

# Professional Development of Primary School Teachers in Visual Arts Education

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## Abstract

*Professional development of teachers in visual arts education encompasses widening and deepening art knowledge and abilities as well as further development of professional, personal and subject-specific competences necessary for efficient implementation of visual arts classes. The goal of this research was to examine the extent to which teachers attend professional education in visual arts education and the reasons for not attending the aforementioned. Research participants were 143 in-service primary school teachers. Kendall Tau-b Rank Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the correlation between two groups of variables, the first being - age, degree of education and professional title, and the second - areas in which teachers would like to gain additional knowledge and competence, and reasons for inclusion into professional training programmes. The results show that the increase in age, degree of education and professional status lessen the subjects' need for gaining additional knowledge and competence related to the visual arts area. Furthermore, the teachers are aware of the need for inclusion into professional training programmes in visual arts education since most of them consider the activity important for their professional and personal development. However, the results also stress teachers' insufficient attendance when it comes to professional training in visual arts education, mostly due to the lack of appropriate programmes.*

**Key words:** *competence; lifelong learning; primary school teachers; teachers' professional development; visual arts education.*

## Introduction

Teachers' education is one of the central issues in educational policy in general since the quality of students' achievements, i.e. realisation of educational goals, depends

on the quality of teaching (Palekčić, 2008). Contemporary idea of competence as a developmental category implies teachers' responsibility for continuous professional development throughout their professional life. In fact, teachers should possess competences that encompass complex knowledge and abilities. These competences should enable them to quickly and efficiently adapt to dynamic and unpredictable teaching situations, include students in independent and active work, use new technologies, deal with various educational context and modern approaches to learning and teaching visual arts, and motivate integrative development of students' personality. In order to do so, teachers should continuously build upon and deepen their professional knowledge and abilities through lifelong learning process as a foundation of their professional development. In fact, formal education gained at faculties of teacher education is not sufficient for the development of specific knowledge and skills needed for quality teaching in general, as well as in visual arts classes. This study is focused on the issue of the primary school teachers' training within visual arts education, as a part of a wider concept of teachers' professional development.

### ***Teachers' Professional Development in Visual Arts Education***

Teachers' professional growth is a concept which represents the inevitable component of the modern comprehension of teaching profession and it is a part of teachers' lifelong learning. Lifelong learning process sets off with initial education (*Initial Teacher Education* or *Pre-Service Teacher Education*). It is built upon with teachers' professional training (known as *In-Service Teacher Training - INSETT*, which is replaced in the EU by the concept of *Teacher Professional Development - TPD*), more appropriate for the teachers' specific needs (Radeka, 2007). As the pedagogic paradigm develops, a change appears in the relationship towards informal and non-formal teacher training in which the emphasis shifts from acquiring factual knowledge to gaining competence. In accordance with new expectations from teachers and their tasks, it is necessary for the professional training to support them in developing new aspects of their professional role (Vizek Vidović & Domović, 2008). Competences related to visual arts education that teachers should possess imply complex knowledge and abilities which are not mere mechanical transmission of knowledge. Instead, these competences are: responsible creation of the teaching process and finding creative ways of its implementation, quick and efficient adjustment to dynamic and unpredictable teaching situations, openness to new ideas and knowledge, desire for experimenting and trying out new ways of work, motivating students' independent and creative art expression, and using new technologies and motivating integrative (cognitive, affective and psycho-motor) development of students' personalities. It is also important for teachers, amongst other things, to possess communicative abilities, readiness for team work, ability and desire, i.e. intrinsic motivation for lifelong learning, that is, professional and personal growth.

Organised professional training in Croatia is structured within the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, i.e. the Agency of Education, most frequently as

partnership with faculties of teacher education and central or regional institutions. The goals of the in-service training are prescribed in the document In-Service Teacher Training Strategy 2009-2013 (AZOO, 2009). Although the document states the need for ensuring the conditions for lifelong learning and permanent professional in-service development of educational workers as one of the most important tasks of modern society, the gap between theoretical settings and their implementation in practice still exists in Croatia. In-service training for teachers is still mostly conceived through lectures and not sufficiently linked to practice. In fact, the most frequent problem in the context of teachers' professional training is how to 'translate' the abstract curricula principles into concrete teaching tasks which, at the same time, presents one of the hardest aspects of designing programmes for the professional development of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Teachers do not feel competent enough for this complex task, for which not only the integration of knowledge, abilities and attitudes is needed (Hoogveld, Paas, & Jochems, 2005) but also the adjustment to local conditions, context and heterogenic nature of classes. On the other hand, the problems which teachers in Croatia encounter when trying to realise their obligation and right to organised professional training within visual arts education are lack of time, financial means, insufficient understanding and support from their colleagues and/or the school's management. These problems are also present in educational systems of other countries (Alter, Hays, & O'Hara, 2009; Collins, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Russel-Bowie, 2012). The stated problems most frequently result in teachers having less intrinsic motivation for further learning, i.e. professional training.

