

VIEWS OF ART EDUCATION STUDENTS ON THE INCLUSION OF ARTWORKS IN ART EDUCATION LESSONS

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Abstract The standpoint which students of art education gain in the course of their studies can impact their later work as educators. A fundamental aspect of art education is the inclusion of artworks in art education lessons. The existing curriculum defines neither the artists nor the number of artworks to be showcased by art education teachers. Also, it does not define the time teachers should dedicate to discussing various artworks, as this is entirely their professional decision. The objective of this research, which focused on students in the third year of art education was to determine (a) what kind of experience with artworks inclusion the students gained during observational teaching practice, (b) which artworks the students find the easiest to show to and discuss with pupils in the second and third cycles of elementary school and to relate to the concepts from the curriculum, and (c) what response to the showcased artworks the students anticipated from pupils. We discovered that the experiences of the students included in our sample varied considerably and that the students considered the artworks combining various communication codes to be more appropriate for the inclusion in art education lessons in higher grades of elementary school.

Keywords:

art education, relation to art education, teaching methods, contemporary art practices, multimodality.

1 Introduction

Modern artworks -normally introduced to older pupils in art classes taught by an art teacher -frequently deviate from the traditional modes of expression. Contemporary art practices often incorporate various communication codes. Instead of using merely the visual code, they frequently include the elements of sound, text, or movement. Similarly, younger pupils are also introduced to modern modes of artistic expression to some extent (through school-organised visits to galleries and museums or in their leisure time). They should, however, learn about different modes of expression (not only the traditional ones) in art class as well. The art curriculum does in no way favour the traditional modes of expression, even though they are considered -with respect to the set art notions and the development level of pupils -crucial and hence strongly represented in the artworks normally shown to pupils in elementary school. With regard to the operative goals of art education, artworks are the key element used for learning art notions. "Through artworks produced by artists, creations produced by pupils and through models as seen in nature and the environment, pupils learn the notions related to sculpture" (Curriculum 2011, p. 10). A question that arises pertains to the selection of artworks to be shown to pupils. Surely one needs to consider that an artwork needs to be related to the set art task, that is, the theoretical artistic problem, the visual art technique, and the motif or theme -the idea of the work. According to Shulman Herz (2010), an artwork should incite pupils to think about a selected topic and be suited to their age; older pupils can deal with more difficult concepts, while younger pupils have no difficulties accepting non-figurative artworks. She further notes that the artwork must equally attract the teacher, as excitement is catchy and a dialogue can hardly develop unless it is led by an enthusiastic teacher (Shulman Herz, 2010). Enthusiasm for the artwork is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for the integration of contemporary works of art into teaching. Teachers need competencies related to knowledge of professional subjects (studio subjects, art theory, art history, and so forth) and general pedagogical subjects (such as pedagogy, psychology).

A gradual incorporation of artworks by artists who have moved away from the traditional modes of expression and who include various communication codes could take pupils one step closer to modern visual arts. Zupančič (2006) devised a set of criteria for the selection of contemporary artworks which could be introduced to pupils: (a) the author and their work have been recognised by art historians as

important, (b) the author is a typical representative of their art movement (the same applies to the artwork), and (c) the showcased artwork is explicit, deals with appropriate subject matter, and is suitable in terms of pupils' further artistic work.

Introducing artworks that incorporate various communication codes allows pupils to recognise multimodality -different communication codes -in works of art. The older the pupils, the easier it will be for them to identify the meanings conveyed through different communication codes (for example, what information I get through sound, what the visual image is trying to convey, and how to combine both pieces of information together). This will in turn help children develop their multimodal literacy. In this day and age, multimodality has replaced monomodality in different areas.

More recently, the dominance of monomodality has weakened, although it still persists in some practices, for instance in the writing and publishing of academic papers. The trend towards multimodality began with the avant-garde experiments of the early twentieth century, when 'concrete poetry' began to express itself not only through words, but also through typography, and when visual artists used new kinds of materials and sought to produce *Gesamtkunstwerke* which would combine as many forms of expression as possible. (van Leeuwen, 2017, p. 4)

Multimodal literacy is the ability to decode the message of multimodal works, that is, the ability to discern the meaning created by a combination of different communication codes. Jewitt (2008) identified the following communication codes: verbal (text), visual (how something appears), spatial (placement within space), gestural (body language), and audio (music, sound effects).

