to be apprehensive.*

*If a child lives with pity,
he learns to feel sorry for him-
self.*

*If a child lives with ridicule,
he learns to be shy.*

*If a child lives with jealousy,
he learns what envy is.*

*If a child lives with shame,
he learns to feel guilty.*

*If a child lives with encour-
agement,
he learns to be confident.*

*If a child lives with tolerance,
he learns to be patient.*

*If a child lives with praise,
he learns to be appreciative.*

*If a child lives with acceptance,
he learns to love.*

*If a child lives with approval,
he learns to like himself.*

*If a child lives with recogni-
tion,
he learns that it is good to have
a goal.*

*If a child lives with sharing,
he learns about generosity.*

*If a child lives with honesty
and fairness,
he learns what truth and jus-
tice are.*

*If a child lives with security,
he learns to have faith in him-
self and in those about him.*

*If a child lives with friendli-
ness,
he learns that the world is a
nice place in which to live.*

*If you live with serenity,
your child will live with peace
of mind.*

With what is your child living?

Canfield, J. & Wells, H. C.
(1976). 100 ways to enhance
self-concept in the classroom: A
handbook for teachers and par-
ents. Boston: Allyn & Bacon

Important factors in small children's art education

Abstract

This article focuses on conceptions of a group of kindergarten teachers and preschool teachers (n=38) working with children who are about to begin their school, which means that the children they teach are 6–7 years of age. The article is based on empirical research which was done in University of Helsinki's teaching project in the Finnish city of Lahti in autumn 2005. The target group consisted of 38 persons, all of them female. The data was collected by email after a teaching period "*Aesthetic orientation in preschool and school beginning*".

The questions were given during the lectures to participants and they sent their answers to the researchers by email. Then the data (N=33) was analysed, categorised and reported. In this article only one question is handled, and it was: "***What are the most important factors in small children's art education from your own point of view?***" The results show that the educators see art education as an important mean to build up children's self-conception and emotional growth. The results also show a way to be able to lead a good life with the enjoyment, therapy and joy which understanding art can give us all.

Keywords: Art education, good life, kindergarten teacher, Aesthetics and Art, Early childhood education, Phenomenographic research

Introduction

What is a good life?

A good life is something everyone should be able to live. The future always includes both good and bad events, but what is important is the inner strength of each individual. How happy and fortunate a person is, depends on many different factors. There are personal factors and social factors connected to an individual's happiness.

The post modern society is rapidly changing. There are many new ideas pressuring the social, cultural and economical structures in our times. The institutions of government are in economic trouble as the needs of the population increase and the sources of money diminish. It is important that in a situation like this we could believe in possibilities and positive challenges while living through this turning point. It is often said that today people have

drifted into a crisis of values. We speak about disappearing values and at the same time about too many values, which lead to difficulties in deciding which of them we should choose to guide us through life. It is often thought that old values will collapse and new ones will grow up to take their place. Still many researches show that the basic values change very slowly, if at all (Väkevä 2004). The changing process concentrates more on the importance of values, beliefs and preferences. Principles, needs, hopes and expectations form the basis of decision making.

The ongoing change in the society reflects especially in the needs of people (see Niikko 2004). We are moving away from a society that fulfils only the basic needs, to a society that focuses more on social appreciation and self-fulfilment. The general view of reality becomes increasingly more fragmented in the middle of the tide of information. That is why the world view of young people easily becomes splintered and fragmented (cf. with Stipek 2004; Landerholm & Gehrie & Yi 2004; Efland 2004). Life is more concentrated in short-term thinking: narcissistic hedonism easily takes the place of a tranquil long period of planning and decision-making.

Having a positive picture of one's own current life as well as the future is one of the basics for a good and meaningful life. If you have something to enjoy and look forward to, it is easier to overcome the usual difficulties of everyday life. If you understand life and society generally, it is easier to live in it. In this article we ask how art could help to form a solid and harmonious self-concept and world view which would form a solid basis for leading a good life. The way children understand art is in connection with their experiences in early childhood.

A good everyday life ?

Wittgenstein wrote that ethics is a research which tries to solve what is "good". Ethics is also research of what is really valuable or what is really important. Ethics researches the meaning of life and what makes it worth living. At the same time it is a research about the right way to live. This is what connects everyday life situations to a good life. These questions are like looking at a sculpture from many different points of view. The terms indicating values (good, right, important, valuable) are used in two different meanings. The first meaning is comparative value (relative value) and the other is absolute value (ethic value). (Wittgenstein 1986, 24–25). The relative values are used when there exist some kind of a standard and we try to fulfil it. The ethic values cannot be connected to any standards—they rather form a standard. Ethics is often mixed with the concept morals. Ethics is a wider concept

and we can say that all moral statements are basically ethic, but all ethical statements are not always moral.

Aesthetics and art

In the latest discussion on aesthetics there have been new winds blowing. For example Shusterman (1995; 1997; 2003) has written strongly about the gap between theoretical and pragmatic approach in arts education. He has widened the entire definition of art to contain also elements of everyday life and popular culture. Shusterman's point of view is quite important in modern societies ruled more and more by different types of media. These ideas form a basis for this article, too. In the field of music education there has been active research going on about the philosophic and practical tasks about how to teach, what to teach, and also what the aims and needs of teaching music and other arts might be (e. g., Paige, R. 2005). The basic approach in this conversation has been the difference in basic philosophy in pragmatic music education philosophy and aesthetic music education philosophy. (Elliott 1995; 1996; Regelski 1996; Swanwick 1988; 1996; Anttila & Juvonen 2002, Juvonen & Anttila 2003). The same conversation has also been going on in the field of aesthetics more widely.

Aesthetics is a part of philosophy which tries to establish what beauty really means. Aesthetics is a philosophic approach; it concentrates on problems trying to find out what art basically is and what it means, or what difference there is between aesthetic values and values of observed or empirically verifiable knowledge. It is often stated that an aesthetic experience is close or even includes some kind of "flow-experience", which is a dynamic state, a holistically or comprehensively stimulating experience that does not create anxiety about what is happening or what might not happen (Csikszentmihalyi 1990a, 4; 1990b; 1997). In any case, emotions and feelings are usually present in all kinds of intense experiences, and that is why the experiences are often remembered even after many years. Naturally the intensity of emotions and feelings is dependent on personality structure. It is often thought that enjoyment (pleasure) is one of the feelings connected to aesthetic experience. Both concepts: experience and enjoyment, cannot be easily specified as they are usually very personal experiences. The intensity of the experience is consequently hard to measure. An experience can be enjoyable, if it has a positive charge. Enjoyment usually lasts only a little while, when experience can even change a person's whole life by bringing new sensations and feelings into his or her emotional realm (Ruismäki 1996). The joy of success in doing something demanding easily brings experiences which are enjoyable. This is one important connecting point linking arts experiences and aesthetic experi-

ences to education. In arts subjects at school as well as in preschool it is possible to create an atmosphere where a pupil can and will process artistic work which both provides a challenge and gives the joy of success.

Aesthetic elements can easily be found also in many other sectors of life (sports, science, love, food, animals etc) but in this article we will not be touching on them. The associations between ethic and aesthetics are a very common fountain for argumentation in literature comprehending thoughts of epistemology, the ethics of good and the aesthetic of beauty. A question is often raised about the domination between the two subjects mentioned. In this article we are not trying to respond to that question, even though it seems evident that aesthetics cannot exist without an ethical and moral point of view.

The target group and the aim of the research

The inquiry was targeted to kindergarten teachers and elementary school teachers working in preschool and they came from different cities in the Southern Finland. The participants were in the middle of their updating education at the time of the research. Prof. Heikki Ruismäki was responsible for a course "*Aesthetic orientation in preschool and school beginning*", and that was where the research was completed. The question we focus on this article was: "*What are the most important factors in small children's art education from your own point of view?*"

The age of the target group was between 23 and 40. The presentation of the inquiry which was used in this research was given to the students at the end of a lecture held by Professor Ruismäki in the autumn 2005. The total sum of the target group was 38, but the number of responses was finally 33. There were no male teachers among the respondents.

The aim of the research was to gain more knowledge of the respondents' conceptions about art education (in common). The information this research offers can be used in many ways in planning rapidly changing education for both kindergarten and classroom teachers. The questions asked were stated based on many sources (Reimer 1989; Dickie 1990; Puurula & Väyrynen 1992; Langer 1976; Koroscik 1992) and also practical themes which came up during the discussions in the lecture series. The students wrote their answers independently and intuitively reflecting their points of view to bring new knowledge to the focused field of problems.

The conceptions of the participants show quite widely the thoughts of the whole target group. At least considering Finland we believe that these results show the main lines of thinking although the number of participants was small.

Process and methods

This research belongs to the qualitative research tradition, and to be more specific: in the phenomenographical field. The aim in qualitative research is to describe the target as well as possible and to increase understanding about the subject. The phenomenographical method was first used by Marton in Sweden. The targets of the research are the conceptions and relations between conceptions of people. It shows the way the world is built and represented inside one's consciousness. The starting point for this approach is consciousness and the ability to build conceptions of different phenomenon and to describe these conceptions linguistically (Nummenmaa & Nummenmaa 1997, 65–66; Ahonen 1994, 113–114, 121–122). Phenomenographical research has some points of contact with Piaget's theories, Gestalt psychology and phenomenology. The main difference is that in phenomenographical research the surroundings and the cultural dimension are included in the research.

The conceptions are built inside our head through experiences and thoughts and with them a human being is connected and interacts with the surrounding world. Each person has different conceptions about different phenomenon because of the different experiences which form the conceptions in the first place. We form through everyday life so called pre-conceptions on which the understanding of new experiences is built. Through analysis and interpretation we build different descriptive categories which include different ways of understanding the world on a general level without connecting the categories into the individuals who are under research. These descriptive categories form the main results of phenomenographic research.

Results

The data analysis was made by classifying the data on many levels and naming the categories, then analysing the substance of each category. The results showed clearly, that the saturation point was reached in our research material. It is often said that: *"It is not necessary to fish all the fishes in the lake to know what kind of fishes live there"*. The same answers became common after analysing two-thirds of the material collected. The problems in this kind of data are the deep connections between different elements of the phenomenon researched. The research revealed five categories of description telling: ***"What are the most important factors in small children's art education from your own point of view?"***

Most important elements in art education are:

- 1) A possibility to experience art (feelings, joy of success)
- 2) A possibility to act in field of art (invent, create, imitate, practise)
- 3) A possibility achieve versatile, different type interactivity (experiencing art, creating art)
- 4) A possibility to learn knowledge, skills and attitudes towards arts and making it (knowledge about art)
- 5) A possibility to grow as a human being

These categories were formed from the answers. The first element: “*Possibility to experience art (feelings, joy of success)*” was seen very clearly in most of the answers. The respondents show deep understanding of the importance of a child’s learning though his or her own activity as well as the meaningfulness of the joy, pleasure and enjoyment the children get in the production process.

Person 1 The most important element of early childhood art education is the phenomenal attitude and the versatility.

Person 3 A child gets experiences in his own work and gets lots of pleasure and enjoyment in doing it him- or herself.

Person 7 Because art is a personal experience, we should be careful not to criticise the products children have produced with their own hands.

Person 20 A possibility to get different experiences from all fields of art.

Person 23 Children should be taken to art museums and concerts; you should listen to good and many-sided music with them and read poems and fairytales. Versatility in art education is much better than concentrating on one or two fields of art.

The second category “*Possibility to act in the field of art (invent, create, imitate, practise)*” shows the importance of the child’s own activity, which also is connected to positive feedback. A child as an artist is very often mentioned in the answers.

Many of the respondents also note that not all art is only beautiful. There are often also negative elements involved in art. These elements should be discussed with a child to make him/her understand the polarity of the world.

Person 4 ... a child needs a possibility to be an artist himself, to be able to create with his/her own hands.

- Person 10 A child enjoys doing something meaningful to him/herself...What is important for a child is the process of doing something, creating self, that's where children need space and help from adults...
- Person 13 Making art objects of their own without competition may become very meaningful and satisfying; children should be let to enjoy making their own products.
- Person 21 It also depends on a child's age. When we are working with children 0-3 years old, the most important element is to give them possibilities to get experiences together with a safe adult. It should leave the child with a good emotional feeling, a feeling of being taken care of and being loved.
- Person 22 I feel that the most important element in art education is that every child gets a possibility to take part in artistic work in many different ways, they should have a possibility to react their personal ways and share different experiences.
- Person 25 The joy of doing something. The result is not as valuable as the process of making something.
- Person 5 Hearing the child's own point of view and approving it is extremely important. A child has a right to be understood by an adult. It is also important that in art education a child knows that he or she is loved.
- Person 6 A child must never be embarrassed or humiliated; all his productions must be taken positively and he must be motivated to go further.
- Person 9 Appreciating and respecting one's own work and the works of other children.
- Person 13 ... to be able to express himself and to be in interaction with surrounding world...
- Person 15 A child enjoys art by taking part in art making and in interaction with others to be able to imitate others and use these processes in finding his or her own way of expression.
- Person 7 A child should live through both negative and positive art experiences to bring out his/her own ideas of what is art that will be his/her own.
- Person 6 Experiential and phenomenal experiments, an ability to enjoy and create beauty in its forms are important factors in the growing process... Anything that comes out from a child must be let to come, no matter if it is positive or negative.
- Person 9 Although the wholeness of the art object might not be enjoyable to you, you can always find a small detail which is beautiful.

Person 12 Art makes you free from everyday life and gives you a feeling that even the impossible will be possible in the world of art.

The third element mentioned was: “*The possibility to achieve versatile, different types of interactivity (experiencing art, creating art)*”. Many of the answers show clearly the importance of versatility in teaching arts. The possibility of experiencing different art forms and broadmindedness in general are the leading principles that should be followed to be good art educators for small children. The abilities of the educator may not be limiting factors in early childhood art education: what is necessary is the right attitude towards the arts, which means readiness to offer the children situations where art is involved without a fear of prejudice or humiliation. It is often said that the art experience kind of brightens up your vision and allows you to notice elements of the art object which you normally would not notice. These effects are often connected to the aesthetic experience. Perceptive skills are mentioned in many of the answers. This shows that it is an important element of art education. Some answers show how the target group has developed their own perceptive skills to quite a high level: they see and feel beauty even in every day surroundings.

Person 16 It is good to teach a child to notice the different types of art there are. That helps them to notice the changes; differences and then they can develop their perceptive skills.

Person 24 Developing a child’s senses with artistic actions in a safe atmosphere is very important, because then a child gets to know the enjoyment in a way which is not learned through cognitive processes; it is learned through emotions. Carpe diem!

Person 11 Seeing one’s own and also other children’s works of art helps to appreciate and enjoy different points of view. Children can find differences and similarities from the works, but an adult should be giving advice about criticising other’s work. Every work is valuable and good.

Person 9 Most important in small children’s art education is the liberality and broadmindedness together with the freedom from prejudice. The educator’s own limitations or constraints of making many sided art may not narrow children’s options.

Person 26 Respecting dissimilarity and everything different is one of the most important aspects of art education of small children... we have to respect the products of other children and also our own output.

Person 1 It is also important that a child is never forced to make art. Everything must rise from the child her/himself, spontaneously.

- Person 8 Because art is a personal experience for everyone, no one is allowed to criticise a child's own product.
- Person 11 In the stage when children are bubbling with all kinds of ideas and thoughts we must give room to creativity, otherwise it may happen that children only take prepared models from adults and lose their own spontaneous ability to invent and create new.
- Person 20 I wish I could make children excited about art in their own individual way.
- Person 7 Hearing a child's own opinion is most important. A child has a right to be understood by an adult. We should always give them a feeling of being loved.
- Person 9 Talking about art and one's own experiences raises interest in the subject and helps in understanding many levels of art.

"Possibility to learn knowledge, skills and attitudes towards arts and making it (knowledge about art)"—this was the fourth element found in the data. The child's ability to invent and create something new is seen as a great opportunity for art education. Many of the respondents seem to think that after school age the children lose that ability somehow. The child-originated artistic work is seen as very important through the answers. The respondents also note the importance of encouraging children's differences and dissimilarities as they see it important that the children grow up as individuals.

- Person 3 A child wants to try many different materials to get experiences of working with them.
- Person 13 The most important thing is that children have enough different materials to do whatever they wish.
- Person 14 I believe that children enjoy art if they can take part in making it, identifying themselves and admiring good art. They also must have a chance to imitate pictures and shapes and they may find their own way of expression.
- Person 17 It is also important that a child has a possibility to create; he/she should be encouraged to make art that looks like him/herself.
- Person 25 Of course a child should be given different materials and guidance in using them, but after that we should count on a child's own creativity.
- Person 10 Artistic work is a valuable part of emotional, social and cognitive development. Art supports individuality and dissimilarity. Art education aims to develop a child's creativity, imagination, self expression. It also helps to develop senses and perception, spatial conceptualisation and an appreci-

ation of other's work... Children's own art exhibitions are interesting and children love and enjoy looking at other's works.

