

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO TEXTBOOK LITERATURE IN TEACHING ART

S. Filipović

Sanja Filipović

Abstract: *The research represents the analysis of a methodological approach to textbook literature, regarding Art as a school subject, in our current educational practice, as well as an attempt to define the attitude of teachers regarding the use of textbook literature in teaching Art. We have also observed the efficiency of the Questionnaire for teachers, as an instrument, which was specially created for the need of the survey. The results achieved have shown insufficient use of the Art textbook as a teaching instrument in our educational practice. It has also implied that teachers pay little attention to the didactic-methodological function of textbook literature for the above- mentioned subject,, which results in the insufficient use of it on the part of students.*

The basic expectations of the research were to attain a more reliable interpretation of the above- mentioned phenomenon, with the help of the results and the interpretation of the research, and in the light of theoretical settings and the previous studies of textbook literature, which has a wider pedagogical relevance. It was also expected to serve as a starting- point for the promotion of Art teaching methodology as a scientific discipline and practice in schools.

Keywords: *textbook/ art / methodology of teaching*

Introduction

The textbook represents the interpretation and the memory of the concept of the curriculum, which sets the guidelines and serves as a basis for teaching, through interaction with students. It defines the extent and the level of knowledge of each item of the curriculum. As a

primary teaching resource, textbook exists independent of its author, systematically affecting generations of students. It also affirms significant methodical experience, and establishes the connection and systematization of the curriculum contents. (Trebješanin i Lazarević, 2001:16)

Unlike traditional textbooks, characterized by its dominant communicative function, in terms of passing on knowledge, a modern textbook must have the features of development and structure; in other words, it should use its didactic apparatus in order to enhance the knowledge of the learner. Learning, as the construction of knowledge, assumes full involvement and effort on the part of the student, thus demanding a student oriented textbook. "A textbook is not a simply a tool used for the realization of curriculum, but basic means for the organization of the learning process, and its productive pedagogical interaction on both student-textbook and teacher-student level (Ivić and Fell, 2008: 23). The idea that a textbook should be aimed at students assumes that the concept of the textbook should be built from two

¹ e-mail: argus4@nadlanu.com

directions - taking into consideration the difference in age, character and needs of each student, and enable the realization of the educational aims and objectives established by the curriculum. This approach is confirmed by evidently significant progress and the results of modern methodology in Art teaching. We could refer to B. Karlavariš's *New Conception of Art teaching* in opposition to the traditional approach to teaching Art, which paid little attention to the textbook as a teaching resource.

Using the attitude to textbook literature in our current educational practice as a starting point, its change in the recent period becomes evident, in terms of a significant number of textbooks fulfilling the modern standards. The research is based on the supposition that the use of a textbook in Art teaching is an important factor in fulfilling the curriculum.

It also implies that the need for the Art textbook as a teaching resource depends on the attitude of teachers, supposing that the contents of the literature are inadequately promoted in our educational practice.

Methodology of the Research

The primary objective of the research was to determine the presence of textbook literature in teaching Art as a school subject in the existing educational practice.

The main task was to determine the difference in attitude between the teachers who are *for*, and those *against* the use of textbooks in Art teaching, concerning: 1. The use of the Art textbook as a teaching resource in achieving the aims and objectives of the curriculum; 2. Teachers' actions and instruction to students in using the Art textbook; 3. The main function of the Art textbook in the process of schoolchildren education and; 4. The contents of the Art textbook.

The basic hypothesis of the research reads:

It is assumed that there is statistically significant difference in attitude between the teachers who support the use of textbook literature by students in Art classes and those who oppose it. Four additional sub hypotheses have followed directly from the subject of the research.

Independent variables in the research included Art textbooks currently used in the educational practice throughout the territory of the Republic of Serbia, as well as teachers' support or opposition to using the textbooks. Dependable variables, as the outcome of the abovementioned, included the results of the survey, based on the questionnaire that determines the attitude of teachers to using the Art textbook as a resource. The dependable variables of the research, regarding the use of Art textbooks by teachers, include: 1. The use of the Art textbook as a teaching resource in achieving the aims and objectives of the curriculum; 2. Teachers' actions and instruction to students in using the Art textbook; 3. The main function of the Art textbook in the process of schoolchildren education and; 4. The contents of the Art textbook.

The detection of the abovementioned influences has served as a pedagogical and methodical base when responding to the question: *What is the attitude of teachers to Art textbooks?* The answer is crucial for both the selection and suitable implementation of the educational program, and the science-based methodical process intended to promote the textbook literature in Art as a subject. In the light of the issue, the evaluation of the textbooks was done, in relation to the Art curriculum that serves as a base for teaching the subject and nurtures children's creativity.

