

Art therapy in Finnish schools: education and research

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to explore the possibilities that art therapy can offer as a new learning environment in Finnish schools. As a response to a lack of creative practices in everyday education, the aim of this study is to introduce these possibilities of promoting pupils' well-being through art therapy received. The research methodology followed the hermeneutic and phenomenographic principles. In the interviews (N=15), I collected qualitative data regarding the practice of art therapists in schools and the ways in which their work was by the teaching staff. This study will also create new knowledge about, and perspectives on, the potential of art therapy as a means of treatment in scaffolding pupils and enhancing their development in various areas of learning.

Keywords: Special Education, Art therapy, Art Therapeutic Education, Learning, Pedagogical Rehabilitation.

Referencia normalizada

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CONTENTS

Introduction. The Study. Findings. Conclusions and discussion. References.

Arteterapia en las escuelas finlandesas: educación e investigación

RESUMEN

El propósito de este artículo es el de explorar las posibilidades que el arteterapia puede ofrecer como un nuevo entorno de aprendizaje en las escuelas finlandesas. Como respuesta a la falta de prácticas creativas en la escuela diaria, el objetivo de este estudio es introducir estas posibilidades de promoción a través del arteterapia del bienestar de los alumnos que lo recibieron. La metodología de investigación siguió los principios de la hermenéutica y la fenomenografía. En las entrevistas (N=15), recogí datos cualitativos con respecto a la práctica de los arteterapeutas en las escuelas y los modos en que su trabajo se desarrolló por el profesorado. Este estudio aportará igualmente nuevo conocimiento sobre el tema, y dará perspectiva, al potencial del arteterapia como tratamiento en el andamiaje de los alumnos y en la mejora de su desarrollo en varias áreas de aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: Educación especial, arteterapia, educación arteterapéutica, aprendizaje, rehabilitación pedagógica.

SUMARIO

Introducción. El estudio. Resultados. Conclusiones y debate. Referencias bibliográficas.

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INTRODUCTION

Setting the Scene

Art therapists have a relatively long history of working in school environments. For example, in the USA Bush (1996, 1997) talks about the ways in which art therapy can be integrated within schools, while in the UK Waller (1992) discusses historical alliances between the new art therapy discipline and teachers. Examples of art therapy practice in schools in the UK can be found in Case and Dalley (1992) and Dunn-Snow (1997), while Karkou (1999) presents findings from a survey of school-based art therapists. Although art therapy and art education are different professional fields (Waller 1985; Karkou and Sanderson 2006), the two areas have been explored as potentially relevant interventions aiming at integration



Figure 1.: Client's image

The Finnish educational system has an increasing number of adolescents with various difficulties and special needs who require support. Thus, many ways of helping, teaching, and integrating these young people into the school environment are needed. The purpose of the current research, which situates itself on the borderlines between the fields of art therapy, art education, and special education, is to explore the possibilities that art therapy can offer Finnish schools. As a response to the lack of creative practices in everyday education, the aim of my study is to introduce the possibilities of promoting pupils' well-being through art therapy. One goal of art therapy is to renew the school culture from within in a learner-centred fashion. Similarly, the school will be provided with concrete tools to expand their skills and knowledge in nurturing education. In other words, the main task of art therapy is two-fold: to change the school atmosphere to encompass an alternative imagery-centred learning environment, in which differences are appreciated and accepted, and to introduce these potential means of promoting pupils' well-being through art therapy, in accordance with the creativity strategy (OPM:n julkaisu 2006:43. [*Memorandums and reports of the Ministry of Education*]) of the Finnish government.

