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Fundamental experiences of a pupil at school

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) at school in the narratives of kindergarten teacher students at the University of Helsinki (N=71). The questions were given on a lecture and the answers came via email. They 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 survey raises questions about the meaning of the school art subject education, what emotional experiences the pupils receive at school and how the teaching should be developed when the resources are continually decreasing. What effects do the art subjects have in pupils' lives 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 artistic experiences as a part of a good life.

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

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 for you. What happened during the lesson? Why was the experience positive/negative? Describe the lesson as well as you can". This instruction was given to students in the 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. A qualitative approach forms the main method of this research. Quantitative analyses are made to enrich the qualitative data.

Student narratives were used to describe the actual reality as it was experienced by the respondents. The comments which were chosen from the data are meant to help the reader form a realistic picture of the experiments of the writers.

Theoretical 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 at 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 mentioned subjects 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, competition or utilitarian points of view. The arts have both individual and wider social and cultural meanings. They may lead a way to understanding people's mind, thought, emotions and deepest feelings. The value and position of different arts in an individual mind may vary widely. The modern idea of art education includes the idea of every human being's right to art, a right to feel, react, experience or make art (Kaartinen & Viitanen 2000). A philosophic discussion about the essentials and focuses of art and art education in connection with its many manifestations is going on 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 competitive with each other (Elliot 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. A great deal of research has been done about the development of a single learner and his experiences; this is quite typical in post modern society.

Karppinen's (2005) dissertation 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 willingness to create. But that is not enough to guarantee the appearance of art; 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 the 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 the 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 a 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 in such questions 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 re-framing conceptions of what education can accomplish (Eisner et. al. 2004). Arts subjects are seen by us (McPherson 2006) to be fundamental to a quality education and an essential component of all children's education. In contrast, the devaluing 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 research which shows art education courses helping the learning other subjects. 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 for helping to learn other subjects. As a whole, there is too little retrospective research being done about art subjects at school. Most of it concentrates on students' perspectives on their high school experiences (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 (2005), questions the impact of education reform over the past 15 years and says that it 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 built-in flaws? Are there implications for the experiences we should provide for young children? Does the reality in schools and early year’s settings match the rhetoric of the Foundation Stage curriculum?

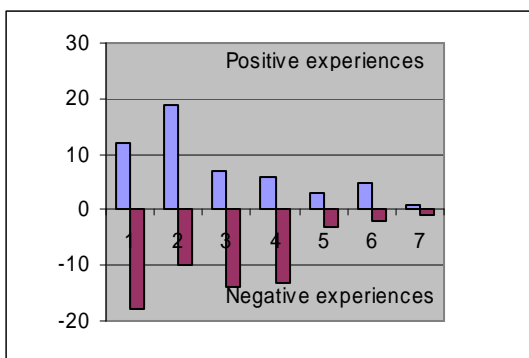
Broad international interest has occurred in school environments and learning when Finland once again came out on top in the OECD’s latest PISA study of learning results among 15-year olds, with high performances in mathematics, science, mother tongue and problem solving (<http://www.jyu.fi/ktl/pisa/index.html>).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

Results

We only focus on the music and visual arts results to limit the data. This shows clearly that these art subjects are very sensitive areas: they offer strong experiences, both good and bad because in these subjects every pupil is dealing with his personality and abilities which easily can be judged by other pupils and also 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 the positive and negative experiences from the two most mentioned subjects, music and visual arts. We have analysed all the data thoroughly also 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 about positive and negative experiences in art subject lessons were as follows. (Subjects from left to right).

Subjects in Table 1	Positive mentions (+)	Negative mentions (-)	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 experiences of the students seem to focus mainly on music, visual arts, sports, handicrafts (girls: textile works, boys: technical works). All experiences included both positive and negative points. Music and visual arts were the subjects which collected the most comments. Many of the respondents remember best their negative experiences. In this article we focus on the themes of the experiences in the light of general development of education in the art subjects. This is the reason why only few quantitative analyses were made. We try to focus only on essentials of the data mainly concentrating on experiences in music and visual arts as they had the most mentions both good and bad.

It is surprising to notice that music, sports and handicraft have more negative elements than positive in memories of kindergarten students. The data also shows that the strongest experiences rise 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 and motivation of the teacher, and Music's ability to arouse strong emotional feelings.

