

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ART EDUCATION TO EDUCATIONAL TRANSITIONS

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Abstract/Povzetek The main purpose of this conceptual paper is to place selected areas of art education in parallel with educational transition. Thus, transition is associated with aesthetic behaviour and aesthetic biography, two notions that may represent two fundamental approaches to art education coined in German / Austrian / Swiss art education theory in recent decades. Both appear to be promising in regard to their potential linkage with transitional education. The study proposes a development in art education that includes and stresses an awareness of transitions; thus, we believe, art education holds great potential to contribute to successful educational transitions throughout early childhood education, kindergarten, school, university and the early phases of professionalization.

Keywords:
art education;
professionalization;
transitions

Ključne besede:

likovna vzgoja;
profesionalizacija;
prehodi

Prispevek likovne vzgoje k prehodom v vzgoji in izobraževanju Glavni namen tega konceptualnega članka je izbrana področja likovne vzgoje umestiti vzporedno s prehodi v vzgoji in izobraževanju. Prehod se tako povezuje z estetskim vedanjem in estetsko biografijo, pojmom, ki lahko predstavljata dva temeljna pristopa k likovni vzgoji, ki sta se v zadnjih desetletjih izoblikovala v nemški, avstrijski in švicarski teoriji likovne vzgoje. Oba se zdita obetavna glede možnih povezav z vzgojo in izobraževanjem na prehodih. Študija predlaga razvoj v likovni vzgoji, ki vsebuje in poudarja zavedanje prehodov. Verjamemo, da ima likovna vzgoja velik potencial prispevati k uspešnim prehodom v vzgoji in izobraževanju v celotnem zgodnjem otroštvu, v vrtcu, v šoli, na univerzi in v zgodnjih fazah profesionalizacije.

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Introduction

This study deals with educational transitions. Research on transitional education has recently been established as an important contribution to pedagogy. One example is the transition model according to Griebel and Niesel (2011), which is particularly relevant throughout elementary pedagogy, primary school, secondary school, university and even during the early phases of professionalization. In order to work, transition education requires the development of new concepts and cooperation from all involved. Transition processes comprise various levels. Initially, we can distinguish the level of the individual student, the interactional level and the contextual level of institutional and other frameworks. We will mostly rely on Griebel and Niesel's (2011) model in this paper; however, several other models of transition could also support our argument.

In recent years within the German speaking countries, new approaches in art education have dealt with how the position of art education in the entire spectrum of education and training could be secured and, if possible, enhanced. While highly praised in Sunday speeches, quite often art and music classes appear mostly irrelevant in daily competition with mathematics, science or language classes (Peez, 2008). Hence, art education theory should seek overarching approaches as a way to anchor visual or musical education for learners; certainly, such anchoring is not necessarily geared to fixed framework conditions for specific age groups. We do not want to overburden art and music classes with too high expectations. Yet, many of the new approaches in German art education theory do align with the statement that education aiming at personality development has become fact in our schools (Budde & Weuster, 2018). This also applies to transitional pedagogy, once we stop focusing only on those few prominent moments of school entry, school leaving, and so on. Thus, these new approaches to art education may be able to access precisely the same interfaces that are of concern to transition research.

Methodology

As elsewhere, the importance of transition is poorly understood within art education. Hence, the present study aims at initiating conceptual reflection. Overall, we enquire about potential linkage between art education theory and transition research. Our first research question asks what models of educational transition and art education could be placed in parallel (RQ1); our second research question enquires how their encounter could inspire pedagogy in theory and praxis (RQ2). Eventually, bringing together and combining scientific approaches from the fields

of transition and art education aims to serve practical purposes in the everyday procedures of schools and similar institutions. Given the paper's limited scope, we are unable to discuss our RQs comprehensively. Thus, within the results section, we merely depict three models as examples in order to initiate the proposed discussion within art education and education in general.

