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The many meanings of art Student's experiences of art subjects

Abstract

This article focuses in the meanings Helsinki University Kindergarten teacher students give to different art subjects (N= 34). The students speculate 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, shop) this particular art subject mean to my life? The student focuses in the meaning of an art subject through his own life. The research question was given at a lecture and was answered through email. It was executed in Helsinki University Faculty of education department of applied education in spring 2005 during a lecture Art education and philosophy. The percent of the answers was over 90 %.

The research is a qualitative analyze of contents which includes phenomenological points of view. The researchers focus in the meanings which the students describe in their narratives as meaningful to their life. Researchers show the differences and similarities between the experiences rising from the ontology of each art subject and from the experienced world of art subjects by the kindergarten students.

The research is connected in the problems of the art education at school as a part of wider a project focusing in the meaning of art experiences as a way to a good life.

Keywords: *Meanings of art, art subjects, school art education, kindergarten teacher students.*

Introduction What is 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 and fortunate a person is, is dependent of many different factors. There are personal factors and social factors connected to happiness of an individual.

To be able to find the basics for being a human being we have to understand the many meanings of art. It is because the arts form the essential basics of being human beings (homo sapiens). As the palaeontologists started to seek the moment when the human being in the way we understand it today had it's birth they focused in the roots of thinking, communicating and first signs of creativity in history of man: in fact they tried to find first signs of art. This small example shows the importance of art in our whole being. Art forms the essentials of humanity in the way we understand it.

The post modern society is rapidly changing. There are lots of new ideas pressuring the social, cultural and economical structures in our times. The institutions of government are in economical trouble as the need of population keep growing and the sources of money are getting smaller. It is

important that in a situation like this we could live in belief of possibilities and positive challenges while living through this turning point. It is often said that today people have drifted into a crisis of the values. We speak about the 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 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 in the importance of the 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 floating away from a society fulfilling only the basic needs to a society focusing more in social appreciation and self-fulfilment. The general view of reality becomes all the time more and more fragmented in the middle of the tide of information. That is why the world view of young people easily becomes splintered and fragmented (compare with Stipek 2004; Landerholm & Gehrie & Yi 2004; Efland 2004; Duffy 2005). The life is more and more concentrating in short period thinking: narcissistic hedonism easily takes the place of tranquil long period planning and decision making.

Having a positive picture of one's own today life as well as future is one of the basics for a good and meaningful life. If you have something to enjoy of and to look forward to, it is easier to win usual difficulties of everyday life. If you understand life and society generally, it is easier to live in it.

In this article we figure how art might help to form solid and harmonious self-picture and world view which would form a good basis for leading a good life. The way the children understand art is connected to their experiences in childhood. This is being reflected through the thoughts and experiences of kindergarten students in this research (Juvonen & Ruismäki 2004; 2005).

What connects everyday life to good 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 a right way to live. This is what connects everyday life situations to 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 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 kind of 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 ethic statements are not always moral.

Aesthetics and art

In latest discussion on aesthetics there have been new winds blowing. For example Shusterman (1995; 1997; 2003) has been writing strongly about the gap between theoretic 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 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 the aims and needs of teaching music and other arts (e. g., Paige, R. 2005). The basic approach in this conversation has been the difference on basic philosophy in pragmatic music education philosophy and aesthetic music education philosophy. (Elliott 1995; Regelski 1996; 1998; Swanwick 1988; 1996;

McPherson & McCormick 1999; Anttila & Juvonen 2002, Finney 2002; Juvonen & Anttila 2003). The same conversation has also been going on in field of aesthetic approach more widely.

Aesthetics is a part of philosophy which tries to show what beauty really means. Aesthetics is a philosophic approach; it concentrates in problems trying to find out what art basically is and what it means, or what difference is there 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, holistically or comprehensively stimulating experience that does not create anxiety about what is happening or what might not happen (Csikszentmihalyi 1990a, 4; 1990b; 1996). In any case, emotions and feelings are usually present in all kinds of severe experiences, and that is why the happenings are often remembered even after many years. Naturally the intensity of emotions and feelings is dependent to 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 whole life of a person by bringing new sensations and feelings into his or her emotional selection (Ruismäki 1996). The joy of success in doing something demanding brings easily experiences which are enjoyable. This is one important connecting point linking arts experiences and aesthetic experiences 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 provide challenge and give 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 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 aesthetic of beauty. The question is often aroused about the domination among the two subjects mentioned. In this article we are not trying to respond to that question, even though it seems evident that aesthetics cannot appear without ethical and moral point of view.