Teachers' professional training in the field of visual arts education should not be overly directed towards transferring expert content, but more towards gaining experience tied to successful implementation of modern teaching concepts that change teachers' beliefs and attitudes (Guskey, 2002). In fact, numerous studies have been done about the influence of beliefs and attitudes on the school subject of visual arts (Eisner, 2002; Garvis, 2009; Hudson & Hudson 2007; Klopper, 2015). They have shown that the aforementioned problem is amongst the most present in the teaching practice and it directly influences the efficiency of the teaching process. Garvis (2009) states that insufficiently developed knowledge and abilities in the course of formal education can leave teachers feeling less assured of their own efficiency, which consequently leads to lack of confidence, knowledge and motivation for teaching visual arts. In other words, teachers' feeling of competence in the field they teach is the main predictor of self-esteem and efficiency when it comes to teaching. Classes should be combined with practical workshops in which modern approaches to teaching would be presented, examples of good practice demonstrated and concrete and applicable solutions offered.

## **Research**

Contemporarily designed visual arts teaching requires creative teachers who know how to follow new trends in education and will, alongside general pedagogical and

psychological, didactic and methodological and personal competences, possess subject-specific competences. However, some studies show that obsolete concepts and approaches to teaching still prevail in the school practice, i.e. teachers do not possess sufficient competences for quality implementation of visual arts classes (Tacol & Tomšič Čerkez, 2004; Tomljenović & Novaković, 2014). A question arises how much future teachers can be capacitated for quality implementation of visual arts classes in the context of existing university programmes, i.e. to what extent and in what way the support for their further professional development in the area should be organised.

The objective of the implemented empirical research was to examine the opinions of in-service primary school teachers about the possibilities, frequency of attendance and reasons for (not) participating in professional training in visual arts education. Teachers' desires and needs were examined in relation to the area of visual arts teaching in which they would like to acquire additional knowledge and abilities. Teachers also stated the level of competence they feel when teaching visual arts. Furthermore, the research aimed at establishing the existence of a statistically significant correlation between the variables 'age', 'education degree' and 'professional status' and the areas in which teachers would like to gain additional knowledge and abilities as well as the reasons for inclusion into professional training programmes.

Considering the determined goals, we set the following research questions:

- 1 How often do teachers participate in some form of professional training in the visual arts education and what are the reasons for their (non) inclusion?
- 2 Do teachers feel they are competent enough to teach visual arts and what are the areas they feel most competent in or do not feel competent enough?
- 3 Is there a statistically significant correlation between the variables 'age', 'education degree' and 'professional title' and the areas in which teachers would like to gain additional knowledge and abilities, as well as the reasons for inclusion into further professional training programmes.

## **Methods**

### ***Participants***

Research participants were 143 primary school teachers (2 men and 141 women) (hereinafter: teachers). They are employed in schools in Primorje-Gorski Kotar, Istria and Sisak-Moslavina Counties and have been chosen randomly. Teachers differ when it comes to the degree of education; somewhat more than half of them (55.9%) have vocational degrees, and 44.1% have a university degree. The difference is a consequence of changes in Croatia's educational politics. Before the implementation of the Bologna Process, primary school teachers' education in the Republic of Croatia lasted two, and then four years. After the Bologna changes, university teacher studies have lasted five years. In addition, 118 subjects (82.5%) have a teacher title, while 25 subjects (17.5%) have a mentor or counsellor title. Most teachers – more than two thirds – are of middle age (between 36 and 55,  $M=45$ ), i.e. they have between 11 and 30 years in service.

## Data Collection Procedures and Analysis

This research was conducted within the frame of a larger research which examined the perception of importance and mastery level of specific competence in visual arts teaching. A questionnaire was designed for the purpose of the research. It consisted of closed type questions and was implemented during March 2014. The authors devised the questionnaire, noted the data and processed them. The research was founded on the quantitative research paradigm. The data obtained with the questionnaire were processed on the level of descriptive and inferential statistics. Kendall Tau-b Rank Correlation Coefficient was used to calculate the link between variables 'age', 'education degree' and 'professional title' and the areas in which the teachers would like to gain additional knowledge and abilities as well as the reasons for inclusion in the programmes of further development. The authors used the SPSS – statistical package for electronic data processing.

