

Original paper

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The Role of the Piece of Art in Pedagogical and Educational Work with Children of Pre-School and Primary School Age

Extended summary

Contemporary strategies in education point at the significance of art in education, which, apart from achieving aims in art contributes to achieving general aims influencing balanced development of children. Art has invaluable role in affirmation cultural heritage and history, enables recognition of values of other cultures and their diversities, and understanding other cultures is at the same time of a vital significance for promotion own and national identity. Art in education strengthens development of perception and expression, contributes to self-recognition and general cognition – development of language, critical thinking, skills of solving problems, etc.

Accordingly, the aim of this paper is to show the scope of the educational potential on teaching with the means of the piece of art i general education and pedagogical work and if adequate approaches and strategies in work with children are applied, and if schools and kindergartens are connected to the institutions of culture. When we say pieces of art, we think about the whole art heritage from the field of visual arts, such as works of art, applied art, crafts, contemporary media, architecture and industrial design.

In theoretical approach to the research, studying relevant domestic and foreign reference, it has been determined that by the use pieces of art in pedagoical-educaional process, significant positive achievements can be done referring to cognitive skills, social and aesthetic thinking, and that all the senses can be included in children. (Perkins, 1994; Housen, 2001–2002; Hurwitz & Madeja, 1977; Hubbard, 2007; Gibson & Larson, 2007 etc.). During the research referring to the ways in which children can be helped from the earliest age, it can be seen that children gain different cognition from the field of visual arts and other scientific fields

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studying pieces of a art, and in which extent the role of the adults is significant, i.e. teachers as well as encouraging environment: art museums, galleries, art studios, we have used theories of great psychologists, primarily the theory of psychological development of Lev Vygotski (Vigotski, 1983, 1990) as well as the theory of cognitive development of Jean Piaget (Piaget, Inhelder, 1990, 1996). We also gave a review on understanding pieces of art according to Michael Parsons (Parsons, 1987), who established the following: there are five phases in aesthetic reply to the piece of art, out of which the first three refer to pre-school and primary school age.

Owing to the results to theoretical analysis, we came to the certain choice in representing approaches and strategies based on the use of pieces of art and they are done in pedagogical and museum-gallery praxis, such as: *Piece of Art, suggestion and encouragement for children's creativity, Multi-sensory approach, Visual games of classification and memorising, Visual thinking strategies – VTS, Adopting formal-art knowledge, Aesthetic and critical research of the piece of art, Strategies of knowledge adoption from the field of history of art and Dialogue without asking questions*. We have also analysed *The Role of an art piece in the integrated curriculum* and significance of *direct interaction with the artist*.

In accordance with the stated approaches and strategies in the following part of the paper, examples of good pedagogical-educational praxis were given in art museums and galleries in the world and in our environment. We have presented more art museums and galleries with different programmes and resources for teaching children and teachers, such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Museum Isabel Stewart in Boston, Museum G. Paul Getti in Los Angeles and many others.

Another aim of the paper was stated, and that was examining attitudes of pre-school teachers, class teachers and teachers of Art in our environment on their own methodological praxis in which pieces of art are used. The main hypothesis of this empirical research is that educational potential owned by the works of visual arts are not sufficiently used in our pedagogical-educational praxis, and there are more hypotheses taken from them: teachers in our environment are insufficiently motivated and professionally trained for teaching in this context, and that teachers, galleries and curators do not cooperate sufficiently. There were 450 interviewees in the research, i.e. 200 teachers, 200 pre-school teachers and 50 teachers of Art from 60 towns, suburbs and villages in Serbia. There was a special instrument constructed for the needs of this research: *questionnaire for pre-school teachers, teachers and Art teachers about their methodological strategies in work of visual arts*.

Results of the research lead to conclusion that pieces of art are insufficiently used in work with children of pre-school and school age. Nevertheless, it is encouraging that pre-school teachers, teachers and Art teachers have the need and desire to be further professionally educated in this field and that there is motivation that pieces of visual art can be used more in work with children. Conclusions drawn from theoretical analysis and completed empirical research give bases for making educational programmes for teachers in our environment who would deal with the described contents.

Key words: Artwork, teacher, developmental competencies of children, educational-pedagogical approaches and strategies, art museums and galleries.

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