Person 2 A small child is an active learner, and he or she learns best by doing things him- or herself. Learning through trying and finding personal paths in doing things will develop problem-solving abilities.

The fifth element concentrates on a possibility to “*growing as a human being*”. They deal with meanings which may not open to adults. When a child creates something of his or her own, it may contain such elements which do not show outside, but still it may give a lot of enjoyment to the child. The safe and encouraging adult is needed to guide a child into dealing with art. To grow to be a human being is involved with emotional growing and broad understanding of differences. A child may handle difficult emotions through artistic work without even noticing it. That is one reason for the therapeutic elements in art. Many of the respondents point out that a child should never be forced to do something or made fun of. The emotional surroundings in art subjects should be made as safe and encouraging as possible. Art may also raise such feelings in a child which he/she cannot handle without an adult sharing the experience. Through discussion a child can take to pieces the experiences arising from art. This helps to better understand one's own emotions and feelings. Estimating and evaluating children's art work should always be done in a positive and encouraging manner, but still with a realistic touch. Too much praise will not lead to good results because children are actually quite skilful at evaluating their own work. Delicacy is one of the elements which should be present every time we discuss or evaluate artistic work. Then the children will be able to learn from experience and how to handle evaluation and criticism.

Person 6 Art may raise uncontrollable feelings in a child, and that is why an adult is needed to help deal with the emotional side. An adult should be very sensitive to such feelings, and be ready to guide the handling of them in a safe atmosphere. Art education develops emotions and feelings as a part of personality.

Person 12 Through art a child goes through different emotional experiences. He or she gains insights and feelings of success when he or she understands something about what he or she sees.

Person 19 Children should be taught to stop, wonder and listen to the surrounding world; we should give them a chance to relax and feel the silence of nature. That is how they have a chance to see beauty around them, to go near satisfying and beautiful places and objects. By showing a good example we can teach children to enjoy art and later even make them artists... After the art experience it is necessary to discuss the event. Were you

afraid of something in the theatre play? What do you remember about the concert? What was the most exciting thing in the art exhibition? These are the types of questions to be asked a child after an intense art experience.

- Person 1 The feedback from art-making should always be positive and encouraging to keep alive the will to try making art again. Then after trying many times the quality of the work will be better... With positive feedback I don't mean over praising, because small children often get embarrassed; they can very often evaluate their own work quite well.
- Person 4 Most important is the positive and appraising feedback.
- Person 5 A child needs a chance to be an artist him/herself, to get a chance to make art. He/she must also get some appraisal of the work.
- Person 8 Because art is a very personal experience, no one has a right to start criticising the results or the artist. The art gives a good possibility to consideration and delicacy in the child.
- Person 16 Even if someone would be better in drawing, it doesn't matter, because everyone is good in some part of artistic expression and one must not underestimate one's own skills. Art as well as beauty is in the eyes of the spectator. We must teach children to respect another person's work.
- Person 10 Art supports a child's individuality and dissimilarity from other children.

Developing self confidence is one of the major challenges in all education. Art education may be one good way of developing self confidence, self consciousness and the self-concept of a child. This happens through creativity and the feelings of success in doing something oneself. A growing child needs to get feedback about his handmade products, but this feedback should be wisely given. In many cases it has been proven that unwise music testing, rough criticism or a negative attitude towards a child's product may cause lifelong changes in attitudes for a growing child. A good example is the singing test, which is still in use at many schools: a new research among the elementary school classroom teacher students show that most negative experiences in music lessons have arisen from these tests which often have been carried out in the classroom in front of all other pupils (Juvonen 2005). Another important element in developing self confidence is that a child should not be forced to do anything. This only causes negative attitude against the subject.

- Person 2 A child naturally gets joy and enjoyment when doing something concrete with his/her hands and feet. A child is naturally active, and wants to try everything new. These experiences are connected to the child's self-

concept. Positive guidance is needed to strengthen this slowly forming part of personality.

- Person 3 When a child is a participant in artistic actions he or she, at the same time, observes everything that's happening. He or she tries to find where his own skills are situated in comparison with the others. When getting positive experiences this helps to build a positive self-conception.
- Person 10 A child enjoys all active concrete doings and to him/her it is most important to be appreciated and encouraged. This feeds his/her belief in his or her own abilities and skills.
- Person 14 Sharing experiences in artistic work, singing, drawing, acting, etc. without criticising the children is very exhilarating and satisfying to children. In this area we are dealing with the most tender and sensitive parts of mind and emotions. Not everyone must be a new Mozart or genius in some field of arts. Let's help children find the therapeutic use of arts!

Conclusions

On the road to a good life there are some turning points which are more important than others. One of the most important elements leading to good life is the many-sided conception about one's person. It has many smaller parts like self-confidence or self-conception or self-reliance (see Eccles & Wigfield 2002). These can also be divided into smaller parts like the musical self. Self-image forms an important part of personality and it has close connections also to a person's worldview. The worldview can, also, be divided into smaller parts like the musical worldview or some other parts of the art world view. All these important parts of a person's mind are forming and being built during childhood. The most important experiences in this artistic field of life take place in early childhood during the first years of life. That makes the difference: the under school-aged children are beginning to form their conceptions about art, sports and every other part of normal life at that age. That is why it is the most necessary to realise the importance of all art subjects. They offer the early childhood educator an opportunity to lead the child on a path towards a good life (see Mori 1997; Juvonen & Ruismäki 2005). The good life consists of a healthy self-image, an ability to enjoy arts, an ability to take part in making different art projects and an ability to enjoy and understand artistic work.

In early childhood art making it is not only a matter of building a positive self-image. At the same time a child learns new motoric, social, emotional and conceptualisation skills. Maybe the most important of these are the emotional connections. They give the sense to all arts. Feeling something in an

artistic experience or situation makes it possible to feel the same emotions later in similar types of situations.

The road leading to a good life is also connected to the ethical questions, which arise from doing things right and just (see Wittgenstein 1986). These questions were closely present in the writings of the target group of this research. As a whole this research shows the great diversity of possibilities to enhance the art education in early childhood. What is most important is that all the participants of the research seemed to have a philosophy concerning art education of their own. They used it as a basic theory in their thinking about art education. This means, that they have logic in their thinking and they have good abilities to their work concerning art education. The worst situation would be that our children would be in early childhood in the hands of kindergarten teachers without a clear vision about art education's meaningfulness and importance for small children. The elements of art education form the stairs which may lead to a good life; we must give our children opportunities and abilities to climb those stairs, step by step.

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Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I'll understand

Chinese proverb

Modelling a good art educator

Abstract

In this article, we report on forming and testing a new model focusing on kindergarten teachers' working contentment, working sensibility, and general work satisfaction while working as art educators. It is built on three elements which are in strong interaction with each other. In the most important role is the balance between people's recognised self-conception and the ideal self-conception. The second area consists of general motivation in teaching. The third element in the model is intense and active association in some of Art education's many substance areas. This element could also be called orientation in work. The new model was tested with kindergarten teacher students (N=128) of University of Helsinki in the spring of 2005. They answered in a series of questions based on the model.

When balance in the area of self-conception is reached, a person's self-conception is strong and positive, his/her self-confidence is strong and self-appreciation is on high level. That builds a strong foundation for teaching Art. To feel satisfaction in Art education all three elements are needed. Teacher education is generally responsible for creating these elements and helping students to gain the necessary skills to work with children generally and in Arts education in particular. In an ideal situation a kindergarten teacher has a vocation to his/her work, good skills in all substance areas of Art education (music, sports, fine arts, etc.), but also a good, balanced self-conception. The results show that the professional orientation is closely connected to the self-conception in our model.

Keywords: art education, kindergarten teacher students, work welfare, job satisfaction, attitudes to art teaching

Background

In this research we create and test a model which includes (kindergarten teachers',) art educators' work contentment, meaningfulness of work and work enjoyment—broadly speaking well-being at work in connection with happiness at work.

The model includes three basic elements which are in continuous interaction with each other. These elements are: (1) "A balance between the conscious self and the ideal self" (most important element). (2) "A motivation towards teaching and learning" (3) "An intensive, functional (operational)

relationship with some art subject” (music, physical education, painting, etc.). Usually these art subjects are very important and close to small children. The third element was focused on and sharpened in analysing the data to “a close and positive relationship with some art subject”.

The contentment model was built leaning on earlier research results and on thoughts of researchers. The model is based on motivation theories, professional self-conception research and self-efficacy research (Ruismäki 1991; Juvonen 2000; Eccles and Wigfield 2002). The new model is connected with many different research areas on the conceptualistic level (see Hidi & Renninger & Krapp 2004). The elementary concepts are self-conception, self-efficacy (e.g., Bandura 1977; Pajares 1997; Welch 1995; Pajares & Schunk 2001), motivation, orientation, mastery of skills, meaningfulness at work, satisfaction at work, balance between conscious self and ideal self, self-appreciation, the control of life and broadly speaking welfare in the whole life. Oreck’s research (2002) amongst American teachers showed that of all the personal characteristics, self-image and self-efficacy were most strongly connected to using arts in teaching.

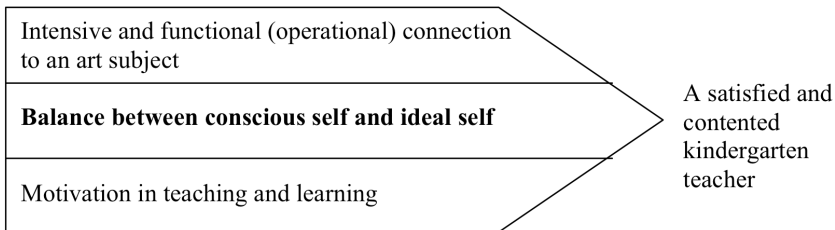


Figure 1. Model of work contentment of kindergarten teachers

The ideal situation is that the ideal self-concept and the conscious self-concept are fully balanced with each other. In that situation a kindergarten teacher feels that she/he is exactly what she/he wants to be. Motivation in teaching and learning is good and the kindergarten teacher has a close, intense functional relationship with the art subjects which are also important to the young children. To feel contented in work as an art educator, the kindergarten teacher needs all three components mentioned—none may be absent either. The balance in the self-concept area forms a solid basis for meaningful art education. When balance is reached, the kindergarten teacher has strong self-respect, sufficient self-confidence and high self-esteem. If one wants to develop oneself as a teacher, one must have a clear vision about the desired new self—which means the direction of ambition. The full balance between the ideal self and the conscious self can hardly to be found before one accepts

oneself for what one is. One can always develop, but at the same time one must remember that no one is perfect.

This balance alone is not enough; there must also be the interest in teaching and learning connected with the relationship to art subject. If two out of three elements are present, a kindergarten teacher may feel her/his work meaningful and enjoy work. The motivation of learning is vital in the work of every teacher no matter on what level the teaching takes place. In a kindergarten teacher's work the interest towards teaching arise the deepest when the work is experienced as a vocation, a purpose in life and a mission associated to balance in areas of self-conception. Motivation in learning emphasises interest towards a small child's learning processes and one's own and also towards learning as a whole phenomenon. A teacher's own learning processes should be part of a kindergarten teachers desire to follow the processes in the field of education and research together with the passion of developing him- or herself as a teacher. All this is closely connected with reflection on teaching work and developing one's own consciousness and awareness.

By functional, we mean in this context the kindergarten teacher's interest, activity and ability in a subject are. For example, in music we would expect the teacher to play instruments, sing or participate in musical achievements like group or orchestra music playing, choir singing, making recordings and listening to them. This interest shows also in the willingness to develop one's own skills in creating music or performing it either alone or together with other people. If the relationship in music is intense and functional the kindergarten teacher has good potential to feel satisfaction and enjoyment in her/his work. (Ruismäki 1996).

In Figure 1 the straight lines between the elements, (in actuality) remind wavy lines as the weight and significance of the elements keep changing in different times (despite the comparatively high stability).

The main assignment of the education of kindergarten teachers is to support and back up the three elements mentioned. The education must help a kindergarten teacher student find the balance in the self-concept areas, to develop her/his personality as a teacher, to develop the values and the interests towards different areas of art. This should be done by raising the level of student teacher's level of consciousness through self reflection. Naturally the aim of education must also be raising the knowledge and everyday skills of a student (see Younger et al. 2004). When a kindergarten teacher knows the justifications of the decisions, she/he can understand them and is also able to situate them in a larger context. That is when she/he is also able to theoretically understand and master the subject area. Besides the institutional educa-

tion (formal schooling and teacher training) self-education can also play a very important role in finding balance between the three elements mentioned.

Research assignment

In the empirical part of our research we examine the thoughts in the working contentment model (“arrow” or “pencil” in Figure 1) awakes in kindergarten teacher students. They were also asked to analyse themselves using the arrow model. In the lecture in which the instruction of the research was given to kindergarten teacher students we discussed the importance of the three elements of the model in light of working contentment and welfare.

The kindergarten teacher students from the University of Helsinki (N=128) deliberated on the given model in their own case using some of the art subjects as an example. The students were about 22 years old. They completed the assignment by using email responses in which they analysed themselves using the elements of the model. The response percentage of the questionnaire was high, a little over 90 %.

In this research the researchers raised questions based on the data collected. We describe some of the central themes, findings, questions and points of view from the data. The results reveal the subjectively experienced world of kindergarten teacher students. Our aim is to point out results and questions which may specify the construction of our model. Thematically vital discourses were especially highlighted. The mainline subjects of the data (regarding closest art subject) were described using quantitative analysis which was done after quantification of the data. The quantification was done after analysing the qualitative data and building the classification.

Results

Kindergarten teacher students mention more than one art subject area to be of interest to them. Some wrote on a general level without a personal point of view, while others wrote on a very personal level (cf. Oreck 2004). Table 1 shows the general lines of the main art subject areas of the research group.

Table 1. The main art subjects of the respondents.

Most important art subject	Number of responses
Music	35
Fine Arts	27
Physical education	24
Handicraft, textile work	13
Theatre and self-expression	4
Dancing	2
Literature	1
Total	101

Music was the most important art subject for this research group. Fine arts and physical education were also considered important by many respondents. Handicraft and textile work and pottery were mentioned 13 times. The least important subjects were theatre, dance, and literature (see Ediger 2004).

Intensive and functional relationship to an art subject

The results show clearly, that when a teacher attaches great importance to some art subject area it will come across in his or her work and may also be transmitted to small children. When a teacher is interested in an art subject it makes it much easier to understand a child's interest in different areas of life. It is consequential for a teacher to consider and become conscious of his or her own relationship to all different art subjects—which also includes self reflection. Naturally a satisfied and contented kindergarten teacher must have the basic knowledge and skills in all arts. Mere knowledge and skill is not enough because functional and personal commitment through an intensive relationship to some of the art subjects is also needed (cf. Elliott and Regelski 2003). If a kindergarten teacher is skilful, enthusiastic and committed, it is sure that the children will also be interested in the matter at hand. This could be seen in many of the responses in the data.

When children are brought to see an intense and functional close relationship with an art subject area it is most necessary that the kindergarten teacher is fully and totally committed. Sensing intensity in the art relationship is closely connected to a kindergarten teacher student's own feeling of ability in the specific art subject area. When a teacher understands the deep variety inside art education subjects and areas he/she is able to jump into the wonderful world of art. If, on the contrary, a kindergarten teacher is unconcerned or presumptuous towards some art subject area it surely will show in the attitude of the children. However, it is most necessary for a kindergarten teacher to

have a functional relation with all arts subjects, not only to the ones that children have an interest in. It may be considered that subject teachers (like a music teacher or a fine arts teacher) might have an intense relationship with her/his own subject area, but a kindergarten teacher should have an open-minded relationship with all art subject areas.

The most important task is to give small children different experiences about all art subjects. In one answer a kindergarten teacher student wished that she would “*never make the same mistakes as her own teachers had done*”. They had made art subjects one-sided, frightening and inhibited self-expression. Finding differences and observing opposites is a way to find new ideals. In an intensive relationship towards an art subject it is also a question of a teacher sharing his or her own positive experiments with the children and being able to broaden their experimental world. This has also to do with the teacher’s own motivation at work.

We can also speculate about a kindergarten teacher being a general teacher or an art specialist. From the answers we can come to the conclusion that the most important art subject is the one in which the students have the best skills. The answers show that too much concentration on only one art subject would weaken the others. Essential in kindergarten work is the usage of “*applied substance*” which means that the teacher must be able to use his or her own skills in a pedagogically clever and reasonable way.

When a kindergarten teacher has an intensive and operational relationship to an art subject it is possible to keep an open and curious attitude to such art subjects which may not be the closest to the teacher him- or herself. This means respecting the child’s own interest areas (see Mori 1996). The operational relationship means very concrete actions. Teaching art subjects must not be teaching only “*high culture*”; it may include exposing many different experiences and it is important that they are all presented as equally valuable. Participating and experimenting in making art is important. The smaller the children are, the more important it is to keep the activity concrete, as one of the respondents wrote. Another respondent said that: “*the most important thing is that the kindergarten teacher is ready to jump into the adventure with an open and exploratory attitude*”. It is not necessary that we know the final results of the activity, although we are and should be dealing with target-oriented activities in art subjects.

