

## MOTIVATION OF FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS IN LEARNING THE SUBJECT OF FIGURATIVE ART

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### ABSTRACT

Student's motivation is the foundation for successful and free learning. The teacher has professional and moral responsibilities on the motivation of students in every subject, including the subject of figurative arts. The role of the teacher is to motivate students to learn every possible skill in the field of figurative arts, using a motivation to improve students' perceptual skills on artistic elements and artistic evaluation. The teacher has full autonomy over the realization of the lesson of figurative art through various forms of artistic expression; he can understand the emotional, cognitive state of the students he works with.

This is longitudinal and qualitative research. Experiment and observation are used for data collection. The reason for using the experimental model has to do with the possibility that this model offers, namely we as researchers had the opportunity to intervene in the moments when we considered it necessary for that kind of intervention to be done as a form of external motivation, which intervention will send us to measurable changes. This research lasted three and a half months and the students had only 1 hour per week of figurative arts. The purpose of this research is to understand the importance of motivating and integrating students in all activities that are involved within the subject of figurative art, to improve students' perceptual skills on figurative elements and aesthetic evaluation of a specific composition.

During September we only have observed the working methods that the teacher realized with her students, so then we could get acquainted with the children and the working methods of the teacher. Due to covid-19, the class was divided into two groups and worked in two different schedules; therefore, we defined the first group as the control group, while the second group was defined as the experimental group. Of course, we were present, as observers in the control group, too. The way of experimenting was that during the realization of the figurative art class we observed by not directly intervening in the work of any of the students, then after completing the task, we started discussing that task to encourage the expression of all students about that composition, we explained and emphasizing the figurative elements and principles within that composition, we discussed the tasks of each student one by one, in order students to understand at what points they need to be improved. At the same time is requested from students to perceive those figurative elements by discussing them and in this way, all the group of students was involved and in a very natural way have improved the perception of the figurative elements and to acquire the artistic appreciation. While students were observing each other's tasks, they also were able to learn from each other and identify figurative elements more easily.

Our research sample is fourth-grade students, respectively age group 9-10 years. The class had 25 students, 15 girls, and 10 boys, and the overall success in all subjects of the complete class was about 4.16% out of 5%. This research is built based on two research questions: Can students' artistic skills are improved through motivation? Can be improved students' skills on the artistic evaluation of composition through group discussion? Both research questions were validated at the end of the experiment, which means when there is proper motivation from the teacher, proper

evaluation of their work by the teacher, discussion of students 'work until they understand their strengths and weaknesses in art; all of these effect on the improvement of student's personal artistic skills and artistic appreciation.

Keywords: Social science, motivation, figurative art, fourth grade, perception, artistic evaluation and skills.

## INTRODUCTION

*Creativity Is In Everything, Especially Teaching!*

*Sir Ken Robinson*

Motivation is a very important thing, an element that helps us in achieving our goals, have a will throughout our lives. There are several types of motivation that help children develop their lives and should be displayed with the ambition to end up in areas to change humanely. At the time we are talking about motivation, we cannot ignore its irreplaceable impact humanly, from birth, in terms of life, social and intellectual. Students should be motivated by their teachers, in every single school life; even in the school subjects, they don't have a preliminary interest or subjects that require skills or talent, for example, arts. The teacher should motivate them to learn more and to seek more until it becomes an internal intellectual motivation. 'When students need to learn more, they have better academic performance, better classroom behavior, and higher sensitivity than self-esteem' (Hattie, 2011).

The focus of this research is on the motivation and appreciation that a teacher can have on the fourth-grade children in the subject of figurative art. The teacher has a very fundamental role in encouraging students to automatically learn in a new way, in the right way. The methods that are used by teachers, of course, have their place because even through them, teaching can become an indirect stimulus or motivation to his students. Considering that we have intrinsic motivation which stems from our inner self and our human organic need to know, understand, learn, research, progress, etc., we also have the external motivation that comes to the person as a result of external influence.

