



ew Trends and Issues
Proceedings on Humanities
and Social Sciences



Volume 4, Issue 6, (2017) 066-078

Early childhood education – students' self-assessment of their teaching competences in the arts

Marijana Zupanic Benic*, Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb, Zagreb 10000, Croatia

Jerneja Herzog, Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb, Zagreb 10000, Croatia

Blazenka Baclija Susic, Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb, Zagreb 10000, Croatia

Suggested Citation:

Benic, M. Z., Herzog, J. & Susic, B. B. (2017). Early childhood education students' self-assessment of their teaching competences in the arts. *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences*. [Online]. 4(6), 066-078. Available from: www.prosoc.eu

Received from; revised from; accepted from.

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Milan Matijevic, University of Zagreb, Croatia

©2017 SciencePark Research, Organization & Counseling. All rights reserved.

Abstract

The term 'competences' in this paper refers to a combination of knowledge, skills and abilities that students gain through initial teacher education and use for effective teaching in early childhood and pre-school settings. Activities in visual arts and music are important aspects of early childhood education, because they facilitate emotional, cognitive, social and psychomotor development. The role of educators is to provide children with a supportive environment where they can express themselves artistically and develop a certain level of competence in the arts; hence the purpose of this study was to measure and evaluate teaching competences of preschool education students in arts. We present the outcomes of a research on students in the third year of preschool education at the University of Maribor, Faculty of Education and at the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Education who were self-assessment for their competences from the point of view of artistic-didactic contents.

Keywords: Preschool education, competences, fine arts, music.

1. Introduction

Art activities in early childhood and preschool education facilitate the emotional development of children, as well as the development of their creativity, multiple intelligences, fine motor skills, perception, self-esteem, motivation, self-efficacy, social skills, empathy and various other skills and traits (Bleed, 2005; Freedman, 2000; Hallam, 2010). Art education is an important element of the holistic approach to education, so teachers are required to integrate the arts into the classroom (Andrews, 2004). Although the benefits of integrating arts in education have been well documented,

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: **Marijana Zupanic Benic**, Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb, Zagreb 10000, Croatia. E-mail address: marijana.zbenic@ufzg.hr / Tel.:

education policies worldwide tend to focus mainly on the science, technology, engineering and mathematics academic disciplines, whereas art education is progressively marginalised. These policies are reflected in early childhood teacher education programmes and the curriculum designed for early education and preschool settings (Ehrlin & Wallerstedt, 2014).

In their review of literature in the area of art education in early childhood, Pramling and Garvis (2013) emphasised the important role of the arts on children's motivation and development through education. Both theoretical research and teaching practice emphasise the role of arts in the development of cognitive skills, but the importance of art education for children's aesthetic development tends to be neglected.

Participation in art activities facilitates the development of essential skills and abilities, but during early childhood education, participation in the arts depends on the support children receive from their parents, teachers and peers (Rose, Jolley, & Burkitt, 2006). For examples, peers can make comments regarding children's artwork that deter them from further participation in art activities or motivate them to continue making art (Rose et al., 2006). Parents also encourage their children's artistic development by allowing children to plan their own activities and giving them the freedom to express themselves (Anning, 2002). In order to conduct such types of visual arts activities, they need to provide artistic materials and introduce visual arts materials and techniques to children (Zupanic Benic, 2015), as well as refrain from interference with the children's artwork, which is defined by their current stage of psychophysical development.

In music education during early childhood, children's attitudes, beliefs and expectations regarding their musical capacity are developed through interactions with their parents, and given the parents' high demands, their role in music education becomes especially strong (Brand, 1986; McPherson & Davidson, 2002, 2006). According to McPherson and Williamon (2006), the most important factors that determine the realisation of children's musical capacity are environmental influences and possibilities granted to children by their parents and other people who have a role in their development. Early childhood teachers and primary teachers are the most important facilitators of children's creative development because they plan and conduct art activities, but most of these teachers report that they do not feel competent to conduct art education with their pupils (Welch, 1995).

Various researchers report that teachers in primary school education, early childhood education and pre-school education do not feel competent enough to conduct music activities such as singing and playing instruments (Hallam et al., 2009; Hennessy, 2000; Leong, 2005; Ruddock & Russell-Bowie, 2009; Seddon & Biasutti, 2008; Stunell, 2010; Young, 2009). According to Garvis and Pendergast (2011), teachers' perceptions of their own self-efficacy to teach determines their competence in teaching practice. Self-efficacy is defined as the teachers' beliefs in their own ability to complete their tasks, so high self-efficacy associated with conducting art activities increases the probability of implementing art education successfully. Welch (1995) demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between self-efficacy in the arts and teachers' attitudes about the value of art in education. It was also reported that the self-efficacy in overall education and self-efficacy in art education specifically are not associated, so self-efficacy is specific to each context and cannot be generalised across different subjects in education (Welch, 1995). Garvis and Pendergast (2011) found that the average teaching self-efficacy of early childhood education teachers, which was assessed on a 9-point scale, in visual arts was 4.86, whereas their average teaching self-efficacy in mathematics and literature was 6.81. Therefore, it is not surprising that the majority of teachers who participated in that study did not conduct art activities at all (42%), and 62% of them reported lacking familiarity with class contents in the arts, which limited their ability to teach the arts effectively. The aforementioned authors emphasise the necessity for further research on the topic of self-efficacy in art education because of its importance for development in early childhood.