A kindergarten teacher should have an operational relationship with all subjects, not only with the one in which he or she is interested or with the one in which the children are interested. A shared mutual interest brings solidarity and togetherness into a group of children. This common interest may be a big help in many tasks, but a kindergarten teacher should also remember to lead

the children's interests to new subjects. A teacher must work actively to make the children pay attention to many different interest areas.

Balance between conscious self and ideal self

Generally speaking the data collected shows that the balance between the conscious self and the ideal self in the target group is good. Most of the respondents were satisfied with the two self conceptions mentioned. There were only a few students who brought up their problems with the balance. Most of the group estimated their self conceptions using some of the art subjects closest to them. The manifestation of balance may also have been dependent on consciousness about the demands of teaching the art subject and their own skills and abilities (cf. Gardner 1983; 1993): *"In the field of music I find it most difficult to be satisfied because in that area the gap between my ideal self and conscious self is too big"*. Some of the students think that there are too few music lessons in their kindergarten teacher education to make them learn the substance of music teaching. Some of the respondents thought that they were even more afraid to teach music than at the beginning of the music lessons. Still it is possible to attain the balance if only there are positive experiments in the field of some art subject.

Some of the respondents also wrote about the art subjects they think are the most difficult to teach. The balance was estimated through speculating about the demands of the subject against their own (often insufficient) skills in the subject. Most of the difficulties seemed to be in area of music (10 cases). The next were drawing (4 cases) and handicraft (3 cases). Physical education and literary arts were found difficult in one case only. Some of the respondents described the balance using the term self-conception and the others used the term self-efficacy in different art subjects.

It may be thought that in a kindergarten teacher's work everything is based on a realistic self-conception which naturally includes the good balance between different parts of self. The student days are important to all teachers as they grow up as human beings. It is important for teachers to be satisfied with themselves, otherwise it may happen that the future kindergarten teacher will not be satisfied with the children she is teaching. She might demand the children to be something that they are not. In that case a kindergarten teacher cannot give voice to the expression that the children are of value themselves, that they are adequate and satisfactory. The danger is that the teacher signals the children that they should always be the best in everything, and that way nothing would ever be enough. One of the respondents speculated about this wisely: *"If I always only dreamed of the things I don't have, how could I be able to enjoy this moment?"*

The balance between the conscious self and the ideal self arises from mental health and an awareness of one's own targets in becoming a kindergarten teacher connected to realistic ideas about one's own skills and abilities. The connection between these two aspects is the key to balance. Balance is built on a feeling that one has found one's own style in teaching and that one is genuinely interested in the work. Balance is found through growing up towards the ideal self. Many of the respondents wrote that the practical skills in art subjects are closely connected to satisfaction as a kindergarten teacher: when they know that they are able to work with children in these art subjects it brings them satisfaction.

It is essential to know oneself, one's own strengths and weak points. One must recognise these elements in oneself, because that helps to piece together values and attitudes. When a teacher recognises possible negative attitudes, it is possible to influence them during the studies. This process may be a life-long task for many of the students. Recognising them is the beginning of that long and winding road. One needs to go into the roots of the negative attitude to be able to turn the whole picture upside down: to use these negative experiences to gain strength. An ability to understand differences and polarities enables a teacher to understand children equally and democratically.

If the target is to be a teacher who can and will give the children positive experiences the first thing is to have a positive attitude toward oneself and the subject one is dealing with. The one question is, of course, can a kindergarten teacher be interested in every subject and is it possible to have good skills in everything? To some degree it is possible to raise interest in difficult subjects, but if it happens that a teacher hates music, it is impossible to force him or her to love it. In that case the kindergarten teacher must accept the fact and restriction in that specific area. Recognising one's own limitations is vital when trying to develop oneself to be a better teacher. One must learn to live with feelings of insufficiency and try to think: "it is enough when I do my best". One must remember all the good things in oneself and be merciful and thankful about one's own life, too.

It is difficult to find the balance if one has no idea about what is most important and what is worth sharing. Conceptualisation of the assignment field helps to find out the possibilities at work. That way one can focus all the energy on the right matters and not just chasing the stars. Still, it is possible to hold the standards on high level and analyse the attainment as a basis for reassessment.

If a person is satisfied with his or her own life, he or she is often satisfied as a kindergarten teacher, too. Still, this includes a will to develop to be even better at work. Many of the answers showed that the ideal self is just the one the respondents were at the time of writing the answers. This means that they

have reached the right studying place and right field of future work. One of the respondents wrote: *"I am pretty much satisfied with my skills in handicraft and drawing so that it is possible to keep in balance between my ideal self and conscious self"*. Many of the answers showed that it is possible to be in balance if one is feeling strong in some of the art subjects.

If the gap between the ideal self and the conscious self is not great enough, it may not lead to any kind of reaction. "I have a little gap between my ideal self and conscious self: I would like to be more active in the field of drawing. Still I have not found time or energy to force myself to act somehow. I guess it means that the conflict between the two selves is not big enough to make me react..."

Many of the respondents speculate about to what extent they should tolerate their own insufficiency and obliviousness. On the one hand, they should accept the fact that children are not every day excited about everything and on the other hand, that the effects of teaching are not always seen immediately in the interaction with the children. As a kindergarten teacher one should have a merciful attitude to oneself and towards children too and rather see the whole working career as a learning process, which will never be completed.

Motivation in learning and teaching

In this data it is easy to notice that the motivation level of the kindergarten teacher students is high. The students are able to achieve and fulfil themselves through their work as kindergarten teachers. Motivation in doing something may be more dynamic than self conception or self efficacy. In our arrow Figure (1) we can see that motivation in learning forms a background philosophy for the motivation in teaching children. Motivation in learning is connected closely to the lifelong learning strategies. Still, the motivation of learning and teaching forms an important basis for the work of the kindergarten teacher. It is not wise to become a kindergarten teacher if only the highest level (intensive and operational relationship to some art subject) is fulfilled. In the worst scenario the kindergarten teacher says *"I don't want to bring up the children, I just want to tell them what I know and about the things in which I am a specialist"*.

Without a motivation in teaching a person cannot be a satisfied kindergarten teacher (cf. Oreck 2004). Motivation in learning and teaching is the basis of being a kindergarten teacher. What might this teaching then be? Our data shows that it can be guidance, support or opening new paths for children. It could be asking the right questions, bringing up and offering new experiences. It could be living together, being a model, giving and sharing things

and experiences with the children; discussing with them. It could be humanity, empathy and sensitivity. It could also be situation consciousness, personal relationship to children; it could be meta-understanding about different subjects and children. Learning things is often not enough; there should be emotions of succeeding in doing something also present.

What could learning be? It might be feelings, emotions, and experiences, doing things, living thinking and considering things. It might be openness and dealing with own understanding. It might be interaction between the learner, the adviser and the substance. It might be interaction between motivation, ambition and willpower. It might be rehearsing trying, rethinking and repeating, feeling or foreseeing things. It might be growing impatient with doing things, persistent trying with the motivation power. It might be enjoying, strong emotions, reaching to high targets. It might even be art. Simply said, a teacher must have a message and ability to transmit it further. The communication abilities are not a part of being a kindergarten teacher. One of the respondents wrote cleverly: *“During my time at school there were many teachers, who knew what they were talking about, but they were not especially good at explaining it to someone, who heard about it for the first time.”*

Motivation always focuses on some area. One of the respondents proportions her interests in her own skills as follows: *“One reason for wanting to become a kindergarten teacher was that I have always been interested in many things like music, drawing, physical education etc. However, I am not so good in physical education that I could have specialised in that area alone. My skills and motivation are sufficient for the work of a kindergarten teacher.”*

Our research clearly brought up the issues that without substance skills it is difficult to motivate oneself to teach children in the arts area. It can be said that if one can teach the subjects which she has good skills in, the situation will be good and in order. The research also shows that students feel that they want to teach subjects which they appreciate themselves. The appreciation is connected to the motivation to work. Naturally good skills in some subject do not make the teaching automatically good. Permanent motivation for developing oneself and learning new things are important in becoming a good kindergarten teacher. From the answers it can be seen that in the student stage, the most important thing is to learn the practical skills of the profession.

The answers show music to be the most difficult of all art subjects (see Gharavi 1994). Motivation in teaching music was lower than in teaching drawing. The students felt that music teaching is laborious and they felt their own skills to be only average or poor. One student described the focus of her

motivation: *"Well, I didn't have the world's best starting points for music teaching, because my dread and fear towards music have prevented me from developing my musical skills."*

If there is a motivation in teaching and learning, it is also easier to tolerate the incompleteness in oneself. Often a teacher's own interest is a good starting point for an interesting teaching process; the teacher does not have to know everything or like every subject. There are interesting points of view in everything to be found with the children and what to share with them. Growing older may help in the process of accepting one's own limitations and restrictions. It also helps in enjoying the good things in life and one's own profession. The result of the speculations we have made is a satisfied kindergarten teacher, a satisfied human being and a good life.

The rewarding, valuable and ethical nature of the kindergarten teacher's work is easily seen in the answers: "The children's gestures, smiles on their faces show easily if the learning has been comfortable or exciting in a positive way. I can be satisfied with myself when I see children happy and satisfied." This example shows beautifully the interactive nature and the rewarding part of the job. The same is seen in another example: "Painting is a liberating and important action for me. In that enchanting and liberating world I would like to lead the children also. I am very highly motivated to learn new things myself all the time. In painting you can never be complete. I get more and more excited if I notice that the children are interested in the subject, too. The children being into painting and drawing, gives me the best reward." (cf. Ji-Hi Bae 2004)

Another student writes: *"I like teaching children especially drawing because it gives a wonderful possibility to children's own meaningful action and enjoyment. A good work gives children a feeling of succeeding in what they are doing. It is also very rewarding to the teacher to see a child happy about his or her own drawing or painting."*

Our data shows that motivation grows from understanding the meaningful goals of doing things. In teaching work it is wonderful to notice the feelings of success in children and also seeing the development of the children's skills. The most significant sign of a successful teaching and learning situation is the feeling of succeeding and the developing of skills. Motivation in teaching grows in the interaction with the children where the not-so-interested children may be seen as a pedagogic and psychological challenge.

One student wrote in her answer, that the feeling of ease in teaching also makes the creativity grow stronger and the feelings of succeeding as a teacher are on a high level. The feelings of success increase the motivation in teaching and being a kindergarten teacher: *"My motivation in teaching and learn-*

ing is on a very high level. I believe that you can never be complete; one must always try to find ways to become an even better teacher and to become an understanding and life-serving human being. To be able to help others on their journey is one of the most important ambitions in my life."

Summary

In the best case the polarity and contradictions (for example in the demands of the work and own skills) teach the student to gradually understand and evaluate him- or herself as a kindergarten teacher and find the balance between different self conceptions. This means that through "bad" experiences one can learn to understand good things; by seeing ugliness one may learn about beauty. The same is true with other pairs: living through sickness may open understanding to health, being poor may help in understanding the rich. A master of teaching teaches because he or she feels the meaningfulness in it. The joy of doing things, appreciating a job well done, an aesthetic approach in doing things, sharing and exposing experiences can be connected to art subjects fluently and they may help to teach a child the meaningfulness of learning.

Art subjects are very pleasing to many children because they are full of concrete activities. This was strongly seen in our data. The children should be offered many-sided art subjects so that each and every child has a chance to try different things. Later a child may want to concentrate more specifically on his or her own interest area. Usually we all have some art subject closer than others, and usually it is the one in which we feel ourselves good and successful. A kindergarten teacher is obliged to give children options in versatile art subjects.

The arrow model proved to work quite well in helping to understand and analyse a kindergarten teacher's action in the central areas connected to work well-being. A better way to describe the "Intensive and operational relationship to some art subject" might be: "close and positive attitude to some art subject". One person cannot have all possible skills, and that is why the co-operation with all working personnel is important. If we see a kindergarten teacher as a developing and incomplete (as many of the respondents did) we can see many open doors leading to satisfaction. Also meaningfulness and a feelings of success at work come closer to us. It is through motivation and feelings of success that a kindergarten teacher can feel satisfaction about his or her work. Being a satisfied kindergarten teacher helps the whole society in kindergarten work together, makes the children happy learners and leads them to the start of a good life (see White 1990).

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Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power.

Laozi, Ancient Chinese

Skills versus knowledge—Essence of concepts

Abstract

This article focuses on kindergarten teacher and classroom teacher students' conceptions of knowledge and skills. The subject has become very important in the changing field of school and especially art education in Finland. The number of lessons in art and skill subjects is decreased to make room for math and sciences. The many-sided learning of knowledge and skills has been jeopardised. The different areas of knowledge cannot be learned without a sufficient amount of art and skill subjects. The problems which will be caused are to be seen in near future. The data for this research (N=54) was collected from students in University of Helsinki and University of Joensuu, Finland. The method of the research was based qualitative analyse and phenomenographical approach which concentrates on conceptions about important things. The results show the importance of both procedural and declarative knowledge which is seen in the classification of the conceptions. The article connects the skills learning and knowledge-learning as equally important parts of development which cannot survive alone. Each needs the other. The school reforms should be carried out in an atmosphere where (both) science and math as well as art and skills have their points of view seen and heard.

Keywords: Skill, knowledge, declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, conceptions of students, importance of knowledge and skills

Background

Much discussion has been taking place lately about the problems between skills and knowledge, and especially in school subjects: skill and art subjects versus science and mathematics. The latest addition to the discussion was on 17.10.2006 when an article appeared in the *Financial Times* about the Finnish school system which has succeeded brilliantly in PISA and other international researches about learning results at school especially in traditional reading, writing and maths. The article pointed out that Finland is deliberately tearing down the structures of a great and well functioning school system by constricting the possibilities in skill and art subjects and cutting down the teaching in these school subjects. This development is most dangerous in Finland because the pupils do not enjoy being at Finnish schools as much as pupils in

other countries (like England or other central European countries). Finnish schoolchildren do learn a lot in the subjects mentioned (science, math, languages), but they have a lack of choices in art and skill subjects (music, art, physical education, and handicraft) (Sinkkonen 2006). This makes Finnish school an uncomfortable and unpleasant place for pupils. And the situation is becoming worse all the time. Even in teacher education at the universities the art subjects are being understated by other subjects and pedagogy. This means that future elementary school teachers are not able to teach these important subjects as well as today and in past decades.

This way of acting in Finnish schools is due to the furious rise of information technology which has made computers the most important investment in schools. Art and skills subjects are paying the price for this development. The development at Finnish schools focuses right on the headline of this article. In this article we describe the conceptions of future kindergarten teachers and elementary school classroom teachers about skills and knowledge.

The data

The data was collected in the autumn 2006 from students in University of Helsinki and Joensuu. There were also updating education students among the informants. The number of answers for the inquiry was 54. There were only eight males in the sample which reflects the gender division in the kindergarten teacher education and classroom teacher education. The questions for this research were given to the students during the lectures of both of the writers and the answers were sent through email. The percentage of the responses was 82%, which can be considered very high. This was because of the way the data was collected. The research questions given to students were: Specify your conception of *knowledge* and *skill*

- What is knowledge?
- What is skill?
- Contemplate the relation between these two
- How do you define these two concepts?
- Which of these two is the upper concept for the other?
- Can you distinguish or separate these two?
- Does knowledge include skills or vice versa?
- Is one of them more valuable than the other?

In this article we concentrate on describing the students' conceptions based on these definitions which they made at our request.

Approach to knowledge and skills

Education in Finland is mixed up in a continuous debate that will impact the character of the whole society in the next millennium. Those of us who have been educated in such knowledge- based disciplines as maths, science or physics have contributed everything they have, and even more to the national and also international dialogs on the topic. Actually they have stolen the space from art and skill substance professionals, who have been forced aside from the focus of discussion by technocrats. The main quiet statement seems to be: only those allowed taking part in the discussion, are those able to show numbers of production or economic growth for the national economy. This means that skills and arts teachers, artists etc. have been out of focus. These subjects cannot show numbers of production as they mostly deal with mental health and emotional welfare among the citizens. This is the main reason for not being valued among the decision-makers and the politicians.

The discussion has been vivid in the issue of whether the schools should focus on knowledge or on skills. The skills and art teachers have not been able to point out well enough their own strengths and important points. It is partly because the results cannot be measured with good rankings in PISA or other researches. This kind of measurement cannot be put on skills and arts: how could you measure well-being on an emotional level, or how is it possible to measure the experience arising from artistic action? Still, it is possible to speculate about the two opposite sides of the coin by trying to find the meaning of these two concepts for people in their thinking. We might learn the importance of both knowing and being skilful in achievements of life. Also, it might be possible to consider the two polarities using concepts about knowledge and learning and trying to figure their possibilities as concepts supporting each other.