External motivation, respectively the motivation that comes from the teacher to his students, should be the motivation that has consistency and which sends self-regulation to continuous learning. Bandura (1977) in addition to the motivation part, pays special attention to the self-regulation that individuals gain as a result of pushing, then practicing, and creating habits that last, which means that the teacher has to create habits that will work for the child throughout life. The creation of skills for genuine work is also argued by Flavell (1963), who proves that the stage of concrete operations, respectively age 7-11 years, is a stage in which the child develops the ability to make differences, understands probability, manages the logical division of objects and can-do problem-solving, even manage to explain logically. Such a fact, proved by Piaget (1977), instructs us to work hard with the child in his cognitive development, including in the field of art because we are dealing with the period of life in which the child is ready to face the new things.

The environment is another element in the acquisition of figurative art. It is very important that the realization of the figurative art classes to be in a special studio or space only for the course of figurative art, it would have a great motivation to students, respectively motivation that comes as an effect of the physical environment which is considerate as an external motivation for students towards the performance of artistic works. Teachers often claim that learning art affects students in terms of confidence, motivation, and self-esteem, while we have another group of

teachers who have claimed that a student's motivation to learn drawing, painting or scaling comes mainly through the practice of drawing and painting and sculpture (Bresler et al., 2002). On the other hand, Drake (2021) emphasizes the influence of art in improving the emotional state of the child, respectively through art, an element that helps them express themselves of their inner state without words helps them to shift attention through artistic focus and in this way to regulate their feelings.

We can use art in many fields of child development, namely to make the cross-curricular connection that has multidimensional benefits for the child. According to Piaget (1971), we can use art to understand a certain condition of the child, to understand the world of the child and the preferences of the child, meanwhile at the time when we ask the student to explain what he has drawn, we also ask from children to give explanations for the drawing they made. This means that the art teacher influences the development of children in terms of language and helps the student to improve his skills in the field of art too. Art can also empower students to determine their aspirations for the future where through drawing students will understand their emotional state and will be able to identify their dreams for the future (Terton et al., 2020).

The age of the students that are part of this paper and their ability toward art is explained as per Malchiodi (1998) who presents the six stages of children's artistic development, according to him, in children aged 9 to 11 years is manifested the so-called dawn realism phase, during which the child's ability to perceive space and color increases, at the same time increases also the ability to express everything themselves through art. At this point, the teacher should encourage students to learn every possible skill and not demotivate students with critical comments, and suggest to them at what points they need to improve. Students need to know what they did wrong and how they can improve it (Tugend, 2013). According to research realized by Rose and Jolley (2019) who wanted to understand the origins of students' creativity and their will to express themselves through figurative art, they were able to identify four of them: content from current circumstances, content from memory, content from elements of imagination and tendency to express a feeling or message. Creativity is a necessary quality to achieve cognitive, affective, and professional benefits in our complex and the interconnected world (Shumakova, 2018).

### **1.1 CURRICULUM FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION IN KOSOVO AND THE FIELD OF ARTS**

The curriculum is a fundamental document for the development of teaching and learning in contemporary ways and accordance with the age of students. The curriculum also determines the outcomes from the competencies, and the outcomes from the curriculum areas, expressed in knowledge skills, attitudes, and values that should be developed and achieved by students by the end of a certain period, as well as the methodological approach of applicability, including teaching, learning, and assessment (Pre-University Education Curriculum Framework in the Republic of Kosovo, 2011). Of course, the field of arts is also very well regulated, it is based on: 'Creativity and artistic performance; Language and artistic communication; Art-society relationship; Aesthetic-artistic appreciation and evaluation' (Core curriculum for pre-primary grade and primary education in Kosovo, 2012). In the fourth grade, the student must acquire these skills, abilities, and knowledge in the field of fine arts: drawing, painting, sculpture, graphics, design (Kurrikula lendore, 2020).