## Results and Discussion

The results in Table 1 show that the largest number of the subjects, almost half of them (48.3%), have participated in some form of professional training related to visual arts education 3 to 5 times; around one quarter of the subjects (24.5%) have participated once or twice, around one sixth of the subjects (14.7%) have participated 5 to 10 times, while the percentage of the subject who participated in professional training in visual arts education more than 10 times and the ones who never have is the same (6.3%).

Table 1

*Frequency of teachers' participation in some form of professional training related to visual arts teaching whilst in service*

	f	f%
never	9	6.3
rarely (once or twice)	35	24.5
occasionally (3 to 5 times)	69	48.3
frequently (5 to 10 times)	21	14.7
more than 10 times	9	6.3

Considering the fact that the average age of the subjects is 45, it can be concluded that teachers have not participated in some of the forms of professional training in visual arts education frequently enough. One of the reasons for this lies in the fact that professional gatherings or some other form of training in this area are too scarce; on the other hand, the results can point to insufficient teachers' awareness about the importance of further professional development in this area after leaving university. In fact, school subject visual arts is frequently considered secondary when compared to other 'important' subjects (Maths, Croatian, foreign language) which can weaken teachers' perception of the importance of visual arts education in general (Alter, Hays, & O'Hara, 2009; Russel-Bowie, 2012; Welch, 1995) as well as their motivation for further professional development in the area. Also, prevailing opinion in Croatian educational culture is the

one of visual arts as being a foremost practical school subject which is, especially on the level of class teaching, considered an activity for students' relaxation with minimal teachers' influence or his/her interaction with the students. Such attitude can be linked to very poor representation of visual arts in the Croatian curriculum, for whose realisation one lesson a week is planned, i.e. 35 lessons a year for all primary school classes. On the other hand, however, we should take into consideration that a growing disproportion between pedagogical and psychological and didactic and methodological training during the initial teacher education leads to marginalisation of systematic work on the competences which teachers should possess (Radeka & Sorić, 2005). Research done by the Agency of Education has shown that teachers consider competences acquired in their initial education insufficient for their teaching and that professional training is very significant and necessary; in that, they especially stress the need for training in the areas of teaching methodologies (AZOO, 2013). Research conducted by Blažević (2015) has shown that areas in which teachers consider to have the least competence or possess insufficient knowledge about are working with special needs children, computer and art areas. This information should not be ignored since the research has shown that the way teachers perceive themselves in relation to their own art abilities is directly linked to the level of efficiency they achieve in teaching art (Welch, 1995).

Table 2

*Frequency of various forms of professional training which teachers attended while in service*

	f	f%
a few hours professional gathering/seminar	94	65.7
half-day seminar/workshop	34	23.8
whole-day seminar/workshop	18	12.6
a few days seminar/workshop	15	10.5

The analysis of answers displayed in Table 2, about the type or form of in-service professional training which teachers attended, show that most teachers, i.e. two thirds of them (66%), attended a professional meeting/seminar which lasted a few hours. One fifth of the teachers (23.8%) have an experience of some professional training which lasted half a day and only somewhat more than one tenth (12.6%) of the subjects have participated in professional training that lasted the whole day or a few days. Expectedly, types of professional training which last moderately short time are most frequently organised and boil down to theoretical lectures by some expert or practical work in which a certain art problem/task is solved in a given art technique. The practice of organising gatherings which last a few hours or one-day seminars, where the organisers pick the topic themselves and the expert to present it, has been observed in other countries as well (Gates, 2010). Research in the surrounding countries also shows that teachers consider their professional training has given them theoretical knowledge foremost and that they have been familiarised with the recent developments in the given educational area, whereas only 13% of them use what they were taught (Marentič Požarnik, Kalin, Šteh, & Valenčič Zuljan, 2005). Professional training is, therefore, most frequently done