We also may state some doubts about measuring pupils with standardised tests as was done in the PISA research. Standardised tests are cost-effective tools for measuring content knowledge and for making meaningful predictions of pupils' performance. Many educators correctly argue that standardised tests (especially multiple choice tests) do not adequately measure pupils' overall performance from every angle. The other possibility would be using authentic performance assessments. It is extremely difficult to measure skills or behaviours compared to measuring content knowledge. For example, how do you objectively measure higher order thinking skills? Even in math as an objective subject there are difficulties in measuring the thought processes used by a pupil to find a correct numerical estimate. The relative importance of knowledge versus skills is not a new issue; it has been under discussion for thousands of years.

Both process- or skill-oriented teaching has had its supporters during the discussion as well as knowledge-oriented instruction. In the past, this has often led to a severe de-emphasis on basic subject matter knowledge. This, in turn, has had the effect of alienating many subject matter specialists in skills and art area, creating pendulum swings of educational opinion in which knowledge-oriented and process-oriented programs have periodically displaced each other. Lately the focus has been on science and math with each passing year, which has caused a lot of despair among teachers and artists as well as handicraft specialists. It is painful to notice that your work is not valued and appreciated.

The fact is that knowledge-oriented instruction is important in many ways, but it should not be lifted up to the exclusion of skill development as it is being done at the moment in many ways in the Finnish school system.

Learning skills and knowledge

Learning processes in skills and knowledge may be different from each other, but they are still in connection with each other. Learning knowledge may even be considered a skill itself. Also often in learning languages the framework is proposed to be from skills learning. (Johnson 1996.) In essence, Johnson links in his book (*Language teaching and skill learning*) considerations of language alongside studies of the acquisition of skills in general, including even the Suzuki method of violin teaching, “inner tennis” and other “inner” skills training such as rowing. This example shows nicely that the two opposite sides may also occur in cooperation inside learning. It also shows the difficulty of separating knowledge from skill. That is because of the general essence of the knowledge itself: declarative (“knowing that”) and procedural (“knowing how”) knowledge are parts of learning processes in most of the achievements we do. Following work in cognitive psychology, especially J. R. Anderson’s (1980, 1983) model of learning as a process in which declarative knowledge is converted into procedural knowledge, it can be seen that automatising is as crucial in learning skills, because it: *“frees conscious attention so that it becomes available for the high-level skills which require it, as in driving a car”*.

The nature of these two sides of knowledge somehow form the basis for the discussion about skills and knowledge at school as the declarative side of knowledge is present in science, math and other subjects like that while the procedural part is present in subjects like music, physical education, art, etc. Procedural knowledge can be directly applied to a task, and in learning it a lot of practice and repetition are needed. Procedural knowledge about solving problems differs significantly from propositional knowledge about problem

solving. One limitation, but also an advantage, of procedural knowledge is its job-dependence. One advantage of procedural knowledge is that it can involve more senses, such as hands-on experience, practice at solving problems and understanding of the limitations of a specific solution. This connects procedural knowledge directly to the art and skill subjects. Descriptive knowledge, also declarative knowledge or propositional knowledge is the species of knowledge that is, by its very nature, expressed in declarative sentences or indicative propositions. This distinguishes descriptive knowledge from what is commonly known as “know-how”, or procedural knowledge (the knowledge of how, and especially how best, to perform some task), and “knowing of,” or knowledge by acquaintance (the knowledge of something’s existence) (Merriënboer 1997; Eichenbaum et al 2001; Norman 1993; Anderson 1980, 1983).

Skills learning—learning procedural knowledge—differ from learning declarative knowledge in a greater need for practice. This makes art and skills subjects more down to earth for pupils at school; it gives them a chance to do something with their own hands and body instead of sitting in their places in the classroom and reading, thinking or trying to understand the teacher’s lessons.

In many cases the procedural knowledge requires and feeds some kind of problem solving: what to do to make things happen the way you wish? What colors must be blended to get the exact color you wish? How do you have to put your fingers to make the chord sound right while playing the guitar? We could say that these solutions somehow require creativity, which also refreshes intellectual activity. Still, before using procedural knowledge declarative knowledge is also needed. We may think that a skill can be lost if it is not continuously used. For example a skill of playing a musical instrument may be lost in a couple of years if it is not practiced. In this case the skill changes from procedural knowledge (an ability to play a difficult piece of music) into declarative knowledge: you know how the playing should be done and how it should sound but you cannot fulfill it because the technical ability is no longer on the level required. This often happens when an instrument teacher does not have enough time to practice his/her own skill in the instrument playing. Thus, knowledge also has connections to memory: memory helps a human being to keep the knowledge he has attained through practice and learning. As the procedural knowledge is connected to practicing, it has also its connections in general intelligence and different areas of talents (musical talent, physical talent, artistic talent, etc.). The combination of talent and intelligence in connection with the memory and essence of different schemata lead to the process of learning skills and they

also regulate the amount of practicing needed in learning processes. The same elements also regulate the learning of declarative knowledge.

Having skills is closely connected with knowing (Reimer 1992). The ways of knowing are multiple: aesthetic, scientific, intuitive, narrative, paradigmatic, formal, practical and spiritual (Reimer 1992; see also Pearse 1983). Important in any kind of knowing is the focus of knowing and knowledge, this is especially when we are dealing with art and skills education. Pearse (1983) distinguishes three different paradigms in knowledge and its situation. Reimer (1992), on the other hand, asks questions about knowing and knowledge: knowing about something (shape, function, materials), knowing how (like transmitting ideas, emotions and feelings through art or handicraft) and knowing why (understanding why something is done in a known context). For skills, a certain level of continuity is typical, for knowing something it is quite the opposite: the action has ended. Knowledge describes the situation of the matter (for example describing a woven textile) while a skill finds the possibilities to achieve the aim appointed. Between skills and knowledge there is a distance which can be connected to sensuousness or physicalness which alludes to the concrete bodily relationship between a human being and the world as it actually is the only way to exist in the world (Varto 2003, 13).

Perception of matter and objects becomes concrete through touching things, through feeling, seeing, hearing, tasting or smelling them. This is the clearest touching point between a human being and the world. Skills and achieving cannot be far from the human body because they are built inside man. Kojonkoski-Rännäli (2005) points out that mere knowledge is not meaningful for a human being as long as there is not a skill existing in connection with it. In other words the skill enables us to take knowledge in use. That kind of knowledge gives the basis for the skill, it inspires the skill on the move. This forms the basis for art and skill education because without a possibility to experience matters in practice it is impossible to gain procedural knowledge, (skill-knowledge, achievement-knowledge, know-how). Procedural knowledge can be attained only through active practical achievement in the focus of matters: an individual learns by doing, by getting knowledge through his or her own activity (see Syrjäläinen 2003, 16; Karppinen 2005, 71–77). Skill-knowledge (achievement knowledge or know how) can be defined as the knowledge which rises from having skills. In this sense it means knowing and understanding how to achieve or perform something through exercises focusing on the principle of Dewey: learning by doing. (Niiniluoto 1992).

Granö (2003) points out that the exploratory artistic achievement always means throwing oneself into the action but doing it with simultaneous reflec-

tion. In the background of the reflection there is good knowledge of different traditions and modern areas of art which means silent skill-knowledge. The focus of the reflection is a dialogue where one has to get used to be in the middle of action and every now and then in a situation with no understanding about everything. Here we may consider non-verbal action as a dialogue. Achievement-knowledge may be non-verbal, silent knowledge, too. The first concept of silent knowledge, tacit knowledge, was brought up by Michael Polanyi about 40 years ago as he wrote that we actually know a lot more than we can tell.

Usually tacit knowledge cannot even be put in to words; it is seen in the way the creator smoothly solves problems in the achievement. This can be seen in the work of a skilful creator, not in the work of an amateur. (Koi-vunen 1998; Koskenniemi-Sivonen 1998, 76–77). It is bodily knowledge which wells out instinctively based on sensations and experiences. It is inner thinking which instinctively rises from the subconscious and swings between instinct and conscious thinking (Wilson 1998) and becomes evident in behaviour and achievement. Wilson (1998) states that an insight is crossing a bridge between instinctive knowledge and conscious thinking: instinct—intuition—cognition. An insight is intuitive and it could be described as *eo-cognitans*—“dawn thinking” meaning an exact, deep thinking, primal thinking or the dawn of thinking. The concept could also be interpreted as awakening of thinking.

The method

This research belongs to the qualitative research tradition, and to be more specific, to the phenomenographical field. The aim in qualitative research is to describe the target as well as possible and to increase understanding about the subject. The phenomenographical method was first used by Marton in Sweden. The targets of the research are the conceptions and relations between conceptions of people. It shows the way the world is built and represented inside one’s consciousness. The starting point for this approach is consciousness and an ability to build conceptions of different phenomenon and to describe these conceptions linguistically. (Nummenmaa & Nummenmaa 1997, 65–66; Ahonen 1994, 113–114, 121–122). Phenomenographic research has some points of contact with Piaget’s theories, Gestalt psychology and phenomenology. The main difference is that in phenomenographic research the surroundings and the cultural dimension are included in the research. There were 54 respondents in this research project. This phenomenographic approach with mentions about the numbers of answers in each group of classification gives a small view of the prevalence of the classes of answers. This

does not, of course, mean that any kind of generalising could be done on the basis of this rather small data sample. Generalisation is not the main idea in the phenomenographic research approach.

The conceptions are built inside our head through experiences and thinking and with them a human being is connected to interaction with the surrounding world. Each person has different conceptions about different phenomenon which is because of the different experiences which form the conceptions in the first place. We form through everyday life so called pre-conceptions on which the understanding of new experiences is built. Through analysing and interpreting we build different descriptive categories which include different ways of understanding the world on a general level without connecting the categories to the individuals who are being researched. These descriptive categories form the main results of phenomenographic research.

In analysing the data collected we used a simple method of text analysis and classification. These methods are typical in qualitative analyses and they are based on the excellent knowledge of the data collected. Although our main idea is to describe the conceptions of students we also use phenomenographic ideas for showing the prevalence of the conceptions. The method was originally developed to describe conceptions. The analysis for this report was done after several readings of the texts of the students. There were about 50 pages of writing to be analysed. After the analysis a qualification was done to put the conceptions in a clear form. Both conceptions about skills and knowledge were analysed. These classifications are reported in this article. And finally we draw conclusions about the relationship between these two conceptions in the minds of the respondents.

Results

In this chapter we describe the classifications of the answers about skill and knowledge and about the respondents' beliefs about the relationship between these two concepts. The answers of the students were very ruminative, which caused a lot of difficulties in the classification. Philosophical discussion is not an easy source of information. We start our results with the conceptions about knowledge.

Conceptions about knowledge

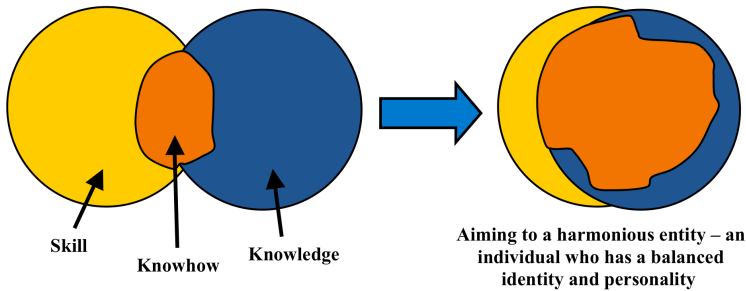
Conceptions about knowledge were classified as follows in six groups formed in the classification. (The total number of mentions may be different from the number of the respondents because one respondent could give answers belonging to more than one group).

Knowledge is:

Classification group	Number of mentions
1) Wisdom	2
2) True and theoretic	18
3) Context bonded	12
4) Superior to skill	6
5) Multidimensional	4
6) Documented or memorised	10

In the classical period the philosophers ended in the rational conception of man, which means that knowledge and consciousness are part of the basic meaning in defining man. For example Plato suggested that real knowledge is the knowledge of a creator: a shoemaker knows about shoes because he can produce them, a doctor has knowledge about health because he is able to cure sick people. Also for Aristotle knowledge was an aim (*telos*) and the greatest of all virtues. A builder has the idea of a house in his head and soul: he knows what a house means. In *The Ethics of Nikomakhos* the Greek word “*techne*” is defined to be the ability for acting rationally. Behind the skill of doing something there is always understanding or knowledge. (Niiniluoto 1990, 49–54). Aristotle described this with a syllogism: I try to reach the aim *x*, and I believe that I cannot reach it if I do not perform action *y*, and that is why I start performing *y*. (Saarinen 1989, 84).

The main idea of the skill-knowledge society we are defining here is the wisdom, that not only knowing is important; one also has to have skills to execute ideas. If the knowledge alone will not be enough for forming a skill, we may ask whether it is a piece of real knowledge at all? And also vice versa: it is not enough to have a skill: one must also know and understand the focus on what is to be achieved. As the main aim in a skill-knowledge society we must have the joining of skills and knowledge: the hands of the human being may be larger than the brain, but equally the brain may be larger than the hands. The identity of an individual and well-being becomes better when these two elements are of equal size. This may be called vision of a culturally and socially sustainable development in a skill-knowledge society.



A skill-knowledge society, a skill-society, socially durable knowledge society and other conceptions concentrating on the meaning of skills and knowledge focus on a thought of joining skill-society and knowledge-society together into one entity. The greater the overlap between knowledge and skills is getting, the better becomes the well-being. A human being is fulfilling his own “telos” (in the words of Aristotle). (Hietanen 2002, 27–30; Juvonen & Ruismäki 2005; Ruismäki & Juvonen 2005).

Without drowning more in the swamp of the philosophy of the essence of skill and knowledge, we can say that the focus of the discussion is that skills do not automatically come after the existence of knowledge nor that the knowledge automatically follows the existence of a skill. Knowing something and producing and making something are two different things which may occur to some extent separately, but still, they have very strong connections in between. For example, Niiniluoto (1990, 52–54) defines skill-knowledge as knowledge concerning a skill.

Wisdom

Some of the respondents deliberated on the whole scene of human life in their answers starting from defining a good life and speculating on the connections between knowledge and life. That is how they came to first of the topics of conceptions: **knowledge is wisdom**. Wisdom was mentioned in some answers saying that wisdom is needed to live a good life. It was defined as wide-ranging, high level knowledge and skill connected to an ability to use it when we try to reach for good things. Wisdom in this meaning would be the sum of skills, ability and knowledge which we have received from our own experiences.

1. ... to be able to live a good and happy life we must have enough wisdom
...

In this category the respondents also put definitions about the questions to which the knowledge may answer (who, where, when, how, why, etc.). Some of the respondents pointed out that knowledge may also occur through emotions. It also was seen as an element which runs away when you try to reach it, and that is why we are not able to ask the right questions, to find the right knowledge at the right moment.

4. Knowledge may be provided, recognised and also felt through personal emotions and with our shared experiences...We don't know enough to even form the right questions about all that we imagine, and vice versa: we cannot even imagine everything we might be able to get to know.

True and theoretic

The second group in our classification was the largest of all the answering groups. This class of answers explained **knowledge as something true and theoretic**. Many respondents stated that knowledge should be something which has been tested and proven earlier by someone, and that it is presented as a fact about some phenomenon unquestionably. Some of the answers consider knowledge as theoretic background of a skill. Knowledge is thought to be the opposite of a belief and the amount of knowledge is seen as able to be increased by working hard. The respondents in many answers see knowledge as something very permanent on which they believe they can rely. Still some of them point out the ever changing nature of knowledge. Knowledge is seen as something one is able to study, learn and teach and it is seen as easy to find. Some of the answers differentiate between scientific knowledge and everyday knowledge. It is also called academic knowledge or book knowledge, which may be reached through reading and studying necessary knowledge. Almost every answer connects knowledge somehow to the skills saying that a skill is needed for putting the knowledge into action in real life. Knowledge is said to be carrying only to a certain point, and after that skill is also needed. The practical part of knowledge is pointed out in many of the answers as an important bridge between theoretical and practical life. The use of skills seems to give the knowledge a meaning which cannot be achieved otherwise.

As a whole, the essence of knowledge in this class of answers seems to be somehow abstract and strange or distant to many respondents. Many say that knowledge should be commonly acceptable to most of the people, which give the definition a social and cultural point of view:

- 11 ...is a proven and tested fact about a phenomenon...one's own experience may also include information.

- 16 Knowledge is examined and theoretic information about a phenomenon. It also may sometimes be everyday knowledge about something.
- 20 ...Knowledge is something which is basically true and well known...
- 24 ...Knowledge is skill in theory.
- 25 ...It is the opposite of a belief, it is a fact, not fiction, for example we do know that a man cannot give a birth to a child.
- 26 ...knowledge is based on justifiable and reasonable facts and it does not rise from beliefs. The amount of knowledge can be increased.
- 27 ...Some part of knowledge is not permanent; it changes through new research and learning new things.
- 32 ...Knowledge requires truth...
- 35 ...Knowledge helps you to build a general view about things.
- 42 ...knowledge as a concept seems far away and theoretic, distant from practical life.
- 45 ...knowledge is something you can count on. It can be double-checked...knowledge is easier to achieve than a skill...