The model to represent transition research is the one coined by Griebel and Niesel (2011). The paper begins by taking two main components of this model under closer examination: Bronfenbrenner's (1981) ecological view of development and Lazarus's (1999) view of stress. Moreover, we add a fundamental anthropological view with Friedrich Nietzsche's praise of transition as part of the human condition. The two models to represent art education theory are the model of aesthetic education and the idea of aesthetic experience as a core element of art education. Both of these suggestions have been extremely fruitful within recent decades; yet, they are conceptions of aesthetic education and far from being fully realized in the classroom anywhere. Nevertheless, as conceptions, they can be analysed for their relevance to transition pedagogy. Within the field of aesthetic education, we also examine a contribution meant for early childhood education and, thus, applicable to any transition period in a person's schooling and training career.

The term training represents a prototype of transition education, both in transition research in general and within this paper. Training thus applies to education across all possible ages.

Results

Transition research

Transition as a basic human condition

„Was groß ist am Menschen“, (what is great about a man), says philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, „das ist, daß er eine Brücke und kein Zweck sei“ (that is: he is a bridge and not a purpose). According to this idea, a human being per se is "a transition"; to be a bridge is what makes him/ her amiable, says Nietzsche (1907, p. 16) (W.Weinlich, Trans.). The Übergang (transition, bridge) might also be an Untergang (downfall). It always I, in a sense, since it ends the former; it ends what has been. For Nietzsche, however, to be human means to accept being a bridge / transition and to live this calling heroically (see Nietzsche, 1907, p. 16).

Within the context of this paper, we note that the classical problems of training linked with transition do not occur by chance and are far from heroic acts. The environment (contextual level of the transition model) of the learner changes, and within the new context, it is necessary to re-develop. Established structures, possibilities and routines have been lost or have disappeared; the conditions for ego development change with its environment. In this respect, transition periods can also be associated with anxiety, stress or overwhelming demands.

Transitions are life events that require coping with multiple levels of discontinuity, accelerate processes, stimulate intensified learning, and are perceived as significant biographical experiences of change in identity development. (Griebel & Niesel, 2011, pp. 37-38, W.Weinlich, Trans.)

On the individual level, we experience strong emotions as well as stress if a child does not succeed in establishing a secure relationship with a new caregiver or teacher during initial phases of new environments. It is thus necessary to create relationships between children and educators that foster security (see Griebel & Niesel, 2011, p. 19).

However, Nietzsche could help us to accept transition not only as a fundamental condition of being human, but also as a possibility, as a special potential. From this perspective, we should remember that transition can be a self-determined activity: a bridge is constructed, and a transition is created, and this bridge is like the human being in transition. For Nietzsche, transition is the longing of man (see Nietzsche, 1907, p. 19). At times institutions may have too little tolerance for the risk and uncertainty involved in transition and change, and consequently for adolescents who feel the need to re-create themselves continuously. This active component in transition -- which on an individual level might not follow the timeline of the contextual level at all -- could perhaps be valued more in the light of Nietzsche's thought. Furthermore, if transition is a human condition, living it out should be associated with gaining autonomy, and active participation of learners in designing their transitions should allow space for their choices, their success or their failure.

Transition and eco-psychological development

Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Developmental Psychology from 1979 (1981) represents a milestone in transition research. The foundation of this theory is a basic scheme of behavioural research that constantly adapts the individual to changing environments. Bronfenbrenner describes the environment of the developing

human being in four layers, micro, meso, exo and macro systems, which surround the individual like concentric circles (Bronfenbrenner, 1981, p. 37).