Whether a pupil can identify all the layers of an artwork, including its multimodal nature, depends on the teaching methods used by their teacher. When discussing artworks, the teacher needs to take into consideration that pupils will have different opinions on different artworks, which means they will experience and judge them differently. The teacher must also allow the pupils to appreciate each other and be tolerant (Berce-Golob, 1993). A dialogue on the artwork that allows open discussion between the teacher and the pupils on the motif or theme (idea), form (design and material), and context is a vital component of the method of visual and aesthetic communication and the method of multiplication and elaboration of artistic

sensibility, which both derive from the specificity of aesthetic communication (Karlavaris, 1987). In addition, artwork discussion relates to the method of complexity and overlapping (Karlavaris, 1987), as one needs to take into consideration that an artwork is a conglomerate of various elements, namely, (a) motif (theme, idea), (b) art technique, style, design and art language (form), and (c) the personality of the author and social impact (context). Hubbard (2010) distinguished between two types of dialogue when discussing artwork, predetermined dialogue and interpretive dialogue:

Predetermined dialogue is helpful when the goal is to illuminate precise questions such as: How has this artist addressed a particular challenge? What was the original function of this object? What have art experts found significant in this artwork? Because the understanding students are to achieve is specific and pre-identified, the effectiveness of predetermined dialogue is relatively easy to assess. (Hubbard, 2010, p. 42)

The predetermined dialogue is the most frequent form of conversation used in elementary school art education classes, as this has been indicated already within the curriculum (learning about art concepts through artworks). The interpretive dialogue, on the other hand, has a whole different character:

In contrast to predetermined dialogue, interpretive dialogue is not meant to communicate pre-identified ideas, but rather enable students to construct their own meaning in response to an artwork. ... Interpretive dialogue addresses the philosophical notion that the meaning of an artwork is not fixed but ever-evolving ... (Hubbard, 2010, p. 42)

Hubbard distinguished between “two types of interpretive dialogue: (a) thematic and (b) open” (2010, p. 42). In a thematic dialogue, the teacher selects a topic, usually a more general one (for example, human relations), and uses carefully selected questions to direct pupils in their study of the artwork (Hubbard, 2010). The essence of an open dialogue is in that it recognises an artwork as complex and multi-layered.

... [A] fixed theme can limit the relevance that certain viewers might otherwise find in a particular work. In open dialogue, multiple avenues for inquiry emerge organically from the viewers' responses. The teacher does not come to the dialogue with a theme or a tight set of questions to ask. (Hubard, 2010, p. 43)

An open dialogue when it comes to discussing art is particularly important with respect to contemporary art practices. Desai (2002) noted that “art teachers need to move beyond the consideration of the physicality of the art object per se to a contextualized understanding of the object in terms of the social, political, economic, and cultural conditions of production and appreciation” (p. 318). One of the methods that helps pupils to identify multiple layers and the complexity of an artwork is the method of aesthetic transfer, developed by Duh and Zupančič (2013), the objective of which is to transfer the aesthetic message contained in an artwork to pupils in the course of art education practice. According to the authors, this method consists of three stages: perception, reception, and reaction (Duh & Zupančič, 2013). They further noted that the first phase aims at the child getting as clear perception of the artwork as possible (p. 75), while reception aims at children expressing the results of perception in words, thus becoming aware of them and internalising them (p.76). The last stage of the method of aesthetic transfer is reaction which the authors define as “individual productive response to an artwork” (Duh & Zupančič, 2013).

Shulman Herz (2010) underlined that the first contact with an artwork should be completely open, as any preliminary questions might lead to presuppositions that impact the child's interpretation. The author further outlined some vital elements of artwork observation: (a) setting the first question (What do you see? What have you noticed?), (b) pupils having sufficient time to observe the artwork in detail, (c) pupils discussing the artwork in pairs, so anyone gets their chance to speak, and (d) pupils making a list of 10 to 15 things they observed in the artwork. What follows is a set of interpretative questions (such as, what could have made the artist select this motif? Do you have any ideas on how the artist wanted to change the way people think?). Shulman Herz (2010) emphasised that it is always about hypotheses and guesses, where children need to base their ideas on what they have seen in the artwork (for example, what in the artwork made you come to this idea?).

