

Common Issues

THE EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE AND THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM FOR COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN CROATIA (PART TWO)*

Metodika 18 (1/2009), 152-187

Original scientific paper

Paper submitted: 3rd December 2008

ARTS EDUCATION IN TRANSITION: ARTS EDUCATION IN THE EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Vera Turković

Academy Of Fine Arts Zagreb

***Summary** – This paper provides an analysis of the role of Arts education within the context of contemporary European system of compulsory education. The introductory part analyses the problems of common elements in European tradition of aesthetic/arts education as well as the meaning of the terms education for art and education through art. Further on, the paper gives a short presentation of the history of Art education in Croatia.*

The second part of the paper lays out the results of comparative analysis of Arts curricula in 11 European countries and Art syllabus in Croatia. In its essence, this analysis is mostly the analysis of curricular content which places an emphasis on quantitative indicators and socio-cultural context. The results obtained in this analysis point out the fact that within European system of compulsory education Art as a school subject has a relevant role because teaching

Visual art develops visual thinking, as well as students' aesthetic and ethical awareness. It also prepares students for independent visual expression which contributes to knowledge acquisition and quality education. However, certain

* The articles published under the heading Common Issues are the second part of the thematic unit entitled *European Experiences and the National Curriculum for Compulsory Education in Croatia*, comprising papers from the project *Evaluation of Syllabi and Development of the National Curriculum for compulsory Education in Croatia* carried out by the Centre for Educational Research and Development of the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb between 2002 and 2005. The first part of this thematic unit was published in Metodika No. 15/2007.

differences among the analysed countries have been noticed. Arts education is much better positioned in those countries in which curriculum development falls under the scope of national institutions, national councils for curriculum evaluation etc. Those countries have also designed their national core curricula. Despite that, generally speaking, it can be concluded that Visual art education has a better position and content of a higher quality in the above mentioned countries than in Croatia.

Key words: *education for art, education for creativity, education through art, national curricula, visual arts*

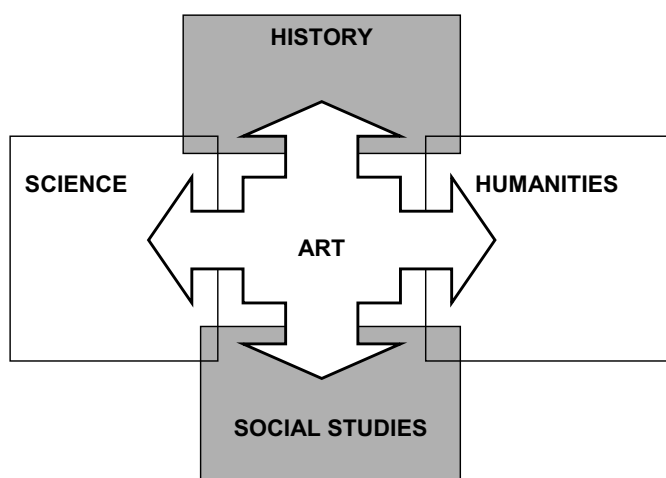
INTRODUCTION: THE ROLE OF ART IN EDUCATION

All those who have so far been involved in the research on the quality of education, both scientists and theoreticians, are unanimous in the belief that art has a great and significant role in increasing the quality of education. Psychologists in the field of cognitive and developmental psychology from J. Piaget (1926), R. Arnheim to H. Gardner and E. Eisner, despite the differences among them, support the theory that perception system on which art is based is actually the primary source of our cognitive life. On the one hand cognition is based in reason, conceptualisation, logic and formal thinking discourse. On the other hand, there is our equally significant physical, perceptive, material, emotional and imaginative nature. In this sense, visual perception cannot be understood as a mere reception of optical picture (Arnheim, 1991). An eye is a part of the brain, a sense which acquires content for the reason, which it will deal with further on, but the function of eye does not end here. Perception presupposes identification and classification and at the same time requires sensibility to dynamic expression. This means that we are dealing with a delicate cognitive process which Arnheim illustrated with a simple example (Arnheim, 1991:28). *“Before a child has created a concept about what a house is, it intuitively perceives it as a sort of a big facility which it experiences and encounters every day. All these houses are different from one another, but they also have something in common and this common feature is what can be captured intuitively. I call it a perceptual concept.”* Of course, there are more complex examples which point to the fact that our perception enables us to classify and differentiate among even those qualities the general description of which is unknown to us. This is where the power of intuition lies. Intuition is defined as a mental capacity (Efland, 2002) linked with sensory perception and is an important tool for understanding and exploring of the world. Intuition and intellect are equally important forms of cognition, while perceptual concepts are as important as intellectual concepts.

Therefore, the school curriculum has to establish a relevant balance of the content of various school subjects in order to enable a student to develop both abilities (Eisner, 1997). Learning does not imply mere recognition of individual objects, but also presupposes forming the types of things and the exploring of their

qualities and functions. These needs can be originally met through art, which is one of the reasons for which art is necessary in all civilizations. The main role of art in education is in its ability to help create a complex picture of the world in which everyone can find themselves. Visual art at the same time provides another dimension. It expresses itself through the visual language of picture which not only differs from the verbal language, but also contains abilities itself which are a great advantage in the process of expression. Arnheim (1991) claims that one of the limits of the verbal language, which is the tool for which we frequently think is the most suitable one for intellectual activity of any kind, is that it operates in a diachronic way, that is, the meanings that language connects are beyond the scope of time. As a contrast to that, the perception of the world, or, more precisely, the meaning it has, can, but does not have to depend on synchronicity– it is rather a unit which breaks the meaning into its components and, vice versa, its components contribute do the meaning of the whole. That is why he suggests re-conceptualisation of the school curriculum by changing its central core. The core should consist of three areas which give children and young people the basic abilities needed for understanding and acquisition of all parts of the curriculum. The first of those three areas is philosophy which teaches children logic, epistemology and ethics. The second core area is visual education in which a student learns how to use visual phenomena as the main means in the thinking organisation function. The third area is language education which enables a student to participate in verbal communication. These three core areas should comprise the central service of educational building, since they contain general elements relevant for learning other areas.

A similar concept was later elaborated by Arthur Efland (2002), who focused on the integration of knowledge through art, which is illustrated by the scheme below.



Pictue1. Integration of knowledge into other areas through art. Efland, A., 2002, p.165

Art, as perceived from the cognitive point of view, deserves, according to Efland, the central position in the curriculum in a way suggested by Herbert Read (1943) a long time ago. To him, the concept of art primarily presupposes the knowledge of art itself, that is, of the great artistic achievements which can be used as a sort of easy entrance into the area of social and cultural circumstances reflected in a particular work of art. The relationship between a work of art and culture is founded on reciprocity, which makes it possible for culture to be understood through art. It is important to note that Efland recognized the cognitive dimension of art in the effect a work of art has upon students, not exclusively through the practical acquaintance with the principles of artistic form and techniques of expression. This suggestion that Efland had made has encountered a massive approval of experts in this field during his presentation at the world congress InSEA 2002 in New York. The suggestion can strike us as too radical, but it can also serve as a good model for establishing a cross curricular co-operation, since the main intention of educational systems in America and Europe is actually to achieve a greater inter-relationship among the educational content within the curriculum. The awareness of this need aims at overcoming the current state of the affairs in which a student still acquires knowledge as a group of unrelated facts, not presented to him in a purposeful way (Ivančević and Turković, 2001). The curriculum which is unrelated in this way reflects a long-standing tradition of the western philosophy the final consequence of which is known as ambivalence of awareness.

It should be pointed out that this curriculum scheme, in which Visual art, as well as visual thinking, occupies a prominent position, the scheme in which the verbal and visual language have an equal value, is supported by H. Gardner's theory of seven types of intelligence: linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinaesthetic, spatial, musical, interpersonal and intra-personal intelligence (Gardner, 1983). This theory has drawn attention to the fact that in the educational process a great care should be taken of the fact that some students learn through visual aids, while others through audio or written material, and that schools should encourage the equal development of all abilities. Since Gardner has already been mentioned as a great expert in the field of developmental psychology, and as a scientist who has been involved for several decades in the research of children's sensory and perceptive abilities, it should be noted here that his empirical findings have shown that through art the following abilities are developed: a) ability of perception, b) ability of conceptualisation, c) ability of production (Gardner, 1990).

Further on, there is a general agreement that arts education provides a great contribution to emotional, aesthetic, creative, personal and social development. However, national educational policies throughout European countries rarely emphasize the importance of the school activities which are based on emotions. Despite the widely accepted argument that art expresses emotions and that it is created through emotional conditions, the language of feelings and emotions is not held in high regard.