Context bound

In the third classification group of answers the respondents saw knowledge as context bound. Some of the respondents point out the possibility of believing in information which may not be true. The base of what is thought to be knowledge may be a belief or a personal experience which may not be an objective fact. Thus, the real essence of knowledge may differ. The knowledge may be coloured through the cultural or social ideas and concepts in different eras of time. These may be influenced through the whole world or just in a single country. A good example might be North Korea at this very moment: the true knowledge there might seem somehow different to that in United States. The same kind of manipulation of information which was thought to be real and true knowledge could be found in the history of the Nazis in WWII. Also single researchers may have their own differences in conceptions about knowledge and this may have an effect on their research interests and even the results of their research.

- 2 Knowledge may be: knowing something which is merely a belief.
- 15 Knowledge gets coloured through the ideas inside the society and culture in a certain era of time. The knowledge is affected by researchers with different thoughts.

- 25 In different cultures there are differing conceptions about knowledge.
- 27 Some knowledge may change through new research while some does not.

In this class of answers a personal experience-based point of view was very strong. The respondents gave a certain value to the knowledge which is based on their own experiences, senses and the knowledge which they have collected just through living in a society, the socialisation process. Some of the respondents see the most valuable knowledge to be the experience-based knowledge we collect every day of our lives. The knowledge is often seen as relative and comparative, changing phenomenon which is strongly related in a person's worldview. This is why the knowledge might be not true from general point of view, but still be adequate to a single person from his own point of view. The most important point is then the interpretation which we all do every day. It is done in the frame of reference of the schemata structure of an individual: the knowledge is situated in the light of the schemata and then the meanings are built based on the former knowledge within the construction. This is why the respondents say that the knowledge cannot be transferred as objective facts to another person. Many of the respondents avoid calling knowledge true; it may only be true in a certain context. Still, even in the same contexts the knowledge may occur in a different light for different persons.

- 31 Knowledge is always relative interpretation starting from one's own point of view.
- 40 An individual may have false knowledge compared to common knowledge, but compared to his own worldview it may occur as true... There are lots of different types of knowledge processed and interpreted by different people.

Knowledge is also evaluated through its utility for the individual involved. The respondents see that only meaningful knowledge is important, and meaningful is the information what has real meaning to a person. This knowledge may occur in many forms, even in the form of a skill. The difference between skill and knowledge is obviously becoming less defined in this class of answers. Knowledge is seen as a channel of doing something which could not be achieved without knowledge. One of the respondents compared skill and knowledge in theory and practice, and sees both as very important for each other.

- 31 A human being collects knowledge about the world through his senses and experiences.

- 45 Knowledge is information which has meaning for the individual.
- 46 Knowledge forms a channel which makes activity possible.
- 51 Skill and knowledge can be compared to theory and practice.

Superior to skill

The next category in our classification is based on the starting point that **knowledge is more valuable than skills**. This thought occurred in earlier classes, too. However, there were many respondents who think that knowledge is more important compared to skills. Knowledge is considered as the basis for building skills, some respondents even call skills the pre-stage of knowledge. Knowledge is thought to be the factor which separates us from animals.

- 3 Knowledge is more valuable, because without it there would not be any skills... On the other hand, knowledge may occur without skill; it makes it even more important.
- 6 Knowledge differentiates us from the animals, it is something abstract... a human being stores knowledge in his brain, a computer, writing it down... Knowledge is the higher concept and I put skills under it... You can differentiate between skills and knowledge.
- 22 Knowledge deepens the skills... all skills need knowledge.
- 33 You need knowledge if you wish to execute some thoughts in practice.
- 36 Knowledge gives birth to skills... a skill without knowledge is incomplete.
- 37 Knowledge gives me the direction, the skill helps me to get through... Knowledge gives tools for interpreting the skills.
- 41 The skill is under knowledge; it could even be called the pre-stage of it.

Multidimensional

The next classification was made on the multidimensionality of the knowledge. Many of the respondents could not form a model of their thoughts and this is why they often ended in many sided and complex descriptions of their conceptions. In the contemplations of the respondents there were interesting speculations about how the knowledge may be reached, and about how complex it is seen. Many of the respondents answered through stating new questions instead of answering the ones we wished to be answered.

- 5 Many people may have a different conception about the same phenomenon, but who can say what information is true and what isn't? If the knowledge is not true can it be called knowledge at all?
- 8 We would be more creative if we could use knowledge and skills without building borders between them.
- 9 Knowledge is facts, information, learned, endogenous. It is objective, subjective, good, true and misleading. It may be wide or narrow, old or new. It could be understanding and making true some phenomenon, sensation or feeling.

Documented or memorised

Some of the respondents defined knowledge as something which is documented or memorised. Building the conception of knowledge on the thought of knowledge as something which is either memorised or somehow documented was rather common. This conception might be based on the old way the cultures stored their traditions and cultural inheritance. The different ways of getting knowledge through the flood of information through all the media is mentioned in many answers. Also the worry about how to select the right knowledge from the great amount of available is obvious in many answers. The importance of information and knowledge is seen in the writings of the students: some of them see knowledge as a fatal element for the survival of the whole world.

- 7 Knowledge is something I have learned, heard, read or experienced and in one way or the other memorised.
- 10 It gives a possibility to learn new things. If knowledge is interesting, it is easy to learn. These days we are getting a lot of knowledge from everywhere, but are we able to select the right knowledge from it?
- 13 Knowledge is everything a human being collects inside his or her head through his or her life which is considered important. It is the sum of thinking, learning and critical consideration.
- 14 Knowledge is floating around us everywhere from books, newspapers TV and radio... Without knowledge the whole world could not function.
- 18 Knowing is action in which you knowingly process thoughts in your brain and sum together with knowledge.
- 19 ...knowledge is something which has come to an individual through experience, through reading or hearing from the media or education. Researchers collect knowledge and provide it further to others...

- 23 Knowledge may be historic documented information which can be found in books, lexicons etc. To some people knowledge is a passion, to some it may be a weight. Knowledge may also be inherited which moves from generation to another.

Conceptions about skills

Karppinen (2005, 71) writes that the skill and skilfulness have been connected to handicraft as early as in the classical era and even before that. Already in ancient Egypt craftsmen underlined that a good and skilful product is made through the mind and hand loving the material and work under a protective force. A skilfully produced artefact and the whole process of producing it were important especially for the mind of the craftsman. To be able to become skilful the craftsman needed a vocation to consummate the process. The craftsmen were taught by masters. In those days the process of production also contained magic and rituals and ceremonies for the gods (for example the protector of the architects, picture painters and handicraftsmen was the Ptah god) which gave the craftsmen their power of skill and consummated it giving the product a spirit. In ancient Egypt the most skilful handicraftsmen worked mainly for the gods and pharaohs and their products may still be seen (Jacq 2004) in museums. The skill to produce durable artefacts generates products which may live longer than human life as distinct from unproductive work where the results disappear as soon as the exertion ends (Arendt 2002, 91–93).

The conceptions of skill were classified in a similar way as the conceptions about knowledge. The classification resulted in the following groups of conceptions. (The total number of mentions may be different from the number of respondents because one respondent may have given answers belonging to more than one group).

Skill is:

Classification group	Number of mentions
1) In connection with the practice, producing or handicraft	27
2) Learned by doing or through experience in practice	23
3) A consequence of knowledge	27

Connected to practice

In most of the answers skills were connected to practice. It was mentioned as knowledge which can be learned only through practical experience. Skill puts knowledge to use in real life by giving it applications which can really work.

Skill is often connected to something concrete; it is not abstract in any way and it helps knowledge to become more vivid. It has nothing abstract in it; it is considered *physic* as knowledge is classified as *psychic*. A skill is often connected to expressing things emotions, feelings. It clearly has its links to arts and creativity. Creativity is also seen in the ability to create artefacts by hand. One of the respondents stated that skill is what she does and what she creates and brings into the world.

Already Aristotle pointed out that skills are not achieved only for their own sake, but they were keys to a good and decent human life (compare Arendt 2002). Practical intelligence commands the amount and the aim of practice. The skills are connected to rational thinking and reasoning basing on which it is possible to see what is worthwhile and what is not, not only in some special areas like health or physical condition but also considering a good life (Aristotle: *The ethics of Nikomakhos*).

- 1 Skill is knowledge which may be learned only through practice.
- 2 Skill is being able to do something and to master it...it connects knowledge with its practical applications.
- 3 Skill can be defined as something done and knowledge as something thought. A skill is physical and knowledge is psychic. A skill can be seen, but knowledge cannot because it just exists.
- 4 A skill is connected to making something become visual, audible, and touchable or otherwise available to the senses. It means producing, manifesting or expressing something for ourselves as well as other people.
- 5 A skill is something much more practical; it is connected to being able to do and to master things.
- 43 Knowledge is theory; skills are practice.

An ability to concretely create physical things, to produce artefacts seems to be one of the most important elements in skill. Hand skills are closely connected to bodily emotions and feelings. A skill is often considered as something which you either have or not. It has its connections with the intelligence when the respondents state that a skill is the ability to react by using the knowledge in a new situation in an appropriate way.

- 14 A skill means being able to make plans become concrete.
- 29 A skill may be learned; it may be an individual ability or a gift like musical gift or artistic gift.

- 38 A skill is the ability to do things right way, like playing a musical instrument.
- 43 A skill is the ability to do things which may be inherited or learned through practise.
- 45 A skill is the ability to do something if you wish.
- 47 A skill is having mastery in doing something; it is something you have had to practise yourself and learn.

Learned by doing or through experience

Many of the respondents considered skill as a native talent or something which is learned through experiences of life. It is seen as something which may occur without a conscious memorising activity or learning process. This means that many skills develop unconsciously during the socialising processes in early childhood. Some of the skills can be learned and some others may take a lifetime to learn. Skills are also learned in interaction with other people through learning how to deal in groups of people. Some respondents see skill as an ability to use the collected knowledge and to develop it to a skill through diligent practice. It is always possible to develop your skills, but some skills are given naturally to some people. This connects skilfulness to intelligence and the giftedness of individuals. Also the schemata structure has close connections to the topic. The different schemata are closely connected to the motivation of an individual doing something and this is why the skills seem quite difficult to define for the respondents.

- 7 A skill is learned and experienced; it may be natural or practised. Some skills may develop without conscious memorising or learning.
- 5 Some skills may be practised; some take a lifetime to learn.
- 6 Some skills are probably learned by being with other people.
- 14 Practice makes the champion in skills. Learning by doing is something all the children do all the time. Everyone adapts knowledge and skills in his/her own individual way.

Some respondents see that a skill is something which should be learned individually through trying and making mistakes. It often is seen as a more difficult process than adapting knowledge. Many of the respondents see that the skill develops while practising although the basis for the abilities is in the genetics. They state that a human being develops a great number of skills during the developmental process. Some of these become stronger than the others.

- 15 A skill may be inside an individual from the birth as a strength in some area. It may also be learned through practising.
- 17 A skill must be learned through trying and making mistakes. It is much more difficult than learning knowledge.
- 20 A human being develops a huge number of skills. Some become stronger than others.
- 23 Natural born giftedness is needed in learning skills.
- 25 Some have more abilities to develop skills than others.
- 35 A skill can always be developed further, but in some areas like music the giftedness plays an important role.
- 39 A skill takes a lot of time to learn and a lot of practising, but after you have learned it you don't have to think about it anymore.
- 47 A skill is more revised and prepared slowly making it become bigger and more working. It is always based on one's own experiences, while knowledge may occur without subjective experience, prepared by others.

A Consequence of knowledge

Some respondents clearly state the knowledge as more valuable and higher level compared to skills. They often see the skill as a consequence of knowledge, but in many cases they also cannot differentiate the value of either from each other. Diligent practice is needed to develop knowledge into a mastery of doing something, to the level of a skill. Skill may be achieved through mere experiences as in learning to ride a bicycle. The respondents also saw that knowledge does not always transfer into a skill if the individual is not able to handle the knowledge the right way.

- 9 The skill is often regarded as a fruit of the knowledge, but we may also think of skill as the finisher or exposer of it.
- 2 In a skill there is knowledge connected to appropriate application.
- 16 Knowledge is not automatically transferred to a skill if there is not an ability to handle the knowledge in the right way.
- 20 The skills are also affected by knowledge.
- 22 There always must be knowledge to be able to achieve skilful activity, because all skills demand knowledge.
- 24 A skill means being able to; knowledge means the same in theory.

- 29 The skill includes the knowledge. Knowledge may also occur without a skill.
- 31 Knowledge cannot transfer into skill without any experience... The ability to use senses, move and speak offers more knowledge.
- 49 A skill includes knowledge.

The ability to use knowledge is often called a skill. It is regarded when knowledge is transferred in practice. Some respondents note that art may include skilfulness without knowledge. The knowledge is said to give dimensions for understanding skills and the tools for making new elements skilfully. One of the respondents takes music as an example where the theory is not necessarily needed to help the learning of the skill: she states that learning to play music by ear shows skills without knowledge. In addition to this thought we may say that the one who learns to play a musical instrument without using the notes must still know what the piece of music is supposed to sound like. She must also have many skills and a lot of knowledge about the instrument before being able to learn to play it. So even this example is more complicated, than it seems at first.

- 38 Background theory is not necessarily always needed: for example if you learn to play guitar by ear without notes.

Conclusions

The relationship between skills and knowledge

Most of the answers on speculate the relationship between the two polarities as if they are not opposites each other, but rather like Siamese twins, and one cannot survive without the other. Although knowledge is generally highly appreciated, the respondents see it as a rather distant abstract element, which desperately needs connections to reality and everyday life. The skills are seen as the bridge between these two worlds. The procedural knowledge is seen as a pre-stage of the skill, which could not exist without this part of knowledge.

It seems that the value of both knowledge and skill is quite equal in the answers though knowledge is often seen as coming first and followed by skills, which shows the procedural side of the knowledge. On the other hand, in many answers knowledge is seen as included in skills. In reality and practice the respondents see the two sides of knowledge connected in a skill which gives knowledge the meaningfulness and sense. Knowledge without a bridge to practice is seen as not useful and even as a weight on the individual. It is just something theoretical which has no value for normal life. Often

scientific knowledge was mentioned in this sense. The ability to apply knowledge into real life is seen as the most valuable element and it has many connections to intelligence, giftedness, talents, creativity, learning and development of a human being. Many of the respondents also wrote long stories about their own life telling about overcoming troubles and difficulties by using their practical skills as a therapy for getting the knowledge about difficult elements in order. This adds another element to the map of skills and knowledge: a therapeutic aspect, which is mostly included or linked in the procedural side of knowledge connected to skills and the use of skills in everyday life.

In skills-learning the personal and individual part are in main role: the trial and error method is as old as a human being, but it is effective; we learn a lot from our own experimental doing without a conscious knowledge behind our achievement. This is how children grow and learn. Another part of learning procedural knowledge is directly connected to the socialisation process in which a child becomes a member of a cultural and social environment. In this process a child learns a great deal of skills without consciously trying to learn. The learning process is in connection with the interaction between people inside a cultural community. This learning includes both declarative and procedural elements, of which the declarative elements are mostly learned with conscious, institutional learning and teaching channels (kindergarten, preschool, school etc.) and procedural knowledge in everyday life surroundings.

One important point in all learning and especially in skills-learning is the part of genetic differences and due to them the inherited giftedness-structure. The social surroundings also create a dissimilarity in abilities development due to differences in opportunities to get stimulation from the environment. This raises up the question of reasons in social and physical development as a part of learning processes of skills and knowledge.

In many answers a clear ambition for a wide understanding and we could even say a philosophy can be seen. The aim for finding the basis for living a good life can be seen there. Wisdom is a word mentioned a couple of times in the answers which is connected in both knowledge and skills, on the academic or scientific level together with everyday life elements which include the experimental learning of more or less practical skills we do every day and especially in early childhood. The problem may be compressed in one of the thoughts from the answers: *Without the skill of thinking... there cannot exist any reasoning or sense in knowing things.* This example shows nicely the difficult and multi-levelled connection between skills, knowledge and thought.

Which of the concepts is on a higher level?

Most of the respondents place knowledge as a high level concept which is a prerequisite for skill. The main explanation and justification for that was that skills cannot appear without knowledge, but there may be knowledge without a skill to use it in practice. Then again we might ask, what is the value of knowledge with no connection to the real world? This question has, of course been deliberated for thousands of years by the philosophers without finding the right answer.