A microsystem, according to Bronfenbrenner, is "a pattern of tasks and activities, roles and interpersonal relationships experienced by the developing person in a given area of life" (Bronfenbrenner, 1981, p. 38, W.Weinlich, Trans.). The first and most important microsystem is therefore usually the family; it is supplemented in the course of the first years of life by the microsystems of kindergarten, playground and circles of friends and, finally, by primary school. Adaptation to the environment is not the only factor in development; it is embedded in a network of interactions in the space of the microsystem. Mesosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1981, p. 41) are also composed of several microsystems. The child's environment becomes increasingly complex. In the mesosystem, which spans the areas of kindergarten, school and friends, new interactions between teachers, friends, parents and parents of friends become decisive in the development of the child. The child itself is by definition actively involved in all these interactions. Exosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1981, p. 42) describe areas in which the individual is not directly involved, but which have an influence; for a child, this would include, for example, the circle of friends of older siblings or the parental workplace. Macrosystems describe the "fundamental similarities in form and content of the systems that [...] exist or might exist, including their underlying worldviews and ideologies" (Bronfenbrenner, 1981, p. 42, W.Weinlich, Trans.).

Bronfenbrenner also mentions ecological transitions, "when a person changes their position in the ecologically understood environment by changing their role, their sphere of life or both" (Bronfenbrenner, 1981, p. 43). This approach crucially emphasizes reciprocity and dependence. Ideally, the child also plays an active role, but at the same time, the transition happens passively. In the transition from kindergarten to elementary school, the child enters a new sphere of life and changes their role in the space of the mesosystem: they become a schoolchild. Ecological developmental psychology is somewhat reminiscent of the fact that parents also have to change their role: they transition to parents of a schoolchild from parents of a kindergarten child (Grotz, 2005, p. 22). Interaction and dependence thus suggest that all those involved in the transition should, if possible, work together to co-design all the necessary changes. Bronfenbrenner claims that the development-promoting potential of the new sphere of life is more advantageous if the child undergoes a quasi-organic transition, meaning that certain people from the former sphere of life are also part of the new one (Bronfenbrenner, 1981, p. 201); or that actors in both spheres of life share relevant information and experience prior to the

transition (see Bronfenbrenner, 1981, p. 208, W.Weinlich, Trans.). This could happen, for example, when kindergarten teachers, teachers and parents know each other before the child enters school, and a rudimentary yet personal exchange can occur between actors.

Transition and stress

In transition research, much attention has also been paid to stress theory as it describes and depicts conditions of and reactions to stressful situations (Griebel, 2004, p. 89). In this context, Richard Lazarus's model is often used, which offers an assessment of how those affected play a central role in both stress experience and stress management. According to this theory, stress arises when the affected people test their internal or external resources or feel a degree of insufficiency. The affected person then perceives the adaption as stressful. Stressful adaptations can be perceived as challenging, threatening, or even as causing damage or loss. However, only a challenge can be associated with unproblematic development of the personality. Therefore, the first step in coping with stress is a reassessment of the situation (Lazarus, 1991 and 1999). For transition research, this means that the primary assessment of the child is decisive in determining how threatening or even damaging an over-demanding transition can be. The provision of additional social or human resources could absorb negative stress (Grotz, 2005, p. 30). Children are able to find this support if they can perceive and accept the adaptation as a positive challenge.

Transition as a co-constructive process

Since the beginning of the 1990s, there have been considerable attempts to produce a model of transition as a family event (Cowan, 1991). Wilfried Griebel and Renate Niesel developed a model at the Institute for Early Childhood Education (IFP) in Munich that adapts and develops these experiments. The ecological-psychological approach of Bronfenbrenner and the stress theory of Lazarus are taken into consideration. The authors define transitions as "Life events that require coping with discontinuities at multiple levels, accelerate processes, stimulate intensified learning, and are perceived as significant biographical experiences of change in identity development" (Griebel, 2011, p. 37, W.Weinlich, Trans.).

Griebel and Niesel view the innovation of their approach as having brought "the identity of the individual as experienced status, self-concept and localization of the self in one's own life story in connection with transitions" (Griebel, 2004, p. 93,

W.Weinlich, Trans.). Furthermore, this model strives to include all individuals involved in the transition, as well as their mutual relationships and interactions. In this respect, the authors succeed in laying a foundation for the successful design of educational transitions (compare Griebel, 2004, p. 93 and p. 119).