As far as creativity itself is concerned, its significance is frequently singled out and emphasized in connection with art (Boden, 1990; Koestler, 1975; Arnheim, 1954; Turković, 1999; Pfenninger, 2001), but in some cases it is linked exclusively with art. Art is considered to be the principal means for encouraging and developing creativity in children, as well as the main area of creative activity in general, probably because creativity is primarily linked with the freedom of expression, spontaneity and innovation which is vital for any kind of artistic activity. However, creativity as ability should be equally linked with other areas. In order to achieve that state some conditions should be met. M. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) sees these conditions as a result of interaction within a complex system comprising three elements: a) culture, which is made up of symbolic rules; b) a person who takes innovation into symbolic space; c) experts in areas, who can recognize and evaluate the real value of innovation. All three elements are crucial for establishing a creative idea, for a creative product or making it possible for the discovery to find its own place. The same can be applied to education – if all the conditions have not been met, creativity cannot develop in the right way in all school subjects. The advantage of Art as a school subject when compared to other subjects lies in the fact that they release and encourage individual imagination in order to enable its development into artistic expression. Creativity in education requires children's freedom and liberation of all unnecessary rules.

Creativity as ability which develops art was initially attached more importance in Europe at the end of the last century. It was made evident in many documents. One of them is the document drawn by Culture Committee of the Council of Europe in 1996 (Robinson). It was drawn in 1995 after ministers of education and ministers of culture had been unanimous in emphasizing the vital importance of developing cultural and artistic aspects of education in Europe, and had started a project known as *Culture, Creativity and Youth*. Also, some countries, such as England, have been forming national expert committees which provide support to students and teachers in solving problems and developing new ideas. In a document of NACCCE (National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education) known as *All Our Perspectives*, it reads that "creativity is a range of creative activities which produce original and valuable results", and that school curricula should support these innate abilities (NACCCE, 1999:29). However, if we carry out a deeper analysis of the reasons behind the change in educational policy, we will see that it has mainly been spurred by industry and market development. Industry and market filter only those people into the world of employment who have abilities of innovation, initiative and their application to problem solution. The key issue in social development has been the question of national resources, which again has more frequently been interpreted as human capital; that is, as talented young people. On the other hand, this first-class political issue is linked with liberal democracy which generally encourages the development of individualism. Art in schools is therefore expected to develop specific working abilities which are highly valued in the world of work. That

is why creativity assigns a special role to art in economy based on knowledge, economy in which creative industries have been recognized as vital components.

The purpose of Arts education should be analysed within a larger context, taking a great care not to measure it only by economic terms. Art before and above all enriches emotional development of a child; it develops its imagination, senses, thinking, memory, speech, develops self-confidence, suppresses shyness, creates tranquillity and relaxation and influences the shaping of personality.

Personality development is one of the main aims of Arts education today. Art teachers have to take upon themselves a complex task to develop artistic sensibility and ability of expression in children and young people, which would help them be what they really are and to develop their own style. Over the past few years, especially at InSEA Congress in Heidelberg in 2007 and Osaka, Japan in 2008, greater significance has been given to the topics on personality development through art. At the same time, most of research in the field of art pedagogy has been preoccupied with this dimension (Karpati, 2007; Podobnik, 2006). It helps draw the conclusion that art teachers question all aspects of their new role in education, the role which has been changing in accordance with social and cultural values established on the laws of highly pronounced democratic individualism.

COMMON EUROPEAN TRADITION

The term *artistic/aesthetic education* was introduced quite late; however, some sort of faith in the noble role of art was found even in ancient philosophy. Pythagoras stressed the role of art in ‘shaping of human spirit’, especially music through which the inner harmony of soul is achieved. Plato believed that the best education ‘for the body was gymnastics, while for the soul evoking the Muses.’ He also exhibited ambivalence to Arts education, which depends on the nature of its purpose. Music, which expresses harmony, can create an analogue harmony in a man. He had warned, however, about the harmful effect of bad music on people, and was deeply annoyed with the poetry which was creating false myths. In that way a double understanding of Arts education was created, and it has been retained over the centuries in the texts which were questioning the morals of various aspects of artistic influence. That is how a certain form of educational censorship of prescribed works of art was introduced.

What should also be pointed out within the common European heritage dating from the ancient times is the importance of Aristotle’s theory of catharsis as a belief that dramatic experience does not only serve to purify the soul, but also to enrich a man at the same time, which has been corroborated by the influence of the universal art masterpieces. Both trends, Plato’s and Aristotle’s, correspond to Nietzsche’s models of Apollo and Dionysius art which have constantly provided incentives for philosophical discussions on the role of art in human life.

The term *aesthetic education* was first encountered in F. Schiller's *Letters on aesthetic education*. In those letters Schiller reminded once again of the dream about the inner harmony of man and encouraged thinking about the ambivalence of *biological* and *formal* nature as an inner antagonism which art can overcome by having beauty come to life through *live form* and creative activity enriched with imagination. An aesthetic being has to create, according to Schiller's idea, an *aesthetic society* permeated with freedom and art.

The 19th century adds a social dimension to this philosophical tradition. For example, the great humanist John Ruskin considered art to be another word for beauty and, as such, to be the basic force in the transformation of society. He supported the *religion of beauty* which preaches the beauty of nature and moral beauty of man.

The next step in the evolution of the above mentioned tradition was a widely known movement for the so called new education, inspired by the spirit of creativity and faith in the universal abilities of every man, especially during an earlier stage of life. Expression, imagination and creativity became the ideals of new thinking and educational activity. One of the promoters of this movement was John Dewey (1958), known as the supporter of the principle *learning through experience*. Because of the significance of the book *Art as Experience* Dewey is nowadays considered to be a co-founder of the theory of education through art. That is an important theory which links aesthetic experience with general experience of man. Still, on the margins of great philosophical discussions on aesthetic/Arts education, practical activities began to form away from sophisticated theoretical expectations. This can be explained by the fact that education at that time was linked with social elitism and sophisticated behaviour. In the second half of the 19th century this way of thinking was overcome due to the emergence of a new type of audience, that is, a new cultural class which was not professionally involved in art and which did not possess any works of art or institutions. Apart from highly well-developed artistic taste, imagination and feeling, there was a simultaneous strengthening of art which was socially engaged as well and which entered the material space beyond aesthetic, in order to change both material and spiritual circumstances of all layers of society.

Arts education in contemporary European society mostly reflects the changes within art itself and multiplies the functions it has been filled with. This primarily implies the connections between art, technology and industrial production.

Education for art and through art

Two complementary terms, *education for art* and *education through art* are most frequently used in the field of Arts education in contemporary Europe. The former implies the forming of sensitivity and some kind of artistic sensibility,

respect for aesthetic values and forming of the abilities of artistic expression. The latter implies the process of forming the entire personality. Education through art does not only help develop artistic sensibility for the sake of art itself but also its transfer to other areas, such as enrichment of knowledge, strengthening of personal opinion, acquisition of moral criteria, imagination and creative ability. Herbert Read, who published the book *Education through Art* in 1943, takes credit for the concept of education through art. The change of the term was not only a formal one; the idea of education through art was a revolutionary one, but still not understood by many, because it put Arts education into the core of the educational system reform. "The aim of the reform is not creating a greater number of the works of art, but creating better people and a better society. Our aim is to establish the kind of Arts education which will develop imaginative and creative abilities in children. Once the creative abilities have been released on one area, they are transferred to all areas of human activity." (Read, 1943:68) The idea of *education through art* has drawn a lot of attention from education theoreticians throughout the world. Read's book became a sort of manifesto in defending the integrity of a man endangered by the alienation process typical of technocratic and consumer civilization. In the spirit of Read's orientation a movement was formed under the patronage of UNESCO known as International Society for Education through Art (1954).

Based on the discrepancy between these two models of Arts education there are still intense discussions which raise questions such as: is art in schools taught merely for the aesthetic pleasure and acquaintance with the works of art, or should art be perceived as a means of a more efficient learning of other school subjects; does Arts education exist only for a small number of students talented for certain area of art or for all areas. The answers to these, as well as many other questions can be found in UNESCO document "*Guidelines for Arts Education*" created at the World Conference on Arts Education: The forming of creative abilities for the 21st century, Lisbon, March 2006, which supports general human rights to education and cultural participation, assigning the essential role of Arts education to the raising of education quality. The document points out the following as the aims of Arts education: the basic right of everyone to education, the individual abilities development, education quality improvement, promotion of cultural differences. Further on, the document singles out the key abilities that Arts education develops: intellectual cognition, artistic-visual literacy, emotional intelligence, cognition through experience, creativity, communication skills, critical thinking, sense of freedom of thought and action. It also puts forward the methods which art employs in developing these abilities: studying the works of art (learning art), direct contact with the works of art, participation in artistic creation; it also stresses that art is the means for studying other subjects (education through art).

At the end of this overview it should be noted that Arts education in Europe is a complex phenomenon which is not determined only by theory, but is primarily determined by the condition and changes in art and culture.