Many of the respondents do think that knowledge can be separated from skills, and this is because they suppose that there is knowledge which is not in connection with any skill. Again we might ask: what about the skill of knowing? The separation of knowledge and skill is problematic, because it leads us again to a philosophical debate with no ready answers, but a lot of good conversation. Still, we may try to claim that there are skills which may be learned without knowledge, for example learning one's mother tongue. The child starts learning words without having any preceding knowledge about them. Then we might ask: is a mother tongue a skill or is it something we know? In the beginning of this article we mentioned Johnson's (1996) approach in learning language as learning a skill. Still it is just one possibility among others. Some of the answers point out that the knowledge is a seed for a skill, which has to be nurtured and taken good care to make it grow to a level of mastery in a special skill.

Which is more valuable?

The respondents do not differentiate between the value of knowledge and skill. To them both are equally valuable although they are able to see areas in which one is more valuable than the other. The respondents mentioned university studies and examinations of educational literature as examples of knowledge without a direct connection to real life. Of course this was just a mere anecdote, but a little frightening as it shows a possibility to educate teachers without a connection between theory and practice.

Some answers point out the greater value of knowledge, but not even they forget the need for bridging the knowledge to skills. As one of the respondents reminded: *Knowledge increases pain*. In this she meant that getting to know something makes you want to know more, but also: getting to know something makes you want to use the knowledge, which is not possible without skills. This builds a connection to emotional and sensible part of human being: in learning knowledge there are emotions and feelings present all the time. The same situation is in learning skills: using your own experiences and practice in real life is directly associated to emotional atmosphere which is

seen as the most important element in learning. Many kinds of emotional loadings are connected to knowledge and skills; they also have a direct link to our self conception and self-appreciation in different fields. Some of the respondents stated a question: Does love for knowledge belong in knowledge or skill? Maybe even philosophy belongs more among skills than knowledge as it deals with ability or a skill for a reasonable discussion.

In knowledge the respondents often connect idealism, hopes and ambitions to build a better world. Right away a problem is involved: *to build*. Being able to change the world into a better place we need skills to fulfil the ideas which we know to be good.

In the end

As an article in the *Financial Times*, one of the world's most appreciated newspapers in economics, pointed out, Finland is ripping apart probably one of the best school structures in the world by lifting the number of mathematic and science subjects at the cost of art and skill subjects. This means that pupils at Finnish schools have fewer opportunities to learn procedural knowledge and skills which mostly would be learned in art and skill subjects than ever before. The decision makers believe that by lifting up the math and science, the economic development in Finland will grow even faster. They are totally wrong. As we have seen in this short article, the skills and knowledge cannot be separated; they cannot be put in order by using the value or they cannot exist without one and the other. Still, the politics cannot see the consequences of their decisions: Finnish schoolchildren (who already at this moment do not like to be at school according to PISA) will dislike the school system even more and more as they do not have a chance for many-sided learning of knowledge and skills. We also should not forget the therapeutic aspect of art and skills subjects: when these subjects are put aside, there will be many difficulties in keeping order in the classrooms, in all kinds of mental problems among children as they do not have a way to discharge their energy in physical, emotional and artistic activity. And what is even more important: there will be problems caused by weak and negative self-conception, low self-respect and low self-assurance. Children will not have a chance to develop their belief in their own skills, their own ability to make artefacts with their hands, and on a larger scale: to change the world. This means that when they start working in high technology production, they will not make good workers for the firms like Nokia or others. Thus, the investment in other than art and skill subjects will kick the investor's own foot.

We see the *Financial Times* article as a last-moment warning about a fatal mistake which is being made. And when the warning comes from a direction

which concentrates on economic success and welfare, it should be really taken seriously by everyone. We, as art educators, have been writing and pointing out this situation for years with no effect, but when the alarm comes from the own side of the barricade something should happen even among technocrats and production-responsible decision-makers who have become leaders without any kind of competence in these difficult and multi-dimensional areas of life, but, about which they make important decisions.

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***In art, the hand can never execute
anything higher than the heart
can inspire***

Ralph Waldo Emerson

What does making things with one's own hands mean?—Experiences of using hand skill and producing artefacts

Abstract

This article concentrates on the many meanings that hand skills have in the modern world. The importance of hand skills has diminished as technological development has produced new equipment to do the jobs earlier done by hand. The great increase of knowledge has led many to think it can take the place of old hand skills. This way of thinking is totally wrong: the different areas of knowledge are in deep connection with each other and these cannot be separated. Without procedural knowledge (connected to skills, “knowing how”) there can be no declarative knowledge (connected to “knowing that”). The data for this research was collected from students of the University of Helsinki and Joensuu in spring 2006 (n=54). It was analysed by both authors of this article and the classification was done thoroughly. The results show nicely the versatile essence of hand skills. The meanings reach from building self conception to the economic and therapeutic areas of life. They form a way for a modern individual to have a link to old times, a channel to fulfil his or her own desires, ideas and plans. Hand skills make the abstract modern life more concrete, they offer a way to use the imagination and develop individual talents by creating new artefacts by hand.

Key words: Hand skills, making things by hand, classification, qualitative research

Background

Making things by hand is one of the basic skills in all cultures when we go back in time far enough. Each culture has its own means of making things; these artefacts which are dependent on the environment form the basis of each culture. Also the number of items needed in everyday life is dependent on the geographical location of the culture and society. Technologic and industrial countries need clearly less hand making in everyday life than agricultural societies. Actually hand made things, in some fields, have become a mark of individualism and high quality; they have become highly valued products. Even the skills generally have become more appreciated, and in modern societies professional craftsmen are highly paid and desired. Actually

in countries like Finland there is a lack of skilful craftsmen in the industrial field (metal industry and especially in the building trade). This situation is due to the enormous development in the high technology area and a high standard in education: the young do not wish to work with their hands; they want to deal with computers and other modern equipment and media. They want to get a job where there is no need for dirtying their hands.

In modern societies the original meaning of making things by hand has lost its significance. This significance has given the name for the whole species to which we human beings also belong: the Primates, which in Finnish means “those who have hands”. Being a handed species also sets the basis for the whole humanity, and this we must not forget: we are made to use our hands. Handicraft and making artefacts by hands has many meanings for human beings. It is natural, because the whole survival of the species is dependent on it. The meanings come from inside the individual, and it is directly connected with skills. When an individual knows that he is skilful in some area, it gives him a lot of self confidence and this way it has its effects on the whole self concept. Learning of skills includes procedural knowledge, which is an area of learning things. Learning procedural knowledge comes partly naturally and it is in strong connection with the structure of an individual’s giftedness. Not only have the talents explained skills learning, also the amount of practical training and the structure of the individual’s schemata and personality are in connection with it.

The use of the hands has many important effects on a human being: it is used in different therapies in cases where the mind has lost its balance. The use of hands in association with different arts makes a good combination for treatment. The practical elements of doing things with one’s own hands also has its effects: it helps to keep the thoughts concentrated on one point, and thus helps in relaxation. The enjoyment of making real artefacts with one’s own hands is obvious: it gives deep satisfaction to see something concrete becoming ready. Making by hand also gives intellectual stimulation as the planning processes connect with the practical object. Imagination and intelligence are needed in planning; problem-solving is one of the important factors in making things by hand.

Because the way of life at the present time rarely requires the use of the hands, it is good for modern people to get away from their usual habits and everyday routines: it is something different. Making things by hand is quite close to artistic work. Hand skills are needed in most of the fine arts as in the handicraft industry, and the difference between them is only a line drawn in water. It is impossible to tell where the skill ends and art begins. This is one of the main reasons which make hand skills a key to a good, a happy, satisfactory life in the modern world.

The use of hand skills is always connected with creativity. They are needed in planning and executing processes on many levels. This makes hand skills most important for kindergarten teachers and elementary school classroom teachers. Creativity occurs in the concrete products which are formed. It gives the creator a chance to see the products of his or her own hands right away. The possibility to feel, see, smell and touch different materials by human senses is also an important element in hand-made products. The satisfaction which rises from succeeding in forming objects is unquestioned.

For many people the making things by hands means a chance to get to know oneself but also to get a glimpse inside other people's minds through seeing, feeling and touching their artefacts. It means a way to build one's own identity and feel the joy of succeeding in cooperation with the others. Making things together means community, friendship, relaxation, tolerance, and leisure; it somehow means a way to catch a moment of reality in a piece of paper, wood or other material. This is why many people try to find a hobby where they may use their own hands.

Negative experiences may also take place when doing things by hand. This is because of the challenge that is always present: the challenge comes from the need to deal with the problems the material causes or the problems in the creative or productive process. Often the negative experiences change to positive when the solution for the problems is found. In some cases, of course, the negative experiences may remain in the memories of a child if the feeling of success is not found while making things by hand. Too strong guidance in doing things by hand may also cause negative feelings: a certain level of individual creativity is needed to keep the activity meaningful and reasonable.

Everyday routines include regular use of the hands: cleaning, washing dishes, making food or washing clothes are simple but very necessary activities in normal life in families. People feel safe when they keep doing their normal routines; it helps them to divide the time of the day in different sections depending on the routines. These activities also help to pass the time without becoming bored. Time flies when activities are enjoyed.

Knowledge in connection with skilful hands

The connection between knowing things and making things by hand is important. It forms the theme in this article. Making things and working by hand have an important historic, cultural and psychological role in the life of a human being and forming an identity in early childhood. At its best the knowledge and skill form a harmonious entity where the human brain understands what the hands are making and the hands are able to execute the plans

and the knowledge which arises in the brain. This harmony of skill and knowledge form the vision of a skill-information society: the explication of socially and culturally sustainable development based on the enjoyment of making things skilfully in command of an understanding mind.

In many different connections the importance of making artefacts oneself and using hands has been under discussion. The association of futurology in Turku, Finland has found three important themes in their aims for the future (Turku futurology association 2001). They are: 1) ecologically and socially sustainable development; 2) the importance of explicating identity and 3) discovering and controlling social changes.

The border between handicraft and art is always a line drawn in water: handicraft always has a certain part of uniqueness although it may use sub-contractors and rationalised production methods, even in industrial production. It places handmade artefacts somewhere in a vague area between industry and unique products. Handicraft and needlework classes at Finnish schools have traditionally been quite strong, maybe even stronger than in many other countries. It is an obligatory subject in elementary school; many handicraft professionals are educated in polytechnics or in universities where there are professorships for this particular area. All this is in connection with the strong and specific Finnish culture of handicraft. (Hietanen 2002, 4–6.)

Handicraft touches us all, it is seen in everyday life products and handmade artefacts, it is a beloved hobby for some while it is a profession to others (see Luutonen 2002; 2004). Lately it has been a part of the discussion in Finnish newspapers about the art and skill subjects at school and the division of teaching hours. In this discussion there have been notions about hand skills developing personality, independence or self conception. The ability to deal with one's own feelings, solving problems, the ability to express oneself, the development of imagination, innovation and analytic thinking have often been stated as being present in making things by hand. Mental and spiritual stimulation, the lifting of motivation in education, the enjoyment of being at school, and health, understanding and tolerance for differences are repeatedly focused in this dialog. The art and skills teaching and learning at school is often mentioned as developers of liberality and humanity in connection with equality. General all-round education and protection and creation of one's own cultural heritage are some of the results in Finnish art and skill education at school. They are in strong connection with development of the visual culture and visual reading ability both with new design in Finland. Finland has many traditions in the field of design. Together with many instrumental values the art and skill subjects have many intrinsic values. These values are very important and a lot of eyebrow lifting has been caused by plans to cut

the number of art and skills subjects. What kind of worldview and what kind of nature of knowledge can be behind these plans? (Airaksinen 2001, B7.)

The manifestation of handicrafts

The Nordic Handicrafts Council (which is a loose association of actors in the handicraft area) wrote down a “*manifestation of handicraft*” at the end of the 1990s. Eight different points of view were shown in dealing with the area. The areas were the following:

1. Handicraft is a part of all-round education. It is born from the human need to fulfil one's own ideas. Understanding the execution of plans is dependent on the experiences of the process in which all senses are in use and the process strengthens the understanding of the entity.
2. Handicraft forms identity, community and cooperation skills. Versatile elements of culture are activated in handicraft and its language is international. It connects local to the universal.
3. Handicraft is the joy of inventing and creating artefacts which connect beauty with usefulness.
4. Handicraft is skill and knowledge to solve problems, it is a giftedness which is transferred together with people and it becomes stronger when it is used.
5. Handicraft is the potential for design where the strength lies in the balance between the freedom of design and the demands of the material. The process and the product cannot be separated in handicrafts.
6. A handicraftsman or woman is a modern entrepreneur, a self-employed person who strengthens the local community.
7. Handicraft is the circulation of materials, where products are long-lasting and they finally return to nature at the end of their usefulness.
8. Handicraft belongs to the future; the practical knowledge of the human being connected to new technology produces new potential.

Every handicrafts person has skills which mean an ability to solve problems and create new innovative products and at best when creative solutions are needed. He or she has much tacit knowledge of a craftsman which is difficult to be transferred or taught to other people using words. It is a kind of portable capital which moves with the human being.

Handicraft is most important for women as they most often have it as a lifelong hobby. The experiences they get from doing things with their hands often are like the ones evoked by music or literature. Some researchers (Metsämuuronen 1995, 1997) see the meaning of handicraft in the need for

creativity, imagination, curiosity, and innovation. As the skilfulness rises, the social ones get more meaning in the motive structure. Anttila (1983; 1993) has also found out that the process of making something by hand is of great value in itself. The attitude towards the product itself and the usefulness of the product are of less value. The joy and enjoyment of producing things by hand was important in the research of Luutonen (2002). The respondents mention handicraft as a means of relaxation and relieving stress. Being able to deal with one's own thoughts while producing things by hand, is also an important way to concentrate. Heikkinen (1996, 1997) in her research jumped to the conclusion that the handicraft process is difficult to separate from the product itself. As a process handicraft is joy, work, rest and activity. It is seen as a part of personality and identity as it lifts up one's self conception and gives satisfaction. The more difficult the techniques are, the more appreciation it gains. Thus, the level of difficulty, appreciation and the value of the hand made products make handmade objects expensive.

The project "*In search of experiences*" collected writings about the meanings of art and handicraft. It showed that finding the meaning in one's own life is essential for a human being; it means that art and handicraft connect talking to oneself with the meaningfulness of life. It also showed that handicraft has its social meanings through meeting others who are interested in the same area of life. It means a chance to find one's own place in the rapidly changing world (Eskola 1998; Linko 1998). In hand-work the joy comes from the meanings of the process and the functions of the production process. These functions are succeeding in the work, therapeutic function, the deepened conception of self, and the peace of mind and strengthening of the identity. The positive attention from hand-work has been a turning point in life for many; it has also been used as a means of increasing self esteem.

This is a feeling which has been described by Csikszentmihalyi (see 1991; 1996; 1997; Juvonen & Ruismäki 2006) as a flow experience. It is something which can be achieved in doing something (usually artistic) deeply devoted and concentrated so that the rest of the world just seems to lose its meaning: the only thing that matters is the work at that very moment; everything seems to go just the way it should go and everything seems clear and right. It is often stated that an aesthetic experience is close or even includes some kind of "flow experience", which is a dynamic state, a holistically or comprehensively stimulating experience that does not create anxiety about what is happening or what might not happen (Csikszentmihalyi 1996; Juvonen & Ruismäki 2006; Ruismäki & Juvonen 2006). In any case, emotions and feelings are usually present in all kinds of intense experiences, and that is why the events are often remembered even after many years. Naturally the intensity of emotions and feelings is dependent on personality structure.

Flow experience may reason for the meaningfulness of handicrafts (Csikszentmihalyi 1997). Csikszentmihalyi explains that the flow experience is a stage of mind where the consciousness is full of experiences in total balance with the activity. Everything one feels, hopes or thinks is in balance.

The data

The data was collected in autumn 2006 from students in the University of Helsinki and the University of Joensuu. There were also updating education students among the informants. The number of answers for the inquiry was 54. There were only eight males in the sample which reflects the gender division in the kindergarten teacher education and classroom teacher education population. The questions for both this and the other research presented in this conference were given to the students during the lectures of both of the writers and the answers were sent through email. The percentage of the answers was 82%, which can be considered very high. This was because of the way the data was collected. The research question given to students was simply: **What does making things with your own hands give and mean to you?**

Method

This research belongs to the qualitative research tradition. The aim in qualitative research is to describe the target as well as possible and to increase understanding about the subject. The starting point for approach we used is consciousness and ability to build conceptions of different phenomenon and to describe these conceptions linguistically. (Nummenmaa & Nummenmaa 1997, 65–66; Ahonen 1995, 113–114, 121–122). The conceptions are built inside our head through experiences and thinking and with them a human being is connected to interaction with the surrounding world. Each person has different conceptions about different phenomenon which is because of the different experiences which form the conceptions in the first place. We form through everyday life so called pre-conceptions on which the understanding of new experiences is built. Through analysing and interpreting we build different descriptive categories which include different ways of understanding the world on a general level without connecting the categories to the individuals who are under research. These descriptive categories form the main results of our phenomenographical research.