The model includes family members, educators, primary school teachers and all actors in the child's social environment. The main difference between parents and children compared to the educators, however, is that the former must actively go through the transition; however, the educators involved experience no change in their identity and play only an accompanying role. The parents have a dual role because they are both recipients of support from teachers, and supporters of their children in transition (Griebel, 2004, p. 121). Without involvement from the parents, there can be little feedback about the child's creativity. Therefore, for a positive transition, it is important to consider all actors in the social environment.

It is important to remember that transition is a process for which an exact time frame cannot be determined. The appropriate preparations for school enrolment, for example, must start in kindergarten; different individual speeds of adaptation must also be accounted for (Griebel, 2011, p. 118).

The children and parents must be able to adapt on three levels: the individual, the interactional and the contextual. The adaptation accomplishments can be understood as development functions. At the individual level, the development of identity takes place for both children and parents during school enrolment. The parental role changes based on the child's new relationships and interactions with new non-family actors. The parents must adjust to this individually and reinvent their role. Strong and ambivalent emotions, such as anticipation, insecurity, fear or curiosity, must be regarded as normal and require regulation by children and parents. The development or acquisition of emotional competences is an integral part of this process. On the interactional level, the task of the child is to build new relationships. Old relationships are sometimes lost, and often change. Loss and role growth both need to be mastered. School itself is in turn linked to the individual expectations of parents. Parents of the transitioning children are also challenged to build new relationships. On the contextual level, enrolment in school requires synchronization of family and school. Formal education and its curricula replace the forms, methods and content of kindergarten (Griebel, 2004, p. 123, and 2011, p. 119).

During the transition phase, previous experience and skills are mobilized and transferred to the new area of life. The co-constructive process brings existing experience, potential and development status into the new situation. Each child should have an individual and appropriate fit of requirements and conditions; a successful transition is crucially dependent on this. Therefore, communication and participation of all actors involved is conducive to a successful transition. Fig. 1 shows the co-constructive process schematically. Through communication and participation, parents and children jointly manage learning and development processes. The interactional level is re-evaluated (see Griebel, 2004, p. 125, and 2011, p. 37).

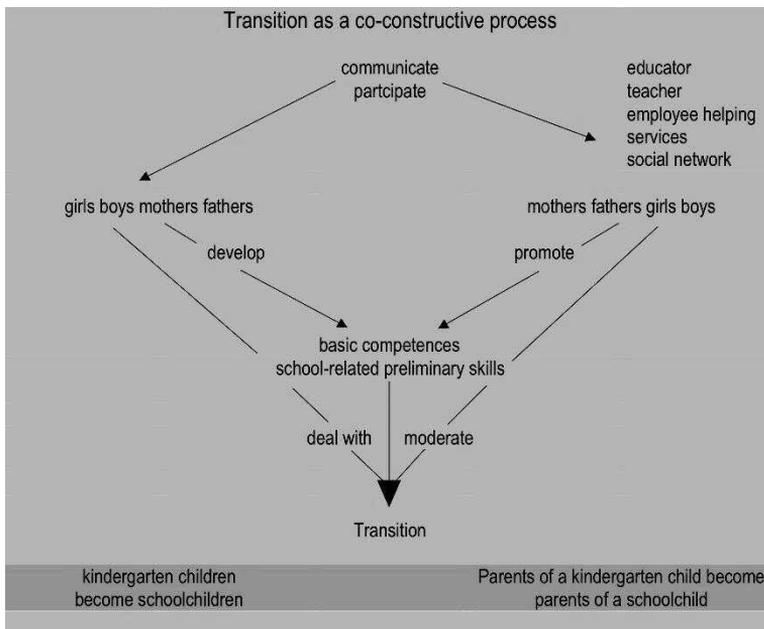


Figure 1: Transition as a co-constructive process (Source: Griebel/ Niesel, Transitionen, p. 120, W.Weinlich, Trans.)