in the routine way without getting to know, analyse or apply contemporary and various approaches of work through practical activities, demonstration of concrete ways of applying theoretical settings in the teaching practice, although this way has proven to be insufficiently effective (Radeka, 2007). However, cognitive science, as well as the teaching practice, have shown that individuals learn more effectively if the ideas and theoretical settings are followed by and linked to practical work (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Also, the creative atmosphere in which teachers are active and feel the support for exchange of ideas and experiences with colleagues and mentors is also preferred by them in much greater respect (Garvis, 2009; Gates, 2010). So, it would be inevitable to review ways of organising different types of professional training related to teaching visual arts, one of whose principal goals is the development of creative thinking and expression, which should also be the goal of professional training for teachers of this subject. World studies (Andrews, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Russel-Bowie, 2012) show that professional training can be very motivating for teachers and their learning in the context of professional development in visual arts education if it supports: practical work with materials, acquiring personal practical experience, creative expression, cooperative surroundings, exchange of opinions with colleagues and mentors, observing one's own video recordings and other materials which document good examples from practice. Such approach helps in overcoming the gap between general theoretical principles and concrete examples of teaching and learning. Also, workshops which were led by artists or in which they participated have proven to be very useful, i.e. workshops held in galleries or museums where teachers, being in direct contact with works of art, more easily liberate themselves of fear and sense of incompetence which can weaken their efficiency in teaching.

Table 3

*Reasons for teachers' inclusion into professional training programmes in the visual arts area*

	f	f%
It is important for my personal and professional growth	106	74.1
It empowers me to follow contemporary teaching trends in the visual arts area	68	47.5
I'm offered a possibility to meet other colleagues and exchange experiences	55	38.5
It is important for my professional advancement	36	23.8
It's a work obligation	18	12.6

Results in Table 3 show that most teachers are aware of the need for lifelong education since more than two thirds of the subjects (74.1%) stated that professional training in the visual arts area is important for their personal and professional development. Positive outlook on professional training is generally confirmed by other research; authors (Horvat & Lapat, 2012) state that 50% of the interviewed teachers react positively to professional training and they consider time there usefully spent. Almost half of the teachers in the present research (47.5%) also feel that organised forms of professional training present a good way modern teaching trends in the visual arts area can be

introduced to them. More than one third of the teachers (38.5%) think that professional training is appropriate for exchange of experiences with other colleagues, which testifies about the teachers' need to communicate and cooperate with each other. Somewhat less than one fourth of the subjects (23.8%), amongst other things, see expert seminars as a possibility of professional advancement. Somewhat more than one tenth of the teachers (12.6%) look upon participating in professional meetings about visual arts as work commitment which means they lack intrinsic motivation for this type of activity and the reasons for that can be numerous (overload, lack of time, lack of financial means, feeling of incompetence, i.e. lack of self-esteem in teaching visual arts...).

Table 4

*Reasons which prevent teachers from participating in the professional training programmes in the visual arts area more often*

	f	f%
lack of available programmes for teacher training in the visual arts area	98	68.5
I would gladly participate, but the financial means are not provided	26	18.2
I participated in a couple of seminars, as many as I wanted	24	16.8
lack of time	15	10.5
too far from home/work	9	6.3
school's management doesn't make it possible	4	2.8

Analysis of the results from Table 4 show that the main reason which prevents more frequent participation in expert meetings in the visual arts area is the lack of available programmes for teacher development in the stated area – as many as two thirds of the teachers (68.5%) feel that the offered programmes in this area are too scarce. This fact certainly should not be ignored since it leads to the conclusion that institutions in charge of organising professional training do not take notice of, i.e. do not provide enough time for quality teacher training in the area. The other conclusion is that there are no sufficient financial means which would enable organisation of expert gatherings and workshops more frequently, which is a problem most likely linked to professional training in all educational areas. The lack of funds is also a reason for which almost one fifth of the subjects (18.2%) do not participate in the aforementioned forms of professional training, and which should be ensured by the institution in which teachers work. Moreover, 16.8% of the teachers feel that they have participated in professional training sufficiently, i.e. they do not feel the need for further professional growth in the visual arts area. This attitude can be a result of teachers feeling competent and self-confident in teaching art, which is a positive indicator. On the other hand, it can point to the incomplete comprehension of the purpose and goals of teaching visual arts and to insufficient awareness of the need for continuous professional growth in all areas of work. This attitude can be linked to previously mentioned trend of marginalisation of arts subjects, meaning that Visual arts as a school subject is seen as less important than the 'main' subjects, so some of the teachers feel they do not have to continuously improve their competences in this area. Somewhat more than one tenth of the teachers (10.5%)

state lack of time as the reason for not participating in professional gatherings, most likely due to difficulties in coordinating private and work commitments; the following reason is linked to this one and it being too great a distance from home, which is stressed by 6.3% of the teachers. Very small percentage of the teachers (2.8%) have stated that school management does not enable them to participate in professional trainings due to the impossibility of organising work substitutes, lack of financial means and alike. The stated results are in accordance with the ones presented by Radeka and Sorić (2005) in their study, which determined that three quarters of the interviewed teachers who are partially or fully dissatisfied with the quality of their own professional training state the following as main problems: insufficient quantity of offered content, lack of possibilities for participation in professional training programmes, limited time and financial means for professional development, and poor organisation of the professional training system on the whole.