One of the problems with this is definitely the time that is allocated to art education in elementary school. The basic activity of pupils in art classes is practical work. The artworks that a teacher decides to include in art lessons must adhere to curriculum goals. What children normally learn through artworks is the concepts related to art theory. Predetermined dialogue is the most suitable choice for this method of introducing artworks to children. However, two of the goals that are listed in the art curriculum under general goals are: (a) children develop their ability to form criteria for the evaluation of artwork and general visual art problems of the environment, and (b) children develop a sensitivity towards art cultural heritage and cultural diversity (Curriculum, 2011, p. 4). To attain these goals, one must resort to interpretive dialogue which is normally more time consuming. At the same time, it allows pupils to form their personal response to the artwork. The interpretive dialogue is particularly important with contemporary art practices which include elements of multimodality and require a step back from the usual practice of artwork observation and discussion.

Which artworks art teachers will choose, how they will discuss the art with their pupils, and how much time they will dedicate to artwork discussion may as well depend on practical experience these teachers have gained in the course of their studies, the views they hold on specific artworks, the age of pupils they teach, and so on.

2 Methods

2.1 The research problem and research questions

The objective of this survey was to collect the views of art education students on specific artworks (the focus was on both traditional and contemporary art forms) with particular regard to their possible inclusion into art classes.

- (1) What kind of experience with showcasing artworks in classroom have the students gained in the course of their observational teaching practice?
- (2) Which of the showcased artworks do they find the easiest to show to and discuss with children (in the second and third cycles of elementary school), and relate to the notions from the art curriculum?

- (3) What do the interviewees feel would be the attitude of the children towards the showcased artworks?

2.2 Survey sample

This survey included all students in their third year of the first-cycle Art Education programme (convenience sample). An electronic survey was sent to a shared e-mail of the students. The request for taking part in the survey was received by 16 students, all of which agreed to participate. The questionnaire was fully completed by 14 students, while two of them failed to provide answers to two parts of the questionnaire. As regards the gender of the survey sample, all respondents were female students (there are no male students in this particular year). The majority of the students in the sample is aged 21 (62.5 %), followed by 22 (18.8 %), 23 (12.5 %), and 24 (6.3 %).

2.3 Data collection and processing

In November 2019 a questionnaire which included a five-point Likert scale was developed; it was used to determine how the respondents perceived the information they gained on various artworks discussed in class in the course of their observational teaching practice. The second part of the questionnaire included two artwork reproductions and a video, followed by ten statements regarding the three artworks and possible answers (*I strongly disagree, I disagree, I do not know/cannot decide, I agree, I strongly agree*). The participation in the survey, which was conducted in November 2019, was voluntary and anonymous. The data were analysed at the level of descriptive statistics.

In this survey I used the following artworks, according to their different modes of communication:

- (1) Henri Matisse, *The Goldfish*¹, 1911. Henri Matisse (1869–1945) was a French artist who is considered to be one of the greatest artists of the twentieth century. Crepaldi described *The Goldfish* as follows:

¹ Photo available at <https://www.henrimatisse.org/goldfish.jsp> (July 11, 2019).

The motif of a vase with red fish is in many paintings by Matisse almost always placed in the forefront. The reflections of fish in the water are surrounded and highlighted by sparkly colours of flowers and leaves in the garden. The entire composition plays with elliptical and circular movements, repeated through and reinforced by the round table. (Crepaldi, 1998, p. 57)

- (2) Peter William Holden, *SoleNoid*, 2009, an audio-visual robotic installation (Holden, n.d.). Holden says about his work that he is exploring ways of dissolving the boundaries between cinematography and sculpture. He notes:

In my recent investigations of this theme, I've been working with computational devices combined with robotic elements to create mandala-like kinetic sculptures. I consider these kinetic sculptures to be solely the medium I work with and just the first step in the process to achieve what I believe is the true focal point of my work. That focal point being the ephemeral animations - choreographies that are created when these sculptures are in motion. (Archive of Digital Art, para. 1)

Holden's installation comprises eight robotic arms, each holding a tap shoe that can move in various directions (toe tap, heel tap, etc.). Holden elaborates: "Each movement produces its own characteristic sound. The sculpture alternates between ... a preprogrammed composition by Marko Wild" and the sound produced through interaction with the audience that can play the installation via the keyboard placed next to it. "Hitting one of the teardrop-shaped keys on the keyboard triggers a short sequence of movements and functions similarly to a sequencer. These sounds and movements can effortlessly be patched together by the audience to produce a new composition" (Holden, n.d.).