Aesthetic behaviour and aesthetic education

Aesthetic behaviour

Aesthetic behaviour refers to the artistic creative process as well as artistic perceptions. (...) The aesthetic refers to objects and persons that are perceived separately because they exert a special charisma, appear beautiful, arouse pleasant

or different feelings and stimulate behaviour (Schurian, 1989, p. 126, W.Weinlich, Trans.).

An experimental, playful-exploratory form of behaviour exists, defined by distinct features. Schurian specifies that the reflexive level can only be reached in adolescence:

Children are often linked psychologically to the aesthetic, e.g. in terms of creativity and other symbolic activities (language, play). Sometimes the source of artistic creativity is also transferred in childhood by the arts (Hundertwasser, 1984). Nevertheless, childlike creativity is fundamentally different from aesthetic behaviour (see Masten, 1986, Harrington et al., 1987, Hammer, 1984, W.Weinlich, Trans.). The child - in continuous exploration of the new environment - uses creative, symbolic, instrumental and animistic behaviours. At this level, however, the child is unable to abstract from its behaviour and self-reflect. This is only possible in adolescence. (Schurian, 1989, p. 126, W.Weinlich, Trans.)

Aesthetic behaviour is thus manifested in many ways in both the productive and receptive form.

Aesthetic education

The task force of the Association for Art Education (BDK - Fachverband für Kunstpädagogik) has presented a model of aesthetic education, (Arbeitsgruppe Kunstpädagogik, 2009, p. B1 - B15) that focuses on an area of transition other than school transition, since it examines the toddler instead. Nowadays, many babies and toddlers will receive childcare from a very young age. The contribution of the task force argues that aesthetic education in early childhood is meaningful. This argument is placed in the context of elementary education, which now concerns day nurseries as well as day care centers.

The approach is based on aesthetic behaviour during early stages of childhood. The current consensus seems to be that "children have dialogue and make exchanges with their world from the very beginning" (ibid. p. B2). Within this exchange, self and world are interpreted, created, designed and contrived. The task force describes the aesthetic world-self relationship in the classical philosophical sense, but then also implies the active construction of self and world when it comes to aesthetic behaviour.

Aesthetic perceptions and expressions of children are differentiated, complex and dialogical processes of employment and exchange with oneself and the world. These processes are about encounter and resonance, about observing and interpreting, acting, marvelling and understanding. (Arbeitsgruppe Kunstpädagogik, 2009, p. B3, W.Weinlich, Trans.)

Aesthetic behaviour is thus the translation of world to the senses, and "at the same time, intentional, establishing sense and meaning, interpreting oneself and the world" (Arbeitsgruppe Kunstpädagogik, 2009, p. B2), while being a matter of both perception/creation of surroundings and identity. Hence, an educational accompaniment of aesthetic behaviour also makes sense at an early age. Aesthetic behaviour unfolds individually "in the interplay of reception and production" (Arbeitsgruppe Kunstpädagogik, 2009, p. B3). Therefore, aesthetic education cannot be limited to sharpening perceptions or learning specific techniques (painting, making music, dancing, etc.), but should endeavour to be relevant to the daily construction of the learner's self and world. Reception, viewing the world as material, begins with perception; handling and comprehension thus already include rudimentary production. Intrinsic processes take place at the same time: fantasy and sensation constantly link the self and the world in new ways (Arbeitsgruppe Kunstpädagogik, 2009, p. B5-B9).

In sum, actual aesthetic design processes result from reception and production processes. This result can be pedagogically manipulated or can happen spontaneously. It is up to educators to intervene in events, to stop processes, to encourage, or to steer in certain directions (Arbeitsgruppe Kunstpädagogik, 2009, p. B10 - B13). Section 4.1 discusses the linkage with transition.

Aesthetic experience and biography

Within art education theory, aesthetic experience is currently an important term that cannot easily be implemented in practice. The concept also has substance in terms of the transition theme. Georg Peez developed an elaborate argument to support this. This approach also succeeds in connecting art education to the existential experience of children and adolescents. For Peez, aesthetic experience begins with increased attention, which is aroused by special events or objects in the child's environment. These events involve the experiencer; they evoke a sense of immediacy and surprise and represent a discontinuity that breaks perceptual habits and everyday occurrences.