Ehrlin and Wallerstedt (2014) concluded that the majority of teachers in early childhood and preschool settings believe that some children are born with innate talent for music skills and artistic

knowledge. However, West and Kempe (2010) argue that these types of beliefs are the products of social conditioning and that musical knowledge and skills are a set of competencies that can be developed as any other competency, given the appropriate environmental conditions (Ehrlin & Wallerstedt, 2014). Garvis and Riek (2010) reported that 30 years of pedagogical research in the area of professional development among pre-service early childhood teachers in music and the arts highlights the following three problems: (a) the lack of time allocated for their art education, (b) the educators are insecure when participating in art activities and (c) previous experiences affect their current participation in art activities.

Primary education and early childhood education teachers' attitudes regarding the importance of art and creative expressions in education, as well as the self-perception of their professional competencies (Jurcic, 2014), can depend on the quality of their initial education. Teachers who completed a visual arts study programme with teaching as a professional orientation and those teachers who participated in out-of-school art programmes or activities usually know how they can provide students with support and creative freedom during visual art activities (Coutts & Dougall, 2005; Rose et al., 2006). In early childhood and preschool education contexts, teachers usually lack confidence for conducting art education in a manner that encourages holistic development (Anning, 2002; Rose et al., 2006). Surveys found that the main problems for teachers in art education include low self-confidence and flexibility, which could indicate a lack of teaching experiences in practice during initial teacher education (Rose et al., 2006). Anning (2002) also reported that teachers in early education and preschool settings consider drawing to be just a convenient 'time filler', a vehicle for decorating the walls, or within art 'lessons' as one off directed activity to promote specific skills and techniques' (p. 208). These approaches to art education encourage creating realistic representations of the environment and developing psychomotor skills by practicing visual arts techniques, but children lose their interest in creative activities when they are not able to express themselves, actively learn by exploring the arts and develop their sense of self through visual expression and creation.

Neglecting visual arts in early childhood and preschool education settings is usually attributed to the teachers' low self-confidence, which is attributed to the negative self-perception of their own creative abilities and self-efficacy to teach visual arts (Garvis & Pendergast, 2011; Welch, 1995). Self-efficacy determines the conviction of a person to organise, direct and execute behaviours required to successfully accomplish a task (Bandura, 1977), so people's subjective perception of their own self-efficacy can affect their actual performance in the arts (Garvis & Pendergast, 2011).

Gibson's (2003) longitudinal study of teacher education students and their attitudes about visual arts in education, as well as their confidence in their own abilities to teach visual arts, highlights the importance initial teacher education has in developing a sense of competence in teaching visual arts. After two years of initial teacher education, during which the students took two compulsory Visual Arts Education courses, the participants developed a better understanding of the term visual arts and the role of arts in children's development. Only 26 of the 107 students reported being confident to adequately teach visual arts at the beginning of the study, but after completing their Visual Arts Education training, a total of 91 students expressed being confident or very confident to teach visual arts (Gibson, 2003, p. 118). Considering the fact that visual arts has an important role in the holistic development of children, and that teaching self-efficacy in art education determines the teachers' abilities to conduct art activities, initial teacher education programmes need to ensure that students gain sufficient experience in creating artworks and teaching children to create artworks in practice (Bae, 2004; Gibson, 2003).

Successful music education in the kindergarten greatly depends on the teachers' sense of teaching self-efficacy in the context of music education, which means that their personal convictions are associated with their abilities to teach music and achieve the relevant educational objectives. Teachers in early education and preschool settings tend to have fixed attitudes, beliefs and values about their teaching abilities (Vannatta-Hall, 2010). It was found that the lack of music education among repressive teachers is associated with their negative attitudes towards music and their lack of

confidence in teaching music (Barry, 1992; Jeanneret, 1997; Mills, 1989; Seddon & Biasutti, 2008). Consequently, teachers will often try to avoid teaching music, or they will not do it effectively.