- (3) Sašo Vrabič, *Portret Erika*, 2016 – 2017, oil on canvas. The portrait of Erik by a contemporary Slovenian artist Saša Vrabič is a commissioned artwork composed of words. According to Ivančič Fajfar, the piece incorporates an intervention of the person portrayed: the inscriptions are taken from a notepad in which Erik kept record of his daily events for a month. Sašo Vrabič skilfully turned the child's handwriting into a font, which was then used on a slightly toned white underpainting to draw/write out a convincing portrait (Ivančič Fajfar, n.d.).

4 Results and discussion

4.1 Experience with showcasing artwork reproductions in the classroom

The first set of questions was answered by all students ($n=16$). The students generally noted that they had learned many new things during the course of their observational teaching practice. As much as 50 % of the respondents agreed and 43.8 % strongly agreed with the respective statement. As regards the statement “The teacher showed many different artwork reproductions over the course of the practical training”, the opinions were split. Over a third of the respondents disagreed (37.5 %) or strongly disagreed (6.3 %) with that statement, nearly a third (31.3 %) did not know or could not decide, while one fourth of the respondents agreed with it (25 %). The students included in the sample completed their observational teaching practice at different schools, therefore they had different art teachers as mentors. The number of showcased artworks and the time dedicated to artwork discussion is entirely in the hands of educators and thus, various practices are used.

Over one half of the respondents (56.3 %) disagreed with the statement that the teachers had shown at least one quality artwork reproduction per art class, while nearly a third of them (31.3 %) agreed with the statement. A minor share of the students (12.5 %) did not know or could not decide. Further, half of the students agreed (37.5 %) or strongly agreed (12.5 %) with the statement that the art teacher had conducted art lessons nearly without including artwork reproductions, and one fourth (25 %) did not know how to answer or was unable to decide. A good fourth of the students, on the other hand, disagreed (18.8 %) or strongly disagreed (6.3 %) with the statement. We can conclude, based on the results, that the students have seen different practices during their observational teaching practice – from teachers who did include artworks in art education lessons to those that paid no particular attention to artworks.

As regards the statement “The teacher showcased artworks reflecting contemporary art practices (installations, videos, etc.) in higher grades (eighth and ninth)”, the majority of the students replied with I do not know/cannot decide (43.8 %), while roughly the same proportion of them disagreed (37.5 %) or strongly disagreed (6.3 %) with it. A minor share of the respondents (12.4 %) agreed with the fact that the teachers in higher grades also used artworks reflecting contemporary art practices.

One quarter of the students (25 %) disagreed with the statement that the teacher had shown artwork reproductions which were based predominantly on traditional art forms, while a greater proportion of the students disagreed with the statement (37.5 %) or did not know/could not decide (37.5 %). That leads to a conclusion that those teachers who did, in fact, showcase artworks in class, mostly resorted to artworks using traditional modes of expression and only rarely to artworks reflecting contemporary art practices. The answers of the students are such one would expect, given that for pupils to develop a relationship with visual arts, they need to be introduced to various artworks (considering time, space, mode of expression, etc.).

The statement “The teacher encouraged the pupils to give their opinion and discuss the artwork while observing it” also revealed much diversity of opinion. Half of the respondents disagreed (43.8 %) or strongly disagreed (6.3 %) with the statement. Over a third (37.5 %) of the respondents agreed with it and only a minor share (12.5 %) did not know or could not decide on whether or not the teacher encouraged the pupils to give their opinions and join the discussion. A large proportion of the respondents agreed (37.5 %) or strongly agreed (6.3 %) with the statement that the teacher directed students largely to a discussion about visual art elements. Nearly a quarter disagreed (18.8 %) or strongly disagreed (6.3 %) with that. Nearly a third of the respondents (31.3 %) did not know the answer or could not decide on this matter. The collected responses indicate that teachers encouraged the pupils to focus primarily on the formal aspects of the artworks rather than on giving their opinions. The responses are hardly surprising, as it is observed in practice that art education in elementary school has been losing its educational value.²

4.2 Henri Matisse, *The Goldfish* (1911)

The set of questions regarding the artwork by Henri Matisse was answered by 15 students ($n=15$).