THE HISTORY OF ARTS EDUCATION IN CROATIA

The history of Arts education which has been so deeply rooted in European tradition has, on the other hand, rarely been thoroughly dealt with in the Croatian educational system, so the data on this subject area in Croatia cannot be found in one place. Unlike the USA (Eisner, 2004) and Europe, where the historical changes in Arts education have recently been the topics of doctoral dissertations, professional publications, conferences, etc, in Croatia there barely exists an awareness of the fact that Arts education has its own history. The work on this demanding task should be undertaken by someone who is ready to expand the research into a wider context and employ interdisciplinary method to shed light on the relationships among art, education, society and culture, as well as the emergence of art pedagogy as a profession. Moreover, this research should pay attention to the legislative and political processes as well. The situation in this sense is additionally complicated by the fact that Arts education was introduced into Croatian public educational system in the 18th century, at the time when Croatia was a part of the Habsburg monarchy, so a great amount of data from that time is hard to obtain or has been given by a secondary source. The small amount of data that we do have helps us partially reconstruct the history of Arts education.

Owing to Angelika Plank (Ivančević i Turković, 2001), a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, who was doing research on the beginnings of Arts education in Austrian schools and faculties, we now know that in 1774 Maria Theresa introduced the public school system and drawing became a compulsory subject in school curricula. Then it was known as „*Zeichen mit dem Zirkel und Linial sowohl, als aus Freyer Hand*“ which translates as “drawing with a pair of compasses and a ruler and free-hand drawing”. In Austria the year 1774 is considered to be the beginning of arts Education, although the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna had introduced Drawing as a subject even in 1690. This is also considered the most important step in the acquisition of artistic abilities such as painting, sculpting, and constructing. The Academy of Fine Arts at that time supported the classical ideal of beauty transformed into institutionalized teaching of art due to the first books written by Cennino Cennini and Leon Battista Alberti. Art at the Academy was taught through three steps: a) copying of drawings, b) copying of sculptures and c) drawing nature – presented in the form of human body (nude drawing). At the same time, Austrian educational system became aware of the importance of the art of drawing in the field of numerous crafts and architecture. That is the principal reason why Drawing was introduced into elementary schools and special drawing schools. It is known that a graphic worker Jakob Mathias Schmutzer (1733-1811) was sent to Paris to become an expert in his field, and having come back to Vienna in 1766 he became the principal of the newly established Graphic Academy, and later the principal of the drawing lessons held in all and drawing schools in the country. Maria Theresa appointed

him the principal of the Arts Academy (Stahuljak, 1955). Jakob Schmutzer also made a significant contribution to the introduction of drawing into public and special drawing schools. With Abbot Felbiger in 1783 (Plank: 53) he published the instructions for teaching drawing in which he said that “drawing a human body” could no longer be contained in the subject area and that it should be abandoned.

Instead, the subject consisted of: a) introduction to the basics of practical geometry, b) copying of all kinds of architectural schemes starting with the system of various pillars, c) copying of various decorations. This Drawing curriculum, as well as the regulation on introduction of Drawing into public schools and the establishment of special drawing schools, was mandatory in the entire area of the monarchy, so it applied to Croatia and Slavonia as well. Moreover, according to the available data which A. Plank referred to, at that time, schools had to send students’ drawings to Vienna twice a year, in order to have the progress of teaching Drawing evaluated. This evaluation could nowadays be considered an external syllabus evaluation. At Graphic Academy of Jakob Schmutzer, Drawing lessons were organized for numerous students, among them Johann Mittermayer, the first master of drawing in the Zagreb Drawing School.

In accordance with the regulation of the authorities of that time, the first drawing schools in Croatia were founded: in Zagreb in 1781 with the above mentioned head teacher Johann Mittermayer; in Rijeka in 1787, but only for a short period of time, till 1789, and in 1790 it continued working again; in Varaždin in 1795 where Franjo Lendvaj was mentioned as the first teacher; and in Osijek in 1799 (Cuvaj, A., 1910). The data on the Osijek School of Drawing and its first teacher Antun Müntzberger (1774-1824), appointed by the decision of the Regency in Budapest at the beginning of 1800, and its curriculum, can be found in *Osječki zbornik* edited by Kamilo Firinger in 1962.

The introduction of Drawing lessons did not aim at preparing students to become artists, but to enable them to use drawings during their education in crafts. The crafts mentioned in all bigger Croatian cities at that time are (Stahuljak, M., 1955): building, stone-mason’s, plastering, cabinet-maker’s, cartwright’s, carpentry, blacksmith’s, goldsmith’s, saddler’s, jeweller’s, brazier’s, bell-founder’s, tinsmith’s, copper-smith’s, haberdashery, button-maker’s, cloth-weaver’s, weaver’s, harnesser’s, toolmaker’s and potter’s.

From the preserved materials we can conclude that the curriculum of drawing schools placed an emphasis on technical and geometrical drawing; that is, drawing which was functional for a certain craft. That is, enlightened absolutism paid special attention to students’ acquisition of competences for a craft, which meant that the outcomes of the learning process were measured by achievements within a certain craft. It was only in the beginning of the 20th century that drawing was seen as a basic art discipline and schools allowed children’s drawings with more freedom. As an art discipline drawing became a compulsory subject in Crafts School founded in 1882 in Zagreb (the current School of Applied Arts and

Design) and after that at the College for Arts and Crafts in Zagreb in 1907 (the current Academy of Fine Arts).

After the Second World War, the compulsory elementary education for everyone was introduced and within it Visual education as well. Drawing remained the main form of children's expression, and its purpose was to help develop painting and modelling and other activities as the function of aesthetic sensibility and introduce the world of art through the interpretation of paintings. The curriculum expanded depending on the development of society and educational system in which there was a greater understanding of the fact that a book, art, play, music, dance make up the inner life of most of children, as a culture they discover and a culture they would create themselves through songs, play, or expression through painting. To be more precise, great changes took place in that period, similar to those in Europe and America, due to the fact that elementary education became compulsory and because it was based on the equality of educational chances for all students, according to their abilities. That presupposes the ability of visual expression of all students, not only the talented ones, according to their preferences and capabilities. This educational development was greatly spurred by the post-war circumstances in which, in 1945 during the establishment of the United Nations, the foundations of a new policy of international understanding and equality were laid. This policy, as suggested by UNESCO, would be accepted in the fields of culture, science and education. At its first and second General conference in 1946 and 1947 UNESCO adopted a resolution which called for the support of Arts education. In 1948 UNESCO formed a Committee for Arts education with Herbert Read as the leader. During a UNESCO seminar in Bristol in 1951, InSEA (International Society for Education through Art) was established. All these events had their effect on Croatia as well, not only making it an active participant in international associations, but also a participant in the transformation of Arts education. Now, drawing skills, an obsolete concept of "hand practising" does not serve the function of crafts and cultural tradition, but is gradually perceived as a developmental activity and creative behaviour. Arts education changed its orientation by emphasizing individual expression, aesthetic impression and a positive effect of art on children's development, which meant:

1. A child's visual expression was taken seriously and analysed thoroughly.
2. Drawing practice gradually disappeared from everyday school life. Besides drawing, painting and modelling were introduced.
3. Visual topics were taken from students experience and interests.
4. Perception, pleasure and play replaced drawing drills.

It can be said that the area brought about a progressive change because art became the means of self-expression and creative acknowledgement through the usage of various visual materials. At that time Arts education was frequently connected with Music education, Technical education and mother tongue because

of a widely accepted opinion that children would grow up into whole, tough people through educational content connected in such way. All the above mentioned accounts for the fact that within the educational system Arts education, later called Visual arts, was allotted two lessons a week throughout all eight grades of primary school. Correlations of Arts education with other school subjects were made (Arkin, S.A., 1948; Poljak, V., 1964; Bodulić, 1972). After that period there was a range of school reforms, none resulting in a better integrated or co-ordinated school system. All the attempts to bind the subjects into curricular areas mostly ended as failures (Ivančević i Turković, 2001). Over the first fifty years institutionalized education was changing only in quantity, that is, there was an expansion of educational content, which consequently caused a total discrepancy between the quantity of educational content and the time spent on its implementation. The best suggestion for unburdening of students' workload through connecting similar school subjects into a common area was the one designed by D. Rosandić, J. Damjanov and others (1980), known as the Curriculum for linguistic-expressive arts area. This curriculum connects into one area the verbal language (mother tongue), visual language, auditory language and kinaesthetic language. Another area comprises literature, visual arts, music and dancing art. A special area in this curriculum comprises the language of film and stage, as well as performing and film art. Due to this curriculum for primary school, in regular education, Visual arts/ Visual culture occupy the place right next to the Croatian language.

