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Výtvarné nadanie v súvislosti so špecifickým výskumným zameraním

Art Talents in the Context of a Specific Research Focus

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Abstract

The scientific study presents a survey of the outcomes and research results obtained through a research tool by a questionnaire from the teachers of the basic art schools in Slovakia. Interpretation of research data in the form of categories - characters and determinants of artistic talent and talent of children and pupils has a representative function. Results of the mentioned group of respondents will be further compared with groups of teachers to different levels of schools.

Keywords: Human species. Research. Artistic talent. Project. Creative ability.

Introduction to the issue of artistic talent

Art, in its many forms, is practised by almost all human cultures and can be regarded as one of the defining characteristics of the human species. In all societies today, the visual arts are intimately intertwined with music, dance, ritual (marking life landmarks, death, religion and politics) and language (poetry, song and story-telling, Morriss-Kay, 2010). Much has been written on the origin or 'birth' of art. The long-held view that modern human behaviour, including art, only began when *Homo sapiens* migrated from Africa to Europe around 45 000 years before present (BP) is based on the idea that there was a rapid evolutionary change in the human brain.

Leaving aside the historical background (in a very condensed version), this necessary to deal with the question: Is giftedness permanent? However, there is no simple answer to that question. If we are talking about genotypic giftedness, it is permanent and does not change over the course of a lifetime. If we examine phenotypic giftedness, that which develops and its manifestations can be observed and influenced, and therefore changed. The authors of psychological tests believed that a high score once measured in some area of performance is permanent and unchanging, that is, if someone had an above average IQ in childhood they will have it in adulthood. We think of giftedness

understood in this way as a continuum. If a child is above average he or she will be above average all the time, if a child is average he or she will be average all the time, if a child is below average he or she will be below average all the time. Examples from history suggest that this need not be the actual case (Valachová, 2018; Tóthová, 2006).

Pablo Picasso showed exceptional talent for drawing at pre-school age, whereas Paul Gauguin did not pick up a paintbrush until he was thirty-three, and by then he was a bank clerk. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart gave concerts at the age of five, and Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's talents did not become apparent until he was twenty-three. Karl Friedrich Gauss showed his mathematical abilities at school, but Albert Einstein was considered a below average pupil by his teachers. This implies that the continuum assumption is not always valid. More acceptable is the fact that giftedness is a quantitative human characteristic (if we speak of phenotypic giftedness) which is the product of a particular development. And development can proceed at different rates, with different pauses or, conversely, accelerations. It all depends on biological assumptions, because some maturation functions are programmed biologically and on the conditions in which the individual finds himself and on the person's own activity. According to this, we can never lose our giftedness, but it can develop from above average to below average and at different stages of our lives (Sternberg et al., 2010).

Children who show talent in childhood have a good chance of remaining so. To increase that chance, Laznibat argues, we need to give them adequate attention. It is not true that giftedness needs no nurturing, that it works itself out. It needs to establish itself by its own activity, but to establish itself it needs conditions that it cannot create for itself in the course of childhood. And later, when one can create the conditions, it may be too late, because childhood is the age that is most important for the development of talent. Because talents that develop later in life, in adulthood, also draw on the foundations provided by childhood (De Witt, 2005).

Characteristics of creative ability

There are three main characteristics of creative ability (De Witt, 2005, p. 5):

a) Sequential development - growth or recovery of creative ability follows a constant sequential pattern and a level or phase cannot be omitted.

b) Motivation governs action - motivation is a precursor of action and the components of both are inseparable. The levels of action and motivation relate in a sequential manner.

c) Creative ability is dynamic - it varies from one individual to another and in relation to situational demands. The flow between the levels is gentle.

