

# **The Creative Workshop as a Space for Subjective Development in the Areas of Creativity and Self-Esteem<sup>1</sup>**

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The essence of educational activities always is supporting the subjective development of an individual. Following *Krajewski* (1977) it is assumed that this development is a process of directional changes leading to diversification of psyche and its internal integration. This pursuit determines the ultimate direction of all changes realized in the area of education, thus receiving the status of the general aim of education. The fundamental dimension of subjective development is creativity, which determines the optimal development of personality in the light of the humanistic theories (Maslow, 1990; Rogers, 1995).

A method which completely fulfills the requirements laid down for the activities aimed at creativity development is the Eugeniusz Józefowski's original method of the creative workshop, developed during many years of his artistic and pedagogical practice. The form of the workshop combines artistic creation with pedagogical activity, realizing the objective of subjective development by means of developing creativity. This fact locates the proposed method on the border of three disciplines: fine art, art education and therapeutic art included within the area of education (Józefowski, 2009).

The original form of the workshop involves two kinds of fundamental activity: imaginary training and the process of artistic – visual – creation. The essence of the utilized imaginary training is creating subjective pictorial visualizations, inspired by the contents of

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<sup>1</sup> Publication realized in the framework of a research project. The project has been financed from the the National Science Centre's funds, awarded by decision no DEC – 2011/03/B/HS2/03496

the leader's speech; their role is to inspire and draw attention to the proposed theme (problem). The main activity of the workshop is visual creation. The artistic activity involves making use of diverse materials and methods of creation that are characteristic for any phenomena which have occurred in art so far, during the process of shaping an art object. It is worth emphasizing that the artistic value of the created object is of secondary importance. Of major importance is the creative process itself, as it becomes a space for internal dialogue whose direction is determined by the theme of the work and the transformation of the artistic form. The created object – the transformations of the artistic structure – initiate insight. The constructed metaphors become a basis for an alternative perception of the problem, reveal aspects which have not been perceived yet and form new context for recognizing difficulties (compare Lubart & Getz, 1997; Morgan, 1986). These transformations of the artistic structure and the accompanying emotional and mental transformations bring about the modification of the cognitive and emotional structures which make up the subjective representation of reality (the problem).

The proposed form of the workshop fully meets the requirements laid down for the activities aimed at developing creativity. Owing to the diversity of the provided, often edible, materials, the organized creative situation provides opportunities for polysensory experience (with sight, taste, smell), which broadens the scope of the supplied information<sup>2</sup>; The planned metaphorical material references to the analysed contents intensify divergent thinking<sup>3</sup>.

It is important to take into account what *Stenberg and Lubart* (1995) called for – the opportunity to select one's own way as a condition of creativity – the planned experience is merely an inspiration, while the utilized interpretation and artistic form of the created object are results of the participant's independent choice, are expressions his individual work on the problem.

The next factor of creativity development includes transformations of the artistic form. They initiate changes in the way that the analysed content is perceived. These changes reveal the range of restructurisations (breaking the problem down), which is considered an indispensable stage during problem-solving (Fasko, 2000-2001). It initiates modification of experience, bringing about new ways of their perception, described by *Guilford* (1967) as "transformation capability". The essence of the described process of cognitive and

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<sup>2</sup> An example may be using a waffle as a material for the artistic presentation of the theme „Subtlety and fleeting nature of emotions”

<sup>3</sup> for example, using cabbage as a material for presenting internal order – workshop „Cabbage” (see Józefowski 2012)

emotional changes initiation through transformations of the artistic form is the possibility to transform information, which makes it possible to understand the content revealed by insight (Guilford, 1967). Owing to the process of broadening the declarative knowledge (store of information), which is indispensable together with procedural knowledge (concerning transformation strategy), creative thinking gets started (Runco & Chand, 1995), conducive to making transformations of the existing structures.

An additional advantage of the described method of the workshop is eliminating the danger of external gratification, which can act as an inhibitor of creativity (Amabile, 1985; Torrance, 1966). The essence of visual creation is arousing internal motivation, gratification related to creativity has its source in the hedonistic values of art, among others in experiencing one's own self-confidence sparked by the very fact of undertaking artistic activity<sup>4</sup> and connected with the making of the art object.

It is worth noting that workshop experiences initiate reflections about one's own identity, thus the workshop becomes an area of identity shaping. The deepened reflection on identity intensifies thinking about values and aspirations as well as a subjectively perceived sense of life. The essence of the internal dialogue run during the creative process is the dialogue with oneself – about oneself. It is assumed that the external contents, as consequences of cultural influences including obligations imposed by the requirements of the social roles, are separated from the contents expressing authentic aims and aspirations of the subject. The possibility to define them more precisely broadens the range of self-knowledge and initiates re-evaluation of one's own value. Broadening knowledge about oneself is conducive to making references to the subject's needs during the evaluation of one's own value.

## *Method and measures*

The aim of the presented research was determining the effectiveness of the Eugeniusz Józefowski's original method of the creative workshop in aiding subjective development.

