Abstract

Modern education is being corrected by the processes of globalization, therefore, it is important to assess the updating of professional training and also specific features of the professional activities which are relevant for the period. In the most important EU strategic documents it is considered to involve students in the development of the study system and orient studies towards the student more and more. Therefore, in the following way, such favourable environment is created to realize educational projects. In the respect of education, this means, that, the relation of co-operation between (an individual and environment culture) is strengthened, grounded on practical experience. The article reveals the role of the method of educational projects while deepening professional experience of the future art specialist, also, promoting activity to act and make decisions independently and finally, affording the student the opportunity to look for one’s own relevant ways of activity. It has been noticed, that applying the method of projects, not only students’, but also the teacher’s role changes in the study process, that the whole complex of the new environment, subject teaching/learning and peculiar activities have been realistically assessed.

Keywords: Educational art projects, professional training, future art specialists, college studies
1. Introduction

The individuality of professional training is decided by the culture of the society however, changing needs promote its never–ending reorganization. The legalization of the documents of the Lithuanian education is related with the provisions of the most important EU documents (Leuven Communiqué, 2009; Budapest–Vienna Declaration, 2010), where the person’s creativity, professional experience and studies oriented towards students are mostly emphasized. This is conditioned by the consolidated new paradigm of education, foreseeing, that the future art specialist is raised not only using the values of culture, but also trying to learn and be able to transform these values in one’s further activities.

1.1. Problem statement

Under the changing conditions of professional training Lithuanian scientists pay great attention to the implementation of educational projects (Bitinas, 2006; Taraila, 2007; Malcienė, 2010; Balkevičius et al., 2013; Lasauskiene, Rauduvaitė, 2015), that is founded towards practice oriented scientific recognition and also towards the new educational activity. However, the opportunities of the implementation of the project method haven’t been widely analysed in the social cultural environment at the College so far.

1.2. Purpose of study

Purpose of study – to reveal the importance of the method of educational projects and the implementation opportunities while developing the process of college studies.

2. Methods

2.1. Implementation of educational art projects

To prepare educational art projects (Siaulytiene, 2001; Lasauskiene, 2012) six weeks were allotted, so 39 educational art (study) projects were prepared and presented instead of professional practice. Students selected topics independently, wrote the scenario, also, projects to non–state organizations, arranged music, searched for event participants and supporters. Students willingly took part in their course friends’ events, assessed them, expressed their opinions, supported each other and were upset because of unsuccessful or were happy with the successful project. The teacher encouraged students for creative activities at the very beginning of the project planning what is more she advised them and took part in their events. The projects were implemented while working individually, therefore, that exposed the future specialist’s preparation for their professional activity. In such reality of education both individual and group expression, its experience in social environment were developed and promoted (Dohn, Wagner, 1999; Thomas, 2000; Green, 2005; Lee, 2009).

2.2. Sample

75 third and fourth year students, future art specialists from Panevezys College, Lithuania participated in the research study (34 female students and 41 male students). The average age is 24 years old.

2.3. Data collection

Essay type compositions (Bitinas, 2006; Bubnys, Zydziunaite, 2012) were written during lectures. The students interpreted the matter statements of the educational project, expressed their attitude
towards the opportunities of implementation of this method in college studies using scientific and art style language means.

2.4. Data analysis

The content of the response has been analyzed having based on the classic content analysis (Mayring, 2014). The instrument of diagnostics enabled to determine the peculiarities of a particular context, also, verified theoretical statements grounding on the fragments of the text. All text components addressed by the categories are then extracted from the material systematically.

2.5. The research ethics

The students were informed that the participation in the project was voluntary, ensuring anonymous, moreover, it was free right to self-determination to take part in the project and express their thoughts in written form.

3. Results

3.1. Students’ attitude towards the importance of the educational project while training the future art specialist

Implementation of educational projects in the process of studies is promoted by difficulties which arise during the practical period and also by the need of study modernization (Roessingh, Chambers, 2011). This process is not very simple for the teacher as it is necessary to review all the core stages in the study process: students’ experience, generalization of the topic, its relation to already known or unknown learning material, consolidation of the gained knowledge, fulfilment and assessment (Shulman, 2004). However, all this depends upon the assessment of the opportunities of the preparation and implementation of projects. Therefore, while training the future art specialist, not only theoretical study, but also independent practical work is very important. In the essay type composition the aim was to clarify the future art specialist’s attitude towards the preparation of educational projects and their importance in practical activities. The research study data demonstrated, that the majority of the project participants enjoyed this activity, only three respondents had negative opinion (Table 1).

Table 1. Students’ attitude towards the importance of the educational project while training the future art specialist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Frequencies of Statements n=75</th>
<th>Supporting Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peculiarities of practical activities</td>
<td>Art of leadership</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>“&lt;...&gt;have learnt to lead others.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation in the project</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>“&lt;...&gt;it’s a difficult method, requiring a lot of knowledge.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team work</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>“As broadened my artistic outlook, besides, I have understood the importance of this method.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>“At least I’m organizing and delivering the event myself.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Have been able to communicate and co-operate in the team.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I’d like the teachers applied the project method”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The students’ opinion and assessments in the research study are very important, they confirm, that the studies which have been grounded on educational projects are meaningful, since in a new way gained and also present experience is applied in practical work. The students’ statements testify such studies have residual value for their maturity. Most respondents assessed the real advantage of the project method and wished to apply that in their further study process, they experienced a lot of positive emotions which they nicely described – all this according to the project participants „inspired them with new work and new sensations“.