Figure 1

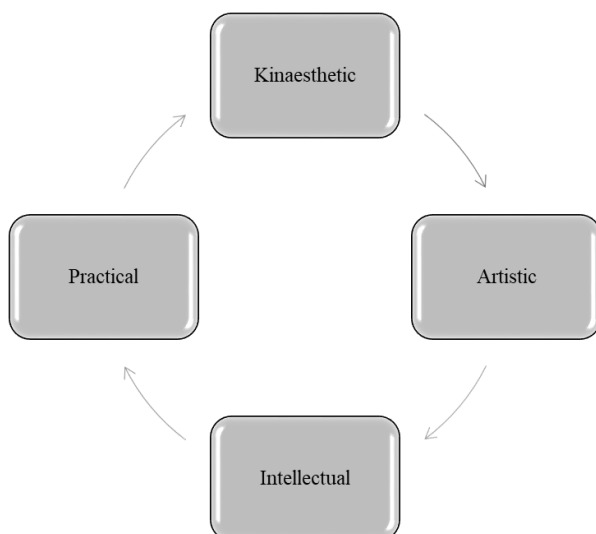
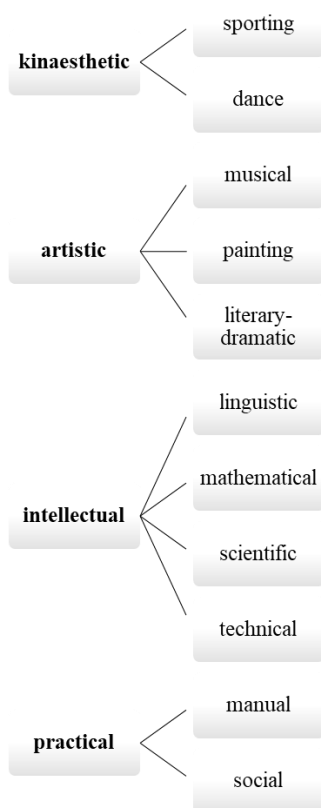


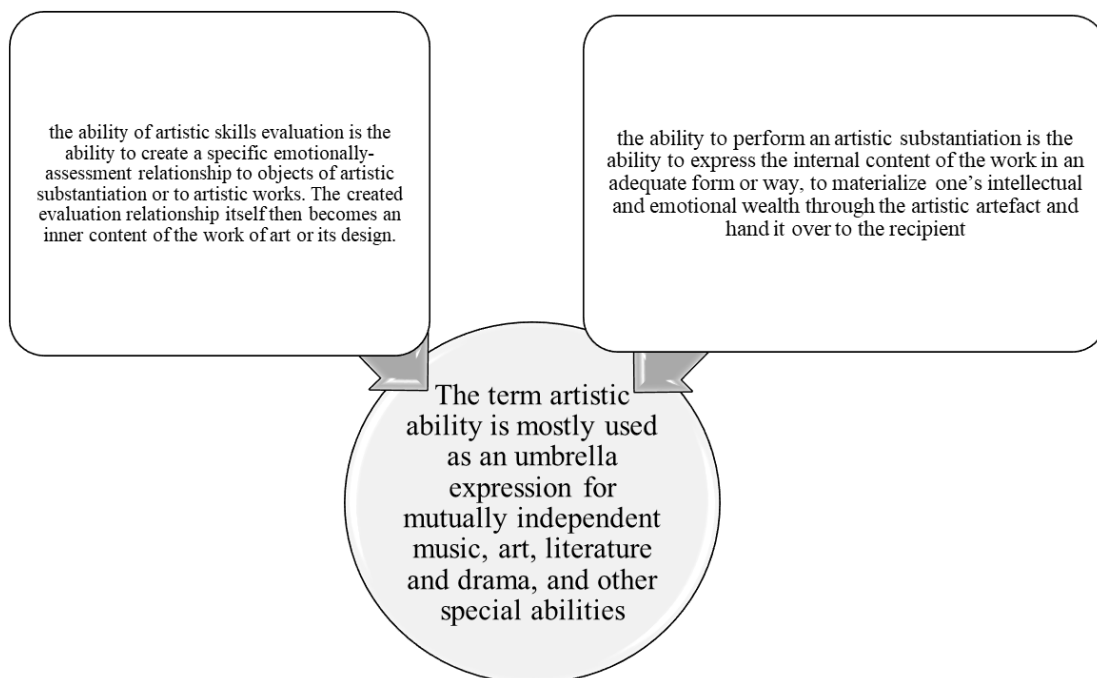
Figure 2 Different types of giftedness



The above scheme will never be complete, as different types of activity may converge. It should also be remembered that different kinds of talents can merge and complement each other. Even the author admits that the scheme omits creative talents but adds that it covers all types (Dočkal, 2005).