It was found that self-confidence can depend on various factors, and researchers are trying to determine how these factors contribute to the overall achievement in teaching music. The musical skills or perceptions of musical abilities among pre-service teachers can determine their self-confidence (Shuter-Dyson, 1982). Teachers' negative perceptions of their own musical abilities are possibly the result of previous experiences in music education. Ruddock and Leong (2005) report that a negative perception of one's abilities can also be associated with unsuccessful attempts at creating music in the past, insufficient understanding of music or the inability to play a musical instrument. Hargreaves, Welch, Purves and Marshall (2003) found that the lowest self-confidence to teach music is prevalent among teachers who lack music education, so there is a need for addressing that problem with continuous professional development or by improving initial teacher education to develop music skills and literacy among teachers. Self-confidence is associated with both competence and self-efficacy in the context of music education, but Wiggins and Wiggins (2008) emphasise that 'confidence alone is meaningless if it is not accompanied by competence' (p. 3).

2. Method

2.1. Definition of the research problem

The term 'competences' in this paper refers to a combination of knowledge, skills and abilities that students gain through initial teacher education and use for effective teaching in early childhood and preschool settings. The arts and artistic activities in visual arts and music are important aspects of education from early childhood because they facilitate emotional, cognitive, social and psychomotor development. The role of educators is to provide children with a supportive environment where they can express themselves artistically, but the educators must develop a certain level of competence to successfully engage children in the arts; hence, the purpose of this study was to measure and evaluate the teaching competences of preschool education students' in arts.

2.2. Purpose

The purpose of this research is with students in the third year of the study programme preschool education at the University of Maribor, Faculty of Education and at the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Education to examine the self-assessment of their competences related to practical experience in the artistic-didactic field.

2.3. Hypotheses

Based on the study of the syllabi in the study programme pre-school education of both participating faculties, which are both part of the Bologna education system, we estimate the study programmes of both the faculties, which are comparable and provide the development of equal competences of students, the future teachers in preschool education. In the analysis of competences of both groups of students we expected therefore that there would be no differences in the self-assessment and formulated the following hypotheses:

H1: We do not expect differences in the self-assessment of competences linked to the performance of musical activities in the education process with students of both participating faculties.

H2: We do not expect differences in the self-assessment of competences linked to the performance of visual art activities in the education process with students of both participating faculties.

H3: We do not expect differences in the self-assessment of competences linked to the performance of musical creative activities in the education process with students of both participating faculties.

H4: We do not expect differences in the self-assessment of competences linked to the performance of artistic creative activities in the education process with students of both participating faculties.

H5: We do not expect differences in the self-assessment of conditions for the performance of musical and music creative activities in tutorials of the didactics of music.

H6: We do not expect differences in the self-assessment of conditions for the performance of musical and music creative activities in tutorials of the didactics of visual arts.

2.4. Methodology

2.4.1. Research method and research sample

The quantitative research used the descriptive method and the causal–experimental method. The study was conducted among a non-probability convenience sample of third year Preschool Education student programme at the University of Maribor, Slovenia, Faculty of Education and at the University of Zagreb, Croatia, Faculty of Education ($n = 154$). There were 61 (39.6%) Slovenian students and 93 (60.4%) Croatian students.

2.4.2. Data collection procedures and instrument

We offered the students of both faculties survey questionnaires. In addition to general questions, the questionnaire contained 50 questions and sub-questions where students assessed the degree of agreement or the assessment with each individual question. The questions were organised in sets: a set related with the area of music and a set related with the area of visual art. The gathered data were processed statistically with the support of the SPSS software.

2.4.3. Data processing procedures

The collected data were processed at the level of descriptive and inference statistics. The following methods were used:

- Frequency distribution (f , $f\%$) characteristics of participants.
- Descriptive statistics (Mean - \bar{x} ; standard deviation – s).
- Mann–Whitney (M-W) test for nonparametric tests.

These data were processed with the computer program SPSS on descriptive and inferential statistics.

3. Results

The results chapter has been edited as four sub-chapters, where with the support of tables each sub-chapter will present the obtained results associated with each individual analysis of self-assessment. Below we present the obtained results of the analysis of self-assessment of competences of students of both participating faculties associated with the performance of musical activities in the educational process. Six specific competences were included into the context of this analysis.

Table 1. The outcome of the M-W test among the Slovenian and Croatian students at observing competences associated with the performance of musical activities in the educational process

Competences	Students	N	\bar{R}	M-W test	
				χ^2	P
Performance of musical activities in the educational process	SLO	61	77.00	-0.120	0.904
	CRO	93	77.83		
Discussion/acquisition and repetition of a song	SLO	61	75.63	-0.451	0.652
	CRO	93	78.73		
Discussion/acquisition and repetition of a counting song	SLO	61	67.31	-2.330	0.020
	CRO	93	83.42		
Children's games with singing	SLO	61	77.97	-0.111	0.912
	CRO	93	77.19		
Playing self-produced rattles or children's musical instruments	SLO	61	82.54	-1.206	0.228
	CRO	93	74.19		
Actively listening to music	SLO	61	82.75	-1.386	0.166
	CRO	93	73.18		

We wished to find how students of both faculties assess their own competences associated with musical activities in the educational process. Included into the context of competences that contain musical activities were the discussion/acquisition and repetition of songs, where we found in the assessment that no differences could be detected between the two groups of students, and that in this work the students assess themselves equally and likewise in the competence discussion/acquisition and repetition of counting songs, where we also obtained a result that does not point to a difference between students. A difference, however, was detected with the competence children's games with singing, where a statistically significant difference ($P = 0.020$) was identified. In this competence, the students from Croatia assess themselves as more competent than the students from Slovenia. With the last two competences, active listening to music and musical creativity, however, differences between the two groups of students in the assessment were not detected. The hypothesis H1 generally can be confirmed.

