This paper reports on research-in-progress motivated by the need to educate Visual Aesthetic Education (VAE) teachers. The research asks, how VAE teachers can find a referential to orient their pupils' work in this time of aesthetic controversy and technological/economic pressures and do this adequately for a class of 30 pupils. The paper summarizes two earlier reports that asked what VAE development is possible and actually takes place in the classrooms. The paper then presents, from the research-in-progress, a synthesis of the emergent valuation referential, drawn from a qualitative analysis of student dialogues in which the teacher tried to remain a mirror-mentor. (BT)
“Actual Dimensions of the Visual Aesthetic Education (VAE) Process and Teacher’s Valuation of Pupil’s Work at School”

by

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ACTUAL DIMENSIONS OF THE
VISUAL AESTHETIC EDUCATION
(VAE) PROCESS AND TEACHER’S
VALUATION OF PUPIL’S WORK
AT SCHOOL

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Introduction

This Research Conference reflects about Knowing, Doing and Being through Art Education
at a time of Cultural Transitions. The present synthesis (even without images) of my Prese-
tation to the Reseach Conference, accounts for my research in progress, within this theme.

The motivation of my research has been the need to educate VAE Teachers (already with
a 4-5 Licence in Art, Design or Architecture; on paid In-service at Lisboa District schools of
the Basic Education 3rd Cycle (ages 12-15, final compulsory education stage) or of the
Secondary Education (ages 15-18, for those intending to go to Higher Art /Design/Architecture
Courses or for Artistic Professions); and coming to the Faculty of Education for a 2 years
Teacher Education Course, at which 1st year we are in charge of the VAE Didactics and, in
the 2nd year, we supervise VAE Teaching Practice in the schools.

The question to the answer of which our research aims to contribute is the following:

How can the VAE Teachers find a referential * and orient their pupils’ work in our time
of aesthetic controversy and technological/economical pressures; and to do this ade-
quately for about 30 pupils, or groups, even in the instant of a class?

*Scheme of ideas to which one may refer, as a starting point in comparation, for decision about one’s own ideas. We prefer the concept of referential to the concept of model.

To answer this question, we have to answer a previous problem:
What VAE development is possible and actually takes place in the classrooms?

We must start by our understanding of the meaning of some essential concepts:
VAE is intended for all and ought to be granted up to the adolescents being capable of au-
tonomous criticism and vocational clarification (by the age of 15). It is expected that the
young persons had developed a self development system for VAE along life.
Artistic Education is intended for the vocational education of the professional artists.
Aesthetics is defined as orientation of (each person’s) energy for quality (as qualia = cha-
racter - Peirce, C., 1958), while recreating or appreciating form.

Methodology and some findings
cerning the previous problem: Pupil’s possible developments through VAE

To answer the previous problem above, we made a 1st Action Research Pilot Study
(Oliveira, E., 1997), questioning our own 50 Art/Design students, (9th year, age 15) Coimbra,
either in 1977-78, at the end of their Course and 4 years afterwards (with 50% responses),
about their representations of the effects that such a Course might have had in their lives (work/leisure).

Through their responses content qualitative analysis, we verified that, 4 years later, 68% were following with Art appreciation; 58% were practicing some kind of Art, even if engaged in courses or having a job removed from Art; and for 27% of them, Art/Design had become a way of living or a professional field. We also verified that Art/Design studies can – and must – reach, in its didactic units, the following:

Aesthetic development: Three dimensions & Three functions:

- Material dimension
- Social dimension
- Ontological dimension

Technological function
Communicative function
Life-Organizing function.

In a 2nd Pilot Study, in the 80’s, we verified that these Aesthetic development dimensions and functions were also reached (according with the pupils’ representations) in common Basic School 3rd Cycle VAE classes of 4 contrasting Portuguese regions. We followed a methodology of qualitative analysis of the content of their responses but, also, of their Free Expression, in drawings that we asked them to make; and we attempted to understand Expression evolving from pre-adolescence, through adolescence, until transition-to-adulthood, coming to conclusions such as that, for that kind of sample, tension was a crucial feature in adolescents' free expression; imagination might not undergo blockage at that level but, instead, turning to apply to a more functional purpose; and flight appears to be the most common metaphor occurring in works across these ages. (Oliveira, E., 1997).

In our recent research we analysed, in the same 4 Portuguese contrasting regions, samples of Basic School 3rd Cycle VAE pupil’s Free Expression (Drawing), Design (problem solving applied to a project of bettering the visual impact of a fruit shop window, with restricted means) and Art Appreciation (observation of three poster size images: a Chagall’s painting, a Pop poster and an Industrial Paint catalogue poster). Our observations of the responses in the main categories of this Questionnaire were submitted to the test of three specialist Judges, resulting no need of important corrections.