Table 5

*Teachers' opinion about the level of one's own competence, i.e. the level of one's own professional training in visual arts education*

	f	f%
It is partly sufficient because I feel the need for additional professional training.	81	56.6
It is sufficient, although requirements emerged subsequently due to which I needed or need to educate myself additionally.	22	15.4
It is sufficient, although I needed additional professional training in the beginning.	19	13.3
It isn't sufficient.	12	8.4
It is sufficient and I don't need additional professional training.	9	6.3

The results in Table 5 show that more than half of the teachers (56.6%) do not feel sufficiently competent for teaching visual arts since they feel the need for additional professional training. Somewhat less than one third of the subjects consider their education in the stated area sufficient, although they felt the need in the beginning of their teaching (13.3%), or during their service (15.4%), for additional professional training. A study in Slovenia (Devjak, Vogrinc, & Repac, 2007) has also shown that most teachers, who feel their formal education was not sufficient for their initial professional work, needed additional professional training in later stages, i.e. additional practical experiences. This fact confirms the concept about the need for continuous lifelong professional development of teachers in all areas of their work. Almost one tenth of the teachers do not feel competent to teach visual arts. Only 6.3% of the teachers feel that their level of professional competence in the stated area is sufficient and that they do not need additional professional training. Garvis (2009) states three reasons for which teachers do not have enough self-confidence, i.e. competence in teaching visual arts: the desire for development in the field of mother tongue and maths as primary school subjects, lack of professional experience in teaching visual arts as well as a lack of support for teaching in the field of visual arts from the school in which they work. Authors

who deal with these issues state more reasons for which the quality of teaching visual arts is generally poorer than expected. These reasons are: a lack of teachers' personal experience in the visual arts area, lack of time for adequate lesson preparation, lack of appropriate sources and poor knowledge of educational goals set by the teaching curriculum (Andrews, 2008; Klopper, 2015; Oreck, 2004; Russell-Bowie, 2012). Precisely this information should serve as the main compass for further planning not only for teachers' professional training in the area but also for initial education of future teachers.

Table 6

*Areas related to visual arts education in which teachers would like to gain additional knowledge and skills*

	f	f%
use of visual arts techniques and creative expression	108	75.5
development of aesthetic sensibility and abilities for analysis of artworks and children's works	76	53.1
specificities of didactic and methodological procedures in organising and implementing visual arts classes	62	43.4
subject specific content (visual arts theory, visual arts history...)	20	13.9
connecting visual arts content to other areas	18	12.6
I don't want to gain new knowledge	3	2.1

Analysis of the results displayed in Table 6 shows that the greatest number – three quarters of the subjects (75.5%) want to gain additional knowledge in the area of art techniques and creative expression, which is also confirmed by some previous research (Brewer, 1999, as cited in Gates, 2010). On the one hand, this statement testifies about teachers' sense of incompetence in the visual arts area and indirectly about insufficient number of courses aimed at acquiring these skills and abilities throughout their initial education. On the other hand, this information supports the fact that teachers prefer interactive, cooperative ways of work in which they directly and practically participate, in comparison to the type of seminars or professional meetings mainly based on lectures where they are mostly passive and the gap between theoretical ideas and their implementation in practice is still present. More than one half of the teachers (53.1%) want to gain additional knowledge and skills linked to the development of aesthetic sensibility and analysis of artworks and children's works. This segment of visual arts classes is usually fairly neglected in practice. The reasons for that can be found in the lack of time for processing teaching content, but also in insufficient teacher competence for their realisation. Also, almost one half of the teachers (43.4%) want to learn more about the specificities of didactic and methodological procedures of organising and implementing the teaching process in visual arts. The stated fact testifies to teachers' awareness about the importance of applying appropriate and specific teaching strategies and methods in realising learning goals, but also to the teachers lacking this type of knowledge and skills. Somewhat more than one tenth of the subjects (13.9%) want to gain additional knowledge and abilities in the subject specific content (visual arts theory, visual arts history...). The assumption is that lesser percentage of the subjects