Games with singing, discussion of songs and counting songs, active listening to music and encouraging musical creativity and playing percussions the most frequently represent the contents that appear in the activities of the musical culture in preschools (Gospodnetic, 2015). Borota (2012) states musical performance, which includes singing, playing instruments and rhythmical pronunciation, as the basic area of musical activities in preschool and in the first educational cycle of basic school. Further, Oblak (2000) considers these activities to be the most intriguing musical communication of a child, which is closely associated with listening to and with creation of music. Voglar (1989) highlights versatility – the integrity of preschool musical education, which includes singing, listening to music, playing instruments and performing musical-didactic games.

Based on the review of literature (Borota, 2012; Gospodnetic, 2015; Gospodnetic & Spiller, 2002; Voglar, 1989), it can be assumed in the case of students from Slovenia that less attention is paid to the performance of children's games with singing, which is confirmed by the obtained statistically significant difference in their self-assessment of competences for the performance of the said activity between the surveyed groups in favour of students from Croatia.

The same as from the point of view of musical activities we were also interested in the assessment of students of both faculties from the point of view of artistic activities in the educational process. In the context of artistic activities, 12 competences were included, which students of the study programme preschool education should acquire.

Table 2. The outcome of the M-W test between Slovenian and Croatian students for observing the competences associated with the performance of artistic activities in the educational process

Performance artistic activities in the educational process					
Competences	Students	N	\bar{R}	M-W test	
				χ^2	P
Drawing in various drawing techniques	SLO	61	72.75	-1.181	0.238
	CRO	93	80.62		
Painting in various painting techniques	SLO	61	69.86	-1.864	0.062
	CRO	93	82.51		
Shaping a sculpture and applying various sculpture techniques	SLO	61	69.24	-1.901	0.057
	CRO	93	82.15		
Graphics, print	SLO	61	57.95	-4.673	0.000
	CRO	93	90.32		
Learning the area of applied art and design	SLO	61	73.71	-0.911	0.362
	CRO	93	79.98		
Shaping puppets	SLO	61	83.36	-1.392	0.164
	CRO	93	73.66		
Production of theatrical scenery	SLO	61	81.73	-0.993	0.321
	CRO	93	74.73		
Building and architectural techniques	SLO	61	72.91	-1.081	0.280
	CRO	93	80.51		
New media (cartoon, animated film, computer graphics)	SLO	61	72.85	-1.085	0.278
	CRO	93	80.55		
Producing picture books	SLO	61	69.73	-1.829	0.067
	CRO	93	82.60		
Observation and analysis of artistic work	SLO	61	80.20	-0.890	0.374
	CRO	93	74.02		
Art-didactic games	SLO	61	82.29	-1.399	0.162
	CRO	93	72.62		

The same as from the point of view of musical activities, we were also interested in the assessment of students of both faculties from the point of view of artistic activities in the educational process. In the context of artistic activities, 12 competences were included which a student in the study programme preschool education is expected to acquire. Looking at the results, we can see from the point of view of competence that the students assess themselves similarly, except for the competence of artistic activities associated with graphics and print, where we perceived a statistically significant difference ($P = 0.000$), which shows in favour of a higher assessment of the students from Croatia. In three competences (painting with different painting techniques ($P = 0.062$), shaping sculptures and the use of various sculpture materials and procedures ($P = 0.057$) and production of a picture book ($P = 0.067$), we perceived a tendency of difference, which likewise shows in favour of the students from Croatia. Seen in general, we can confirm the hypothesis H2, as only in one case, namely with competences associated with knowledge in graphics, statistically significant differences show that are in favour of higher assessments of the students from Croatia.

‘Listening to fairy tales and watching illustrations children develop their vocabulary, they develop imagination and the capacity of longer concentration’ (Duh, 2013, p. 33), it is therefore extremely important to guide students towards understanding the significance of such an approach. Several opportunities thus exist for using various branches of art for the development of the child’s cognitive, affective and psychomotor areas. It depends on the teacher whether, in the process of artistic creative activity, children will develop their potential to the maximum; whether they will develop new skills through varied methods and forms of learning and whether they will know how to observe, interpret, perceive and thus develop their competences (Zupancic & Duh, 2009).