However, in 1996, the Ministry of education, responding to the minister's suggestion to "unburden students' workload", abolished 1 weekly lesson of Arts education in primary schools, after Religious Education had been introduced in schools as a compulsory subject. The number of lessons was cut in half in the 5th and 6th grades, and in the 7th and 8th grades it was almost completely abolished. In 2002 the Ministry of Education and Sports drew up a document "Curricular approach to the changes in primary schools: the elaboration of the framework syllabus within the function of unburdening the students' workload" in which it is suggested that the content of Arts education should be integrated into other subjects whenever it is possible, in order to avoid overburdening of students. Later, European experiences have shown that this kind of integration of school subjects is a utopia, since artistic expression is then used as illustration, a decoration of other subjects' content, while at the same time it neglects the abilities which should be developed through Arts education. This is currently happening in Croatia. In other words, Croatia has seen the reduction of the number of Arts education lessons but at the same time it has become aware of the importance of Arts education, art literacy, visual communication in the context of contemporary society, which is absurd. The absurd is even greater if we take into consideration the new *Law on Education in Primary and Secondary School*, passed in July, 2008, which, in Section 4, points out that one of the educational aims is aesthetic education. However, what happens in practice is a completely different situation – can anything really be achieved with only one lesson per week?

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE POSITION OF ARTS EDUCATION IN 11 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

The discussion on the position of Arts education in compulsory education has become the main topic over the past few years in most of European countries, for many reasons. The first and maybe most significant one is the fact that integration processes in European politics reflect on the area of education in order to be brought closer together, to try and establish a common framework to provide mutual recognition and open new space for international cooperation. However, in order to think about the common educational framework, we have to take into consideration all social and cultural values and other factors which affect Arts education. Also, we have to analyse them thoroughly in order to grasp the differences in educational systems in different countries. Some countries have established concrete forms of active cooperation in their region, as early as the beginning of the previous century, despite great historical and cultural differences, such as Scandinavian countries (Lindström, 2007). This cooperation has spread to other countries after the Second World War, as described in the previous chapter. Lately, we have noticed a greater assimilation of educational policies of Eastern and Western Europe. In that sense Croatia is also trying to find its place in this new European educational area, by adopting European educational standards. It is important to point out that some European countries have made quality elaborations of their national curricula and national norms according to the law. Also, it is very important to follow the examples of good practice for those countries which are only just starting making their national curricula. The countries which have already designed a good national curriculum provide security for subject content, and Arts education as well, which is very important. It was for these reasons, that, over the past few years, numerous European seminars have seen presentations of the results obtained by comparative analyses of the status of Arts education in Europe.

The first analysis of this kind in Croatia was enabled by the Centre for Educational Research and Development of the Institute for Social Research Zagreb within a scientific-research project "*Evaluation of subject curricula and national curriculum*". The project leader was Branka Baranović. In its second phase the project focused on the comparative analysis of national core curricula for compulsory education in 11 European countries in order to bring closer to our educational practice different models, different concepts and content from other countries' experiences. The project focused on the study of concept, structure and content of European models of curricula with the aim of extracting the examples of good practice which could be applied in the design and development of the National curriculum for compulsory education in Croatia, which became the task our country has to complete after it had adopted Croatian National Educational Standard in 2006. The analysis of Arts education curricula is the contribution to the second project phase. With respect to this, Croatia has accepted the matrix

adopted in the common project. The matrix determines the content of the elements of subject curricula, the elements being: subject description, curricular area to which a subject belongs, educational aims and outcomes of the learning process, subject status in the curriculum, the weekly and annual number of lessons, cross curricular topics, didactical and methodological guidelines, the conditions of the teaching process and evaluation. The approach to the research of Arts education position retained the complete model of dividing European countries into four groups, according to the project rules (Baranović, 2007). That means that the first group is formed of: Finland, Norway, Sweden; the second group of: England, Scotland and The Republic of Ireland; the third is formed of: Austria, Slovenia, Hungary, and the fourth of: the Netherlands and Germany. As far as Croatia is concerned, Croatian National Educational Standard of 2006 was analysed.

The following presentation puts forward the examples from the first three groups after they have been singled out as specimens of content, structure and unity. They are considered the best examples that can be used as a significant reference for the improvement of our subject curriculum in Croatia.

In the first three countries, Sweden, Norway and Finland, Arts education has a similar position in compulsory education. That means that in all these three countries the subject is given the status of a compulsory subject by the national curriculum, and remains compulsory throughout all nine years of compulsory education in Finland and Sweden and 10 years in Norway. The content of subject curriculum is described in such a way that it enables a great freedom to teachers in the choice of appropriate teaching methods and the choice of teaching materials. The curriculum prescribes neither didactic guidelines, nor the organization of the teaching process, which means that a school can be flexible and free in distributing the number of lessons according to its needs. Apart from that, the characteristic of these three countries is that they link it with the crafts, which is common in their tradition and culture. **Norway** has a subject called *Arts and Crafts*, which means that it is permeated by these two contents, while their structure includes practical work and history of art. They place an emphasis on the individuality development and the expansion of creative ability. The subject curriculum does not describe the expected outcomes, that is, the students' achievements. **Sweden** has two subjects, *Arts* and *Crafts* in the same curricular area. The subject curriculum is oriented towards a student's achievements. In its content, Arts is similar to the same subject in Norway. The curriculum in **Finland** is considerably larger and contains two separate subjects: *Visual Arts* and *Crafts*, and has been precisely elaborated. That is why it deserves to be presented here in its entirety. That curriculum, with its standard content, places an emphasis on visual communications, new media and design. Apart from that, it prescribes visits to exhibitions and museums. The fact that the Finns combine visual art and visual communications in their educational system, as well as crafts and skills, applied arts and design, has a crucial role not only in the culture of Arts education quality, but also in design, for which the Finns are renowned throughout the world.

FINLAND

Table 1. Subject curriculum – FINLAND

Subject title	<p>1. Visual Arts 2. Crafts</p> <p>Both subjects are taught from the 1st to the 9th grade of compulsory education and make up Arts education divided into two phases: 1st -4th and 5th-9th grade.</p>
Curricular area	<p>Visual arts and Crafts are encompassed within the area of Arts, Crafts and Physical Education.</p> <p>It contains Music, Visual Arts, Crafts and Physical Education.</p>
Subject purpose	<p>The task of Visual Arts education in comprehensive schools is the support of visual thinking development, as well as aesthetic and ethical awareness in students, and preparation for independent visual expression. The key contribution of this teaching process is the understanding of the material forms of culture in society – in art, media and surroundings. The aim of this educational process is to help a student form his own attitude to art. Arts teaching process creates the basis for respecting and understanding Visual arts within Finnish culture, for understanding the youth culture and other cultures with which students are not familiar. Visual arts develop skills necessary for the creation of sustainable future.</p>
Subject purpose	<p>The starting point for artistic expression and artistic activity is the visual world which surrounds students, sensory perception, mental images and experiences. The aim of education is to develop creative imagination and encourage numerous skills which can help students solve problems creatively and develop learning through research. The subject field is also connected with experience, which has a specific meaning for students. Visual arts education has to take into account the inner integration of the subject, in such a way that the objects of observation, cognition and forming are simultaneously transformed into visual experience. The main content of art can always be transmitted in the same way. The thematic quality is such that it allows a relaxed atmosphere.</p>
Subject status	<p>A separate subject A compulsory subject</p>
Subject organization	<p>The subject encompasses cross curricular topics. Since Visual arts content is linked with visual communications, the thematic units of this subject link it with those subjects that provide education for communications, and they are: mother tongue, foreign language, music, history and society. Art enriches these subjects with its aesthetic and experiential aspects.</p> <p>Visual arts contributes to education for the surroundings because it sensitizes students to natural and cultural heritage. It is found in all subjects that encompass ecological topics.</p> <p>The subject is divided into two cycles: 1st -4th and 5th-9th grade.</p>