who chose this statement does not mean they feel competent in the given areas, but that most teachers consider them less important for successful implementation of visual arts teaching on the level of classroom teaching. Almost equal number of teachers (12.6%) want to find out more about the possibilities for connecting visual arts content to the contents of other subjects, which testifies to their awareness about the need for interdisciplinary and integrative approach to teaching and learning. On the other hand, small percentage of subjects with this answer shows that most teachers already apply interdisciplinary approach in practice (Tomljenović, 2016). A very small percentage of the subjects (2.1%) do not want to gain additional knowledge or skills. We can infer that teachers feel the desire, that is, the need for additional professional training in the visual arts area, i.e. various areas of visual arts and methodology of teaching visual arts. Sabol (2006) states 88 different themes in which teachers would like to acquire additional knowledge and abilities, which is the best indicator of the variety of teachers' interests and needs in the context of professional development in the visual arts area. This fact implies the need for moving away from traditional forms of professional training in which one-sided, narrowly conceived and obsolete issues prevail, in favour of interdisciplinary and integrative approach within visual arts education.

The research also aimed at establishing the connection between variables of 'age', 'education degree' and 'professional title' and the areas in which teachers would like to gain additional knowledge and abilities as well as the reasons for inclusion in the programmes of further professional education. The Kendall Tau-b Rank Correlation Coefficient was used to calculate the correlation between one nominal/dichotomous variable and one ordinal variable.

Analysis of the results displayed in Table 6 shows that a statistically significant correlation on three items is visible between the variables 'age' and the areas in which teachers would like to gain additional knowledge and abilities. Weak positive correlation exists between age and teachers' attitudes about not wanting to gain additional knowledge related to visual arts, and between age and teachers' attitudes about the development of aesthetic sensibility and the ability to analyse children's works and artworks. Older teachers are mostly in the group which does not want to gain additional knowledge in visual arts, but also in the group in which they want to acquire additional abilities connected to the development of aesthetic sensibility and analysis of artworks and children's works. This information is understandable if we consider that the didactic and methodological concept of visual arts has been changed and modernized over the years, and expert literature emphasises exactly the area in question. With that alone, it is probable that younger teachers possess more knowledge in this field. Weak negative correlation exists between age and the use of art techniques and creative expression. Younger teachers mostly fall in the category of subjects who want to gain additional knowledge and abilities in using art techniques and materials, i.e. in the creative expression. It is assumed that this result is connected with (too) small number of lessons intended for students' practical education at faculties of teacher education

Table 7

Correlation between variables 'age', 'education degree', 'professional title' and areas related to art in which teachers would like to gain additional knowledge and abilities

	Kendall's Tau_b								
	Age			Education degree			Professional title		
	Correlation coefficient	p	N	Correlation coefficient	p	N	Correlation coefficient	p	N
I don't want to gain additional knowledge	0.176**	0.006	143	-0.034	0.683	143	0.173*	0.018	143
Subject contents	0.099	0.155	143	-0.041	0.628	143	-0.074	0.371	143
Use of art techniques and art-creative expression	-0.150	0.016*	143	0.057	0.493	143	-0.124	0.132	143
Development of aesthetic sensibility and the ability to analyse art/children's works	0.171**	0.008	143	-0.189*	0.012	143	-0.233**	0.005	143
Specificities of didactic and methodological procedures of organisation and implementation of art classes	-0.053	0.449	143	0.002	0.985	143	0.068	0.408	143
Connecting art content to other areas	0.126	0.072	143	-0.047	0.578	143	-0.119	0.148	143

$p \leq 0.01^{**}$ ;  $p \leq 0.05^{*}$

and a minor number of lessons intended for school practice where students would gain personal experience in real school conditions, among other things, in the application of art materials and techniques. There is a statistically significant weak negative correlation on the item 'development of aesthetic sensibility and abilities of analysing artworks and children's works in the given area between variables 'education degree' and the areas in which teachers would like to gain additional knowledge and abilities. Teachers with higher degree of education greatly fall into the category of the subjects who do not have the need for gaining new knowledge or abilities in the given area. As stated before, the assumption is that faculties give more attention to the area today, within methodology of teaching visual arts, than they used to when teacher studies were on the level of vocational studies. Results of the Kendall Tau Correlation Test between the variable 'professional title' and areas related to visual arts in which teachers would like to gain additional knowledge and abilities also show a statistically significant correlation for two items. There is a statistically significant, weak, positive correlation between professional