Based on the analysis of literature and research experience, we confirm that drawing and painting giftedness exists. Currently, the issue of drawing and painting giftedness is researched to a lesser extent compared to other areas and types of giftedness.

Figure 3 Artistic ability - term



Source: Sternberg(1985), Dočkal (2005);Laznibatová (2007);Bartko et al. (2018)

Expected particular contributions

Popularization of research results will be presented in several forms. During the project (Valacová, 2018), it will be through workshops with investigators, but I collaborators of teaching experience. In addition, throughout the duration of the project and after his research team will publish scientific articles in scientific conferences at home and abroad and in professional journals. During the implementation of direct research and also after the end of the project will be organized seminars with presentation of partial and final results of the project.

Installation project outcomes will be in specialized areas of art galleries bring specific experience and the possibility of mediation project outputs and the public (Zelina, 1997; Kusá, 2006).

Project exhibition in public areas and libraries and schools (provide feedback to children and youth and with teachers). After completion of the project will be a popularization through the application of the project results to the Education Fine Arts in terms of innovation and updates. Published publications encourage student solution PhD. theses and other inquiries. In this sense, will inspire all issued and published articles, publications issued during the project.

To ensure excellence will be published outputs subject to professional review. In addition, the research results will be made available to schools and institutions involved in the education artistically gifted children and youth, in the form of policy recommendations and optical materials and attachments to identify artistically (artistically) gifted children and youth. Popularization of the project will be carried out through the cooperation with information portals publication of results in virtual space websites.

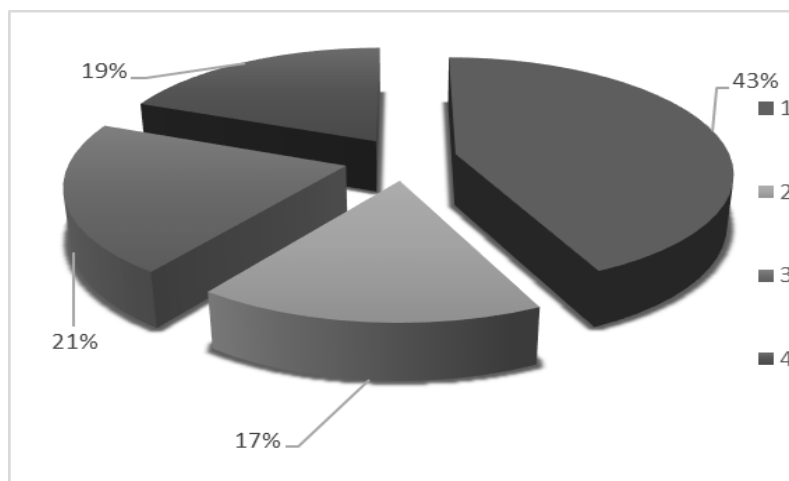
The project results will be presented to the general public through the media and members of the team participate in the Week of Science and Technology in Slovakia (years 2016-2017). Researchers' project will be in the action not only present the results of the project itself, but also the results of sub- aims of the expert lectures and presentations.

Research method and some partial findings

The questionnaire was used as one of research methods in complex survey. We decided to use it because of its strength – possibility to obtain an appropriate number of participants. Items of the questionnaire were focused on teachers' opinions of gifted-in-art individuals, their performance and conditions, which are principal for talented individuals (Valachová, Kováčová, 2018). The questionnaire contains eight items. Two of them were aimed on basic information about teachers (qualification and duration of educational practice). Following two items looked for possibilities of education in research field. Another four items were focused on participants' opinions and preferences in field of gift and talent in fine art (Valachová, Pavlikánová, Kvasnicová, 2018).