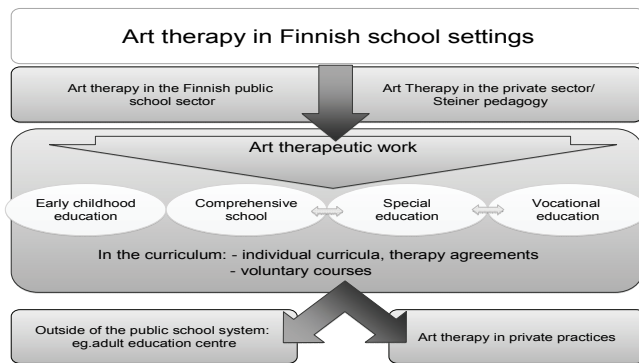
However, when attention is turned to the work of Finnish art therapists in school settings, precisely what this work involves remains unclear (Hautala 2005, 2006). Art therapists' roles differ a lot from each other. Some therapists work as teachers and use art therapy methods in their work. In this case, the art therapy is rarely explicitly indicated in the curriculum, and can be thought of as hidden art therapy work. In contrast, some art therapists work in schools as visiting art therapists. This work is often possible as part of the normal school day and in other cases it is sometimes done as an after-school activity.

The current research constitutes an attempt to explore the possibilities that art therapy can offer Finnish schools. My data consists of 15 interviews with art therapists working as specialists in different Finnish schools. The theoretical

background of this research is phenomenography. The data gathered from the research participants works dialogically with the theoretical background of the research, as well as between each other. I studied the ways in which therapeutic art practices are integrated into the school setting at different educational levels; from basic education to vocational training. In this paper, I will use the terms *therapeutic teaching and learning*. In turn, the pupils and students, in other words the clients of art therapeutic work, will be referred to as *learners*.

This is a survey research in which the data has been collected through semi-structured interviews on central themes elicited from the interview data. Relevant to my study, the existing provision of art therapy in Finnish education is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The state of art therapy in Finnish Education



THE STUDY

The research questions addressed in the present study are:

1. What is the main content of art therapeutic work in Finnish schools?
2. What can the culture of art therapy give to the school culture, and how do these two cultures differ from one another in Finland?
3. How is the art therapeutic process realized in schools and what is the potential of the consolidation of the art therapeutic process in the future?

Research Design

The theoretical background of the methodology used in the study is hermeneutic phenomenography, which is based on the interview data. My work as a therapist is the basis for my research. Both the phenomenological research and phenomenography have philosophical roots in hermeneutics. One can also refer to hermeneutic phenomenography when the purpose of the research is to understand the research object more deeply by using the hermeneutic method. This method aims at defining the phenomena as a concrete whole (Anttila 2005, 336). According to Marton and Booth (1997), the research object of phenomenography is the way in which people experience the world and related phenomena. Here, it is oriented to facilitate understanding the learning issues of the learning environments.

In hermeneutic phenomenography, the researcher divides the data into categories of significance that do not objectively exist in the data. The result of each piece of research is the researcher’s point of view on the subject, without the intent to explore the ultimate truth (Marton & Booth 1997; Anttila 2005, 336). Phenomenography is more or less neutral from the point of view of specific research methods. Nonetheless, it does represent a distinctive perspective, according to which findings may be re-interpreted in ways that do not correlate with their original meaning. (Johansson, B., F. Marton and L. Svensson, 1985: An approach to describing learning as a change between qualitatively different conceptions. In Pines and West, red: *Cognitive structure and conceptual change*. New York: Academic press)

Table 1: An example of the analysis method. The image as a part of a process: analysing the basic data from interviews to the results