The sample of the Teachers questionnaire includes teachers on the territory of the Republic of Serbia. A hundred and fifty-two (152) teachers from eighty (80) schools were surveyed. The survey was carried out in the Republic of Serbia in the period between January 2008

and January 2009. The sample of the survey was appropriate. The selection was carried out to fulfill certain demands that enable generalization of the results to the entire population with certain possibility. It also provided us with results that can offer enough data to draw conclusions and specific implications for the existing educational practice.

As a **technique** used for collecting information in the course of the survey, we used the method of **questionnaire**. The Questionnaire for teachers was used as an instrument specially designed for the purpose of the survey.

Percent calculations and Chi-square test were used for the purpose of processing the results of the questionnaire. The achieved results were used to determine the difference in answers of the examinees. The processing of the data was computerized (Microsoft Office Excel 2007). In order to offer as much objectivity and reliability as possible at the stages of collecting relevant data and drawing conclusions, the questionnaire was anonymous for all teachers.

The results of the survey

In this part of the research the Chi-square test was applied to the Teachers questionnaire. It represents an image of preferences, opinions and actions of teachers who opted for and those against the use of textbook literature by students and teachers in Art classes.

The question: **Do you use the Art textbook as a teaching resource for fulfilling the curriculum?** offered a range of answers that gave a good insight into the use of textbook literature by teachers, regardless of their personal opinion on the subject. 77 out of 82 teachers (94%) from group FOR, and 53 out of 70 teachers (75.7%) from group AGAINST chose alternative **a) to use a textbook**. 05 out of 82 teachers (0.6%) from group FOR, and 17 out of 70 teachers (24.3%) from group AGAINST chose alternative **b) not to use a textbook**.

$\chi^2 = 8.675$ compared with the limit values χ^2 **3.841 and 6.635** with the right number of degrees of freedom (**df =1**) on the appointed significance levels **$p=0.05$ and $p=0.01$** is bigger, which leads to conclusion that there is a **statistically significant difference** in the attitude of teachers to using the Art textbook as a teaching resource in achieving the aims and objectives of the curriculum.

The question: **Do teachers instruct students to use an Art textbook?** offered a range of answers, that gave a good insight into

teachers' instruction to students in the use textbook literature. 75 out of 82 teachers (91.5%) from group FOR, and 46 out of 70 teachers (65.7%) from group AGAINST chose alternative **a**) *to instruct students*. 07 out of 82 teachers (08.5%) from group FOR, and 24 out of 70 teachers (34.3%) from group AGAINST chose alternative **b**) *not to instruct students*.

$\chi^2 = 13.876$ compared with the limit values χ^2 3.841, 6.635 and 10.827 with the right number of degrees of freedom (**df =1**) on the appointed significance levels $p=0.05$, $p=0.01$ и $p=0.001$ is greater, which leads to conclusion that there is a **statistically significant difference** in the attitude of teachers to giving or not giving instructions to students on the use of the Art textbook.

3. The question: **What, in teachers' opinion, is the main function of the Art textbook in teaching Art to students?** offered a range of answers, that gave a good insight into the methodology used by Art teachers and their opinion on the function of textbook literature. 02 out of 82 teachers (2.4%) from group FOR, and 02 out of 70 teachers (2.8%) from group AGAINST chose alternative **a**) *students should learn the theory taught by the teacher*. 0 out of 82 teachers (0%) from group FOR, and 03 out of 70 teachers (4.2) from group AGAINST chose alternative **b**) *students should observe the reproductions of artworks*. 18 out of 82 teachers (22%) from group FOR and 12 out of 70 teachers (17.1%) from group AGAINST chose alternative **v**) *students should be stimulated to individual work*. 62 out of 82 teachers (75.6%) from group FOR, and 53 out of 70 (75.1%) from group AGAINST chose alternative **g**) *to enable students to gain both theoretical and practical knowledge of Art, according to the aims and objectives of the Art curriculum*.

$\chi^2 = 0.0002$ compared with the limit value χ^2 3.841 with the right number of degrees of (**df =1**) on the appointed of significance level $p=0.05$ is smaller, it can be concluded that there is a **statistically significant difference** in the attitude of teachers to the main function of the Art textbook in teaching Art to students.

The question: **Which of the three statements best represents the attitude of teachers to the contents of an Art textbook?** Offered a range of answers that explained the attitude of teachers to contemporary methodology of Art teaching. 7 out of 82 teachers (8.5%) from group FOR, and 20 out of 70 teachers (28.5%) from group AGAINST chose alternative **a**) *a textbook should be designed to meet the demands of students*. 03 out of 82 teachers (3.7%) from group FOR, and 04 out of

70 teachers (5.8%) from group AGAINST chose alternative **b**) a textbook should be adapted according to theoretical and esthetic demands of art. 72 out of 82 teachers (87.8%) from group FOR, and 46 out of 70 teachers (65.7%) from group AGAINST chose alternative **v**) the concept of a textbook should be built from two directions- taking into consideration the difference in age, character and needs of each student, and enable the realization of the aims and objectives established by the Art curriculum.