<p>Grades 1 – 4</p>	<p>At this stage in Visual arts teaching process children practice the usage of creative imagination and sensory perception in different ways. The approach is entertaining, through play. The main content of this education encompasses the basic skills of visual expression, the familiarity with materials and working approach to art characteristics. The emphasis is placed on artistic process, the phases of which are planned, sketched, the work is completed and then evaluated. Students are stimulated to improve and complete their work and then keep it after that.</p>
<p>Aims (1-4)</p>	<p>Students will –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Acquire skills and knowledge necessary for visual expression: observation, idea development, imagination, invention, creative problem solution, formation and approval of aesthetic choice, setting an aim. – Acquire skills necessary for the creation of image and space construction, acquire knowledge about materials. – Learn how to analyse and discuss their own work and the work of others, practicing the usage of the basic art notions and concepts and respect different views of art and visual communication. – Get acquainted with the visual tradition of their own culture and foreign cultures within the sphere of personal experience, Finnish building tradition, modern art, important buildings and natural surroundings of their own community, architecture and design. – Learn to appreciate aesthetic values, pleasure and functionality of their surroundings. – Learn to question the meaning of various media in their life. – Learn to use the tools for visual communication; learn to differentiate between imagination and reality.
<p>Subject content (1-4)</p>	<p>a) Visual expression and Visual thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Visual techniques, modes of expressions and materials: painting, drawing, graphics, design and sculpting – Elements of visual expression: balance, tension, rhythm, colour, form, space, movement, time and line – Studying and evaluation of the visual works of art and artistic practice, employing the precise terminology in the discussion <p>b) The knowledge of art and cultural expertise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Visits to local museums and art exhibitions; the insight into the work of an artist – Studying the works of art through students’ own work and their interpretation – The masters of the Finnish golden era: the specimens of contemporary art and art from various areas <p>c) Surroundings aesthetics, architecture and design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Introduction to nature and description of nature, buildings, buildings protected through cultural heritage regulations, recognizing changes in the surroundings – Analysis, design and forming of the subject; tri-dimensional construction; making landscape sketches and miniature models

	<p>d) The media and visual communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The elements of visual presentation: from a story towards a visual image, closing and overview, combining a text and with a visual image – Illustration, comics, advertisement images, photography, video, digital picture – Critical analysis and research of visual communication on television, computer games, films, comics and commercials
<p>Educational outcomes at the end of the 4th grade</p>	<p>A student will –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Know how to shape his thoughts, feelings and ideas into visual images, and how to transfer his observations into visual images – Be familiar with the elements of composition necessary for creating pictures and forming space, as well as the properties of materials – Know how to use the main tools and techniques in creating their own paintings, while using sketches as help in developing their own work – Know how to look after artistic tools and materials – Know how to make a record of their work process and use it in self-evaluation – Know how to discuss their own work and other students' work, know how to justify their artistic preferences and use the basic concepts of art – Know what an artist does and be familiar with the work of some Finnish artists; be familiar with visual expression of some foreign cultures, employing their own personal experience – Know what to do in museums and artistic performances, and with art in various contexts – Know how to use the works of art, pictures of the surroundings, nature and buildings, books, magazines, museums, galleries and the Internet as a source of information – Be able to recognize and evaluate aesthetic and ethical values in their schools and immediate surroundings – Know what architects and designers do, as well as be familiar with some of architectonic and designers' most important work – Be able to evaluate their own choice of media, make their own choices, confirm their personal attitude – Be able to detect and establish differences between the real and imaginary world – Be able to use some tools in visual communication – Be able to work alone and in teams
<p>Grades 5-9</p>	<p>Art lessons in this period place an emphasis on the technology of certain media as well as on the basics and techniques of visual expression, on the content of a visual image as an instrument of expression and communication. With the aid of visual materials, the lessons expand students' knowledge of art and history of art, as well as their abilities to interpret paintings. The aim of the subject is to increase students' level of understanding of different cultures and their interaction. Visual arts lessons have to create opportunities for students to create their own works of art and to have a constant insight into art. Their own work, the experience of the work process, group evaluation – all of these will develop abilities to understand artistic processes and help students study art and develop visual thinking.</p>

<p>Aims (5-9)</p>	<p>Students will –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Learn how to use basic materials, techniques, tools, modes of expression which art and visual communication employ – Learn to enjoy expressing their own ideas, observations, feeling for visual forms of expression, as well as understand how art presents various life phenomena – Understand the meaning of artistic process through their own experience of work – Learn to evaluate their own work and other students' work, as well as different approaches concerning content, techniques etc. – Learn to use all sources, even electronic communications while creating their own work of art, that is, all sources of information and experience – Be acquainted with the techniques of visual communication and apply them while expressing their own ideas in a certain medium – Study and evaluate art, visual communication and surroundings from the aesthetic and ethical point of view – Learn to work independently and in a team
<p>Content (5-9)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Visual expression and visual thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Drawing, graphics, painting, ceramics, sculpting, spatial art, art in surroundings, the deepening of visual thinking – The basics of visual communication: balance, tension, rhythm, colour, form, space, movement, time and line – Various styles in art, visual symbolism in the concrete visual expression – Expressing their own observations, thoughts and ideas through visual means b) The knowledge of art and cultural expertise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Basic features of contemporary art; history of art, visual world of different cultures – Visits to exhibitions and museums, introduction to artistic work and the usage of the Internet cultural services – Painting analysis: studying the structure of a painting, interpreting its content, artistic criticism e) Surroundings aesthetics, architecture and design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The research on the interaction between nature and developed surroundings, studying the buildings and building heritage, evaluating surroundings from different perspectives: aesthetic, ethical, ecological, spatial-planning – Introduction to the elements of expression, stylistic features, and to the tradition of architecture and design – Introduction to the most significant representatives of Finnish architecture and design – Observation, planning, and construction of space; introduction to design process; analysis of the connection between materials and their planned usage

	<p>f) The media and visual communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Analysing visual images to be used in a medium, structural and content analysis of media presentation – Photography or digital and video photography – The forms of visual description and special characteristics of illustrations, comics and moving images – Marketing channels and means of expressions – Graphic design and combined words and images, the basics of typography and make-up
<p>Educational outcomes at the end of the 8th and 9th grades</p>	<p>A student will –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Be able to express himself visually – Be able to use the means for constructing visual images and basic materials and techniques in visual art and media – Be able to choose the techniques and materials which are most suitable for his own work – Be able to explain the process of creating a painting, from the sketch to the completed work of art – Be able to recognize the key phenomena in art and be able to place them within their time and cultural context – Be able to analyse and interpret visual images in art and communication – Know how to use well the experience gained in encounters with artists, museums and exhibitions – Be able to differentiate among various aspects of interventions in the space: ecological, aesthetic and ethical – Be familiar with different phases of planning and design process, and be able to apply them in his own work – Be able to recognize stylistic features in architecture and buildings – Know the basics of visual communication and technology of the new types of media: photography or video photography, the trends in digital photography and graphic design – Be able to analyse the content, structure and visual realization of a work of art in a medium – Know how to observe and evaluate his own work and progress and use other students' opinions about his work – Be able to work independently, and cooperate interactively with others, to complete an assigned task – Know a lot about art, paintings and surroundings, natural and cultural heritage through books, magazines, museums, galleries, and the internet sources of information and his own personal experience
<p>Weekly number of lessons</p>	<p>The minimum number of weekly lessons is prescribed in such a way that schools can be flexible and free in organizing the lessons according to their needs. However, one lessons of Visual arts and one lesson of Crafts is obligatory throughout all nine grades.</p>

In the second group of countries **England** designed the national curriculum in 2004. It prescribes Arts and Design as a compulsory subject from the age of 5 to 14, and after that as an elective subject from the age of 14 to 16. England has also prescribed educational standards for each methodological unit for all subjects. As it considers itself to be the homeland of design, it is logical that the term design encompasses *Arts* and *Applied Arts*. What is specific about this curriculum is that it contains expected and outlined activities for working with children with special needs. **Scotland** has *Arts and Design* which is based on the instructions of Scottish Executive Education Department-a (SEED) published as a guide. Similar to England, it has the Law on Educational Standards in Scottish Schools, which was adopted in 2000 and also contains elaborate didactical and methodological guidelines for the implementation of teaching process. In both cases the subject curricula are not focused on the learning outcomes and make up for 15% of the overall number of lessons. The best elaborated curriculum in this group is the one of **Ireland**. This subject curriculum is so thoroughly elaborated and precisely structured that it can be used in the design and preparation of Croatian national curriculum.

IRELAND

The crucial feature of Irish educational system is that many children start formal education at the age of 4. In this pre-school period the emphasis is placed on language learning and on activities which require the use of various materials and aids in order to develop children's motor and sensory abilities. Compulsory elementary education starts at the age of 6 and is divided into:

1. Primary education from the age of 6 to 12
2. Post-primary education (junior cycle) from the age of 12 to 15

The Irish have the national curriculum which was adopted by the government, as was suggested by NCCA (Council for Curriculum and Assessment) which advises the minister of education and science on all curricular changes. NCCA is in charge of approving subject curricula and is advised by special committees. Due to this, Ireland has had curricula for each subject since 1996. Each subject curriculum contains: introduction, aims, broader aims and a table with number of lessons, content, skills concept and development, a guide for choosing the content, evaluation description. The curriculum for *Visual Arts, Crafts and Design* was created by the Curriculum Committee for Arts Education.