Total number of research participants was 372. They were split into four groups according to the place of their professional performance. We focused on analysis of opinions in selected group of 58 participants – teachers at art schools. Duration of teachers' educational practice was identified as one of the interesting descriptive data.

Table 1 The structure of art-school teachers according to length of practice in years



Source: author's own work

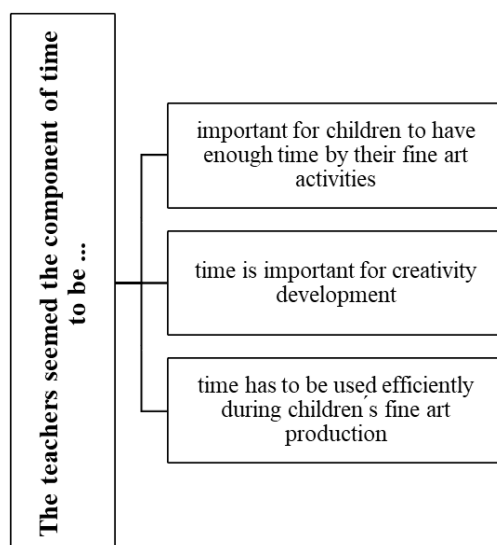
- 1) According to data in Table no.1 it is evident that the first prevalent group is represented by teachers with teacher practice shorter than 5 years (43 %).
- 2) The second significant group is represented by teachers involved in teacher practice in duration from 10 to 20 years (17 %).
- 3) At least, the minor group is represented by teachers with over twenty-year teaching experience (21 %). This shows that the structure of the group of teachers involved into our survey is positive within the context of their age and length of teaching experience.
- 4) Mainly, the group consists of younger teachers, very soon after their teacher training. That can be seemed as positive regarding their teacher's enthusiasm.

The lack of teaching experience might be considered as a risk factor in this group of teachers. The majority of participants assert that they acquire some new knowledge by self-study (a; 78 %) using various sources as the Internet, academic literature, scientific magazines. Some respondents (c; 9 %) did not respond this item. It can be interpreted that they did not consider the item as important, or they could not / did not want to reply it. Probably, they do not assume a study in the field of art gift to be a newer part in the art education. Although, it is possible, that participants do not meet any new knowledge, they do not educate themselves and those are reasons why they did not respond the item. In the fifth item of questionnaire, the teachers had to define the terms: fine art gift and talent. Their statements were framed into several categories: development of child's potential, proceeding in fine art activities, improvement of fine art expressing, creativity, originality.

The teachers reflected the importance of constant development of children's fine art gift and talent in the sixth item of the questionnaire. They had to give some reasons for their statements. All of the teachers seemed the constant development of talent as important. As the reasons for it, they mentioned: development of child's fantasy, proceeding in fine art development, avoiding stagnancy and crisis in fine art expressing, complex development of child's personality (not only specific skills). The seventh item was focused on perception of relationship between fine art expression and the facility for fine art. Most of the responds (a; 65 %) affirmed the conviction for the tight relation between facility and fine art expression. The teachers believed that facility and art expression are "hand in hand" or they develop/support one another. The second group of opinions (b; 33 %) reasoned that those two terms do not have to be necessary interconnected. Not every child has the facility for fine art, but almost every child can express her/himself using fine art.

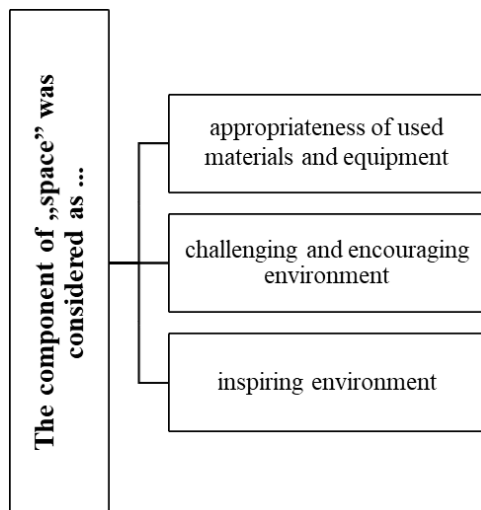
The last item of questionnaire was divided into three sub-items. We were interested how the teachers construe three components – "time, space and feedback" – within process of fine art development.