The skilfulness of the teacher

Many teachers are very skilful in general music teaching and also have a psychological way of acting. Wise solutions in building musical performances may give pupils positive experiences especially in challenging them. This is clearly seen in many of the answers in the data. One respondent tells how her teacher could wisely emphasise the solo part sung by one girl from the group. This shows that the teacher could draw out 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 in those days 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 meet. This striving for a good performance gives great satisfaction to pupils. It also must be remembered that every pupil deserves the opportunity to develop his/her own special skills and to enjoy achievements which are suitable for just him. This means that the teacher should observe pupils thoroughly to know their personality as well as 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

The skills of a teacher may also be used in the way he or she acts in music making, but the personal musical skills of the Finnish elementary school classroom teacher are usually at 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 one is a good musician.

The motivation of the teacher

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 pupils meaningful and reasonable projects reacting to changing situations in the class. One of the respondents reports 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 to his advantage 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 worked together with the students, but wisely in the background giving tender advice and guidance. This song-writing led to an 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 this 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 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 my fingers in 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 rightly and present her with a challenge which was great but possible to overcome. The challenge offered the pupil a great deal of satisfaction after it had been accomplished. When she still, after sixteen years, can remember this event it must have been very important to her whole development and especially in her musical self concept.

Music's tendency to raise strong emotional feelings

Sometimes positive experiences in music may have occurred in otherwise negative situations such as a singing test which is quite often used in Finnish schools even nowadays. One of the respondents wrote that she was not especially nervous in 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. 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 a 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 wiping tears from his eyes. First I was afraid wondering what was happening because naturally I connected crying to something bad. The teacher said he is sorry and apologised for his tears and movement immediately telling me that everything was alright. He also thanked me for my singing and told me that it was just excellent.

Afterwards I understood that the teacher's crying was due to 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 continue my singing hobby.

In the best situations music has been able to strengthen pupil's self confidence and musical self concept when the music lessons have been enjoyable. This is how music has brought new meaning to pupils' lives. This may happen when a teacher is able to teach music matters to pupils by the hand coming down from his teacher's platform down to the pupil's own level but still taking care of 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 lead many of them to choose 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 in use by teachers in Finland. They have been a cause of horror for many generations at Finnish schools. A lot of hate and bitterness has been caused by them during decades, but still many teachers use them as a means of evaluation and a basis for giving music numbers to the pupils. A lot of research has been written lately about the negative effects of this testing but they have 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 too much music theory in music classes with negative means of teaching.

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. The respondents used a lot of 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 creating these emotions and feelings among pupils.

- A4. I still can remember clearly one specific music lesson in 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 to him than they were to 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, red in the 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 would be 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 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 the 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 say 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 concept probably for the rest of their lives. 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 continue to affect their music relation and orientation. It also happens often that this kind of 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 at 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 everyone should 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 eternity to me and I wanted to disappear underground. Unfortunately the music teaching in the 3rd and 4th grade totally ruined my motivation to music learning. After that I always replaced music with 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 is hopelessly difficult.

In addition to these two groups of respondents, there were mentions of unsuitable materials being used in music lessons, the humiliating attitude of the teacher and the differences in musical worldviews of the teacher and pupils in the data collected. Orientation research has recently explored some parts of these problems. (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 the early childhood, though (Ruismäki & Juvonen & Tereska 2004; Ruismäki & Tereska 2006; Ruismäki & Tereska 2008). The amount of music teaching for the elementary classroom teachers varies nowadays from 3 to 35 ECTS depending on the university teaching programme and profile of options in specialising in music.

Positive experiences in visual arts

In the visual arts area 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 as excellent. This excellence could be seen in different types of situations, for example in contests which, when done 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 our 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 of new techniques. 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 dimly lit Danish little town I felt myself strong and renewed.

The feeling of doing something, and 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 his own way show the good skills of planning by the teacher. Also the evaluation of the creations in the lessons is important (compare with Zupancic 2005). Not only may the beauty of the art subject be the point of evaluation

or criticism. The respondents also often mentioned the challenge and responsibility as elements which led to positive experience when the task can be accomplished.

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

Negative experiences in the 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 created or the feedback was only negative. Some of the respondents have felt that they were not taught at all in the 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 the paint mixing practices, but I still would have wanted to have some advice and decent feedback or even criticism for 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 or her own worldview out of 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 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 to 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 or her pupils equally and gives all of their 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 not be part of the art lessons. When it is sensed it may cause most negative experiences for the pupils.

A11. We were in the upper-secondary school on a visual arts lesson. Our task was to choose one of the great paintings and make our own version of it. I took a 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 fuck are you poncing around with your painting?” Then he took my work and ripped it to pieces and then gave me a new paper and told to start from 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 profession. Unfortunately these kinds of stories are not rare. The humiliation of a 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 a student’s own abilities and skills and they can also be seen, which gives a bad teacher an opportunity to use his/her power wrongly causing pupils traumatic experiences.