$\chi^2 = 8.675$ compared with the limit values $\chi^2 3.841$ and 6.635 with the right number of degrees of liberty (**df =1**) on the appointed of significance levels $p=0.05$ и $p=0.01$ is greater, it can be concluded that there is a **statistically significant difference** in attitudes of teachers regarding the question: Which of the three statements best represents the attitude of teachers to the contents of an Art textbook?

Result discussion

The analysis of the teachers' answers suggested the following conclusions:

1. Using the State Regulation defined by the state document of the Ministry of Education, presented in The Elementary Education Act, which controls The Book of Regulations of school curriculums, contains the aims and objectives of Art as a school subject, as well as the Article of the Law in the section "Textbooks" (Službeni Glasnik RS", number 62/03, 64/03, 58/04 и 62/04) which explains the necessity of using textbooks in teaching, and offers a range of answers to the question of teachers' using or not using the Art textbook as a teaching resource, when fulfilling the demands of the curriculum. It presented a statistically significant difference in their attitudes to the subject.

Regardless of teachers' personal opinion on whether students should use an Art textbook or not, the results showed that the teachers use it in their teaching practice. 94% of teachers from group FOR and 75.5% of teachers from group AGAINST chose the option. It can be concluded that the attitudes of the population questioned in the survey comply with The Elementary Education Regulation Act which assumes the use of textbook literature in Art teaching a precondition for fulfilling the aims and objectives of the subject, defined by state documents.

It was noticed that 24.3% of teachers from group AGAINST chose not to use the Art textbook as a teaching resource. The fact that this is a significant number of teachers involved in the educational system,

confirms, in a way, the use of implicit pedagogy in our teaching practice, which is not incorporated in modern methodology of Art teaching.

2. The survey confirmed a statistically significant difference in attitudes of teachers, regarding the question: Do teachers instruct students to use an Art textbook? Once again, we can use both The Elementary Education Regulation Act and The Book of Regulations of school curriculums as a starting point, when speaking about the necessity of using textbooks in classes, both by teachers and students.

Regarding the fact that 91.5% of teachers from group FOR directs students to using an Art textbook, one can conclude that the attitudes of the population of teachers comply with contemporary methodology of Art teaching, which suggests using textbook literature in the process of Art teaching as a precondition for fulfilling the curriculum, and is defined by official state documents. As opposed to the population mentioned, 65.7% of teachers from group AGAINST direct students to using a textbook, whereas 34.3% teachers do not. The fact that this is a significant number of teachers involved in the educational system, confirms, in a way, the use of implicit pedagogy in our teaching practice, which can affect students' achievements to a great extent.

3. The question: **What, in teachers' opinion, is the main function of the Art textbook in teaching Art to students?** offered a range of answers, that gave a good insight into the methodology used by Art teachers and their opinion on the function of textbook literature, as well as their actions in relation to the previous statement that they are generally familiar with contemporary methodology of Art teaching. It was concluded that there is insignificant difference of opinion between the teachers regarding the main function of the Art textbook in teaching Art to students.

The understanding that the function of a textbook is *to present students with the matter taught by the teacher* is in opposition with contemporary methodology of Art teaching. The textbook has educational character, but it does not affect students' conduct, or any other aspect of the subject. Regarding the fact that only 2.4% of teachers from group FOR, and only 2.8% of those from group AGAINST chose the option, it can be deduced that teachers usually consider Art teaching an integral process that affects both the education and conduct of students.

The understanding that the function of a textbook is *to allow students to observe the reproductions of artworks*, only partially defines the function of Art. There is also a danger of imposing the existing models and esthetical criteria on students, if we take into consideration that only 0% of teachers from group FOR, and 4.2% of those from group AGAINST chose the option.

The understanding that the function of a textbook is *to stimulate students to individual work* is reasonable to some extent, but should be observed from a wider point of view. 22% of teachers from group FOR, and 17.1% of those from group AGAINST chose this option.

The understanding that the function of a textbook is to enable students to gain both theoretical and practical knowledge of Art, according to the aims and objectives of the Art curriculum, is the attitude that best explains the function and importance of using an Art textbook in the educational process. Proportional number of teachers from group FOR (75.6%) and those from group AGAINST (75.1%) chose the option.