	Stage 1 of the analysis: Becoming familiar with the data and forming the index of the classes of concept	Stage 2 of the analysis: Subcategorizing the participants’ meanings	Stage 3 of the analysis: The development of the significance network into results, theory of the research, and upper categories	Synthesis and its discourse
Research Question 3. How is the art therapeutic process realized in schools?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The image is multi-layered - The image is versatile - The image is important - Everything is possible in the image - The image can be destroyed - The image is able to live its own separate life in the mind of the learner - The image tells something the life of the child - The image mirrors its creator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The image is a versatile document - The image evokes symbolic, multi-layered information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The image brings internal issues to the fore, which can be explored, unconscious to conscious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are the meeting points of psychodynamic theory and educational theory
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The image could compensate e.g. for weakness in speech - Talking about an image is an internalized issue for children - The world of adolescence exists in the images - The image is a slice of the learner’s emotional life at the moment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The image is fluent self-expression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The image will strengthen the learner’s self-esteem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inner learning occurs during the creation of the image - the image is a therapeutic learning environment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The image can be carried home like a safety blanket (transitional object) - The image is an idiom of emotion when there is no words - The image communicates what is happening to the child - The Image is the tool of communication and interaction - Therapy happens with the help of the image - The therapist will accept/receive the image 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The image will strengthen the learner’s everyday life by proving the concrete means to express emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The image is a very important part of the triangular relationship - Experience of pleasure and joy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The image is an important part of therapeutic activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The image is a source of happiness and will surprise the child - Children and adolescents are normally satisfied with the images they make - Sometimes, the image encourages further work on it or carrying on with the subject in another image 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making the image causes the feeling of pleasure and it is a continuing narrative process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The image is the space in which the learner’s own narration can be found 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The image will fluently connect therapy culture to educational culture

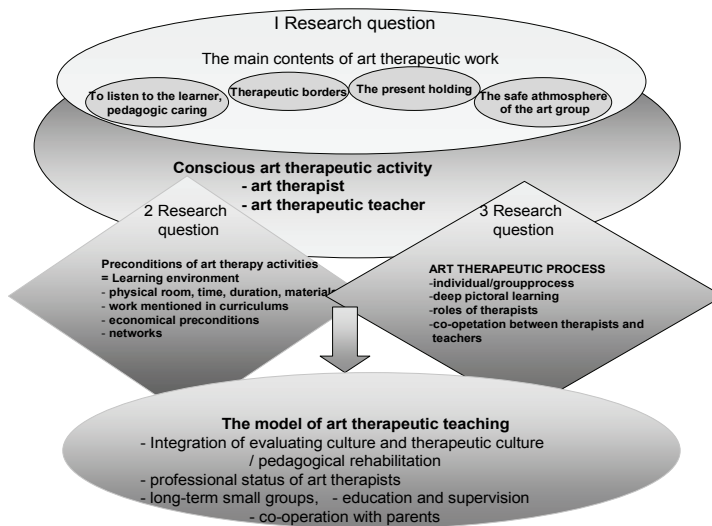
In my experience, pedagogic and psychodynamic theories are not far apart from each other. Even in studies relating to learning, the need to understand the unconscious has been recognized (Ojanen 2000, 5–23). In therapy, learning experiences are also very important. The learner’s emotional and psychic needs can be perceived in the process of creating a picture, which enables a quick intervention in the learner’s problems (Table 1. Synthesis and analyses).

This study also analyzes the relationship between art therapy and art education, special education, and educational rehabilitation. It structures the way in which we should speak about art therapy as a part of school culture and the form it takes in practice.

Findings

Figure 2 summarises the above synthesis of findings. It also shows the answers to the main questions of the study. On the one hand, school as a familiar environment makes it easier for students to seek therapy, but on the other hand, the results of this study show that art therapists find it hard to find their place in the school environment. This figure indicates the possible ways in which art therapy can be included as a part of school culture.

Figure 2: Art therapies in school culture²



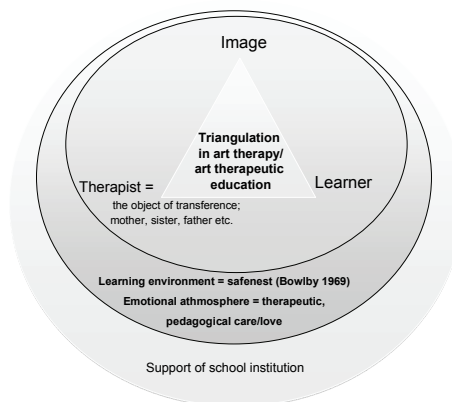
² **The research questions:**

1. What are the main contents of art therapeutic work in Finnish schools?
2. What can therapy culture give to the school culture, and how do these two cultures differ from one another in Finland?
3. How is the art therapeutic process realized in schools and what is its potential of the consolidation of the art therapeutic practice in the future?

