

What type of social learning is suited to the artistically talented?

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Complex definition of talented pupils

- **Talented pupils have either achieved or shown potential to achieve a lot in the intellectual, creative, specifically academic, management or artistic field. So, by definition (1) talented pupils have a high-level general intellectual capacity and (2) a specific talent in a given area is not precluded. Thanks to their wild imagination, the talented are creative. They border their thinking only gradually through education and experience. Basically, the talented like to engage in divergent thinking and learning by checking out various correct options, experimenting with different ideas, creating new possibilities.**
- **Artistically talented are independent and creative artistic thinking, the correct take on the artistic information, perception of many and varied details, spending a lot of time solving an artistic problem, testing out new materials, perfecting their work.**

Some characteristics of talented pupils

- **Talented pupils fall into the category of children with special needs since they need not only regular classes but also special classes in order to develop their capabilities. The talented sometimes seems like a curse. Often the talented seem to have poor learning habits, low motivation to do school work, achieve poor school results, are incapable to learn on their own, have a dislike for the routine work, for obedience, for authoritarian relations, for dependence and for learning by heart or convergent learning. They often find it difficult to interact with their peers or with adults. Therefore, the talented often feel lonely, or even as social outcasts, bored, unsatisfied, disappointed, anxious, depressed. Later on the paper studies ways around these weaknesses.**

Social competencies

- **The talented are learning by observing parents and teachers thus accept their new social roles. One of the methods of social learning is social games because 1) there the talented learn social competences that enable the development of intellectual, emotional and social side of their personality and foster their creativity 2) they enable talented to get to know themselves, their needs and emotions and thus to non-violent communicate. 3) As they learn something about themselves, as they feel understood, it become easier for them to accept opinions, feelings and behaviour of peers and other peoples. 4) They become more tolerant. 5) A socially competent person has a positive self-image and a host of social skills (in order to cooperate with others, resolve conflicts etc.).**

Art education in our primary school

- **An organisational hindrance to developing the artistic creativity in the Slovene nine-year primary school is the one-hour class of arts a week. Some schools offer a two-hour class a week but for half a year only. This option allows for a multidisciplinary approach and thus for a multifunctional attainment of goals. This last option is relatively new and hence an exception rather than the rule. The teaching of art classes is offered only at one level, so there is no distinction between more or less talented pupils. Some schools try to remedy that by organising art competitions and (photo)galleries. The France Bevk primary school is the case in point. External motivation factors include competition amongst peers, evaluation of the works, attracting attention, exhibiting one's works.**

Art education curricula in Slovene primary school

- 1) **They are based on contents, problems, objectives aiming at understanding notions, artistic expression and perceiving the world around (Tacol). There are some multidisciplinary correlations and knowledge standards and special didactical recommendations. They take due account of the pupil's development stages and teachers' training.**
- 2) **Pupils aged 11 to 15 express and solve artistic problems. Teachers encourage individual development and social contacts. They develop motor skills by handling different materials, sensibility, creativity and aesthetic expression. The prerequisite to achieve these goals is internal motivation and pupil-based constructivist process-based approach. The curricula suppose that all pupils are more or less talented, that is why there is no specific mention of the talented**

Teaching artistically talented in U.S.A.

- The Slovene curricula imply the individual, social and content-based approaches within a general curriculum that caters for the talented and average pupils alike – unlike in the USA.

Clark and Zimmerman (2004) suggest that in a supportive, flexible and intellectually demanding environment the artistic talent may be cultivated. Teachers should be encouraged to take on leadership roles in a variety of educational contexts.

Teaching artistically talented in U.S.A.

- In U.S.A. it is possible to choose 1) *Society centred orientation*: art activities that result in social development, 2) *Child centred orientation*: art that result in personal growth and 3) *Subject centred orientation*: art activities that result in new knowledge and skills.
- In U.S.A. all three orientations must be given attention in an adequate art education curriculum. Which of the mentioned orientations teachers use most in given circumstances depends on the curriculum, talented pupils' characteristics and needs.

P. Torrance Manifesto for children

- Don't be afraid to fall in love with something and pursue it with intensity.
- Know, understand, take pride in, practice, develop, exploit and enjoy your greatest strengths.
- Learn to free yourself from the expectations of others and to walk away from the games they impose on you.
- Free yourself to play your own game.
- Find a great teacher or mentor who will help you.
- Learn the skills of interdependence.
- Don't waste energy trying to be well rounded.
- Do what you love and can do well.

Motivation factors for talented

- Problem-solving motivates pupils to think independently because gifted learners tend to take greater responsibility for their own learning than average pupils do. The talented select learning activities, that allow them considerable freedom to pursue topics or objectives of personal interests (*Borich, 2010*). It is recommended that the talented engage in auto-regulatory learning, personally-significant; experience-based, socially-constructivist and peer learning.

Some stimulative elements of social learning

Art teachers should

- perform some elements of neurolinguistic programming (NLP) in order to activate pupils' perception paths (VAKOG), have good rapport with others and communicate effectively.
- Create an open, working and innovative class climate.
- develop of pupils' social and emotional literacy, awareness of and overcoming their self-limited beliefs.
- stimulate various learning styles of talented, encouraging their visual thinking and independent artistic expression.

Three strategies for underachieving talented pupils

- *Whitmore* (1980) differs following strategies:
- 1. Supportive Strategies. Classroom techniques and designs that allow pupils to feel they are part of a 'family' versus a 'factory'. Curriculum activities are based on the needs and interests of the children; and allow pupils to bypass assignments on subjects in which they have previously shown competency.
- 2. Intrinsic Strategies incorporate the idea that pupils want to get good academic results (*Purkey and Novak, 1984*). Teachers encourage pupils to try it out, and do not focus only on the end result; they value pupils' input in creating classroom rules and take on responsibilities; and they allow talented to evaluate their own work before the teacher marks it.

Effects

- **3. With remedial strategies, talented are given a chance to excel in their areas of strength and interest while opportunities are provided in specific areas of learning deficiencies. This remediation is done in a safe environment in which mistakes are considered a part of learning for everyone, including the teacher.**
- **These three strategies work only if the underachieving talented pupils get all the support of the school management, counsellors, parents and teachers alike.**

Conclusions

- **Personal counselling may play a big role since it shows the talented how to interact with others, resolve their emotional problems, assess oneself in amore positive light, develop personal views and values, the feeling of belonging and of being loved and develop stress-management techniques.**

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