² Possible causes might lie in numerical school grades and the *Nacionalno preverjanje znanja* (NPZ) [National Assessment of Knowledge] examination. The latter focuses on testing the knowledge of art-theory related concepts, which is easier to assess (see <https://www.ric.si/mma/N191-551-3-1/2019061310502833/>). In the future, it would make sense to analyse positive and negative effects of the NPZ examination on the way art education classes are conducted in elementary school.

Table 1: Henri Matisse, The Goldfish, 1911

| Henri Matisse, <i>The Goldfish</i> , 1911 | I strongly disagree. | | I disagree. | | I do not know / cannot decide. | | I agree. | | I strongly agree. | | TOTAL | |
|--|----------------------|----|-------------|-------|--------------------------------|-------|----------|-------|-------------------|-------|-------|------|
| | F | f% | F | f% | f | f% | f | f% | f | f% | f | f% |
| I could easily show this artwork to students in the second cycle. | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 15 | 100% | 0 | 0% | 15 | 100% |
| I could easily show this artwork to students in the third cycle. | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 6.7% | 12 | 80% | 2 | 13.3% | 15 | 100% |
| I could easily discuss this artwork with students in the second cycle. | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 13.3% | 12 | 80% | 1 | 6.7% | 15 | 100% |
| I could easily discuss this artwork with students in the third cycle. | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 13 | 86.7% | 2 | 13.3% | 15 | 100% |
| I could easily relate this artwork to the concepts from the second cycle curriculum. | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 5 | 33.3% | 10 | 66.7% | 0 | 0% | 15 | 100% |
| I could easily relate this artwork to the concepts from the third cycle curriculum. | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 3 | 20.0% | 11 | 73.3% | 1 | 6.7% | 15 | 100% |
| Students of the second cycle could not relate to this artwork. | 0 | 0% | 11 | 73.3% | 4 | 26.7% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 15 | 100% |
| Students of the third cycle could not relate to this artwork. | 0 | 0% | 10 | 66.7% | 4 | 26.7% | 1 | 6.7% | 0 | 0% | 15 | 100% |
| This piece is a regular example of an artwork that can be shown to students in the second cycle. | 0 | 0% | 1 | 6.7% | 7 | 46.7% | 6 | 40.0% | 1 | 6.7% | 15 | 100% |
| This piece is a regular example of an artwork that can be shown to students in the third cycle. | 0 | 0% | 1 | 6.7% | 7 | 46.7% | 6 | 40.0% | 1 | 6.7% | 15 | 100% |

The results in Table 1 indicate that the students could show *The Goldfish* by Henri Matisse to pupils in the second and third cycles of elementary school without reservations and do not expect any problems discussing the artwork with the class. Most of the respondents feel they could easily relate this artwork to the notions from the art curriculum. Over half of the respondents believe that pupils would be able to relate to this artwork. Nearly half of the respondents, however, could not decide whether this artwork was a typical example of artworks that are normally shown to pupils in the second and third cycle of elementary school. This has been expected, as *The Goldfish* is a figural work with a motif that children can relate to. Furthermore, the students could easily recognise the formal features in this artwork, such as colour, colour relations, and composition. It is therefore not surprising that they could relate it to the curriculum.