Therapeutic learning and teaching pursue the goal of integrating the learner’s inner world: the perception of the learner’s own identity and existence, as well as the acknowledgement of the individual’s importance to himself/herself and his/her community. According to the participants in this study, for these goals to be reached it is very important that the whole school community supports the triangular process and that there can be a safe learning environment within which the triangular relationship can enable the integration of the learner’s inner world (**Figure 3**). In the triangular, individual process the learner is able to reach a relaxed state, in which s/he can be safe. The participants think that the affective atmosphere is therapeutic, caring, and pedagogically loving, regardless of whether the form of the therapy is individual or based on group action.

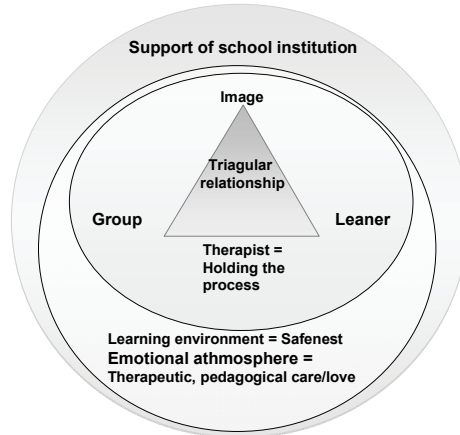
The learners’ need for a sense of security in the group clearly arose as one of the strongest themes in the interviews. Interviewees saw therapy work in terms of the creation and guarding of an inner mental space, i.e. a secure base. The secure explorational atmosphere of art therapy can thus be compared to the following secure base phenomenon. The therapist, who creates the inner boundaries of the therapy by his/her presence, is present in the therapy room and gives the client, i.e. the learner, the freedom to become familiar with themselves through the creation of the picture. If necessary, the client can reflect on the novel, exciting, and perhaps even frightening emotions together with the therapist in the process of picture-making. This intimacy and interaction occurring in and via the picture is to a great extent a non-verbal discussion with the therapist. Occasionally, it is sufficient that the picture of the client becomes visible for the therapist to see. Just as most of the interaction between mother and child is non-verbal, the communication in a secure space, i.e. in the potential art therapeutic space or “safe nest” (Bowlby 1969), happens at the emotional level, often non-verbally.

Figure 3: Preconditions of art therapy to establish favourable learning environments in school, individual process.



According to the participants in groups, the role of the art therapist becomes the action of the whole group (Figure 4). Thus, the role of the art therapist is more like a container and holder of the process.

Figure 4: Art therapy to establish favourable learning environments in school, group process.



My research suggests that there is not much room for talk about therapy in school culture (Hautala 2005; 2006). Diagnoses and recognising symptoms belong to the responsibility of the secondary medical institution. According to the interviewees, in art therapy, mental health concepts are replaced by talking about understanding of inner emotions and outlining the psychological needs of the child or adolescent. The goal of teaching, education, and therapy is that the individual accepts responsibility for his/her life, becomes independent, and understands the balance of freedom and responsibility. This is also one of the aims and central principles of educational rehabilitation.

According to the participants, art therapy in school settings is linked with and integrated more to the students' needs. Students are usually sent to art therapy by their teachers and receive art therapeutic education on their teachers' initiative. They often attend therapy during their school hours and only rarely outside school time.

In many schools, the art therapist works as a member of staff. In theory, the art therapist can contribute his/her own individual perspective to the staff meetings and so contribute to offering comprehensive support to each student. In practice, however, since art therapists mainly work part-time, it is difficult for them to attend staff meetings.

Art therapy as an inner learning experience

According to the interviewees, the situation of the child or adolescent is often more sensitive than can be observed. The therapeutic, healing experience of the

learner is a valuable goal of the work. From the point of view of therapeutic learning, the learner is not seen as the object of teaching but as a subject of his/her own growth. The learner's will and motivation arise from his/her experiences and related needs. In his/her picture, the learner describes his/her story, and his/her experiences exist at the core of the picture. The image and the interaction with the imagery reveal the individual's inner perception. The starting point of experiencing the picture and learning from it is within the individual, and outsiders cannot assign meanings to the picture. According to the participants, it is increasingly important that the educational professionals understand the inner perspective of the mental well-being of children and adolescents.