In interpretation, at this content analysis, we have reapproached the parallel already made in our research presented in 1994, between Michael Parsons’s framework of art appreciation and our VAE framework of appreciation. It is shown here, as a referential for further analyses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parson, M.’s VAE appreciation framework</th>
<th>Oliveira, E.’s VAE framework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favouritism - Realism</td>
<td>Denotation (no interpretation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressivity - Style/Form</td>
<td>Senses/Concept imagination*(w/ interpret.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Autonomy/Synthesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Imagination_ is the most crucial factor in VAE development: To give sense to the unknown (Warnock, M., 1976).

As a sample of our analysis outcomes, in Art appreciation, we found the emergence of the following 7 emphasises in pupil’s Image Description Type:

0. Absent or no (clear) description
1. Denotative/Enumerative
2. Denotative/Object category integrative
3. Story imaginative
4. Denotative/Form organized
5. Wholistic/Expression generalized
6. Imagined/Structural
7. Integrated/Structural (5+6)

The understanding of these emphasises may open the way for a referential taxonomy helping the teacher to stimulate the pupil’s Art appreciation growth. It must be safeguarded that advanced appreciators may intentionally stay at the lower level emphasises, that remain, only..
Once evidence appears to have emerged, that Aesthetic developments may occur ad of what characteristics they might show, in Free Expression, Design and Art Appreciation, we tackled the main question:

Methodology and some findings on: Teacher referential criteria in valuating and orienting pupil’s work

We organized an Action-Research approach to this question, through discussion among our Students (In-service Teachers-in-Education), along our 1995-1999 VAE Didactic classes. The qualitative analysis of their dialogues in which the teacher tried to remain as a mirror-mentor, still in progress, is expected to allow relevant insights into the Students’ procedure of constructing valuation criteria and the value of peers’ interaction in building such referentials.

Here, we present only a synthesis of the emergent valuation referential at the conclusion of our 1997-1999 Students’ discursions. And we register that almost all of them recognized the usefulness of this interactive reflection in class, for their further teaching practice; some said that they did not expect that our class discussion could bring them so far; and all of them found the resulting evaluation framework to be an aid-tool, inventing variations of it applied to the most different types of VAE that they had to orient in schools.

Pupil’s VAE work evaluation framework (Key) For Schooling at ages: 12-18

In a double entrance Specification Table, of the Behaviour Typology to be developed through VAE by the VAE experience Typology

Behaviour Typology:

To live: I. To Know
   - General knowledge
   - Specific knowledge: Theoretic Practical

I. Research
   - (Deadline fulfillment)
   - Work methodology
   - Ideas & language relevance
   - Functionality/Usefulness
   - Techniques and materials/tools mastery

II. To Do (Interventions/Togetherness):
   - III.1. More specific capabilities, criticism
   - Expressiveness
   - Criticism
   - Creativity: individuality/imagination/originality

   III.2. Values/attitudes
   - Autonomy
   - Self-accountability
   - Participation/Initiative (including Presence frequency)

VAE experience typology: 1. Diagnostic
   - 2. Design Project
   - 3. Free Expression
   - 4. Geometries ( & other Exact Sciences)
   - 5. Art History ( & Art Heritage/Environmental Studies)
   - 6. Arts Workshop
   - 7. Functional Expression
   - 8. Technologies
VAE development in Pupil's work

*Weight Chart of behaviour by VAE experience type in a scale of 0-100 points*

*V* = Weight Variation among the 4 classes of about 80 responders, 1997-1999-09-30

<table>
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<th>I.</th>
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<th>III.1</th>
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<td>V 0</td>
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<td>V 5</td>
<td>V 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Obs: To know: acquisition of knowledge, only 1st in Arts Workshop and Art History
To do: application of knowledge, 1st in Project Design, Geometries and Technologies;
Max. V (as 2nd) in Art History and Arts Workshop
To be- III.1. 1st in Free and Functional Expressions (and Diagnostic)
III.2. Always 4th, except in Free Expression (and Diagnostic) (3rd).

Main conclusions in Methodology for Teacher Education

The discussion among Students proved to be advisable for:
- Awareness of the different nature of the VAE approaches.
So: An integral VAE experience must be allowed.
No one ready-made best VAE work evaluation framework exists.
- Students' reflexive discussion open views of how far VAE can reach and open must remain in the proposals to the pupil's work.
So: Each VAE unit of work must reach the 3 Dimensions/3 Functions considered before.
This discussion procedure initiates to the *Teleanthropos age*, of the *Society of*

Reference Bibliography

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