Seefeldt and Wasik (2006) report that children express their feelings and emotions in a safe and spontaneous way through all artistic techniques. With play, they learn to control their emotions and are aware that with positive functioning they can express negative as well as pleasant feelings. They meet colours and shapes, acquire various skills, manipulate with scissors, observe phenomena and creations in nature in a spontaneous way, and so they are daily in contact with arts.

Table 3. The outcome of M-W test among Slovenian and Croatian students at observing competences associated with the performance of music-creative activities in the education process

Musical-creative activities in the education process				M-W test	
Competences	Students	N	\bar{R}	χ^2	P
Activities associated with listening to and imitating sounds	SLO	61	71.33	-1.369	0.171
	CRO	93	80.76		
Body percussion	SLO	61	62.35	-3.491	0.000
	CRO	93	86.71		
Sung speech, asking musical questions and completing unfinished musical phrases	SLO	61	79.39	-0.573	0.567
	CRO	93	75.41		
Rhythmical speech	SLO	61	76.71	-0.068	0.946
	CRO	93	77.19		
Varying melody, rhythm, pace, dynamics and/or the character in a known song or counting songs	SLO	61	91.55	-3.704	0.000
	CRO	93	87.24		
Improvisation/composing words and melodies	SLO	61	76.14	-0.207	0.836
	CRO	93	77.57		
Activities associated with playing self-produced rattles or children’s musical instruments – the so-called ‘little orchestra’	SLO	61	82.26	-1.257	0.209
	CRO	93	73.51		
Activities associated with encouraging children to give sounds to a story or a poem during its performance (imitation with voice or instrument, etc.)	SLO	61	81.02	-0.971	0.332
	CRO	93	74.33		
Adding music to verse	SLO	61	87.93	-2.596	0.009
	CRO	93	69.76		
Listening to music while dancing and/or at artistic expression	SLO	61	71.41	-1.336	0.181
	CRO	93	80.71		

In the research, we were interested to determine how students of both faculties assess their own competences associated with musical creative activities. Under musical-creative activities we have included body percussion, where we have detected a statistically significant difference ($P = 0$), which shows in favour of students from Croatia. Another activity making up musical-creative activities is also varying the melody, rhythm, pace, dynamics and/or the character of a known song or counting song, where we have also detected a statistically significant difference ($P = 0$), which shows, however, in favour of better assessment of Slovenian students. The third activity that constitutes musical activity and in which we have likewise detected a statistically significant difference ($P = 0.009$) is adding music to verse. In other activities, the activities associated with listening to, imitating and recognising sounds, sung speech, asking musical questions, completing a musical phrase, rhythmical speech, improvisation/composing words and melody, activities associated with encouraging children to provide sound to stories or poems while performing them (imitating with voice or instrument), we have not detected any difference in the assessment of students and we can claim both groups, both Slovenian and Croatian students feel similarly competent in the said activities. In general, we can say hypothesis H3 is partly confirmed as in three of the listed 10 competences a statistically significant difference shows.

The obtained results can also be interpreted with reference to the analysis of the existing methodical handbooks in the methodology of musical culture used in Croatia and in Slovenia. Musical-creative activities in the Slovenian literature by Voglar (1989) and Denac (2012) are integrated into the basic musical activities through discussion/repetition of a song and of a counting song. Voglar (1989) states the system of preschool musical education expresses equality and creates balance between a creative and an interpretative musical work. On the other hand, Gospodnetic (2015) quotes the activity of encouraging children’s musical creativity briefly in the framework of a special chapter, while in the framework of basic musical activities these activities are dedicated less attention, which is also confirmed by the results in composing music to verse and the activities of varying melody, rhythm, pace, dynamics and/or the character of a known song or counting song in favour of Slovenian students. The same author emphasises the use of the elements of body percussion slightly more, which also obtained results in favour of students from Croatia.

Table 4. The outcome of M-W test among Slovenian and Croatian students at observing competences associated with the performance of artistic-creative activities in the education process

Artistic-creative activities in the education process					
Competences	Students	N	\bar{R}	M-W test	
				χ^2	P
Planning and performing artistic-creative activities in the way to guide child’s perception to a shape or phenomenon by asking questions	SLO	61	61.14	-3.864	0.000
	CRO	93	87.14		
Encouraging interest and artistic expression through conversation about something children spontaneously saw and experienced a short or longer time ago	SLO	61	68.33	-2.119	0.034
	CRO	93	82.75		
Illustrating various stories or poems, invented events, events from the past and from the future	SLO	61	76.20	-0.314	0.754
	CRO	93	78.35		
Imagining the non-visual (music, feelings, emotions) as stimulus for artistic expression	SLO	61	73.03	-1.070	0.285
	CRO	93	80.43		
Games with artistic materials	SLO	61	72.18	-1.272	0.203
	CRO	93	80.99		
Creative games associated with child’s experience of an artwork	SLO	61	75.63	-0.692	0.489
	CRO	93	80.35		
Developing child’s verbal competences through conversation about an artwork	SLO	61	74.14	-0.798	0.425
	CRO	93	79.70		
Artistic activities integrated with other contents of cross-curricular integration	SLO	61	75.71	-0.431	0.667
	CRO	93	78.67		
Projects of artistic creation (a deeper approach to a theme) that require a longer period of time	SLO	61	78.49	-0.235	0.814
	CRO	93	76.85		
Activities in the field of contemporary art, performance, land art, conceptual art	SLO	61	77.96	-2.527	0.011
	CRO	93	71.19		