The space used in art therapy (potential space) was also considered to be important for the learners' wellbeing. One of the interviewees expressed this thought as follows:

“Through the use of safe space, the child understands that s/he has a chance to talk about his/her issues, to focus on his/her thoughts and on creating the picture without distractions.” (Interview no12)

The duration of the art therapy process

In their work, the participants paid attention to the short duration of art therapy processes. The budgetary allocations and maybe even the willingness of the school community, do not favour processes that last over a year. Processes lasting for at least 12 months are rare in schools, although research supports the effectiveness of long-term therapy and the notion that short therapy is only appropriate for a small proportion of individuals in need of help (Sandström 2006). There is a belief in the school world that these children and adolescents in need of special support can be “treated” by a short intervention. The research participants explained that this belief is more welcomed than denying support altogether. Nonetheless, the situation is frustrating for therapists who see the potential for recovery and change in longer-term therapy. Because the duration of the therapy process is so short, the goals of the therapy need to be set lower, and the therapy must be seen as supporting activity instead of a process pursuing the goal of integrating experiences. According to the art therapists interviewed, permanent results for students with serious learning and concentration difficulties can only be achieved with a minimum of 2–4 years of therapy.

Art therapy culture's integration with school culture

With the intention of treatment, the intervention of the therapist or the therapeutic teacher has tools to observe differences in pupils and maybe even to take care of the child temporarily until s/he can be directed to special care, if needed. In reality, such reorganization meets with resistance from the leadership

and peers of the school environment. The research participants associated this with the lack of staff awareness and expert knowledge.

One difficulty and disadvantage for the therapists was the vagueness of the practice in using the title of art therapist. They considered not using the term *art therapy* in schools to be good practice, since in their view the word was stereotypically charged. One participant proposed replacing the term by using *special education through art* instead. In the interviews carried out in the present study, therapy in special schools was also considered. Quite a few art therapists have implemented careful observation and developed their methods of special education especially in the field of art-making.

Therapy-related terms seem to be treated as taboo within schools. Even if it is a special school in question, in which pupils might attend different types of therapy to support their growth, these therapeutic interventions are not seen as elements of learning but, instead, as components of a treatment culture. According to the participants, this results in them being excluded from the school culture and pushed into treatment environments and institutions both in terms of the language used as well as in terms of the actual physical exclusion of art therapy from general school environments. Nevertheless, the participants in the research do report their experience of an improvement of the skills and efficiency of teaching staff when treatment culture is incorporated in the school community. Through close observation and quick intervention, it is possible to intervene in the crisis points of life management. These include, for instance, the so-called “grey area” (invisible children), bullying, depression, and co-occurring phenomena such as truancy, eating disorders, or attention deficit.

The contribution of art therapy in educational culture

According to the findings from this study, the contribution of art therapy as an educational intervention and pedagogical rehabilitation can be seen on three levels, as presented in Table 1:

Learner’s level: affects the learner’s welfare, the development of interaction skills, educational rehabilitation, individual curriculum, and participation in individual/group therapy

Work community’s level: in part, influences pastoral care and co-operation in a multiprofessional team; art therapy contributes to the work community, individual curriculum, and perspectives related to supervision via therapeutic knowledge

Educational institution’s level: develops the school culture on a general level, facilitates a new way of learning in the different environment, and promotes the health and well-being of school culture

Table 2: The contribution of art therapy in the culture of a school

	Learner's level	Work community's level	Educational institution's level	Synthesis
Significance	Individual interaction and welfare, a restful place, the possibility of gaining a confidential relationship	A part of the pastoral care; principal is the key person in this communication	Atmosphere of the school culture/ the board of governors: the sense of community	Promotion of welfare, prevention of issues and problems
The form of influence	As individual and group therapy: be involved actively as educational rehabilitation, of 'unseen children'	Team work: the forum for the awareness of hidden curriculum	Creating a learning environment by encouraging health and wellbeing in the educational culture	Reinforcement of pedagogical rehabilitation as a part of educational culture -Addition to the culture of health and education
Art therapy's contribution as the developer of educational culture	Consultation with pupil's own teacher and personal curricula	Holding, supervision in the team	- Economic resource from special education or from social and health services - Resources for time and the room	- A new, controlled, intervening learning environment - The model can be adapted as mixed artistically or between subjects