The target group, method and the aim of the research

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

The aim of the research was to focus in the different experiences from the art subjects at school. The answerers had a possibility to tell in their own words their feelings, emotions and experiences from lessons and from their voluntary hobbies in this area. These experiences may show a path from early childhood experiences which could lead into meaningful and valuable appraisal of the art subjects. This research is a part of a bigger project focusing in the different parts of early childhood art education, art education at school and art education at the university classroom teacher and kindergarten teacher education (Ruismäki & Juvonen 2005a; 2005b; 2005c; Juvonen & Ruismäki 2005a; 2005b; 2005c; Juvonen & Anttila 2005; Anttila & Juvonen 2005; Juvonen & Lasauskiene 2004; 2005).

The method used in the analyzing of the data was qualitative including ideas of phenomenographical research. This means that we are focusing in the conceptions of the target group. Although the group is small, it represents one year kindergarten teacher students at the University of Helsinki. This is why we also mention the amounts of different mentions of the art subjects although the real results come from the substance of the narrative writings. The data was

classified and categorized in thematic areas which were then analyzed and named. After this the data was thoroughly analyzed and specified to find the real essence of the writings. Then the results were written down 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 answerers described and stated reasons for their experiences and thoughts. The many meanings of these experiences rising 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 minds of kindergarten students.

Results

First the answers were analyzed 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 mentions

What is surprising is the lack of mentions in literature. It seems that the modern society is going towards the use of more and more technical devise in field of art subjects. Literature has a more time taking essence than for example music or visual arts. You have to centralize and concentrate more while you are reading a good book than in other art achievements. The amount of the mentions in different areas may be dependent also of the answerer's gender. Usually kindergarten teachers are women in Finland, and so it is in this group, too. Because this answering group consisted mostly of female students (only 3 male), it may have some effect in results. But as we are not making a quantitative analyze, 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 answerers wrote beautifully about their relation to art subjects. In many answers there were more than one subject mentioned in the beginning of the answer. Then the answerers focused in specific areas and told about the emotional and mental connections to the selected art subject.

Drawing has been a hobby for many answerers from early childhood. Some answerers 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 answerers 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 answerers mention modern art as an example of something which they do not specially like in visual arts. This is because the works of modern art seem not sincere or true in their eyes. One of the answerers thought that they have been made only to give some relief in 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 make 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 into conclusion that these works are made only to relief 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 childhood home have direct connections to adult age. Some parents have even put

their children to art school. One answerer describes nicely the moments at home when she and her siblings were drawing and painting together with their mother. She had also positive experiences at school visual arts lessons and she has taken visual arts as specializing subject also in 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 put me also in an art school when I was 10 years old...

Some answerers describe how 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 have 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, realization and discovering. Many of the answerers also mention painting and drawing as a kind of self therapy. It offers a channel to disgorging bad feelings and emotions and finding new solutions to problems. One answerer sees painting as a way to focus in the essence of herself, a way to look inside one's own little world.

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

Very often the answerers 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 the school time. Many answerers 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 the art and modern times, the effect the art objects have in different people etc. Some of the answerers write that their life would not be the same without visual arts.

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

One answerer mentions herself to be a visualist by heart. She wants to sweeten her environment all the time with colours, shapes and forms and materials making it look more beautiful, harmonic and more cosy. She writes that her own prosperity is strongly connected to colours of the surroundings. She also looks at the 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 answerer writes that colours are therapeutic to her and she wants to dress in bright colours (see Anning 2005).

The challenge in doing paintings at upper level secondary school is mentioned in some answers. The success in doing them gave a big enjoyment. Visual arts are often mentioned as a source of self competence and it has helped to form a positive self conception. They give a possibility 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 answerer sees visual arts as a way to contemplate herself.

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

Music

Many answerers see music as big part of their life; they cannot imagine a world without music. This is natural in a modern world where music is all around us all the time. 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. (Juvonen 2000, Syrjäkoski 2004; Juvonen 2005.) This answering group did include only students with positive music orientation.

The basic of music orientation is formed in the early childhood and 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 answers. Listening music at home together with parents is a lovely memory to many of the answerers. One answerer even mentions that her mother used to listen to music while being pregnant, waiting for her birth. Another tells how her father always used to sing old dance music at home; these songs still raise beautiful emotional memories. Another says that she had a lot of musical experiences when she was young. Also her mother was singing to her before the birth as 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 with special music classes.

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

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 answerers 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 answerer forms an exception: most of those who mention music as the most important art subject have a music 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, mostly they are somehow sad.