Looking at the activities that constitute the cluster of artistic-creative activities, we can see a statistically significant difference in students’ assessment shows in three activities, namely in planning and performing artistic-creative activities in the way to guide a child’s perception to a new shape or phenomenon by asking questions ($P = 0$) in favour of better assessment of the students from Croatia; in encouraging interest and artistic expression through conversation about something children spontaneously saw and experienced a short or longer time ago ($P = 0.034$), likewise in favour of the students from Croatia; and at activities associated with the field of contemporary art, performance, land art, conceptual art ($P = 0.011$), this time in favour of better assessment of the students from Slovenia. In other activities: illustrating various stories or poems, presenting events from the past and from the future; imagining the non-visual (music, feelings, emotions) as stimulus for artistic expression; games with artistic materials; creative games associated with child’s experience of an

artwork; developing child’s verbal competences through conversation about an artwork; artistic activities integrated with other areas (cross-curricular integration); and topics (project work, a deeper approach to a theme that require a longer period of time) we did, however not detect statistically significant differences. From the above, it follows thus we can partly confirm hypothesis H4, as in three of the 10 competences mentioned a statistically significant difference appears.

The presented outcome is an important indicator in which of the investigated segments students feel more competent or which of the listed competences they feel as more or less developed. They show the immediate impact of the initial education on the development of the feeling of competence in students for guiding artistic-creative activities, which also Gibson (2003) and Bae (2004) underline in their research work, how this feeling develops with greater experience of students through participating in activities in directly working with children. It is interesting that students from Croatia assessed themselves higher in verbal competences, which serve as motivation for artistic-creative activity itself, and which is performed through the method of conversation. A higher assessment of students from Slovenia in performing activities in the field of contemporary art, performance, land-art and conceptual art, however, is an indicator that the students have been introduced in these areas of contemporary art and given the experience gained about it in initial education that their competences in this area are more developed in comparison to other offered competences. Such assessment can also be the result of the focus of the lecturer who teaches the methodology of art on contemporary art.

Table 5. The outcome of M-W test among Slovenian and Croatian students at observing conditions associated with the performance of musical and musical-creative activities in tutorials

Conditions for the performance of musical and musical-creative activities during tutorials	Students	N	R	M-W test	
				χ^2	P
Did you have adequate conditions for the performance of musical and musical-creative activities in your group at performing methodological tutorials in music?	SLO	61	77.96	-0.993	0.321
	CRO	93	71.19		
Did you have the necessary instruments and materials for the performance of musical and musical-creative activities during methodological tutorials in music?	SLO	61	74.55	-0.560	0.576
	CRO	93	70.86		

To be able to fully develop the competences that are indispensable for their work in practice and for their own professional growth, students must have adequate conditions at the time of study already. With the students from both countries we have checked how they assess the conditions for the performance of musical and musical-creative activities during practical activities at the faculty. Looking at the assessment of adequacy of conditions for the performance of musical and musical-creative activities in the group during tutorials in the special didactic of music we see there are no differences in the assessment. Looking at the responses of the students they added in the sub-questions, we see, however, most students think they have slightly more adequate conditions for the performance of musical and musical-creative activities in the group at performing methodological tutorials. Looking whether students of both faculties have adequate instruments and other materials for the performance of musical and musical-creative activities at tutorials in special didactics of music, we see the students of both faculties similarly assess the support of tutorials with musical instruments and materials. It follows from this we can fully confirm the hypothesis H4.

Table 6. The outcome of M-W test among Slovenian and Croatian students at observing conditions associated with the performance of artistic and artistic-creative activities in tutorials

Conditions for the performance of artistic and artistic-creative activities during tutorials	Students	N	\bar{R}	M-W test	
				χ^2	P
Did you have adequate material conditions for the performance of artistic and artistic-creative activities at performing methodological tutorials in visual arts?	SLO	61	68.73	-1.991	0.046
	CRO	93	82.48		
Were the necessary materials and tools for the performance of artistic and artistic-creative activities at your disposal during methodological tutorials in visual arts?	SLO	61	76.57	-0.216	0.829
	CRO	93	78.11		

Likewise, we were interested in how students assess the conditions for the work at the faculty from the point of view of special didactics of visual arts. On the question of whether during tutorials in special didactics of art material conditions were assured for the performance of artistic and artistic-creative activities, we see there is a statistically significant difference ($P = 0.046$); students from Croatia assess these conditions better than students from Slovenia. In assessing the provided material and tools for the performance of artistic and artistic-creative activities we have, however, not detected differences between the assessments. It follows from the above that we can partly confirm hypothesis H6, as only in 1 of the 2 conditions is there a statistically significant difference.