Aesthetic experience is thus also an experience of the self, combining openness and curiosity with meditation and emotional involvement and, ultimately, with an enjoyment of perception and pleasure. Aesthetic experience includes excitement, surprise and wonder. The experience of subjectivity and individuality in the aesthetic experience also involves stimulation of the imagination; the known and familiar is now mixed with new, unknown associations, before finally being reconciled with the existing interpretation of world and self, even before the child can relate this information to known cultural and artistic phenomena. Aesthetic experience is also a privileged starting point for one's own artistic production, which captures and communicates the experience (see Peez).

Discussion

Aesthetic behavior and transition: World and self

The aesthetic relationship of world and self tends to comprise ever changing aesthetic behaviour, according to the elementary school task force. It thus has a high potential for transition in the Nietzschean sense: "Observing children in their curious, adventurous and unconventional devotion to the world makes it obvious that children actively accept the challenge of life from birth: children are actors in their individual development, progressing within social and cultural contexts" (Arbeitsgruppe Kunstpädagogik, 2009, p. B3)

In the production process, "the active design of reality can be witnessed" (ibid.), including its growth and change. Aesthetic behaviour thus affirms and creates everyday transitions in exploring, re-comprehending and fantasizing, and in the everyday progress of early childhood development. In parallel, the procedures and praxis of art classes can easily be imagined as reflecting the individual growing into a new spatial environment, a new school, etc. Similarly, art and music classes may on a regular basis thematise the way we perceive/create the world, with the classroom acting as a token for the world. Learners could also reflect musically or artistically on how they gradually grow out of a framework, or gradually learn to create it.

Overall, aesthetic education's contribution to transitional education could be viewed as a didactic thematisation of transition, but not so much in the form of drawings of the learner in front of the new school building, but more as a constant reflection of the self in its changing relationship with its surroundings.

Perhaps, the task force's contribution does not sufficiently take into account that reception and production of the material world are also forms of communication. The world is always mediated by parents, educators and the media; thus, aesthetic behaviour remains embedded in interaction. However, this hardly represents an obstacle to a connection with the co-constructive transition concept and its emphasis on interaction. One possibility is to introduce group work into art classes. As groups, learners, could take on certain public areas of the school and classroom as their responsibility in the sense described above--by temporarily exhibiting the results of their work there, or even constantly adding to the design of these places. Performances or aesthetic actions/events could even become an endeavour for the entire class: for instance, the creation and maintenance of a recreational corner or organisation of a simulated fare.

Image imagination begins at a young age with the onset of the ability to draw; when thematising transition as a human condition in the fashion described above, various media corresponding more closely to the world of adolescents easily come into play:

It often happens that many children in the transition to puberty give up their ability to draw because their ability to represent does not correspond to their complex visuals, their communication and expression, so it is then worth considering whether the computer is a suitable tool, to bridge the discrepancy between representation and image concept. (Kirchner, 2003, p. 101, W.Weinlich, Trans.).

Media other than drawing may comprise SMS texts, smart telephone applications of photography and film, or computer applications. The interactive construction of self and world can be worked through in group assignments - as already stated - as well as within interactive media, starting with applications that enable users to re-design stock footage, and extending to interactive programming on websites such as <https://p5js.org/>, which give students the opportunity to practice their aesthetics through programming.