Table 2. Subject curriculum – IRELAND

Subject Title	Visual art Age: 6 do 12
Subject status	A separate subject A compulsory subject

Subject Organization	Cross curricular topics are described at the end of each unit. Visual content is usually related to music, acting and dancing, that is, the subjects within its curricular area, but with other subjects as well. The possibilities of relating subjects in this way are planned at the beginning of school year, during syllabus design. Some topics are related to Maths, such as shape: Sciences, such as materials; History, such as costumes.
Subject purpose	Visual art is a way of communication, the transfer of meaning through art. That is the unique symbolic domain and discipline with its special requirements, and the subject of learning as well. Visual art is a natural way of expanding and enriching a child's experience of the world. It teaches students how to establish contact between the world of imagination and the real world. Through drawing, painting, constructing and discovering, a child acquires experience and reacts to it, and tries to express its feeling about it. During educational process Visual art enables students to and prepares them for creative and aesthetic experience through analysing, discovering, experimenting, finding, forming and expressing through a range of different media. It encourages different forms of observation, helps student develop his own sensibility for the visual, spatial and tactile world and aesthetic experience. Visual art direct children's curiosity for educational aims. The perceptive awareness development helps students to be happy and interpret visual surroundings and works of art, but also contributes to learning of the content of other curricular areas. Creative achievements in art develop awareness of a student's own identity, boost self-respect and help create cultural awareness and empathy.
Reasons for Learning	Activities within Visual art curriculum encourage both creation of art and reacting to art. Drawing, painting, constructing connect various elements of students' experience, which enable a new conceptual development. Understanding visual images creates additional opportunities for learning and preparing students to express their ideas, feelings and imaginative insight. The possibility of exploring and analysing visual elements in the surroundings helps students grasp the nature of the world around them and to channel the innate curiosity to educational aims. The subject emphasizes a creative process and development of the ability to understand visual concepts. Observation, imagination and children's experience form the basis of artistic activity.
Curricular area	Arts education (visual arts, music and acting)
Visual Art Curriculum	It suggest the following acceptable media of expression, through which a student can explore, express, and interpret the world visually: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drawing - Painting and colour - Graphics - Sculpting and clay - Construction - Weaving <p>When necessary, teachers can use other media, such as: photography, film and video or computer graphics, under the condition there is a balance between two-dimensional and three-dimensional media.</p>

	<p>Visual elements of the curriculum are: line, shape, form, colour and shades, texture, patterns and rhythm and spatial organization. These elements are at the same time the elements of visual world and the language of visual communication. In visual education language is of vital importance for encouraging ideas and gathering experiences. To be able to talk about art is as important part of a child's development as expressing oneself through artistic means. That is why visual language is consistently planned and incorporated in arts education.</p>
<p>Subject Aims</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Help students develop sensibility to visual, spatial, and tactile world and to gain aesthetic experience – Help students express their ideas, feelings and experiences in visual and tactile form – Enable a child to feel pleasure in expressing through different media and enable them to have an opportunity to explore, experiment, an opportunity for creative imagination, design, discovery and work with various materials – Encourage understanding and personal responsibility of a child to a creative process which involves two-dimensional and three-dimensional art – Enable students to feel excitement and fulfilment for creativity and achievement in artistic activities – Intensify the sensibility to aesthetic experience and respect for visual art – Create an opportunity for students to understand how the work of an artist or a craftsman can influence their own work.
<p>Students' Achievement after the Lessons Completion</p>	<p>Having completed the lessons in this subject students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Observe and enjoy a range of familiar and unfamiliar objects and visual images in the surroundings and have their own attitude to them, while recognizing their visual characteristics – Develop sensibility for the quality of line, shape, colour and shades, texture, pattern and rhythm, spatial organization and three-dimensional form quality – Express ideas, feelings and experiences in visual form, imaginatively, with the feeling of pleasure and self-fulfilment – Experiment in a spontaneous, imaginative, well-structured way, through a range of materials, including a pencil, dye, crayon, markers, chalk, ink, clay, coloured paper, textile and material construction – Explore expressive and design properties of materials within two-dimensional and three-dimensional medium which includes: drawing, painting, graphics, sculpting/clay, construction, working with textile – Apply the skills and techniques showing sensibility for visual elements in their own work – Have an open mind and curiosity for the works of art and crafts – Explore the atmosphere, content and influence of works of art, especially when the influence reflects to their own work – Develop the skill of recognizing and commenting the important designer elements which refer to specific items, especially when they are hand-made – Respect the surroundings in which great works of art were made, as well as their culture – React to the experience of visual art in various imaginative ways – Use an appropriate language while describing visual-artistic experience

Subject Title	Arts, Crafts, Design Age: 12 to 15
Subject Status	A separate subject A compulsory subject
Subject Description	<p>The subject contains three interdependent disciplines. They are fundamental for human experience, and were prior to written language. All three of them have an important role in the evolution of man and cultural development. Each discipline exhibits its own way of thinking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – art emphasizes ideas, feelings and visual elements – crafts presupposes the right usage of tools and materials – design emphasizes planning, problem solving and project completion, using drawings as the means of thinking. <p>These disciplines bind the abilities which enable a man to shape the world for functional reasons and for the expression, and sharing of ideas and feelings. The contribution of visual and classical art to life is unique and brings enrichment of experience for everyone. That is why this subject, as the unique part of education has been given the central function of the total personality development, binding heart, head and hands, making an individual capable of shaping his own world reasonably and of understanding and respecting the work of others. This subject develops a range of individual qualities, especially those which imply individual initiative, persistence, sensibility and self-respect.</p> <p>The practical part of the main subject curriculum comprises drawing, two-dimensional art, crafts and design, as well as three-dimensional art, crafts and design with their supporting content. The teacher chooses at least one more option besides the compulsory part of the curriculum for the lower level, and at least two more options for the higher level, in order to make the curriculum adjusted to a student's stage of development, his abilities, previous experience and interest. Supporting content comprises: history, critical evaluation, evaluation, understanding, science, technology and the accurate work vocabulary.</p>
General subject aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – To support a young person's further development of knowledge, cognition, attitudes, skills and competences he has acquired during primary education – To expand and deepen the scope and quality of educational experience of a young person with regard to knowledge, cognition, skills and competences – To develop a young person's self-confidence and confidence in society, as well as initiative and competence through a wide, well-balanced general education – To prepare a young person for demands that further education, employment and life outside educational process would make – To contribute to a normal and spiritual development of a young person and develop tolerance and respect to the beliefs held by other people – To prepare a young person for the civil duty and responsibility, and national context for a wider European and global world
Outcomes at the end of the cycle (general)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Competences in literacy, counting, and speaking skills, all of which enable life in society – Experience in various domains of activities – artistic, intellectual, scientific, physical and practical – Formative experience in moral, religious and spiritual education

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Knowledge of and useful advice on things regarding personal health, sexual awareness and sex life – The knowledge of and respect for one’s social, cultural and physical heritage and surroundings – Understanding of and respect for relevant civic concepts – Understanding of and respect for the values of thinking and learning and positive attitude to education and opportunities that it creates
<p>Specific subject aims</p>	<p>Encourage students to form a well-informed, analytical and sophisticated attitude to the surroundings and help them establish the appropriate relationship with the world and visual, tactile and spatial sense.</p> <p>Develop a feeling of one’s own identity and self-respect through practical experience of expression.</p> <p>Develop students’ understanding of arts, crafts and design, and different contexts – historical, cultural, economic, social and individual.</p> <p>Develop students’ ability to apply evaluation of their own and other’s work in everyday contact with natural, social and man-made surroundings and mass media.</p> <p>Develop students’ practical understanding and competences for the principles and skills needed in Visual art and construction design and problem solving.</p> <p>Through a structured practical work enable students to develop aesthetic sensibility and the ability of a critical approach in respecting and assessing art, as well as the ability of imagination, creative originality and ingenuity.</p>
<p>Specific outcomes of students after the subject completion</p>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop their ability perception, presentation skills, artistic thinking and memory, and imagination. – Know how to react to an idea, experience or any other stimulus. – Work by imagination, memory and direct observation. – Use drawing for observation, description and analysis, as a means of thinking both in communication and expression. – Use the main two-dimensional processes in creating visual images, combining text with a visual image. – Use three-dimensional processes. – Use and understand elements of art and design. – Use various materials, media, tools and equipment. – Use the appropriate work vocabulary. – Understand relevant scientific, mathematical and technological aspects of art, crafts and design. – Implement a project from its start to its completion. – Have a critical attitude to their work during the process itself and after its completion. – Develop an awareness of historical, social and economic role and value of art, design and craft, as well as aspects of contemporary culture and mass media.
<p>Subject structure</p>	<p>Subject structure is divided into the compulsory part and optional, or elective content. Minimum common content is added one option at the lower level, and two options at the higher level.</p> <p>The compulsory part comprises: drawing, two-dimensional expression and painting, graphics, photography, graphic design.</p>