The results show that the teachers' answers match the attitudes described in the questions, and illustrate no significant difference. It leads to conclusion that the majority of teachers are familiar with the function and importance of textbook literature in the educational process. Nevertheless, a significant number of them disregard the attitudes in practice, and their actions reflect individual awareness of a teacher's position, rather than their unfamiliarity with the current educational practice.

4. When we consider the attitudes of teachers to the question: *Which of the three statements best represents the attitude of teachers to the contents of the Art textbook?*, we can observe their accordance with contemporary methodology of Art teaching, and the previous statements, which show their awareness of it.

The teachers showed a statistically significant difference in attitude to the question: *Which of the three statements best represents the attitude of teachers to the contents of the Art textbook?*, and their opinion on the use of textbooks by students.

The understanding that *a textbook should be designed to meet the demands of students* is just a phrase, because its contents are always adapted to children's needs and abilities. Only 8.5% of students from group FOR, whereas a notably greater number of those from group AGAINST, 28.5% chose the option. It is the evidence of their tendency

to rely on phrases that have no foundation either in theory, or in practice of Art teaching.

The understanding that *a textbook should be adapted according to theoretical and esthetic demands of art* is inappropriate, since it is more related to academic programs of study used in specialized schools and academies for the education of future artists. Only 3.7% of teachers from group FOR, and 5.8% of teachers from group AGAINST chose the option, which proves a small percent of teachers still do not grasp the principle of educational process with primary school children.

The understanding that *the concept of a textbook should be built from two directions- taking into consideration the difference in age, character and needs of each student, and enable the realization of the teaching aims and objectives established by the Art curriculum*, is the one that best explains the purpose of Art education in primary schools. 87.8% of teachers from group FOR, and 65.7% of those from group AGAINST chose this alternative.

The teachers' answers comply with the attitudes stated in the questions, which brings about the conclusion that a great number of teachers are familiar with the function and importance of textbook literature for an educational process, as much as properly established contents of a textbook. However, it is evident that a small number of teachers from group AGAINST, who realize the importance of textbook literature, are unable to determine the contents necessary for the realization of the curriculum.

Conclusion

With the occurrence of first curriculums in Serbian teaching practice, methodical approach to textbook literature and reference books changed according to the demands of the time, which brought about changes in the concept of Art textbooks for children. The feature of a modern textbook, used in our current educational practice, is its focus on a student and the contents of the subject.

The contents of a contemporary Art textbook reveal problem approach, illustrated by the examples of children's creative works, works of modern Art, and pieces of national heritage. The demands of the textbook are based on the contents of the curriculum, while the topics are chosen to achieve the objectives. The principle of presenting examples helps authors recognize the contents that stimulate perception

and apperception, as well as critical thinking, thus best harmonizing the aims and objectives of Art teaching according to children's age.

It also enables esthetic impression as a factor that influences creativity and has an important role in contemporary methodology practice. It leads to conclusion that a modern Art textbook has both a developmental and formative function, and uses its didactic apparatus for building students' knowledge.

The aim of the research was to determine the difference in attitudes of two groups of teachers: those who are FOR and those AGAINST the use of the Art textbook by students. The research included the following aspects: 1. The use of the Art textbook as a teaching resource in achieving the aims and objectives of the curriculum; 2. Teachers' action and instruction given to students in using the Art textbook; 3. The main function of the Art textbook in the process of school-children education and; 4. The contents of the Art textbook. Judging from the results, the hypothesis that there are statistically significant differences in attitudes of teachers who support, and those who oppose the use of Art textbook literature, can be disregarded in favour of the alternative hypothesis.

Discussing sub-hypothesis resulting from the objective of the research, the following can be deduced:

1. There is a statistically significant difference in attitudes of teachers, regarding the use of the Art textbook as a resource to achieve the aims of the curriculum.

2. There is a statistically significant difference in attitudes of teachers, regarding teachers' action and instruction given to students in using the Art textbook.

3. There is no statistically significant difference in attitudes of teachers, regarding the main function of an Art textbook in the process of school-children education.

4. There is a statistically significant difference in attitudes of teachers regarding the contents of the Art textbook.

The starting point of the survey was the assumption that the use of a textbook in order to achieve the aims of the curriculum is an important aspect, and that it greatly depends on the attitude of teachers towards it. The achieved results confirmed that teachers use the Art textbook as a teaching resource, and that a great number of them are familiar with the function and importance of textbook literature for an educational process, as much as properly established contents of a textbook.

However, their directions given to students proved to be insufficient. Taking into account the contents of textbooks in the history of Serbian teaching practice and the crucial segments of the educational process, as well as the Law abiding use of textbooks in classes, it should be pointed out that a textbook constitutes an important part of teaching Art to children. It is also essential that teachers should direct students to using it more in practice.

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