Eventually, even though thematising constant transition of self and world, aesthetic education, or simply art and music classes, provide continuity. Hence, art education offers itself as a permanent mesosystem, with changing protagonists, that deals explicitly with identity and the world. Aesthetic education could and should in that sense be institutionalised. The curiosity that seeks constantly to expand self and world could be re-evaluated in teaching materials and methods. In addition, the need to establish oneself in the world could be didactically re-defined with a focus on art and design skills. Fundamentally, the chance to practice drawing and painting

creates a permanence, for instance, in the transition from kindergarten to school, which children might not otherwise experience. In the context of the transition concept, it is generally advocated that children transitioning at the kindergarten and primary levels be supported in terms of personnel and location. Such permeability relieves the stress of the transfer, while supporting the transition to the new situation (Brandl, 2016, p. 272). Primary-level art education would be a formal breakthrough in terms of crossing the formal education barrier, as some preschool and kindergarten children were allowed to experience. However, beyond that, a structural commitment is certainly needed in order to anchor art education in the elementary education system. Relevant further training of educators can promote cooperation in practice.

Aesthetic experience and transition: Aesthetic biography

Over recent decades within German art education theory, a wide range of attempts have aimed to bring art classes closer to the real world and existence of learners. Aesthetic experience, even though a core notion of many attempts, is not an easy notion to concretize for art and music classes; as described above, aesthetic experiences imply authenticity; so, strong aesthetic experiences for today's youth would mostly be fostered by popular culture. At the same time, by means of copying from magazines, adolescents often enlarge their repertoire of image production; popular stereotypes, idols and icons become important symbols in complex and changing processes of identity formation (see Glas, 2016). Hence, art education eager to involve aesthetic experience must be tolerant of the stereotypes and preferences of learners rooted in popular culture as, for instance, represented by mainstream media or gaming.

One methodological concept, usually referred to as the aesthetic research (see Kämpf-Jansen, 2001), has found particularly widespread reception and application, even in primary education. The setting is process-oriented and similar to a workshop. Anything can become a subject of the aesthetic investigations learners set out to conduct. It is therefore common for the subjects of aesthetic research to have strong personal and biographical meaning. Learners may keep research diaries for their investigations, and thus develop a sense of aesthetic biography.

Aesthetic research projects could also be designed and set out for learners in a stricter form. Art educator Alessandra Nitsch, for example, gave learners in the eleventh grade the task to explore the forensics of the notion everyday life. The class collected footprints, arranged, photographed, and drew forensic details and

arranged small tours for presentation at the school (see Nitsch, 2001, p. 42). Such a method could be feasible for primary school or kindergarten.

Peez notes that bringing too much biography orientation into the classroom could risk "centring on the personal, subjective perspective," while "working on favourite topics and hobbies" (ibid.). Within the framework of this study, however, we note that especially in times of transition, a biographical approach could support the co-constructive process, since by constructing an aesthetic biography, learners practice cultivation and reflection of their own identity formation processes. Such practice and implicit awareness can only support learners in their ideal roles of being active participants in transition processes. Autonomy requires space to create experiences with one's own preferences, history and so on. Art and music classes could provide these spaces. Transition, on the other hand, would definitely be associated more with an individual rhythm of adaptation when linked with adolescent development in general.

Theoretical and practical implications

Possible fields of research (theoretical implications)

This study presents a series of theses to be either confirmed or refuted, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The paper at hand claims that art education based on the aesthetic relationship of world and self-construction (aesthetic behaviour) can assist children and adolescents in situations of transition, given its focus on the reception and production processes relevant for identity, particularly on the individual level. It also suggests that a biographical approach in art education might be supportive of transition, both approaches providing stability for children and adolescents in transition because of their emphasis on personal involvement and experience in our conceptualization. Obviously, a wide range of assumed linkages and possibilities could be investigated both qualitatively and statistically, for instance the link between identity formation and various formats of education, or possible effects of learners active participation in the design of new designs for the school or its environment.

The potential of art education on an interactive level has so far been only minimally addressed in a systematic fashion. Further conceptual work could thus aim to link interaction and transition in relation to art education, or to more detailed concepts

such as how, at the individual level, the reception and production processes, which have not yet become design processes, should be fostered, supported and taught. In an extension of the media spectrum, the present study has taken an initial step towards the art-pedagogical thematization of interaction. It may also be helpful to raise awareness or emphasize the communicative aspects of reception and production processes through didactic methodology. Experimental hourly designs or reports would be required to do so.