title and the attitudes of teachers who do not want to gain additional knowledge related to visual arts. Teachers of higher professional title (teacher-mentor, teacher-counsellor) significantly belong to the group of subjects who do not want to gain additional knowledge related to visual arts. On the one hand, this information is understandable since additional education and training is a prerequisite for teachers getting a higher professional title. On the other hand, it seems that higher status gives some teachers a 'false' sense of security about their own teaching and a feeling of not having to attend professional training any further, although teacher profession requires continuous follow up on modern pedagogical and expert theories and practice throughout overall years in service. There is a negative correlation between professional title and the development of aesthetic sensibility and the ability to analyse artworks and children's works. Teachers who are not mentors nor counsellors, i.e. most of them, are placed in the group of subjects who mostly want to acquire additional knowledge and abilities in the area of developing aesthetic sensibility and analysis of artworks and children's works. The fact that teachers do not feel competent enough in the given area is confirmed once more. Bračun Sova and Kemperl (2012) came to a similar conclusion in researching the level of knowledge about natural processes of perception, understanding artworks and methods for motivating abilities for acquiring aesthetic experience, i.e. sensibility in teachers.

Table 8

*Correlation between variables 'age' and 'professional title' and the reasons for inclusion in the programmes of further professional training in the visual arts area*

	Kendall's Tau_b					
	Age			Professional title		
	Correlation coefficient	p	N	Correlation coefficient	p	N
It is important for my personal and professional growth	0.038	0.586	143	0.227**	0.003	143
It is important for my professional advancement	0.029	0.681	143	-0.021	0.802	143
It offers a possibility of meeting other colleagues and exchange experiences	0.176**	0.006	143	-0.042	0.611	143
It gives me the opportunity to follow modern teaching trends in the art area	0.090	0.200	143	-0.142	0.085	143
It is a work obligation	0.156*	0.013	143	-0.006	0.938	143

$p \leq 0.01$  \*;  $p \leq 0.05$  \*

Statistically significant correlation between subjects' professional title and the reasons for inclusion into the programmes of further professional training in the visual art area was determined. Subjects with higher professional title are represented more frequently in the group that has the need for further professional development with the goal of personal and professional growth. Statistically significant positive correlation was also

found between teachers' age and the item 'it is a work commitment'. It means that older teachers mostly fall into the group of subjects whose reason for participating in various forms of professional training is work commitment. This information is in accord with older teachers' statement that they do not want to have additional experience in the area.

There is a statistically significant correlation between teachers' professional title and item 'it is important for my personal and professional growth'. It means that teachers with higher professional title mostly fall into the group that states this reason as dominant. It is interesting that the same group states they do not have a need for additional professional training in the visual arts area more than the others.

Table 9

*Correlation between variable 'professional title' and the reasons which stop more frequent teachers' inclusion into the programmes of professional training in visual arts education.*

	Kendall's Tau_b		
	Professional title		
	Correlation coefficient	p	N
There are no offered appropriate programmes for class teachers' professional training in the art area	-0.252**	0.002	143
I would gladly participate, but I don't have the financial means provided	0.115	0.163	143
Management of the school doesn't make it possible for me to participate in professional training activities	0.047	0.572	143
Due to great distance from home/place of work	-0.046	0.575	143
Due to the lack of time	-0.154	0.061	143
I participated in as many seminars I wanted to	0.152	0.064	143

$p \leq 0.01^*$ ;  $p \leq 0.05^*$

In the research, we also examined the correlation between variables 'age', 'professional title' and 'education degree' and the reasons which prevent teachers from participating in the programmes of professional training in visual arts education. There is a statistically significant negative correlation between professional titles and item 'there are no appropriate programmes offered for teacher training in the visual arts area'. Teachers who do not lower professional title, the majority (82.5%), mostly belong in the group of subjects who attend professional training related to visual arts teaching often because there are no programmes offered in that area. This information is compatible to the previous, from which it is obvious that two thirds of the teachers (68.5%) consider the provided programmes related to teaching visual arts too scarce. This information implies the need for rethinking the ratio of certain educational contents in the programmes of organised professional training, i.e. in the further strategy of devising professional development of Croatian teachers.