	<p>Three-dimensional expression comprises: modelling, casting, carving, construction.</p> <p>Elective options:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Animation</td> <td>Making a film</td> <td>Tapestry</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Metalwork</td> <td>Graphic design</td> <td>Stage design</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Batik</td> <td>Jewellery-making</td> <td>Making toys</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Graphics</td> <td>Work with leather</td> <td>Traditional crafts</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Publishing</td> <td>Multi-media sculpture</td> <td>Video film</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Calligraphy</td> <td>Packaging</td> <td>Weaving</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Carving</td> <td>Photography</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Computer graphics</td> <td>Pottery/ceramics</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Embroidery</td> <td>Puppetry</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Industrial graphics</td> <td>Soft sculpture</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fashion design</td> <td>Comics</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>At the end of a three-year programme students leave portfolios, sketch pads with homework assignments, notebooks with expanded options, three-dimensional and two-dimensional work, etc. The following elements are studied as integral components of art, crafts and design: dot, line, shape, shade, texture, colour, form, light, space, structure, pattern, volume, balance, scale, rhythm, unity, harmony, contrast, symmetry, proportion.</p>	Animation	Making a film	Tapestry	Metalwork	Graphic design	Stage design	Batik	Jewellery-making	Making toys	Graphics	Work with leather	Traditional crafts	Publishing	Multi-media sculpture	Video film	Calligraphy	Packaging	Weaving	Carving	Photography		Computer graphics	Pottery/ceramics		Embroidery	Puppetry		Industrial graphics	Soft sculpture		Fashion design	Comics	
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Curricular area	Arts education (Art, craft, design, music, acting)																																	
Weekly and annual number of lessons	<p>The 1990 curriculum prescribes the minimum number of lessons for each subject and each curricular area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Age 4 to 6 – 2 lessons a week for arts area – Age 6 to 12 – 3 lessons a week for arts area <p>In the post-primary grades of primary school all art subjects make up for 7.5% of the total number of lessons. That is, however, only a minimum number of lessons. Each school can have the freedom to expand some curricular areas, therefore the number of art subjects lessons can be expanded as well.</p>																																	
Evaluation and Assessment	<p>Evaluation is necessary and serves as a diagnostic procedure which helps establish what has been taught and what has been learned. This procedure is based on monitoring:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the level of the achieved aims 2. the level of individual achievements 3. the level of group achievement <p>Evaluation is the central component of teaching and learning. It serves for monitoring the process of learning and establishing the achievements in each curricular area. Through evaluation and assessment a teacher creates the whole picture of short-term and long-term needs of learning and plans future activities according to them. Evaluation also helps recognize particular problems which students encounter in the learning process, which helps assisting and helping students. Evaluation also helps in communication about a student's progress, in communication between a teacher and a student, a teacher and parents, and among teachers.</p>																																	

	<p>It helps a student become aware of himself as a student, and to develop the ability of self-evaluation. It also helps maintain education quality.</p> <p>In Visual art the following is evaluated:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ability of perception 2. ability of expression and skills 3. criticalismal and aesthetic awareness 4. a talent for artistic activities <p>Evaluation / assessment methods:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. teacher's observation 2. tasks assigned by the teacher 3. a completed work, portfolio, project 4. curriculum profile <p>Evaluation and assessment apply not only to students, but to teachers as well. Self-evaluation of teachers is a very important point in subject curriculum implementation. That means that a teacher gives careful thought to the strategy of teaching process and encourages students to make comments on his teaching. The accurate evaluation enables a teacher to identify his/ her weaknesses and oversights in curriculum, and will definitely increase the quality of teaching and learning.</p>
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From the comparison of these two groups of countries it can be concluded that Arts education in their compulsory education slightly differs in characteristics and formal structure, which is probably due to regional cultural characteristics and different traditions. So, it is wise to analyse at least one more subject curriculum from our neighbouring country as the one which was developed under similar circumstances. The neighbouring country is Slovenia, with which we share the experience of the common educational system. Moreover, it can immediately be noticed that Slovenia has retained the subject title *Arts education (Lkovni odgoj)*, and that there are numerous similarities, but differences as well. Still, the subject curriculum has been greatly improved and as such, it can be used in the transformation of the Croatian subject Arts education.

SLOVENIA

Table 3. Subject curriculum – SLOVENIA

Subject title	<i>Arts education</i>
Subject purpose	Develops students' ability to grasp space. The subject is useful for all areas because it enables managing the space and making visualisation. On the cognitive level it analyses the material world, while on the level of expression it shapes it visually. It encourages young students' feelings, attitudes and values development. The subject content is based on some art areas (drawing, painting, sculpting, space shaping and graphics) and their basic concepts which students acquire and develop with respect to their abilities of artistic expression. Some curricular areas are also connected with certain concepts of art theory and art history, taking into consideration students' age.
Subject Status	A separate subject A compulsory subject

<p>Subject organization</p>	<p>The subject includes cross curricular topics. The teacher has to find meaningful correlations with other curricular areas, taking into consideration the necessity to keep the unity of his own subject, at the same time keeping it intact. Art tasks have to be implemented in other subjects according to art principles. The teacher can find starting points for making correlations with other subjects in art itself, art techniques, motives or art concepts. Arts content correlates to other subjects: familiarizing with the surroundings, Music education, Slovenian, Maths, Physical education, and, in, post-primary levels of primary school, with Geography, Physics, Chemistry, History, Technical skills and Technology. The special position of art is found in the so-called <i>cultural days</i>, such as art exhibitions, encounters with artists etc.</p>
<p>Curricular area</p>	<p>Arts</p>
<p>The Subject Aims</p>	<p>Education helps discover students' abilities; encourage and direct their spontaneous artistic expression and the impression of the world; discover the uniqueness of individual artistic expression and spark their development; develop students' interest in the works of art of great artists as well as the aesthetic value of everyday objects in their surroundings. The specific goal of the subject is to prepare students for participation in the cultural life of its central and broader surroundings in order to understand the contemporary visual communication. In communication and interaction with the teacher, a student, through his practical work in this subject develops his ability for cognition, art thinking, emotion and motor skills, visual memory and imagination. It involves a complex interaction and permeation of creative and artistic abilities of students. The abilities are activated verbally, and realized through artistic expression. In that way students visualise their thoughts and feelings in a special way. Through artistic means of expression in various materials students show the imagined objects and phenomena from nature and surroundings and design their own work.</p> <p>General aims of the subject:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students develop perception, presentation skills, artistic thinking, artistic memory and imagination. – Students develop interest in various forms of artistic activity. – Students enrich and cherish ability of artistic expression. – Students acquire basic knowledge of art theory and develop a feeling for art value. – Handling various materials and tools helps student develop their motor skills, dexterity and sensibility. – While shaping spatial and sculpting volumes, students develop the relationship between the physical and sculpting, as well as the sense of space. – Students become familiar with the differences and similarities between the visual and artistic world. – Students develop the ability for artistic expression and creation. – Through arts practice students enrich their emotional, social and aesthetic personal qualities. – Through the awareness of their feeling students develop the sense of beauty. – Students grasp the role and significance of visual communications in the central and broader surroundings. – Students develop the ability to experience beauty in nature and art. – Students develop relationship to the works of art, national and world artistic cultural heritage.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students develop assumptions for making evaluation criteria for their own work, the work of their peers and the works of art. – Students develop the ability to understand various visual culture media and the ability to evaluate everyday objects, as well as the problems of art in their surroundings.
<p>Grades and educational cycles</p>	<p>Weekly number of lessons 1st -5th grade = 2 lessons 6th -9th grade = 1 lessons 1st – 5th grade – annual number of lessons = 70 5st – 9th grade – annual number of lessons = 35 The total number of lessons – 490.</p> <p>Art education curriculum encompasses three cycles: 1) 1st – 3rd grade – 210 lessons 2) 4th – 6th grade – 175 lessons 3) 7th – 9th grade – 105 lessons</p> <p>Besides the compulsory subject there is a compulsory elective subject from the 6th to 9th grade, one lesson a week, and it involves art workshop.</p> <p>Division into cycles was done due to the fact that curricular aims should be adjusted to students' age.</p> <p>a) In the first cycle the teacher does not insist on schematic solutions and specific art solutions, but allows a student to express himself through play in a completely individual way. Special attention is paid to the choice of motives – they are based on a student's perceptions from the real world.</p> <p>b) The second cycle involves students at the ages of 9 to 11. In this period cognitive and visual development becomes related. Students' art work is no longer subject to perception; students depart from intuitively acquired concepts and enter the period of visual realism. In this period a student is able to critically and rationally accept and respect the linear, colour and spatially-formed values. In the 6th grade artistic expression is even more formed, artistic expression becomes clear. Besides that, students are able to acquire art concepts successfully.</p> <p>c) Art education content in grades 7, 8 and 9 is a meaningful synthesis of all art areas (drawing, painting, sculpting, spatial shaping and graphics) with the problems of art. The acquisition of problems of art is based on a teacher's successful motivation of students for the methods of speaking, demonstrating and observing, as well as artistic expression as a conscious and creative realization of their own thoughts.</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Art evaluation is actually the assessment of students' work with respect to the amount of effort invested during a lesson and his work engagement. The evaluation aim is not only the grade of the final achievement, but the grade of a student's overall work, based on progress during the entire teaching process.</p> <p>This kind of evaluation (of work and progress) encompasses the achievements in affective, psycho-motor and cognitive areas. After the completion of each assignment the teacher, together with students, analyses their work, completed or uncompleted, and evaluates it according to the criteria pronounced by a certain assignment. The teacher makes notes on students' progress. The objective criticism should serve as guideline for the future work; it must encourage students' emotional, moral, motivational, aesthetic and intellectual components.</p> <p>The teacher writes students' grades according to the Regulation on Monitoring and Evaluating Students.</p>