### 3.2. The changes in college studies

The students, writing essay type compositions, clarify how they perceive the real situation and changes in the study process. Their utterance demonstrated, that the teachers often introduced themselves as indisputable authorities and critics. However, most students have already understood, that modern opportunities of adopting information and consolidating it have also changed the teacher’s as the knowledge supplier’s role. The teacher’s objective is not only satisfy students’ needs, but also create favourable learning environment (Balkevičius et al., 2013). Future art specialists think, that the development of the study process at College is necessary. The investigative emphasize, that: „the development of the art studies is related with the teacher’s personality“, „the repertoire must become value“, „rather vivid gap between the block of general and professional subjects“. Students notice, that some teachers do not use active teaching/learning methods in their lectures. Therefore, such lectures are boring, non–informative. The data also highlighted the relevant qualitative categories in the fields of the change of studies – efficiency of the study process, modern attitude towards studies, the importance of change (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Frequencies of Statements n=75</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency of the study process</td>
<td>Teacher’s role in the study process</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>„&lt;...&gt;less theory, more practical training. “</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of the repertoire</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>„&lt;...&gt;to reveal the attractive sides of the future profession.“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>„Performing the musical composition which is too difficult for me, I’m feeling fear.“</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>„&lt;...&gt;encourages to concentrate the attention to self-expression. “</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>„I think .the teacher who works in a new way is interesting not only for students, but for one’s“</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Innovations

Modern attitude towards studies

Teaching strategies

25

The teacher and the student must work together, they must co-operate.

Teachers must tolerate our opinion, they must encourage and develop us.

Students must express themselves in lectures more than teachers.

Importance of the change

Integration among art subjects

24

It’s important that the same should be spoken both in the theory lectures and in practical training, as it gets easier during practice.

The modern study process is changing the learning from the accumulation and application of quantitative knowledge to the learning how to plan, assess, correct and reveal oneself in different activities. The significance of the classic methods is not undervalued, however, the active teaching methods make the studies more attractive. Students and the teacher solve problems together, they discuss and advise each other. Therefore, traditional roles are changing – teachers and students are becoming colleagues and partners. Such intercommunication provides the opportunity to move college studies to the reality of modern life. This method is various and involves a lot of different activities and the very process rises in dynamism. It is important, that the learning outcomes of every stage are interdependent and provide new experience since the experience is the core factor of learning.

3.3 Importance of the educational project in developing students’ personal characteristics

The students’ essay type compositions demonstrated the real benefit of the projects – they had used different information sources more often and felt satisfaction while doing real work. Therefore, such opinions confirm the presumption, that the success of art studies is influenced not only upon understanding and theoretical knowledge, but also upon the variety of methods broadening students’ outlook, enriching and constructing the gained knowledge (Table 3).

Table 3. Importance of the educational project in developing students’ personal characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Frequencies of Statements n=75</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>“&lt;...&gt;gained confidence to perform my own created songs for a large audience.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>which are important for the profession</td>
<td></td>
<td>“&lt;...&gt;started to believe what I do.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I’ll have enough courage in my next practice.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“&lt;...&gt;confidence in my professional activity.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>“&lt;...&gt;good eloquence helped while looking for supporters.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“During the project period there were kind communication and co-operation.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>“&lt;...&gt;the feeling of independence and responsibility strengthened.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“It was a difficult moment... I needed confidence and responsibility.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                    |                           |                               | “I couldn’t keep still when I got an offer to take part in an educational project. At least the event in my
The students state, that their personal characteristics as well as their professional, general–cultural and general competences, practical experience changed, their motivation strengthened and their self–confidence grew during the participation in the project.

Therefore, in the process of college studies implementing educational projects, rather favourable conditions are made to feel the fundamentals of creativity and get actively expressed. According to R. Taraila’s (2007) statement, the method of projects makes the study process topical, encourages future specialists to form their attitudes towards various phenomena of life.

4. Discussion

For a long time the training tradition of „specialized artists“ dominated in our country, it was applied both to professional art performers and art teachers (the emphasis is put on art subject knowledge, abilities and skills, and playing technique). However college future art specialists are not professional performers, they are educated people, who are able to express themselves grounding on the activity characteristics of art professions. Therefore, teachers are promoted to perceive and develop the student’s artistic and professional maturity and provide favourable conditions for self–expression.

The research study outcomes have demonstrated, that the preparation and implementation of educational projects is an important part of the study process. During the work in educational projects the conception of modern studies exposed in future art specialists’ minds, that involves planning, reflecting and the work in a cooperative spirit.

The outcomes of the qualitative content analysis revealed, that the students are satisfied with their studies („a lot of interesting art subjects are taught“, „new art subjects are useful and important“, „the development of art studies is related with the teacher’s personality“). The students’ attitude and assessment are very significant since the studies, which are based on educational projects, are meaningful and have residual value for students’ maturity.

5. Conclusions

Preparation and implementation of educational projects revealed the opportunities to modernize the process of studies (favourable study environment, students and teachers’ interaction, individual student’s work) while developing and changing the person’s artistic and professional experience. Therefore, it is possible to state, that educational projects „fix“ the student in the centre of the process and promote one’s professional maturity. Therefore, the project method integrates the experience of studies and the knowledge of art subjects in the process of college studies and allows to consolidate it in the meaningful activity of professional practice. Besides, while organizing activities, students also develop their professional experience.

The research study has demonstrated, that the preparation and implementation of educational projects is an important part in the process of studies. Application of the project method arose the students’ interest in educational projects, changed their attitudes towards the significance of studies, study change and the assessment development for the purpose of studies. Therefore, modernization
of studies should be evaluated as the strategy of the change of educational paradigms and the way to reorganize professional training in the higher educational institution.

References