Most therapists emphasized learner orientation, the importance of the quality of the art therapeutic interaction in a triangular relationship, and competent treatment of the client. In addition, the significance of the families of children and adolescents was emphasized in art therapy.

For the therapists working in schools, one of the greatest problems they faced was difficulty in communicating and problematic interaction, or even the lack of it, with other members of the school staff. The community's support is one of the principles of successful art therapy. Art therapy has been better integrated into education in those schools in which the teachers and other staff members have been familiarized with the principles and rules of art therapeutic education than it has been in those schools where this is not the case. The literature suggests that this kind of familiarization is most successful when it is based on action and experience; for example, art therapy workshops in which the staff members participate (Moriya

2000). For the purpose of cooperation, increasing knowledge and an understanding of the therapeutic process, it is important that the art therapist takes part in staff meetings that deal with students' well-being and learning (Moriya 2000).

According to the participants in this study, most conflicts relating to therapy in schools are mostly due to the cultural differences between the schools and the field of art therapy. These differences were compared in table 3.

Table 3 Comparison of school culture and therapy culture

Evaluative school culture	Culture of art therapy in school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – competition – continual assessment and comparison 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – permissive atmosphere – self assessment and reflection in group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – aims of curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – aims of comprehensive and flexible individual curriculum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the values of hidden curriculum are strong and unconscious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – recognition of hidden curriculum as an aim of art therapy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the group is important in achieving students' curricula as well as Boosting the productivity and good reputation of the school community? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the group is important in achieving the social aims and the interaction skills of individuals and groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – cognitive values are highlighted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the group is an important environment for learning confidence – emotional and mental values are more important
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – learning environment is spacious and boundless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the learning environment is supported by the therapeutic boundaries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – teaching is dictated by school community and teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – teaching is learner-centred; the students' own experiences and images are emphasized
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – learning is at the conscious level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – deep learning, a part of which has been absorbed at the unconscious level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the role and the authority of teacher dominate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the role of learner and self-reflection are independently present
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – short-sighted and swift benefits are dominant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – slow, process-like support is important, the appreciation of sustainable development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –lack of confidentiality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – professional confidentiality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – so-called invisible pupils of classroom are dropping out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – so-called invisible pupils are active and equal members of the group

Many of the operations needed to create a future for art therapy in Finnish schools are financial in nature. Art therapy activities in schools are funded by various project funds, such as the European Social Fund of the Finnish National Board of Education, special needs teaching funds, and the funds of Social Insurance Institution of Finland. Funding is allocated on an annual basis, and thus tends to be rather short-term considering the students' long-term need for special support.

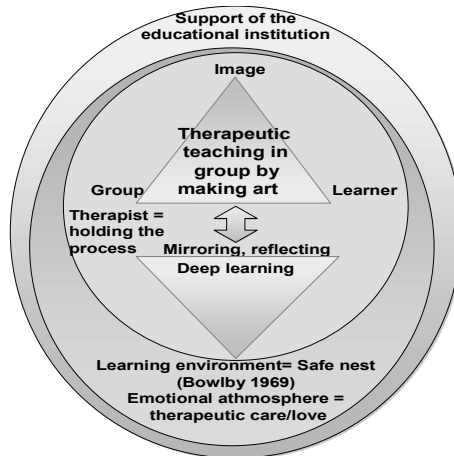
The participants rated resistant attitudinal prejudice and beliefs even more burdensome than the financial limitations. In order to attain a potential therapeutic space and a good working atmosphere, the following measures are called for:

- the acknowledgement of the psychological needs of the learner as one basis for teaching
- the training of teachers and the work community as supporters and actors in therapy
- the introduction of learner-centredness in art therapy and art therapeutic teaching, as well as interpolating art therapeutic boundaries into school culture, which in the opinion of the research participants should be acknowledged in the curriculum
- the inclusion of optional art therapeutic courses in the curriculum
- the fortification of parental co-operation
- providing the school community with a possibility to supervision at work

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The picture makes the information on the client's feelings visible for the client and the therapist, and transforms it into a tool for communication. It is often enough to marvel at the picture together in silence. In the process of visual learning, the group therapy dynamics change from private to public while the therapist supports the process (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Therapeutic group learning through art therapy



After comparing group-based art therapy and verbal group therapy, Case and Dalley report examples of differences between the methods. For example, in the beginning of a group-based art therapy session, each member withdraws from the group in order to make art by himself/herself with focus on his/her own therapeutic processing (Case & Dalley 1992, 195–215; Leijala 2002, 13–23). This method moulds the group dynamics as well as illustrates and promotes the members' will to assimilate into the "group-self." The tension between group-dependence and individuality is obvious. The structure of the group enables the exploration of both of these phenomena, and it provides time and space for both areas. In the group, the members are as reliant on the group as they originally were of the therapist. The members of the group develop into each other's therapists. This phenomenon is already visible in the groups of elementary school children. This stage can become an important phase of growth, characterised by gaining independence and individuality. The group starts to resemble a closed society, reluctant to accept new members. (Salminen 1997, 155; Skaife & Huet 1998)

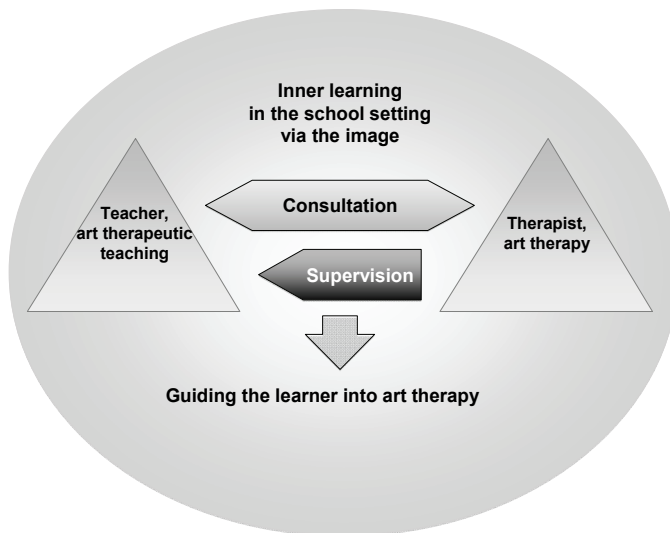
In an art therapy group, the product, i.e. the picture, forms a bond between the members of the group and thus functions as a rudimentary structure for the process. One of the research participants discussed the care and the love with which the members of the group related to their pictures. The group was considered safe and supportive, and the therapy process was seen as a protected mental safety nest. The members also showed respect to each other's pictures as intimate and unique products of the process. According to the interviewees, art therapy in schools typically takes place as a group activity and less often as an individual activity. Therapy has usually been implemented for one year at a time, and very few students have received longer-term art therapy sessions.

Nurture/caring is a term consciously excluded from the educational field, since, according to the interviewees, it is considered to be a concept used by social and health care professionals. The opposition to art therapy is partly due to this bias: the school is introduced to a treatment culture that should remain the responsibility of other institutions. The teachers are increasingly assigned additional roles, and their status changes to encompass a broader concept of the profession which includes these new occupational tasks (Hautamäki et al 2003, 201). In my opinion, one of these tasks is that of treatment, or even intervention. Here, the teacher must be well informed in order to perceive differences and treat the child temporarily before redirecting the child to appropriate care. According to the therapists, the thought of medicalization in treatmental culture should give way to the paramedicalization and hidden curriculum of the school³.