In the detailed presentation of the subject content in the above mentioned countries, the examples that have been extracted have a high quality of covering all the elements of the prescribed matrix and abound in elaborate descriptions which can be used in the implementation in Croatia. In the given example of subject curricula and Croatian curriculum of Arts education, numerous differences can be found: European examples are significantly oriented towards the learning outcomes for the acquisitions of competences and achievement evaluation, while the same cannot apply to Croatian example. Also, the advantage of the above mentioned covers the connection of art and crafts which implies practical work and aesthetic dimension, which again helps develop skills and knowledge necessary for coping with life and the world of work.

After a detailed insight into the subject curricula of the countries presented in the table below, there are basic data on other analysed countries.

Table 4. The presentation of Arts/Visual arts status in 12 European countries

	Subject	Curricular area	Subject status		Number of lessons (weekly)	Note
			Compulsory	Elective		
Sweden	1. Art	Art: – Art	7 – 16	–	4%	– Schools can determine the number of lessons according to their needs or preferences ; – A lesson lasts 60 minutes
	2. Crafts-textiles-woodwork and metalwork	– Domestic science – Sports – Health education – Music – Crafts	7 – 16	–	6%	
Finland	1. Visual Arts	Art: – Art	9 years	–	1+1	
	2. Crafts	– Crafts – Physical Education				
Ireland	1. Visual Arts	Art: – Arts education	6 – 12	–	2	
	2. Arts, Crafts and Design	– Visual Arts – Music – Acting – Art, Crafts, Design	12 – 15		1	

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England	Art and Design	Art: – Art and design – Music – Drama	5 – 14	14 – 16	Number of lessons is left to schools to decide	Curriculum for students with special needs
Norway	Arts and Crafts	Art	6 – 16		min.10%	If necessary, schools can increase the number of lessons
Scotland	Art and Aesthetic Education	Art: – Art and design	-	3 – 5		Pre-compulsory education
	Art and Design	– Music – Drama – Physical Education	6 – 16		min.15% of the total number	
Austria	Art education	Art	grades 1 – 7		2	
			grades 8 – 9		1	
Hungary	Drawing and Visual Arts	Art	grades 1 – 6		2	
			grades 7 – 8		1	
Slovenia	Art education	Art	grades 1 – 5		2	
			grades 6 – 8		1	
The Netherlands	Drawing, art and crafts	Art: – Expression activities – Language – Music – Visual Art. – Handiwork – Playing and dancing	5 – 12		9% of the total number	Lesson duration: – Primary school – 60 min. – Secondary school – 50 min.
			12 – 16		9% of the total number	

Croatia	Visual culture	Art	7 – 15		1	
	Germany	Art	1 – 7		1	
8 – 9				2		

Note: It is evident from the table that there are numerous differences which make it difficult to establish the common characteristics because of different terminology in subject titles, and because of differences in curricular areas and the way in which the number of lessons are determined.

CONCLUSION

After a thorough insight into the core curricula in 11 European countries and into the Croatian primary school curriculum, we can notice the common attitude that art/visual education has an important status in the educational system, because art/visual art lessons develop visual thinking, students' aesthetic and ethical awareness, and enable their independent visual expression. The key contribution of this kind of teaching is the development of understanding of cultural forms in society, art, the media and environment. The teaching aim is to develop students' own attitude to art. Visual culture / Visual art education creates the basis for respecting and understanding art within students' own culture, as well as other cultures, with which students are not familiar.

The starting point in artistic expression and artistic activity is the visual world which surrounds students, sensory perception, mental images and experiences. The teaching aim is to develop creative imagination and spur development of numerous skills which can help students solve problems creatively and develop research learning. In other words, it is not only about acquiring the knowledge of art, but also acquiring the knowledge of creativity, analysis, and visual communication.

Also, in the countries that have been analysed an attitude prevails that activities within this subject help achieve general educational goals, such as the ability to be a good team-worker, to analyse the behaviour of other students, to respect the criteria and values of others, to take part in sharing responsibilities, acquire the ability to evaluate the achievement in culture and art, develop the ability to express one's own experience, develop the ability to work with various materials, tools and equipment, acquire behaviour patterns according to ecological, hygienic, health and ergonomic norms, develop the ability to plan free time purposefully.

That is why Visual art as a school subject has a compulsory subject status in all 11 countries, with the total number of lessons slightly bigger in the lower grades of primary school. In most of these countries the national curriculum prescribes the minimum number of compulsory lessons, and allows schools to be

flexible in the interpretation of the national curriculum, and to increase the number of lessons, if necessary. However, it does not imply that Arts education in these countries has taken its rightful place. Even the most developed countries have still not reached the aim suggested by UNESCO (Helsinki, 2003; Lisbon, 2006) and INSEA, that Arts education should become the basis of formal and informal education, starting from the belief that creative abilities development through art facilitates the acquisition of knowledge and enables quality education. Moreover, teachers, art pedagogues, in many European countries are not satisfied with the subject status within school curriculum, as an example from Finland illustrates (Lindstrom, 2007). In March 2006, teachers gathered 16,000 signatures in their petition against the low number of art lessons in schools.

Still, it can be detected that the subject has a better status in the countries in which the curriculum development falls under the scope of national institutions, such as SLO, the National Institute for Curriculum Development in the Netherlands, NCCA– the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment in Ireland, etc. At the same time, in these countries development of the national curriculum is encompassed within strategic plans for society development and is subject to frequent changes (every 3 to 4 years) which, as a rule, improve the position of Art education expanding it to design, crafts, new media, visual communications etc. This expansion, however, is not always followed by a bigger number of lessons, so there is a discrepancy between a demanding curriculum and the time planned for its implementation.

Generally speaking, it could be said that Visual education has a better status in the above mentioned countries than in Croatia. The status of Visual education in Croatia is worse, mostly because in our educational system art still has not been given a right to truth cognition and has been expected only to help prepare children and young people for the visual world.

Before comparison with Croatian circumstances, it should be pointed out that Visual education can be found nowhere in Europe under the subject title *Visual culture* as in Croatia. Only in the ungarian national core curriculum can we find the term “drawing and visual culture”, while the subject title is *Drawing and Visual Art*. Europe prefers the following subject titles: Fine arts, Arts and crafts, Visual arts, Arts and design, etc. Therefore, during the harmonisation process, we should consider changing the subject title into Visual arts. Through the change of title the subject could encompass new media (photography, film and video and computer graphics) and visual communication, that is, to the content of this subject as seen in European examples. The qualitative analysis of European subjects’ content it found that in most of the cases the subject Visual art is connected with Crafts and design, which is not the case in Croatia. The representation of cross curricular topics in the Croatian educational system is significantly lower than in the European examples. The Croatian educational system has not recognized yet the value of Art education as the means for learning other school subjects.

Further on, European examples with well-elaborated didactic and methodological guidelines make it evident that the national curriculum prescribes the compulsory cooperation between schools and museums, galleries, crafts centres etc., which is not the case in Croatia.

As has already been said, the number of Art education lessons in Croatia has been significantly reduced since 1996; actually, it has been cut in half, from two lessons a week to one lesson, throughout the compulsory education. This change has caused serious problems in education. It is impossible to cover all dimensions of Art education: studying the works of art, direct contact with the works of art, and participation in artistic creation. Since children and teenagers in Croatia, unlike in most of European countries, cannot have quality art lessons in any form of extracurricular activities, it is extremely important that within the school curriculum there is enough space for expanding the content of Visual art. The fact is that the Ministry of science, education and sports has invested certain effort in curricular changes by designing Croatian National Educational Standard and Primary school syllabus, but, unfortunately, Croatia does not have the national core curriculum yet. Discussions on subject content still use an obsolete terminology, and there are few people who can say that they understand the concept of curriculum. In that sense, Croatian educational policy should rely on positive European experiences.

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Translation from Croatian: Mirta Kos Kolobarić