Table 2 Process of fine art development I.



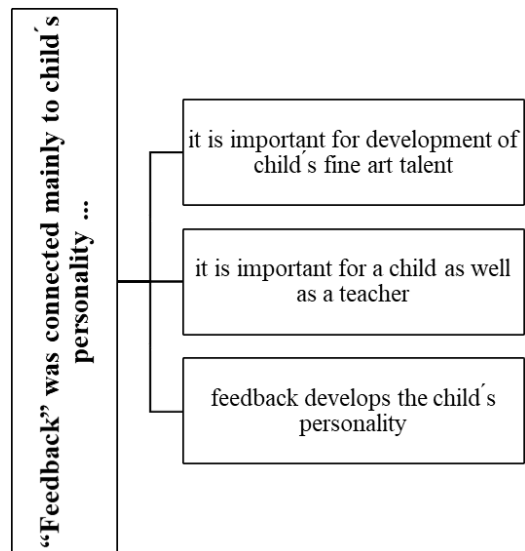
Source: author's own work

The category of "time" was perceived as an important factor during children's production. They believe that the abundance of time is essential during art production as well as in process of development of the facility for fine art. According to some participants, the more time means the more creative product. The participants' responds were very similar, without considerable differences.

Table 3 Process of fine art development II.

Source: author's own work

The category of „space” was not connected with any significant differences in participants' opinions. The group of art schoolteachers agreed that the space is important during art production, and it should provide stimuli for work. They used the term “space” as an equivalent to term “environment”.

Table 4 Process of fine art development III.

Source: author's own work

The category of “feedback” showed that the art schoolteachers considered “feedback” as important for subsequent development of pupil. The need for praise, compliment and encouragement was stressed.

According to mentioned findings, it is possible to sum up some specific opinions in our research sample:

- It is evident in responds and their analysis, that the fine art teachers understand the term “fine art gift and talent” in appropriate way.
- The participants believe that it is important to develop children’s facility for fine art.
- The participants identify besides facility for fine art also another types of facility.
- From the point of view of the participants, the component “time” is closely connected with fine art production.
- In the category of “space”, the connection to stimulation and motivation is stressed.
- The component “feedback” is represented by the term “necessity”.

Received responds present the frame of the most preferred participants’ opinions which are joined not only with the issue of fine art gift and talent, but also with using that knowledge in own teaching strategies. The group of art schoolteachers is very specific – because of their own education and because of the curriculum at art schools. This was the reason why we aimed our attention on opinions of those teachers.

Concluding review

The theoretical obtained analyses and the results of the conducted research and its outcomes can be applied as follows within the following framework:

Usability in applied research:

- New and innovative findings in the context of research on artistic giftedness can be verified in further research specifically focused on a more detailed analysis of individual developmental periods.
- Analysis of the defined identifiers within the saturation process in the individual items of the assessed art products in the context of the considered artistic giftedness in a child/pupil with potential artistic giftedness.
- A knowledge platform applicable to changing the perception of artistic giftedness as equivalent to intellectual giftedness as part of social awareness.

Usability in practice:

- Possibilities of using the basic scale to identify specific features of artistic giftedness in children and pupils with potential artistic giftedness in the school setting - kindergarten, primary school, art school.

- Possibilities of using model identifiers to evaluate the degree of occurrence of artistic talent on the basis of an experimental assessment scale.
- The possibility of using non-standardised test batteries based on original (in our conditions unknown) art tasks in the evaluation of artistic talent in the period of preschool and younger school age.
- Realistic possibilities of using creative activities to evaluate the artistic activity of children in kindergartens and pupils in the environment of primary and elementary art school.
- Design strategies for developing artistic talent in a group of individuals identified as having artistic talent from the perspective of a teaching staff member in a school setting – list.
- Evaluation through a daily diary (with elaborated methodology) in the teaching subject of art education in the primary school environment.

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