³ School culture also has its counterpart for **medicalizationized** speech. In the same fashion as treatmental culture, the school produces its diagnostic vocabulary that can be considered part of the phenomenon of paramedicalization. Paramedicalization refers to the strengthening of methods of treatment outside the scope of the medical institution. **Paramedicalization** and the strengthening of medicine (medicalization) are in a sense opposite trends that have advanced in parallel. Both phenomena fortify people's interest in their own health (Tuomainen, Elo, Myllykangas 1995, 217–222)

The research contribution of this present study is a model of supplementary education for teachers. Its objective is to familiarize special teachers and class teachers with therapeutic education so that the method can be adopted for the benefit of learners from various age groups. In this model, the art therapist acts as a work instructor for teachers rather than as a therapy teacher (**Figure 6**). The supplementary education model is one way of expressing what kind of education teachers should receive about art therapy and art therapeutic education. It is important that the education focuses on the specific nature of the school culture in maintaining the therapeutic boundaries: how the school community could achieve the best possible circumstances to commence the therapy processes that provide help for learners of various ages and enrich the educational environment. It is also important that the supplementary education familiarizes the teachers with the triangle of therapeutic education: how the symmetry between the learner, the teacher, and the picture works, and how the institution's support can strengthen this interactive, creative learning and convalescence. The goal is also to create an educational model for teachers for academic supplementary education in order to guarantee a supportive work environment and to extend the cooperation to help the learners therapeutically (Hautala 2006).

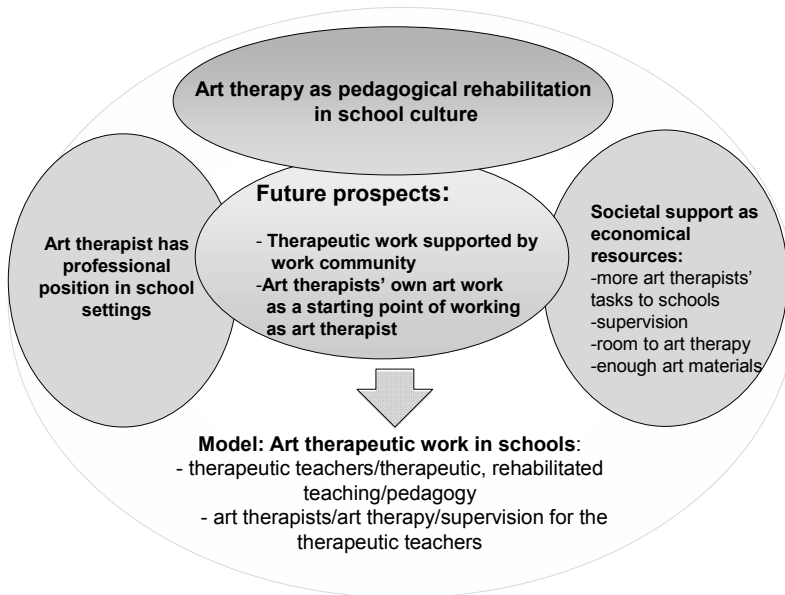
Figure 6 Comparisons between the art therapist and art therapeutic teacher



While inclusion is spreading comprehensively in all Finnish schools, a question arises about whether the system has been prepared for mental health work such as art therapy. It will inevitably play a greater role in school culture and everyday practices, since it can hardly stay at the level of a hidden curriculum. The participants in this study agree that therapeutic limits and regulations will help the

schools create a considerate atmosphere, beneficial to learning. In addition, these rules will increase and enhance the learners’ communication skills in everyday school life and amplify respect within groups.

Figure 7: Future prospects



As a summary of the future visions, the interviewees expressed their desire to establish a single operational outline and method to cover art therapy in the school world (Figure 7). The outline would conveniently fit into the field of pedagogic rehabilitation. Hope was expressed that art therapists would attain status in the school culture similar to that of school psychologists, curators, and school nurses. The interviewees also called for stronger social support in the form of financial resources. The contribution of this study to the position of art therapy in the educational field is a model with which art therapists could work as art therapists in the school culture, as well as the educators and supervisors of therapeutic teachers (Figure 6).

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