4. Conclusion

According to Rosic (2009), education is certainly the most complex and, at the same time, the most responsible human activity. The already known findings in the area of education depend on many internal and external factors, among which the preschool teacher is the most important one. Lucic says (2007) the preschool teacher is not the only one responsible for educational activities, her or his role in preparing the child for life is nevertheless extremely important. Preschool teachers must be professionally trained for their activity, as only in this way will they be able to adopt appropriate methodological approaches. The well-being of children in a group in preschool sometimes also depends on the methods of teacher’s work, on personality traits, on the character and on the approach to children itself. If teachers often use a means of persuasion in their work, this can, in other words represent a milder form of social pressure. According to Cohen, Stern and Balaban (1997), an important role of teachers is also to regularly observe and make records about a child’s behaviour. In this, two distinct teacher’s roles can clearly be identified – implementation and reflection. With such methods of work, preschool teachers are an important source of information both for parents and for their colleagues, because through observing they recognise the needs, interests and diversity of children.

Also, the curriculum (Kurikulum, 1999) starts from the fact that teachers form a quality, rich and aesthetic artistic environment, in which they create a friendly atmosphere of mutual trust and encourage the child in the desire for expression. Only the child that feels safe and free develops his creative and developmental potential. It follows from this that at existing faculties, we must educate good staff that will, as stated, carry out their mission with utmost quality.

References

- Andrews, B. W. (2004). Curriculum renewal through policy development in arts education. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 23(1), 76–93.
- Anning, A. (2002). Conversations around young children's drawing: the impact of the beliefs of significant others at home and school. *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 21(3), 197–208.
- Bae, J. H. (2004). Learning to teach visual arts in an early childhood classroom: the teacher's role as a guide. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 31(4), 247–254.
- Barry, N. H. (1992). Music and education in the elementary music methods class. *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 2(1), 16–23.
- Bleed, R. (2005). Visual literacy in higher education. *Educause Learning Initiative*, 1, 1–11.
- Borota, B. (2012). Opazovanje in spremljanje glasbenega razvoja-priloznost, da prisluhnemo otroku kot kompetentnemu glasbeniku. *Revija za Elementarno Izobrazevanje*, 5(2/3), p. 121.
- Brand, M. (1986). Relationship between home musical environment and selected musical attributes of second-grade children. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 34(2), 111–120.
- Cohen, D. H., Stern, V. & Balaban, N. (1997). *Observing and recording the behavior of young children*. Ney York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Coutts, G. & Dougall, P. (2005). Drawing in perspective: scottish art and design teachers discuss drawing. *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 24(2), 138–148.
- Denac, O. (2012). *Nacrtovanje glasbenih dejavnosti v zgodnjem obdobju otrostva*. Maribor, Slovenia: Pedagoška fakulteta Maribor.
- Duh, M. (2013). Pronalazenje znacjenja u vizualnoj umjetnosti kao preznacavanja vlastitih govornih konstrukcija. In L. Zaninovic Tanay & E. R. Tanay (Eds.), *Stretna djeca – Dijete u razlicitosti izazova* (pp. 33–48). Zagreb, Croatia: Studio Tanay.
- Duh, M. (2016). Art appreciation for developing communication skills among preschool children. *CEPS Journal*, 6(1), 71–91.
- Ehrlin, A. & Wallerstedt, C. (2014). Preschool teachers' skills in teaching music: two steps forward one step back. *Early Child Development and Care*, 184(12), 1800–1811.
- Freedman, K. (2000). Social perspectives on art education in the US: teaching visual culture in a democracy. *Studies in Art Education*, 41(4), 314–329.
- Garvis, S. & Pendergast, D. (2011). An investigation of early childhood teacher self-efficacy beliefs in the teaching of arts education. *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, 12(9). Retrieved from <http://www.ijea.org/v12n9/>
- Garvis, S. & Riek, R. (2010). Improving generalist teacher education in the arts. *The International Journal of the Arts in Society*, 5(3), 159–167.
- Gibson, R. (2003). Learning to be an art educator: student teachers' attitudes to art and art education. *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 22(1), 111–120.
- Gospodnetic, H. (2015). *Metodika glazbene kulture za rad u dječjim vrticima*. Zagreb, Croatia: Mali profesor.
- Gospodnetic, H. & Spiller, F. (2002). *Djecje igre s pjevanjem : uz pratnju klavira i/ili gitare*. Zagreb, Croatia: Edicije Spiller.
- Hallam, S. (2010). The power of music: its impact on the intellectual, social and personal development of children and young people. *International Journal of Music Education*, 28(3), 269–289.
- Hargreaves, D. J., Welch, G., Purves, R. & Marshall, N. (2003). The identities of music teachers. In R. Kopiez, A. C. Lehmann, I. Wolther & C. Wolf (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 5th International ESCOM Conference* (pp. 178–181). Hanover: Hanover University of Music and Drama.
- Hennesy, S. (2000). Overcoming the red-feeling: the development of confidence to teach music in primary school amongst student teachers. *British Journal of Music Education*, 17(2), 183–196.
- Jeanneret, N. (1997). Model for developing preservice primary teachers' confidence to teach music. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, (33), 37–44.
- Jurcic, M. (2014). Kompetentnost nastavnika–pedagoske i didakticke dimenzije. *Pedagogijska istrazivanja*, 11(1), 77–91.