Despite the proper organizational and substantive regulation that this relevant document regarding school subjects, it also tolerates autonomy within the institution and the class specifically. In other words, the teacher has the freedom to organize the course and regulate course functioning according to the needs and requirements of the group of students she/he works with. It is not said that we always should have a task per week for the students; the teacher helps his students even if he/she leaves them free to express themselves and their cognitive or emotional state. If the teacher gives the students space to draw whatever they want, this is a very good opportunity for the teacher to understand the student's inner state because through free drawing the student is released emotionally or mentally in a positive or negative context (Brechet et al ., 2020).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this research is to understand the importance of motivating and integrating students in all activities that are involved within the subject of figurative art, to improve students' perceptual skills on figurative elements and aesthetic evaluation of a specific composition. Taking under consideration that every child has their world of creativity, abstract and imaginative skills, we need to motivate children to express their inner world, and this by appreciating their work and commitment. This research is built over two questions:

Can students' artistic skills be improved through motivation?

Can be improved students' skills on the artistic evaluation of composition through group discussion?

This is qualitative research and the used method to collect the data is experiment and observation. The reason for using the experimental model has to do with the possibility that this model offers, namely we as researchers had the opportunity to intervene in the moments when we considered it necessary for that kind of intervention to be done as a form of external motivation, which intervention will send us to measurable changes.

The participants of this research are fourth-grade students, respectively age group 9-10 years. The class had 25 students, 15 girls and 10 boys of the school Zenel Hajdini School in Podujeva, Kosovo. It should be noted that the overall success of students has been very high, respectively out of 25 students who have been in total, 16 of them had the maximum average of success, 5, four of them had a grade point average of success, 4, and five of them had a grade average success, 3 and lower. This means that we have worked with a group of students with an average grade of about 4.16%.

According to the Administrative Instruction (MEST) no. 08/2016 on the evaluation of students according to the curriculum framework for pre-university education of the Republic of Kosovo (2016), first and second-grade students are not evaluated with numerical marks, while from the third grade onwards, students are evaluated with numerical mark. The designation for the fourth grade is done because we have considered that students have been adapted with this evaluation, in contrast to the third grade that is experiencing the transition to numerical grade.

Wanting to preserve the integrity and privacy of the teacher, since we are dealing with only one teacher who teaches children in all subjects provided by the curriculum for the fourth grade, and we can conclude that we are not dealing with a qualified person in the field of art, but a qualified person in the field of teaching (a qualified person in the Faculty of Education).

The way of experimenting - this has been longitudinal research as well because to get the necessary results and to intervene in the points that we have considered essential, we had to be present in class while holding the figurative art class for about three and a half months. Students have had figurative art once a week (Kurrikula Lendore, 2020). The experiment began in September 2020.

During the month of September, we only observed the way the teacher works in the subject of figurative arts, in which case we noticed a sincerity and sincerity way of working by her side, at the same time we got to know the group of students and their personalities. During the month of October, the class was divided into two groups; the pandemic Covid-19 favored us at this point because the class was divided into two groups, at two different schedules, due to the distance in the classroom.

Group 1 was the control group, while group 2 was the experimental group. In the control group, we continued to be observers and kept notes regarding the ways of motivation, methods, and techniques of work realized by the teacher. The experimental group was led by us as researchers. In group 2, respectively in the experimental group, the assignment was made by the teacher, because we did not want to directly interfere in the curricular planning done by the teacher, while the observation, motivation, intervention, engagement, and additional responsibility was done by us.

Neither group was aware that we were experimenting, we kept this a secret so that students would not feel stressed or neglected.

The experiment ended on December 15, 2020.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