## **Conclusions**

Professional training is a part of teachers' lifelong learning as one of the basic postulates of modern educational policies and goals of today's society (Vizek Vidović, 2005). Lifelong learning not only implies gaining knowledge, but also developing new competences, such as creative and critical thinking, enthusiasm, reflexion, self-evaluation, openness for seeing new perspectives, inclination towards acquiring new knowledge and abilities, and cooperativeness. Only through acquiring the stated competences can professional development lead to quality changes in teachers' way of thinking, attitudes and work, which is the principal goal of their professional development. The implemented research has pointed out to some of the problems which teachers encounter in their professional development, i.e. which stand in the way of realising their professional training in visual arts education. Most teachers have a positive attitude towards the aforementioned professional training because they feel it will contribute to their own professional and personal development. On the other hand, they are not satisfied with the type, length and frequency of the offered programmes and consider them lacking. Frequent reason for them not attending some forms of professional training is the lack of money. Also, most teachers do not feel competent enough to teach visual arts and have the need for additional training in the field of using art techniques and materials and creative expression, development of aesthetic sensibility and analysing children's art works, and also in the area of knowing the specificities of didactic and methodological procedures and teaching visual arts. Further design of various forms of professional training should take into consideration their concreteness and specificity, and also following up the theoretical lectures with practical ideas which will help teachers in everyday situations in the classroom. Lectures should be combined with practical workshops in which, amongst other things, modern approaches to teaching and the strategies for their realisation in practice will be taught and learned, i.e. concrete and applicable solutions offered. Teachers' professional training related to visual arts teaching should primarily promote a sense of success and a positive attitude towards visual arts activities and the subject itself, and it should also develop teachers' self-esteem (Andrews, 2012; Oreck, 2004). With proper backing and appropriate programmes, teachers will develop an ability to freely and creatively express themselves and become more aware of the potential, purpose, goals and values of teaching visual arts within the school curriculum alongside developing subject-specific competences. The results of the research have also shown that teachers' need for gaining new knowledge and abilities related to the visual arts area lessen with the increase of years in service, degree of education and professional status. Older teachers, however, want to additionally educate themselves in the area of aesthetic sensibility and gain abilities to analyse artworks and children's works, while teachers with higher education degree and higher professional status do not feel the need to gain knowledge in this area. Younger teachers want to acquire additional knowledge in the area of using art techniques and creative

expression. Teachers who are not in groups of teacher-mentors or teacher-counsellors, i.e. great majority, want to be additionally educated in the area of aesthetic sensibility development and analysis of artworks and children's works.

Based on the stated results it can be concluded that the existing model of teachers' professional training in visual arts education does not satisfy their needs and that it is necessary to review/restructure the existing programmes not only when it comes to quantity, but also quality. For the purpose of improving the current state, the necessity arises for the realisation of better cooperation between faculties of teacher education and educational institutions which are directly or indirectly linked to teachers' professional training and professional development. The results of this research point to some expected facts which can serve as a platform for future research in this area and as a guideline in devising, planning and implementing professional training with the goal of more quality acquisition of teachers' competence as the fundamental purpose of professional development in the context of visual arts education.

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# Profesionalni razvoj učitelja primarnog obrazovanja na likovnoumjetničkom i likovnopedagoškom području

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## **Sažetak**

*Profesionalni razvoj učitelja na likovnopedagoškom području podrazumijeva širenje i produbljivanje likovnih znanja i sposobnosti, kao i daljnji razvoj stručnih, profesionalnih i osobnih kompetencija potrebnih za učinkovito izvođenje nastave likovne kulture. Cilj provedenog istraživanja bio je ispitati u kojoj mjeri učitelji pohađaju stručna usavršavanja vezana uz likovnoumjetničko i likovnopedagoško područje, zatim koji su razlozi njihova (ne)pohađanja. U istraživanju su sudjelovala 143 učitelja zaposlena u osnovnim školama Primorsko-goranske, Istarske i Sisačko-moslavačke županije. KendallTau-b koeficijent rang korelacije upotrijebljen je za izračunavanje povezanosti između varijabli 'godine starosti', 'stupanj obrazovanja' i 'stručni status', područja u kojima bi učitelji željeli steći dodatna znanja i sposobnosti, kao i razloga uključivanja u programe daljnjeg stručnog usavršavanja. Rezultati pokazuju da se s povećanjem godina starosti, stupnja obrazovanja i stručnog statusa smanjuje potreba ispitanika za stjecanjem dodatnih znanja i sposobnosti vezanih uz*