- Kurikulum za vrtce*. (1999). Ljubljana, Slovenia: Ministrstvo za solstvo in sport: ZRSS.
- Lucic, K. (2007). Odgojitejska profesija u suvremenoj odgojno-obrazovnoj ustanovi. *Odgojne znanosti*, 9(1), 135–150.
- McPherson, G. E. & Davidson, J. W. (2002). Musical practice: mother and child interactions during the first year of learning an instrument. *Music Education Research*, 4(1), 141–156.
- McPherson, G. E. & Davidson, J. W. (2006). Playing an instrument. In G. E. McPherson (Ed.), *The child as musician: a handbook of musical development* (2nd ed.) (pp. 331–351). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- McPherson, G. E. & Williamon, A. (2006). Giftedness and talent. In G. E. McPherson (Ed.), *The child as musician: a handbook of musical development* (pp. 239–256). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Mills, J. (1989). The generalist primary teacher of music: a problem of confidence. *British Journal of Music Education*, 6(2), 125–138.
- Oblak, B. (2000). *Glasbena slikanica 2, priročnik za učitelje*. Ljubljana: Drzavna založba Slovenije.
- Pramling, N. & Garvis, S. (2013). The arts in early childhood education. *Oxford Index: Education*. Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780199756810-0097>
- Rose, S. E. Jolley, R. P. & Burkitt, E. (2006). A review of children's, teachers' and parents' influences on children's drawing experience. *International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 25(3), 341–349.
- Rosic, V. (2009). Obrazovanje učitelja i odgojitelja. *Methodological Horizont*, 4(7–8), 19–32.
- Ruddock, E. & Leong, S. (2005). 'I am unmusical!': the verdict of self-judgement. *International Journal of Music Education*, 23(1), 9–22.
- Russell-Bowie, D. (2009). What me? teach music to my primary class? challenges to teaching music in primary schools in five countries. *Music Education Research*, 11(1), 23–36.
- Seddon, F. & Biasutti, M. (2008). Non-music specialist trainee primary school teachers' confidence in teaching music in the classroom. *Music Education Research*, 10(3), 403–421.
- Seefeldt, C. & Wasik, B. (2006). *Early education: three, four, and five year olds go to school* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Shuter-Dyson, R. (1982). Musical ability. In D. Deutsch (Ed.), *The psychology of music* (pp. 627–651). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Stunell, G. (2010). Not musical? identity perceptions of generalist primary school teachers in relation to classroom music teaching in England. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*, 9(2), 79–107.
- Vannatta-Hall, J. E. (2010). *Music education in Early Childhood Teacher education: the impact of a methods course on Pre-service teachers perceived confidence and competence to teach music* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.
- Voglar, M. (1989). *Otrok in glasba*. Ljubljana: Drzavna založba Slovenije.
- Welch, A. (1995). The self-efficacy of primary teachers in art education. *Issues in Educational Research*, 5(1), 71–84.
- West, T. & Kempe, A. -L. (2010). Musical transformations. Paper presented at *5th International Conference on Multimodality (5ICOM)*, University of Technology Sydney, Australia. Retrieved from <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:su:diva-53144>
- Wiggins, R. A. & Wiggins, J. (2008). Primary music education in the absence of specialists. *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, 9(12), 1–27.
- Young, S. (2009). Towards constructions of musical childhoods: diversity and digital technologies. *Early Child Development and Care*, 179(6), 695–705.
- Zupancic, T. & Duh, M. (2009). *Likovni odgoj i umjetnos Pabla Picassa. Likovno-pedagoski projekt u Dječjem vrticu Opatija*. Opatija, Croatia: Dječji vrtić Opatija.
- Zupanic Benic, M. (2015). Odgoj putem umjetnosti-suradnicko ucenje majke i djeteta kroz likovno stvaranje. In *Zbornik radova: Istrazivanja paradigmi djetinjstva, odgoja i obrazovanja* (pp. 198–208). Zagreb, Croatia: Uciteljski fakultet.