Own songs belong to all children. One of the answerers tells that in her childhood she always sang her own songs during the playing. She imagined being playing 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 a self therapy when there are troubles in her life. The divorce of her parents was one situation where piano playing could take her thought to something else. Therapeutic use of music is very common in this answering group. They often see music as a way to relax and get away from the hectic everyday life. One answerer describes his life which was lonely and dark mooded. Heavy music (Nightwish) gave him relief in those days.

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 those times 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 the nature. Then I found the new record of Nightwish: it raised an interest to heavy music. That lasted for two and a half years...

One of the answerers 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 connecting the two arts beautifully together. The words of songs have a lot

of meanings for the answerers. Many of them have started to write own poems for songs to be made. Song writing is one of the music hobbies mentioned in answers.

Many answerers have had beautiful experiences from playing music or singing in different concerts. These experiences have given them positive feedback and that way they have strengthened their self conception. The growing musical competence has given many answerers a good attitude to music teaching and a deep love for music. Some of the answerers sing in a choir because they do not wish to be performing alone. One answerer described negative experiences from piano lessons at music school, but after leaving it she found the joy of music making again when she could self decide what music to play. Some other answerers also have found music learning and teaching focusing too much on completion and succeeding 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 an own record of our programme. This way I had a lot of experience of performing as a musician.

A15. What a day of joy it was when I got my examination passed at the music school: never again would I play Etudes or prima vistas in front of an examination jury.

Handicraft

The skills of making things by own hands must be one of the essential sources of enjoyment for human beings. It has connections to our survival as a species and to the success compared to other animals. Traditionally the handicraft skills have been highly respected in rural societies where everything had to be made self. This respect may be still seen in the writings of our answering group. The enthusiasm to handicraft often rises at home. If the atmosphere at home is suitable, the respect for making things with own hands seem to continue in children. Many of the answerers tell nice stories about their grandmothers and grandfathers who have been teaching them in handicrafts. Seeing mother, father or grandparents doing handicraft is a very efficient thing which often leads to interest in same kind of action. One of the answerers point out the meaning of the time used in learning handicraft skills from her grandmother. This means that the action has also social points of view.

A22. Also the time I spent with my grandmother when she taught me knitting has been irreplaceable. This way the 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 skills of hand have always been present in our home...

"I learner to weave before I learned to read" wrote one of the answerers (A17.) She tells about the enormous amounts of needlework and other handicraft products she made already before kindergarten. Handicraft has always been very important to this answerer and it gives her a way to relax and realizing herself. Her grandmother taught her to weave as a small child and also her mother made clothes herself. Another answerer describes how the crochet hooks and knitting needles just fitted in her hands. She always helped other pupils at home in handicraft lessons. This answerer had clearly her heritage from her father who was a handicraft teacher (wood works). 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 loose its meaning: the only thing that matters is what you are doing at that very moment, everything seems to go just the way it should go and everything seems clear and right.

- A17. In the upper secondary school my teacher sometimes marvelled at my concentration in knitting: it looked like nothing else mattered...
- A 18. 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 the school.

Another student writes about her enthusiasm in handicraft telling that they have always been so easy and joyful for her. She dreamed about becoming a textile artist but never succeeded coming in to education. Being a craftswoman means more to her than being an artist. The answerers often underline the importance of the action itself: it builds self-confidence when you notice to be able to create something with your own hands. One of the answerers focuses in the idea of making something three dimensional and beautiful with own hands. She thinks that this idea has aroused from both his fathers and mothers relatives as most of them have been craftsmen. The appreciation and respect for skills of hand had always been present at her home. She thinks that for example knitting clears your mind as you must concentrate in the exact action and counting the loops. The most important thing is to be able to create something visible and salient. It is necessary to see what you actually have made. Being able to express oneself concretely and to be able to deal with own different moods, emotions and feelings seem most important factors of loving handicrafts. One point is also the feeling of making something solid which is necessary (for example knitting socks) and giving it to other people makes handicrafts joyful. One of the answerers dreams of living in a big house where she could place a planning bench for wood works, a sewing machine, a painting set and lots of different materials for handicrafts. Another answerer writes about the good feeling she gets from touching different materials with her hands. This seems to lead in the essential and indigenous origins of being a human being: sensing and touching things, feeling the presence of things with your own hands.

- A18. The magic of making something with your own hand has not disappeared during aging...
- A19. I believe that there is some kind of inborn need inside myself for creating 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 being 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 area. There are machine sewers and textile planners among the answerers. 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 a possibility to join both handicrafts and bringing up children.