Results

In this article we concentrate on describing the student's conceptions based on the definitions which they provided for us. Both of the authors classified and analysed the data thoroughly before getting together and comparing the classification. Although many of the groups were similar, there were also slight differences in the basis of the classification. After a long and fruitful discussion a mutual understanding was reached and the final classification was made. The classification of the meanings of making things with own hands were as follows:

- 1) Therapeutic meaning
 - a. Stress relief
 - b. Getting away from everyday life
 - c. Relaxation
 - d. Quieting down
- 2) A creative process
 - a. Self expression
 - b. Fulfilling oneself
 - c. Flow experience
- 3) Making a concrete artefact
 - a. The joy of active production
 - b. Seeing the product completed
- 4) Intrapersonal and interpersonal aspect
 - a. Becoming familiar with oneself
 - b. Becoming familiar with other people
- 5) Experiential aspect
 - a. Experiences of succeeding
 - b. Negative experiences
- 6) The routines of everyday life
 - a. Spending time
 - b. Doing casual routines
 - c. Habits of everyday life
- 7) Multiple classifications

Conclusions

The importance of hand skills cannot be doubted. It is based on the different areas of knowledge which are important in all learning and development processes. A human being cannot survive in nature or in a modern society without hand skills, although they have lost their vital meaning in defending oneself from different dangers. They have different meanings in a modern society: they help modern people to solve problems, to survive with their everyday routines; they help them to know themselves through opening channels to show and understand feelings and emotional experiences. Hand skills are in direct connection with giftedness and general intelligence; they help in building strong self assurance and a healthy self conception. Hand skills are always present when discussing art; good art always includes feelings and signs of skilfulness. In connection with creativity, imagination and inventiveness skilfulness opens the world to an individual: they help in understanding the phenomena of creation on multiple levels they help to understand the inner brilliancy of a human being; they build a bridge between the old world and the modern one by saving the heritage on cultural, social and spiritual levels.

The whole idea of being a human being is rooted in the use of the hands. Through the mere definition of our species the meaning of the hands is seen. The use of hands develops based on the gifts and the structure of talents which the genetic heredity has given to each individual, but still: everyone is able to develop the hand skills through practice. The one who is able to use his hands is often seen as clever and able to survive in different situations, he has an ability to create new solutions for problems. Also new technology is built by inventions to be used for helping mere hands.

The value of handmade objects has opened new channels for hand skills to survive in the fight for a place in the sun together with maths, sciences or technology in the modern world. But these commercial solutions form only a small way to lift hand skills: they offer some people the potential to earn a living. The cultural inheritance is often transmitted through this channel to new generations, but the importance of home cannot be denied: home is the place where the basis of the values, conceptions and appreciation of one's own culture is built. This is why everyone is responsible for transmitting these important values, skills and routines to the next generations.

The real value of hand skills is based on the processes of learning skills together with learning knowledge. These two cannot be separated from each other. If we try to separate them, lifting one at the expense of the other, we are on the road to destruction. The weakening of the art and skills subjects at schools all over the world has become one of the most important topics in the

discussion about education. Finland, among other modern societies believes in high technology and education only. In the last few years the industrial world has also noticed the importance of skills: to become a good industrial worker, you need to believe in your own skills; the ability to solve problems on paper makes good engineers, but the skills of a good handicrafts person built the world. The skills of artists make it a better place to live in. What is most important: the hand skills lift us above the everyday life even in our own home every time we have a chance to use them properly: skills are a key to the flow experience. They form together the long and winding road to a happy and good life, which should be the aim for us all.

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Do It Anyway

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten. Do good anyway.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

This version is credited to Mother Teresa. This poem was written by Mother Teresa and is engraved on the wall of her home for children in Calcutta.

Children's right to good art and skill education in a multicultural environment—Building declarations of children's rights

Abstract

Arts and skills are an important bridge between different cultures and also within each culture. These subjects are often considered at schools and in different education forums. We may ask if the pupils have the opportunity to receive enough art and skill education in kindergartens and schools, or even in teacher education. This article focuses on children's right to access good art and skill education. The general research has considered the essentials of art and skill subjects in different forums. The philosophy of art and skill subject teaching was examined in kindergarten teacher education of the University of Helsinki between 2004–2006. The students (n=90) reflected on the essential principles and ideas in teaching music, visual arts, physical education, handicrafts, dance, drama and literature through writing an essay on the task given. The considerations included also implicitly the multi-cultural learning environment. After we analysed and classified the data, we found that the declarations of the rights of children in art and skill learning must be built on the principles revealed in thoughts of the students. They consisted of essential points in art and subjects, the principles, the philosophy and the values of good learning and teaching.

Keywords: Declaration of rights; children's art and skill education; multiculturalism; art and skill subjects; music education; visual art, physical education; handicrafts; drama; dance; literature; art education

Background

In many institutes art and skill (in this article we mean: music, physical education, art, home economics and handicrafts) teachers have to defend and explain their right to teach the subjects mentioned. In recent newspaper articles, both students and teachers have expressed their anxiety and concern about learning and teaching art and skill subjects in the Finnish school system. This concern is not without a good reason.

The share of art and skill subjects in the whole curriculum of classes 3–6 has dropped between 1866–1993 from 30 % to 20 % (Kauranne 1994). Erkilä (2003) discovered that the share of art and skill subjects in the compul-

sory school subjects has been at the lowest level since 1994 compared to the times of Cygnaeus (the founding father of the Finnish school institution). Compulsory art studies in classroom teacher education (music and art) have also decreased between 1990–2002 in ten teacher education universities from 10.4 credits to 6.4 credits (mean value). After the latest curriculum reform (2006), the numbers have become even smaller. The trend has continued during the beginning of the 21st century in teacher education (Vesioja 2006).

Nowadays art and skill subject teachers are often obliged to justify their subjects in different forums. On the other hand, the meaning and significance of arts have been questioned through centuries although they are a part of human development and an important part in human growth. It is now important to ask whether the children and young people have an opportunity to study these art and skill subjects sufficiently. Can they receive good art education in kindergartens, schools or even in university-level classroom teacher education programs?

A child's right to receive good art and skill education

Kurkela (2006) cleverly describes the significance and value of art and skill education: cultural education as well as art and skill education may be in a very important role when we try to bring up citizens who are active, cooperative and responsible while we develop a Finnish society which is lively, pluralistic and humanistic. This kind of education will develop the overall personality of children, young people and even adults, as bringing fresh points of view, new skills and know-how while fostering a creative attitude. This development serves the growth of momentous life consciousness and a feeling of life control. A well functioning musical and artistic environment builds valuable preparedness and willingness which will show their importance not only in the field of art, but also in the field of science and the general development of mental and emotional wellbeing as well as the whole society.

In this article we focus on children's right to art and skill education. We examine the essential factors which become evident while learning and teaching art and skill subjects. The question was considered during the lecture "Philosophy of art and art education" between 2004–2006. The students (n=90) reflected on and contemplated in groups the indispensable principles and conceptions in learning and teaching music, art, physical education, handicrafts, drama, dance and literary art. From these considerations we built the declarations of children's rights in art and skill education. In these declarations we collected the essential foundations, principles, philosophy and values behind good teaching and learning in art and skill subjects. The idea was originally elaborated in the field of music education (Elliott 1995; Regel-

ski 1998; Reimer 1989; Swanwick 1994; Pugh et al. 1998; Heimonen 2002) and the thesis about music education has been published in the conclusions of an article concentrating on the meanings of music in fostering children's and youngsters' art learning (Ruismäki et al. 2006). Material for this article was collected by email. The declarations are under further development (Oikeus-turvajulistukset 2007) based on continuous, ongoing feedback.

A child's rights declaration in music

1. A child has a right to sing.
2. A child has a right to find the sounds in the surrounding environment, explore them and also notice the importance of silence.
3. Find the emotion of the song and a child has a right to feel safety through singing.
4. A child has a right to make his/her own music and manifest it through movement.
5. A child has a right to an opportunity to play a musical instrument.
6. A child has a right to find his/her own music.
7. A child has a right to hear all kinds of music and learn to understand them.
8. Let singing and playing music create experiences and memories.
9. Pass on the joy and delight of music-making.
10. Let music join children, parents, the world, cultures and people together.

A child's rights declaration in visual arts

1. A child has right to feel the joy of making things and succeeding in the field of visual arts.
2. A child has a right to get to know various materials and use equipment which is in good condition.
3. A child has right to explore and to become enthusiastic and receive expert guidance in different areas of expression and work.
4. A child should have an opportunity to express visual arts in his/her own way; he/she has the right to be creative and to carry out creative projects from the beginning to the end.
5. A child has right to visual art exercises that are planned for children, not for the parents or the teacher.
6. A child has the right to gain experiences and present his/her opinion about different areas of visual arts.

7. A child has a right to receive fair, equal and encouraging feedback (not criticism) about his/her work to support the need for self-expression.
8. A child has a right to show his own works and to receive sincere appreciation.
9. A child has a right to an interactive relationship with an adult who is active in the visual arts.
10. A child has a right to environment that supports and encourages a child's comprehensive art experiences without confining them to the classroom or school lessons.

A child's rights declaration in physical education

1. A child has the right to move.
2. A child has a right to the experience of moving.
3. A child has a right to positive experiences through physical exercise—the physical self conception is carried throughout life.
4. A child has a right to praise and encouragement regardless of his/her skills.
5. A child has a right to get to know himself/herself through his/her own body and physical exercise.
6. A child has a right to a wide vision of physical exercise, not just competitive sports.
7. A child has a right to find challenges and surpass his/her own expectations.
8. A child has a right to get to know different sports and ways of moving also integrated to other subjects.
9. A child has a right to feel the joy and delight of moving together in groups.
10. A child has a right to find his or her own sport dreams, not those of the parents.

A child's rights declaration in handicrafts

1. A child has a right to develop his/her hand skills using quality tools.
2. A child has a right to get to know all kinds of different materials.
3. A child has a right to design and carry out the products him/herself.
4. A child has a right to express him/herself through handicrafts.
5. A child has a right to a safe work environment.
6. A child has a right to learn to appreciate his/her own and other people's handworks.
7. A child has a right to enough time for the work.

8. A child has a right to work without being compared with others.
9. A child has a right to versatile stimuli in handicrafts.
10. A child has a right to have an encouraging, emboldening and appreciative teacher.

A child's rights declaration in drama

1. A child has a right to be heard and appreciated for his or her expressions
2. A child has a right to a safe, appreciative and encouraging environment to express him/herself.
3. A child has a right to enough time to find his/her own way of expression.
4. A child has a right to use his/her energy constructively through expressing him/her self.
5. A child has a right to an opportunity to quieten, calm down and relax.
6. A child has a right to a teacher or leader who can show him/her the different areas of drama.
7. A child has a right to a chance to develop his/her ability for empathy through drama.
8. A child has a right to receive versatile encounters and experiences of high-level children's culture.
9. A child has a right to experiences, joy and happiness in processing his/her own emotions and feelings.
10. A child has a right to focused drama education, but also to freedom of expression because creativity thrives in freedom.

A child's rights declaration in dance

1. A child has a right to dance.
2. A child has a right to be encouraged and motivated to dance.
3. A child has a right to express his/her own emotions through dancing.
4. A child has a right to find the limits of his/her own body through dance.
5. A child has a right to create movements using his/her creativity and imagination.
6. A child has a right to feel the music with his/her own body and dance to the rhythm.
7. A child has a right to use his/her own body as an instrument.
8. A child has a right to learn many forms dance through performances.

9. A child has a right to an opportunity to practise dance under guidance together with other children.
10. Let the child know about other cultures and their music through dance.

A child's declaration of rights in literary art

A child has a right to a mother tongue and with it the understanding.
A child has a right to his/her words and thoughts.
Rhymes, sentences, fairytale pictures and stories.
These are food for the mind, building material,
Potatoes with red salmon.

Give the child words, dreams and fantasies;
Feelings, experiences expressed by words
To be articulated in thousands of ways
And to be expressed with in his or her own words.

A child has a right to the child words,
The gift of hearing and listening,
The keys for reading and knowing,
A child has a right to new possibilities
And new worlds.

A child has a right to a language to sing and speak;
Words carrying forward;
Leading to the good life;
To the joy and unity of the people
Creativity and shared bread;
Work and love together.

Give a child a tree of fairytales,
The magic forest,
Where the gnomes and fairies wander,
With the wings of Pegasus, carry the child
To the world of literary art.

The analysis of the declarations

The declarations formed from the students' group works have a common focus. Many of the principles mentioned are common to all art and skill subjects. The core subjects are presented as a right, possibility or as a directive for action. The theses were expressed—as is common in these declarations—on a rather abstract level without going into concrete details. The strength of this declaration lies in making people focus on the factors in art and skill subjects which make them especially important. In the best situation these declarations would be accepted at least on an ideological and theoretical level; putting them into action might be difficult for many reasons.

Explicitly the *right to achievement* is strongly expressed in the declarations: a right to sing and play, a right to visual art, a right to physical movement, a right to develop hand skills, a right to expression, dance, language and the mind. Art and skill subjects are seen as important factors in the general development of a child, not only as a means of teaching the contents of the curriculum.

Many of the declarations are based on *child-centeredness* as a starting point. The action begins from the child and is brought out by parental guidance. The outer appearances of activities were diverse: a chance to create songs, plan visual art and handicraft works, an opportunity to find one's own limits in the fields of dance, physical movement, drama or other expression channel.

Feeling joy and happiness were also in focus in art and skill subjects. Overall, the freedom to experience, process and channel one's own emotions and feelings was emphasised in many declarations. Although the principle is generally acceptable, the real life of a pupil may occur in a quite different light, (<http://bulsa.helsinki.fi/~hruismak/materiaalit.htm>; Ruismäki & Juonen 2006).

It seems to be essential in most of the declarations that the child is able *to have encounters and experiences of success* in different art and skills subjects. At their best these may help the child to build a positive self concept, feel enjoyment and satisfaction, to know him/herself together with the environment and to build values and attitudes. Adults are encouraged to offer children opportunities to gain rich and positive experiences.

Working, acting and experiencing things together were highlighted in some of the declarations as principles of good art education. Not only the interaction inside oneself but also the interaction between other members of the achievement group may occur when dealing with art and skill subjects.

The encouragement of a child's own expression was seen as extremely important in many of the declarations. When an adult gives a child an oppor-

tunity to express him/herself in many different ways and areas, it is obvious that the child in time will find his own way of expression inside some of the art and skill subjects. Education should acquaint the child with his/her own cultural heritage and traditions. Fairytales, rhymes, games, plays, songs, architecture and visual arts help the child to know his/her own roots and find the power they offer.

An adult who offers the opportunities to experience arts and skills should always concentrate on the interests of the child and ensure that the experiences are many-sided. The role of an adult in most of the declarations is being just, fair, encouraging and supportive. He/she should act as a special guide who creates a supportive and safe environment for learning. An adult should also act as a positive example in art and skill subjects areas.

A child should be offered *challenging tasks suitable for his/her stage of development in a stimulating and safe environment* for the achievement of the skills. All materials and means for work securely should be guaranteed for every child. The working environment should be a place for safe and creative self-expression for a child.

In the declarations a child is *guided to find things and matters* and is *encouraged to express emotions and to find his/her own creativity*. A child must not be pushed into the action or activity; creative expression must have room and time to occur. Too much comparison and evaluation was often seen as negative; also competition should be avoided, according to the declarations.

In education all senses should be taken into account giving room for a child's *personality, originality and dissimilarities*. Developing a positive self conception is one of the most important tasks of art education: it creates the basics for the child's own activities (Tereska 2003; Ruismäki & Ruohonen 2006; Juvonen & Ruismäki 2006). It is most important to accept oneself and others, to be liberal and unprejudiced as well as to be merciful to one and others.

Discussion

The UNICEF Convention on the rights of the child (<http://www.unicef.org/crc/>) was the first legally conclusive international juridical instrument to guarantee the child's full human rights in all situations and circumstances. It defines the child's civil, cultural, economical, political and social rights. The convention was made in 1989 from the starting point that children under eighteen years old need special caretaking in terms of human rights which adults do not especially need. It consists of 54 articles and two extra protocols. It defines the basic rights of the child everywhere and in all situations (LOS 1989). The convention is an internationally accepted agreement of the

rights all children should have regardless of colour, sex, language, religion, political opinions, nationality, ethnic or social background, wealth, disability or extraction.

The principles of UNESCO about culture and art education as a basic right for all the citizens guide the achievement of many different institutes and organisations. (<http://www.unesco.org/culture/lea>. Read 2.9.2010) For example, the Finnish music council (<http://www.musiikkineuvosto.fi/> Read 2.9.2010) promotes the social valuation and state of musical life and music education, develops the possibilities of action in fields of music increasing cooperation inside the music branch among organisations and by developing information nets. The organisation also belongs to international development in culture and music trying to promote the basic rights for art education in EU countries. These general principles are seen in national art education activity and they also have an effect in the declarations in this article.