Cooperation and further education (practical implications)

As illustrated above, the co-constructive approach to transition aims at intensified collaboration among parents, educators and teachers. A change in the mesosystem implies a change in the constellation of caregivers. Additional human resources within the closer environment of the co-constructive process have proven to be stress relieving and to have a positive impact on the child (see Grotz, 2005, p. 30). The position presented here suggests that it makes sense to involve art education in this process. In this context, art educators and art education could create situations where, even during transition, the changing mesosystem can be consolidated (also in the sense of Bronfenbrenner).

These situations or spaces embody an organizational permeability of the boundary of formal education. At the transition from kindergarten to school, individual learning or competence acquisition is replaced largely by instructed learning and instruction (see Brandl, 2009, p. 272). Art lessons do not necessarily follow this categorization, especially not if they are based on the above-referenced approaches. As a result, institutionalized spaces of art education during the transition to formal education could assist in the challenge of transferring competences and developmental states into the new situation beyond the constancy of caregivers and routines, thus stabilizing and supporting the child, while relieving stress. In principle, art education extends the spectrum of forms of mediated knowledge, and aesthetic behaviour is a form of knowledge that should relate to childlike learning behaviour in both kindergarten and school curricula.

Institutionalization relieves the system of providing consistency in terms of personnel if constancy can be established in formal and content-related standards. The current instruments for this are training and further education of kindergarten teachers and teachers. In this context, the transition from kindergarten to school is largely organized within the private sector.

Consequently, measures and standards there are subject to considerable free competitiveness among ideas. Initiatives must therefore be supported at least privately, which in turn requires persuasion. In this situation, it seems almost necessary to rely on privately funded initiatives to provide art education spaces in the sense described here and in addition to those afforded by the existing micro- and mesosystems. Using this as a starting point, awareness work can be conducted, especially if such spaces could multiply in elementary education as well as the school domain through training opportunities.

Conclusions

All three models appeared promising for their potential link between art education and transitional education. Thus, ecological as well as sociological models of transition and an emphasis on stress avoidance seem to be generally advisable for future conceptual or empirical research in the field (RQ1). Against the background of changing ecological environments, art and music classes could constitute a mesosystem of their own, offering continuity even when art educators change. Aesthetic education, as a thematisation of the changing relationship of world and self, further contributes to transitional education by educating the concrete aesthetic perceptions/creations of spatial surroundings and environments. An emphasis on aesthetic experience in art education ultimately contributes to transitional education by educating cultivation/reflection of identity formation processes (RQ2).

Transitions are an important part of the *Conditio Humana*; in transition, we transcend life forms, roles, provisos and limitations, and as we grow older, we grow up. Educational transitions, however, are not determined autonomously but are largely determined at the contextual level. Participation in shaping education transition, however, is enhanced with the assistance of the co-constructive transition concept. Through participation and communication, children and parents jointly solve the adaptation and transfer challenges demanded by both. Educators and teachers in turn support the processes relevant to identity. Even in this extended environment of the co-constructive process, a general cooperative and communicative attitude is conducive to successful transition. The co-constructive transition approach includes art education as an equal participant in the pedagogy of transition.

The art pedagogy in the model presented in this work can be understood as a production of knowledge beyond specifications that are specific to the kindergarten or the school. As such, it provides stability in changing mesosystems. This stability

can also be institutionalized for mesosystems; for example, art-education spaces could be used in addition to and overlapping with the existing microsystems (school, preschool and kindergarten). Important impulses could also stimulate school and elementary education in these areas, thus creating the long-term prerequisite for art pedagogy to become cooperative at both the elementary and school levels in a meaningful way. Two approaches have been discussed in this context: art education as an accompaniment to the development of aesthetic behaviour, and the pedagogical focus on aesthetic experience and biography. Both approaches show great potential to provide an art pedagogical contribution to a pedagogy of transition. The theses put forward require empirical verification, but the relevant research questions are helpful in concretizing and establishing points of interest in the work.

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