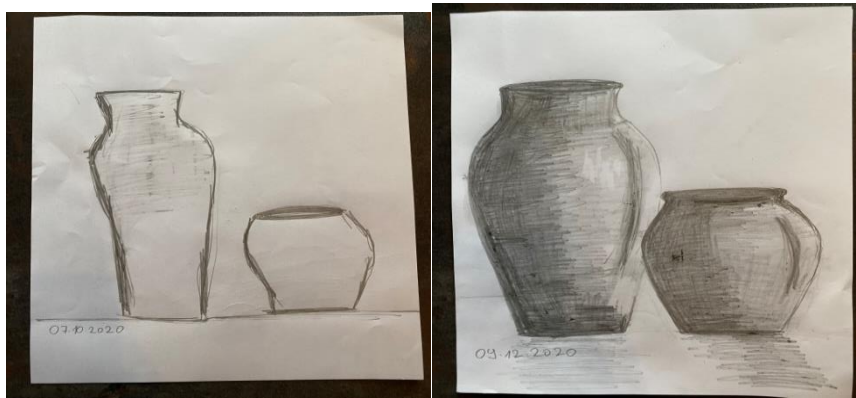
During the observation conducted in September, we have identified the following ways of working applied by the teacher: verbal motivation, respectively praising the work of each student, unfortunately, there were no clear expectations regarding the achievements that her students should achieve by the end of the semi-annual which had an impact on the low willingness of children to engage in art. To assist students in their internal expressions, the teacher had instances when she did not do any specific planning and left the students free to draw whatever they wanted but never discussed in detail the improvement of the work done by the students, ie students did not receive clear feedback on what their strengths or weaknesses were while completing a figurative art task. Students in most cases do not understand what they would gain at the end of a given task; they did not experience the task given by the teacher attractively as they had the same method and tools constantly.

At the beginning of October, when we took over the work with the experimental group, we showed them what tools they should have with themselves and that these tools will be used during this period as much as to work together, what will be their responsibilities during the art class, respectively engagement, preparation, and maintenance of the file, creative skills, what methods will we use, and finally, we explained to you that with their works we will realize an exhibition in school. The exhibition was the fundamental motivation!

Every beginning of the art hours has started with warming up, ie the students have been instructed to make free scribbles, dots, dashes, and any other kind of stain on paper, to bring out the best and get free their emotional and cognitive part. Considering that during September we became familiar with and the students and have understood their personalities, it was easier to work with them now. After the teacher determined the topic of the week based on

the curriculum, we instructed the students on the working methods and tools they should apply when completing that topic. The students were under constant observation by our side; of course, we gave them complete freedom of expression during the artistic work, but still guiding them to some basic rules on the construction of a composition. During the realization of art class, we have observed without interfering directly in the work of any of the students, then after completing the task, we started discussing that task to encourage the expression of all students about that composition, we explained and emphasizing the figurative elements and principles within that composition, we discussed the tasks of each student one by one, in order students to understand at what points they need to be improved. At the same time is requested from students to perceive those figurative elements by discussing them and in this way, all the group of students was involved and in a very natural way have improved the perception of the figurative elements and to acquire the artistic appreciation. While students were observing each other's tasks, they were able to learn from each other and identify figurative elements more easily. This way of realization and presentation of a student's work is presented in figure 1, it answers positively to our first research question.

Figure 1 Improving students' artistic skills



The variety of used methods, the explanation from the first meeting with students about the responsibilities during this semester, and at the end the motivating with the exhibition, presented a set of motivations that students received in different forms.

Regarding the second research question raised, we can say that it has been proven since the selection of works for the exhibition was made by the students themselves, and as can be seen in Figure 2 and Figure 3, the students have selected works that have high artistic values. We also asked the students to argue about the work they have selected to exhibit.

Figure 2. Exhibition with student's works



Figure 3. Exhibition with student's works



## CONCLUSION

Based on the data obtained from this research we can conclude that it is very important that in the subject of figurative arts there is always should be a qualified teacher of art. To realize figurative art correctly, the teacher should know what he/she wants from the students and what he/she wants to achieve with the students in the subject of figurative arts.

The teacher should use different materials during the realization of art and the students should be motivated to use different materials during the realization of arts. Arts should to developed freely and the teacher to be only a guide and clarifier for the students. Regardless of the talent that the student may have, the skills in art and the artist's appreciation of a particular composition are improving and the artistic value too.

In conclusion: each artistic work of each student has artistic value, it is the responsibility of the teacher to identify the artistic elements and understand the meaning of the student's work by seeing or discussing them. It is the responsibility of the teacher to control and not impose his artistic taste, but to appreciate and respect the artistic taste of each student, and this can be called motivation over art!



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