4.3 Peter William Holden, *SoleNoid*, an audio-visual robotic installation (2009)

Table 2: Peter William Holden, an audio-visual robotic installation (Sole Noid, 2009)

| Peter William Holden, an audio-visual robotic installation (<i>SoleNoid</i>), 2009 | I strongly disagree. | | I disagree. | | I do not know / cannot decide. | | I agree. | | I strongly agree. | | TOTAL | |
|--|----------------------|------|-------------|-------|--------------------------------|-------|----------|-------|-------------------|-------|-------|------|
| | f | f/% | f | f/% | f | f/% | f | f/% | f | f/% | f | f/% |
| I could easily show this artwork to students in the second cycle. | 0 | 0.0% | 7 | 43.8% | 3 | 18.8% | 6 | 37.5% | 0 | 0.0% | 16 | 100% |
| I could easily show this artwork to students in the third cycle. | 0 | 0.0% | 1 | 6.3% | 3 | 18.8% | 9 | 56.3% | 3 | 18.8% | 16 | 100% |
| I could easily discuss this artwork with students in the second cycle. | 0 | 0.0% | 7 | 43.8% | 3 | 18.8% | 6 | 37.5% | 0 | 0.0% | 16 | 100% |
| I could easily discuss this artwork with students in the third cycle. | 0 | 0.0% | 2 | 12.5% | 2 | 12.5% | 11 | 68.8% | 1 | 6.3% | 16 | 100% |
| I could easily relate this artwork to the concepts from the second cycle curriculum. | 0 | 0.0% | 6 | 37.5% | 5 | 31.3% | 5 | 31.3% | 0 | 0.0% | 16 | 100% |
| I could easily relate this artwork to the concepts from the third cycle curriculum. | 0 | 0.0% | 2 | 12.5% | 3 | 18.8% | 10 | 62.5% | 1 | 6.3% | 16 | 100% |
| Students of the second cycle could not relate to this artwork. | 0 | 0.0% | 4 | 25.0% | 4 | 25.0% | 8 | 50.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 16 | 100% |
| Students of the third cycle could not relate to this artwork. | 0 | 0.0% | 7 | 43.8% | 5 | 31.3% | 4 | 25.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 16 | 100% |
| This piece is a regular example of an artwork that can be shown to students in the second cycle. | 0 | 0.0% | 14 | 87.5% | 2 | 12.5% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 16 | 100% |
| This piece is a regular example of an artwork that can be shown to students in the third cycle. | 0 | 0.0% | 7 | 43.8% | 6 | 37.5% | 3 | 18.8% | 0 | 0.0% | 16 | 100% |

The results in Table 2 show that a good half of the respondents had no reservations showing the artwork by Peter William Holden, *SoleNoid*, to pupils in the third cycle of elementary school, but not to pupils in the second cycle. Similarly, half of them feel they could easily discuss it with pupils in the third cycle but expect difficulties with pupils in the second cycle. As for the correlation between the artwork and the curriculum, the results were rather similar. There were interesting answers pertaining to students' opinion on whether or not children could relate to this artwork. While a half of them believe that pupils in the second cycle could not relate to this artwork, only a quarter of the respondents assume the same for pupils in the third cycle of elementary school. Most of them opposed the statement that this was a typical example of artworks normally shown to pupils in the second cycle of elementary school, whereas the proportion of those that felt this was not an artwork typically used with pupils in the third cycle was under a half. Based on their answers, it is safe to assume that the artwork could be used with older pupils (in the third cycle) with less difficulties. The artwork in question represents a major departure from traditional modes of expression, as it incorporates movement and sound and is thus more difficult to analyse through discussion. A conversation about visual elements and materials used is certainly not sufficient, so the teacher should plan an interpretive dialogue that would encourage critical thinking and allow pupils to express their opinions.