- A22. After the 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 deepest connections to home. It is something in which we all have been growing in all our lives. Still there are many different ways of dealing with the area, and also the experiences from school strongly colour the attitude to home economics especially among men. As this answerer 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 answerers in the group.

Home economics have always been important for little girls. One of the answerers (A23) writes about her plan for occupation: "*I will be a mother*". She had always been a mothers little help as a child and later she had a dream of becoming a home economics teacher. Many of the answerers 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 a chaperone on.

She also tells that their home was always clean and plain coffeebread smelling. The cleanness was due to the cleaning which was done every Friday evening by all the family members. The answerer writes about her lovely memories of cleaning for Christmas, making food together or baking cookies in evenings. She clearly connects the 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 a chaperone...

A25. I have lovely memories of Christmas cleaning when we were shivering carpets in the clear white snow...

In home economics many answerers have enjoyment of seeing the results quite fast: cooking, baking or cleaning are all processes in which you see the marks of your own hands right away. Some of the answerers 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 is clearly leading to the interest in this area. It is easily seen, that also in home economics many answerers 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 foods self made.

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 coffeebread and feeling of cleanness at my home...

A25. When I was on the lower classes at school I always wanted to go to see my mothers (a home economics teacher) lessons. I have lovely memories from them, sometimes I could participate in working, too...

A26. In future I am going to teach also my own children to take care of 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 the others and this causes differences in everything concerning physical exercise. The experiences from school and other sport events build a self conception focusing in this specific area which leads to the everyday habits in adult age. 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 less popular than it would have been if there were more boys in the answerer group.

The basic attitude towards physical exercise is built in early childhood at home. Many of the answerers 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 answerers mention the joy coming from a possibility to put oneself totally in the game, a possibility to find one's own limits and maybe even surpass them. One answerer tells that one important reason for continuing the physic exercise hobbies were 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 answerer describes his development from a competitor to a hobby mover who tries to enjoy everything he does in physical exercise.

A27. Physical exercise of all art subjects 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. Still I 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 answerers write about the feelings he gets from physical exercise: it is hypnotic and forms easily 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 answerers say that they have noticed the change in themselves from need of 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 notices 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 enjoying it is.

Dancing as a way of physical exercise was the focus of one answerer. She started as a ballet dancer as a little girl and then moved into show dancing at teenage. Dancing brought her to performances which naturally belonged in it.

Another answerer tells that she never could stay still for a long time. Different environments during physical exercises have brought her joy end enjoyment. She has nice memories of going to Lapland for downhill skiing and cross country skiing in childhood. One of the answerers tells about playing basket ball 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 I 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 basket ball 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 oneself was part of my motivation.

Literature

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

The answerer tells how 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 fairy tale 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 exiting experience to her and ever since she has been reading all the time. Reading gives her a hideaway from the real world: for a moment one can imagine being another person living life in another 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 in her life and personality as a whole. She tells that lately poetry has opened for her and given new experiences to her.

Conclusions

There are several points which connect all mentioned art subjects together no matter what the focus is. The first common thing is that most of these attitudes and values have started to be built in early childhood at the homes of the answerers. The influence of the attitude at home towards different art subjects is strong in whole data. If the attitude and appraisal is pointing out to some art subject the child easily adopts it and transfers it into 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. Parent's activity in these areas has direct response in their children.

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

A challenge is always a good way of motivation when it is possible to reach. Too big challenges jeopardize good aims of the teacher because they may lead to failure and disappointment. This is why a teacher always must consider thoroughly the targets he sets. This is only possible through a good knowledge about his pupils' skills, abilities and personal characters. It may only be built via continuous evaluation in different situations of art education. A good teacher know each and every pupil well, he knows the weak and strong areas of pupil's self conception and self confidence. This helps a teacher to build these elements of personality stronger and in that way to 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 prepares a child also to do the same in other areas in life. Art subjects offer a play like environment to deal with problem solving. It also gives a possibility to handle one's own problems at a symbolic level and find solutions in them. Many of the answerers saw art subjects a way too look inside them selves; they also used often 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 a possibility to surpass one's earlier achievements in the same field of action. You are always able to do things better and more strictly and in that way to get to better results than earlier. The noticing of own development gives satisfaction and enjoyment both in intellectual, emotional and physical achievement levels.

The feeling of success is strongly dependent of 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 makes the task seem a mission impossible which easily make pupil to give up trying. A pupil should always be able to believe in success of solving the problem or reaching 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 in them.

The most important element in all art education is to use art subjects in a way which leads into developing 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 (compare with Ruismäki & Juvonen 2005).

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