Conclusion

In this research the art experiences are seen in both a positive and negative light (compare Lightbody et al. 1996). Music and visual arts were the subjects most commonly mentioned. This is naturally in connection with the school system in which they have the 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 endorses earlier research 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.

Values and attitudes are formed through different life experiences (see figure 2). There are always two polarities in each experience, negative and positive. Satisfaction and enjoyment form a polarity to anxiety and disgust. Feeling good and feeling bad form a polarity to each other. Joy and happiness form a polarity with disappointment and sorrow, success in doing something is a polarity to failure.

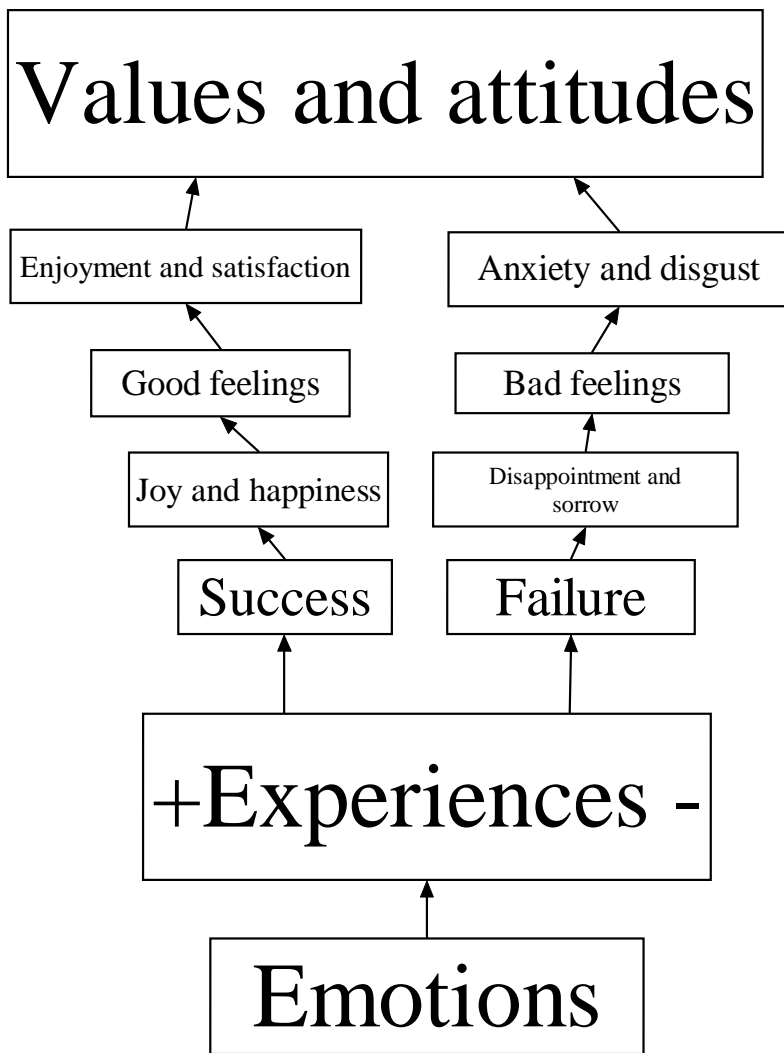


Figure 2. From emotions to values and attitudes

The basics for deeper interest and orientation in music and visual arts may lay in the school art education. There the individual experiences form the essence of the mental and emotional relationship which is slowly forming. 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 winning the challenges and feelings of satisfaction and enjoyment to forming of 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 in fulfilling the given task, disappointment and sorrow, anxiety and disgust. These feelings often lead to negative values and attitudes towards the subject. It has also direct connections to self confidence and self conception in the same area.

Although the pupils would have negative experiences of art education at school, it does not necessarily mean that they will become “value invalids” about music. School is only one of the many places where to gain musical experiences. Many significant experiences arise in informal circumstances, in listening to music, playing in own bands or singing in groups voluntarily, going to concerts etc. Still, it is necessary for teachers and educators to consider why the experiences of pupils so often are negative and what could be done to make them better in future. This study also showed the central significance of teacher in all learning. The value of a skilful teacher can never be over accentuated (see White 1990). A good teacher is in most important position in all school subjects and she or he holds the keys to the experiences which form the essentials of the pupils’ values and attitudes. He/she 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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