4.4 Sašo Vrabič, *Portret Erika*, 2016 – 2017Table 3: Sašo Vrabič, *Portret Erika*, 2016 – 2017

| Sašo Vrabič, <i>Portret Erika</i> , 2016 – 2017 | I strongly disagree. | | I disagree. | | I do not know / cannot decide. | | I agree. | | I strongly agree. | | TOTAL | |
|--|----------------------|------------|-------------|------------|--------------------------------|------------|----------|------------|-------------------|------------|----------|------------|
| | <i>f</i> | <i>f</i> % | <i>f</i> | <i>f</i> % | <i>f</i> | <i>f</i> % | <i>f</i> | <i>f</i> % | <i>f</i> | <i>f</i> % | <i>f</i> | <i>f</i> % |
| I could easily show this artwork to students in the second cycle. | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 3 | 20.0% | 12 | 80.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 15 | 100% |
| I could easily show this artwork to students in the third cycle. | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 14 | 93.3% | 1 | 6.7% | 15 | 100% |
| I could easily discuss this artwork with students in the second cycle. | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 5 | 33.3% | 10 | 66.7% | 0 | 0.0% | 15 | 100% |
| I could easily discuss this artwork with students in the third cycle. | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 1 | 6.7% | 13 | 86.7% | 1 | 6.7% | 15 | 100% |
| I could easily relate this artwork to the concepts from the second cycle curriculum. | 0 | 0.0% | 1 | 6.7% | 8 | 53.3% | 6 | 40.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 15 | 100% |
| I could easily relate this artwork to the concepts from the third cycle curriculum. | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 3 | 20.0% | 11 | 73.3% | 1 | 6.7% | 15 | 100% |
| Students of the second cycle could not relate to this artwork. | 0 | 0.0% | 7 | 46.7% | 6 | 40.0% | 2 | 13.3% | 0 | 0.0% | 15 | 100% |
| Students of the third cycle could not relate to this artwork. | 0 | 0.0% | 12 | 80.8% | 3 | 20.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 0 | 0.0% | 15 | 100% |
| This piece is a regular example of an artwork that can be shown to students in the second cycle. | 0 | 0.0% | 5 | 33.3% | 8 | 53.3% | 2 | 13.3% | 0 | 0.0% | 15 | 100% |
| This piece is a regular example of an artwork that can be shown to students in the third cycle. | 0 | 0.0% | 3 | 20.0% | 7 | 46.7% | 5 | 33.3% | 0 | 0.0% | 15 | 100% |

The students' responses to the artwork *Portrait Erika* by Saša Vrabič were similar to those for the artwork by Henri Matisse (see Table 3). The students had no reservations about showing this particular artwork to pupils in the second and third cycles of elementary school. Over half of the respondents felt they could discuss the artwork with pupils in the second cycle without difficulties (though one third did not know or could not decide on this question). In regard to the pupils in the third cycle, most of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they could easily discuss this artwork with them. There was slightly more difference in opinion as regards relating the artwork to curriculum goals. Over a half of the respondents chose *I do not know/cannot decide* with the statement "I could easily relate this artwork to the concepts from the second cycle curriculum" (though a large share of them agreed with it). On the other hand, the majority of the respondents thought they could easily relate this artwork to the concepts from the third cycle curriculum. Nearly a half of them opposed the idea that pupils in the second cycle could not relate to this artwork, and the majority disagreed with this statement with respect to pupils in the third cycle. There was a considerable difference in opinion regarding whether or not this artwork was a typical example of artworks shown in the second and third cycles of elementary school. Although this artwork incorporates both image and text, which makes it less common compared to traditional modes of expression, the students had no reservations as pertains to showing it to pupils in the second and third cycles of elementary school and discussing it with them. Some problems may appear only with regard to relating the artwork to curriculum goals. It can be assumed that the students found the artworks which combined various communication codes (the second and the third artwork in the survey) intuitively more appropriate for older pupils.

Conclusion

The experience which students of art education gain in the course of their studies and their viewpoints derived therefrom can have a significant impact on their future work as educators. How they will include artworks in their classes, prepare for and execute the discussions about artworks depends also on the models they have been introduced to during their studies (both as part of their observational and integrated teaching practice). The replies provided by the students indicate that the experience with artwork inclusion, which they gained through observational teaching practice, varies considerably. However, the students do see the potential in including the

artworks showcased in this survey, in art lessons. An observation worth mentioning is that they consider the two artworks that combine several communication codes (word, sound, movement) to be more appropriate for art lessons in higher grades of elementary school. Owing to a small survey sample, the results can by no means be generalised. However, they can be used as a starting point for further research regarding the inclusion of artworks in art lessons. A problem arises in the sixth grade and the entire third cycle when the number of art lessons gets halved. The teaching methods (see Berce-Golob, 1993; Duh & Zupančič, 2013; Hubbard, 2010; Karlavaris, 1987; Shulman Herz, 2010) that consider introducing artworks and artists in class require a certain amount of time which art teachers do not have (anymore).

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