Many of the principles of good art education are exactly the same as those of a good life (MLL 2005; LSKL 2006; Suomen musiikkineuvosto 2006; Juvonen & Ruismäki 2005). Varto (2003) notes, that since ancient Greek times, the essential focus in philosophy's work has been the definition of a good life. The importance of art is seen as we research the life of people. Through arts an individual is in connection with the surrounding world and reality. What would be a more appropriate way to anchor ourselves to the surrounding reality than learning to understand the world and human life through music, dance and theatre, Varto asks.

In our article we have asked questions and suggested themes on the significance of art and skill subjects. This leads us to thinking about the significance of the compulsory school's art and skill education: what kind of experiences have the pupils received and how should the education be developed further? What effects do the art and skill subjects have on an individual and his/her development? How does this affect learning other subjects? Why is music valuable enough to be taught to children?

Naturally the declarations presented in this article should be widened to other fields of arts and skills as well as other parts of education. In a modern society, media education, environmental education and technologic education are also worthy of their own declarations of children's rights. Traditionally these subjects have not been focus of arts and skills, but are nowadays in direct connection with art as it achieves new types of appearances all the time.

The declarations in this article are applications for describing the rights of children in the field of art and skill education. For example ensuring safety, a stimulating, balanced environment and many-sided development, making

sure that the educational environment is good and supporting parents in raising children are all also in focus of children's protection organisations. The right to good art and skill education includes the protection of the pupils. It is a responsibility of all teachers and teacher educators which now can be expressed in the form of a poem:

Heikki Ruismäki:

For years I believed,
That teaching at its best would be
A teacher loving teaching, until I noticed
That it is not enough to have teaching
Circling inside oneself

I found the students and understood,
That the teacher should love his students,
Willing to be a good Teacher

Until I noticed, that it is not enough,
It is the learning a teacher should love
- Learning and only that.

After years of trying I was awakened to see
That the learning is not only the task for me and my students
It is Our task and a task for Us all

What is art? And what is skill? The questions may have many answers and many meanings (Juvonen & Ruismäki 2004; 2006). The positive force of different art conceptions is that they direct interest and attention to the significant elements and factors in an art object, performance or event. Many theoreticians tend to think that art is such a many-sided phenomenon that it cannot be exhaustively determined; there only are some signs changing from one artefact to another. Art and skill are open conceptions and that makes it useless to try to form only one theory about their essence. One thing is sure: the essentials of art and skills as well as their significance for education have been researched for decades and probably will be in the future too. After all, every child has a right to a good art and skill education.

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On Teaching

Kahlil Gibran

No man can reveal to you aught but that which already lies half asleep in the dawning of your knowledge.

The teacher who walks in the shadow of the temple, among his followers, gives not of his wisdom but rather of his faith and his lovingness.

If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind.

The astronomer may speak to you of his understanding of space, but he cannot give you his understanding.

The musician may sing to you of the rhythm which is in all space, but he cannot give you the ear which arrests the rhythm nor the voice that echoes it.

And he who is versed in the science of numbers can tell of the regions of weight and measure, but he cannot conduct you thither.

For the vision of one man lends not its wings to another man.

And even as each one of you stands alone in God's knowledge, so must each one of you be alone in his knowledge of God and in his understanding of the earth.

Finally

All the articles form a wholeness which aims to find provisions for ways to live a satisfactory, enjoyable, happy, and good balanced life. Our basic thought is that with artistic experiences and by using one's own hands in producing different art objects and other artefacts an individual gains more belief in his/her own potential; he or she has more touching points to the surrounding world; he or she collects more knowledge about him- or herself, comrades and the whole world and this way he or she gets to use his or her own giftedness in various areas which lead to a harmonious and a well-balanced personality. The importance of making things by hand is one of the fundamental abilities of a human being; it is inbuilt in the whole essence of man. This makes all skill and art subjects at school very important. Different areas of knowledge are also represented in the learning processes of arts and skills. This makes them equal to science and maths in importance: knowledge is not meaningful without skills which enable the use of it in practice. It is the matter of procedural and declarative parts of knowledge: one existing in all kinds of skills, art making and practical achievements which improve an individual's personal skills based on the structure of talents and giftedness; the other exists in intellectual contemplation which can be found more often in science and maths. The questions focus on "knowing how" and "knowing that" both of which are extraordinary important in all learning processes.

Of the articles the first one is decidedly the largest because it was the first research of our project and we think it is one of the most important. It also focuses on the most important task: experiencing art and conceptualising it. The other articles are shorter because they have been published in international publications with strict orders about the length of writings. In a way the first article somehow forms a basis for the others. We also decided to put all the references after each article to make the reading easier.

Pedagogic wellbeing

In this collection of research articles we have focused on art education from many points of view. We see pedagogic well-being as an important part of human life. It shows in pedagogic situations among teachers as well as pupils. It is in connection with enjoyment in learning and teaching.

With the research on conceptions we have tried to show the ways they have been built and to point out the extreme significance of all kinds of experiences. The experiences might rise from any situations around us, but when we speak about art and skill education we may concentrate on the institutional teaching and learning situations: school. That is the place where most of the experiences are had for the first time. Pedagogical well-being is in direct connection with the art and skill subjects. Rising from the material of this book we have chosen the following effects which are in connection with art and skill subjects at school. In the following we will connect these themes in research literature to draw stronger conclusions.

Pedagogic well-being is in direct connection with the pupil bonding into the classroom society, righteous treatment, equality, trust and safety as well as in getting positive feedback about his or her own products and acting. Through all these a pupil starts to build a conception about his own negotiation in different school subjects. This is in direct connection with the increase in motivation and appreciation of school subjects and the whole idea of learning generally. The school teaching in art and skill subjects can at its best, produce intrinsic motivation which gives in-built satisfaction of doing different things and executing tasks. They also may produce the feelings of control and competence in a pupil's mind (Byman 2002, 26). According to humanistic and cognitive idea of man one of the motivating and activity guiding factor is cognitive curiosity and the desire for understanding meanings of life (Rauste-von Wright 1994). In this specific area of motivation art and skill subjects are most valuable. Feeling school to be reasonable is in connection with the affective factors in which the actions and incidents at school bring satisfaction to the pupils through the attitudes and emotional feelings. Through art and skill subjects a pupil has opportunities to make his or her own decisions and master the work. The experiences of self-dependence brings motivation and helps to build learning strategies through which the school becomes more reasonable and learning orientation becomes better. Thanks to this pedagogical well-being also reaches a higher level. (Lagerspetz 1998; Simola-Isaksson 2003; Turunen 1997.)

The meaning of independence

In Finland the great success in the PISA research has led to an emphasis on even more subjects like math and science although at the same time the PISA showed that Finnish schoolchildren do not enjoy being at school as much as all the other children. Many international researches show that the motivation and enjoyment at school drops deeply after the first school years at the same time as the intrinsic motivation drops and changes to extrinsic and school

lassitude increases. The problem could be helped through increasing appreciation and the number of art and skill subjects at school. Through that the pupils would have a chance to deal more with the procedural knowledge, to learn by doing. At the same time their opportunities for making their own decisions would become better as the control of their own work is typical in art and skill subjects. These subjects also offer among other elements a means of therapeutic actions which helps in avoiding the spiritual malaise. In a modern school the number of learned details and pieces of knowledge is enormous even at the start of school. The latest researches also show that an active music hobby is in significant connection with increased interest in most of other school subjects, increased belief in one's own survival and better self conception. (McPherson & al. 2008).

Teacher's responsibility

This research also shows the importance of the teacher's role in school work. The teacher's positive expectations about pupils' success in connection with the solutions made in teaching processes are connected to pedagogic well being. (Orpinas & Horne 2006; 98, 99, 101; Metsämuuronen 1995; 1997, 22, 28; Peltonen 2006, 22–31; Perttilä et al. 2003, 14.) Positive expectations make the pupil's motivation stronger and negative expectations weaken it. If pupils do not have much control of their own work, motivation also weakens. When pupils can control their own work they become more committed to school work. Thus, motivation is tied to self control and independence.

Learning results and the experiences at school are connected to the pupil's emotional well-being. (Perttilä et al. 2003, 13–17.) Emotional experiences have a strong effect on attitudes and self conceptions, interest towards different school subjects, and in addition, they also have a direct connection to personality formation in childhood. (Liinamo & Kannas 1995, 109; Linnanmäylä 1993, 39; Williams & Batten 1981, 9.) Behind the pupil's choices, persistence and coping there are two important parts of motivation: 1) his or her beliefs in managing and succeeding in the task (expectations) and 2) the appreciation connected to the task. Task orientation is dependent on the amount of interest, expectations of success and appreciation of the task. (Eccles & Wigfield 2002.) These are built through the experiences which a person collects everywhere. The experiences in art and skill subjects are most important because they are directly connected to personality development.

Intrinsic motivation rises from the inner satisfaction that a person gets through action or executing a task. Self determination theory explains motivation through the possibility of self-control of one's own work, self-direction and competence. The three needs which are satisfied are: compe-

tence, autonomy and social cohesion. (Deci & Ryan 2000; Deci & al. 1985; 1991; Bouffard et al. 2003.)

Using own hands and body

The art and skill subjects are also important because human beings belong to the primates. Using our hands is natural and common to all cultures. The differences of the things needed depend on natural circumstances. Through the development of technical implements the need for the use of hands has depreciated. Still, the use of hands and skills is the element which has raised the human being to the level where we are today. The use of the hands has a special intrinsic meaning for human beings because it connects skills to the development of personality. When an individual knows that he or she is skillful in doing something, self assurance rises and self conception becomes positive. At the same time task orientation increases together with motivation. Thus, we can see the importance of arts and skill subjects at school and in everyday life, but also the necessity for examination and collation of experiences in arts and skills. (Eccles 1984; Eccles & Wigfield 1995a; 1995b; 2002; Eccles et al. 1989; 1991; 1993; Hietanen 2002; Juvonen 2000; Juvonen & Ruismäki 2005; 2006; Aho 1987; Ames 1992.)

The use of one's own hands and body is part of procedural knowledge and it is directly connected to intrinsic areas of talents. Still the talents do not explain all learning of skills; the amount of practice, the structure of schemata, motivation and learning strategies are also involved. When we are dealing with arts and skills the tasks are usually in direct connection with the context. The task involves real doing or making something, where the meanings and sensibility are born through understanding the knowledge and using it directly. The learning of arts and skills is contextual and self targeting and it takes place in social situations where the experiences and skills are shared with the social community in interaction. (Candy 1991; Entwistle 1998 105–106.) The evaluation should always be sensitive and positive in nature, because when we deal with arts and skills we are in direct touch with personality. This makes arts and skills also useful in many sorts of therapies (which were seen in the results of our research in this book) because they produce pleasure and enjoyment as they are experimental. (Eccles et al. 1983; 1998; Heikkinen 1996; 1997; Hietanen 2002; Jacobs & al. 2002.)

Different areas of knowledge in use

The results of our research also show the many sides of the knowledge which are important in the process of making art or using skills. The planning process uses the declarative knowledge area together with creativity, intelli-

gence, imagination, problem-solving capability and the ability to concentrate. These elements are needed whether the task is in fine art forming or painting, in technical work dealing with metal or wood, knitting, dance performance or making a song or a rhythm exercise. After the planning process the realization begins and the declarative knowledge, and transforms into procedural through the process of execution. When one sees one's own plans come true it brings enjoyment, feelings of ownership and one can concretely touch the product of one's own hands. In the planning process, as well as in executing the plan, the solutions are self-made which form a remarkable part of independence processes. (Deci & Ryan 2000, 73.) This increases the intrinsic motivation, which also brings success in many school tasks. (Eccles & Wigfield 2002; Ainley et al. 2002; Aunola 2000; 2002; Aunola et al. 2000; Gottfried et al. 2001.) At its best art or skill tasks may create a flow experience. Being experiential is one of the essential elements of arts and skills. New knowledge is built upon older through applications in a real context. (Csikszentmihalyi 1991; 1996; 1997; Bilimoria & Wheeler 1995.)

When a pupil has formed, painted or otherwise produced something with his or her own hands, it may always be enjoyed through the use of the senses. Seeing the colours and forms, hearing music and other voices, touching the surface of the object or even tasting the product (in home economics) connect the product of art or skill directly into one's everyday life. Art and different skills attach the senses and personality together and form an important part of human life through offering information about the surrounding world. (Kant 1997; 1998; Oittinen 1998.) The meaning of art and skill is most important in self expression. They form a channel to express emotions and feelings in a way which is exactly suitable for an individual. Self expression is a way of expressing emotions which connects emotional education to the arts and skills. Emotional education is one of the forgotten elements in the Finnish school curriculum. (Absetz 1994; Callesen ym. 2005; Ojala & Uutela 1993; Isokorpi 2004; Jalovaara 2005.)

The results of our researches show the importance of overcoming the challenges which were set on the tasks of planning and making art or skill products. These challenges are usually different from those in everyday life; they often concentrate on using one's own senses, muscles, areas of talent or solving problems and using inventiveness or cleverness. Having enough challenge is one of the basic elements in learning. (Bandura 1997; Shunk 1990.) This ties arts and skills in the formation of personality through the experiences of succeeding. The satisfaction gained through the process is in direct connection with the difficulty of the challenge. Repetitive experiences of success bring positive changes in self conception and learning strategies.

In occasional tasks the beliefs in self-efficacy are dependent on earlier experiences. Thus, the responsibility of the teachers is clear: the feedback and evaluation should be honest but positive in nature. The level of challenge is often set by teachers; every pupil should have challenges suitable for the situation he or she is in just at the moment personally. This is how positive expectations, motivation and task orientation can be reached. (Eccles et al. 1983; 1998.)

The results showed the magnitude of communality for many respondents. Although products or tasks needing art or skills are executed personally, they always take place in a social community. This connects other people's points of view in the work. Pupils see other solutions and other problem-solving ideas and they can also comment on and evaluate them. Every artefact tells something about its creator and through ongoing evaluation processes pupils learn about each other but also about themselves. Therefore, these subjects are means of building identity, but they also offer experiences of success together with others. This develops social skills and a sensitivity to respect the work of others. A social feeling of togetherness is one of the most important elements of self determination theory and learning-centred work. (Deci & Ryan 2000.) Because arts and skills make pupils produce different artefacts and solutions, to produce things which show something from the producer, they teach them to cope with dissimilarity and different points of view. This makes them very useful in teaching multicultural groups of immigrant students as they include much nonverbal communication, too. (Absetz 1994; Ojala & Uutela 1993.)

As our results showed, concentration is one significant element in arts and skills. They require certain stopping and concentrating on the essential elements of the task. Seeking one's own limits and borders in both intellectual and physical ways teaches an individual how to develop skills and capabilities through practice. This helps pupils to learn perseverance and to notice their own development in different areas. This goes as well with all different arts and skills in fine art, music handicraft or sports.

When we are dealing with tasks which are near the capability limits in arts and skills it is natural for pupils to fail every now and then. This makes the activation of different achievement strategies necessary when dealing with arts and skills; thus these subjects are most sensitive: it is easy to deeply hurt another through unwise or graceless criticism. Singing, painting knitting or even the apparatus gymnastics require putting one's soul into the task. It means showing some inner emotions and feelings to other people; the personality and physical characteristics can be considered. The level of committing oneself in the task is usually very high which makes the individual even more vulnerable. For these reasons a teacher should be gentle

and wise especially at the time when the strategy frame of reference is developing. Our results also showed the importance of letting the pupils find their own solutions in the production processes. This makes the task reasonable. Too much pushing or advising as well as fear of failure may cause the activation of defence strategies. (Aunola, 2000; 2001; Onatsu-Arvilommi & Nurmi 2000; Norem & Cantor 1986; Spencer & Norem 1996.)

The results showed that the feeling of personal development is present in many tasks of arts and skills; it joins psychic development, self expression and creativity in the comprehensive development of personality. This is even noted in the curriculum in Finland. (OPS 2004.) All art education focuses on developing the deepest levels of formation of personality. The arts and skills also transfer values, norms, and conceptions as a part of both conscious and unconscious self conception. They give elements for personal growth and development.

Creative action and expressiveness offer possibilities for experiencing oneself, communicating in different kinds of groups and taking others into account. Dealing with arts and skills include much more than just learning knowledge and skills because the reactions connected to them are in connection with deep unconscious areas. They deal with emotions and emotional education and offer an opportunity to dissolve inner pressures and anxiety. They also offer intellectual stimulus through the planning processes, imagination and problem solving. Concrete making things with one's own hands brings much satisfaction and enjoyment but it also relaxes as all the thoughts are concentrated on the achievement. (Juvonen et al. 2006; Juvonen & Ruismäki 2006, 3; Ruismäki & Juvonen 2006, 2.)

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ISBN 978-952-10-6853-9
Unigrafia
Helsinki 2011