Personal development was analysed with reference to identity; its ratios were: creativity, self-knowledge – its aspect affecting self-esteem was researched – and sense of identity. The concept of creativity analysed in the context of the creative workshop belongs to the personological paradigm. Creativity is treated here as a personal

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<sup>4</sup> Creativity is a socially recognised value, that is why the very awareness of taking it up is gratifying, is a source of a sense of pride and competence

feature, personality competence combined with the way an individual functions, embodied mostly in his or her attitudes and methods of reacting to problem situations. Creative individuals act non-stereotypically and more often implement new solutions owing to divergent thinking (Nęcka, 2001; Szmidt, 2007).

Self-knowledge is a cognitive auto-presentation of an individual, making up the system of the „ego”, which is the central cognitive system of an individual (Epstein, 1980). It involves the individual becoming aware of his or her judgments and opinions about themselves (Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1988) concerning all aspects of the „ego”, i.e. appearance, aspirations, character, talents (Drat-Ruszczak, 2000). It is created mostly by self-esteem, that is the affective collection of judgements of evaluative nature referring to one's own person (Fecenec, 2008).

Self-esteem is subject to modifications throughout an individual's life (Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005); they result from changes occurring in self-knowledge and are reactions to changes in the roles that are played, family relations and life situation of the individual.

The effective controlling and assimilating of the information about the „ego” that is reaching the subject are conducive to broadening the concept of the „ego” and obtaining its coherence. An important stage of this process is the sense of identity being constructed and supported (Epstein, 1980).

With reference to the role of self-esteem it was assumed that its shaping is a vital factor of subjective development. It was also accepted that identity development aids self-esteem processes.

Sense of identity is a subjective feeling of self. It includes self-knowledge in the field of the attributes of "I" and subjective values and aspirations. Sense of identity reflects the subjective identity.

In order to assess creativity the Test for Creative Thinking – Drawing by *K. K. Urban and H. G. Jellen* was utilized, in the Polish standardization by *A. Matczak, A. Jaworowska, J. Stańczak*. It is intended mostly for group research to determine creative predispositions. In order to assess self-esteem, the Multidimensional Self-Esteem Inventory was used, in the Polish standardization by *Diana Fecenec*. The concept of the tool is based on the assumptions of the S. Epstein theory, which mentions three levels of self-description: general level, assessed in the sub-scale “general self-esteem”, medium level determined by the remaining subscales: “competences”, “being loved”, “popularity”, “leader capabilities”, “self-control”, “moral self-acceptance”, “physical attractiveness”, “vitality”, as well as the lowest level, including detailed judgements about oneself, referring to concrete events, which was omitted in the construction of the scale. The rest of the subscales concern „identity integration”, that is coherence of self-image and need of social acceptance – subscale “defensive self-esteem reinforcement”.

In order to assess „sense of identity” an original author’s tool was constructed (see Annex) – a scale listing 5 questions referring to aspects of the sense of self-awareness. Cronbach's alpha coefficient equal 0.62. It assess the declared level of the participants’ awareness.

The pedagogical experiment was carried out according to a plan involving two groups (experimental group and control group) with the initial and final assessment.

The experimental variable was participation in the five-meeting creative workshop entitled „Negotiating with identity”, developed by Eugeniusz Józefowski for the needs of the research<sup>5</sup>. The aim of the program was broadening self-knowledge, which is conducive to becoming aware of oneself, as a separate being. The problems included in the workshop tasks involved the most important aspects of identity processes: (1) constructing self-awareness in the course of individual life experience (task one)’ (2) becoming aware of oneself, one’s competences, determining vital aspects of the “ego”, making up the individual character of a person as a separate being, (3) becoming aware of one’s own beliefs through separating them from cultural influences (upbringing, education, mass media, contents acquired through modeling), (4) becoming aware of one’s own aims and aspirations, through becoming aware of desires and expectations and separating them from aims imposed by important others and culture, (5) becoming aware of individual values giving sense to life. Each workshop meeting was devoted to analyzing a different aspect of identity. It was assumed that participation in the creative workshop will bring about increased awareness, and its ratios were level of self-esteem and identity.

## *Sample*

The research involved 208 adult participants who were randomly divided into the two groups: experimental and control group, with 104 persons in each. The participants were selected from people that had applied to take part in the programme.

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<sup>5</sup> the workshop programme is presented in the annex

## Results

### *The influence of the experience initiated in the creative workshop on creativity*

One of the research intentions is verification of the theoretical assumptions of the E. Józefowski's original method of the creative workshop. Thus the influence of the participation in the workshop (the planned activeness) on creativity was examined.

Intra- and intergroup comparisons were carried out within the range of values for the variable „creativity” obtained in the successive assessments; the aim was assessment to what extent the experimental assumptions were met. While testing the differences, the t-Student test for dependent groups, the Wilcoxon test and U-Manna -Whitneya test were used<sup>6</sup>.

Table 1. *Creativity – statistics*

the experimental group					the control group				
Pretest M(SD)	Posttest M(SD)	difference	t	df	Pretest M(SD)	Posttest M(SD)	difference	z	df
34,03 (11,98)	36,18 (12,17)	-2,15	- 2,14 *	102	30,77(1 3,77)	29,62 (12,94)	1,15	-1,89	205

\* $p < 0,05$

The within groups comparisons confirmed that the experimental assumptions were fulfilled. In the experimental group a higher level of creativity was obtained in the final assessment, the difference of means is statistically important:  $t(102) = -2,14$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ; *Cohen's*  $d = 0,42$ .

The correlation ratio received in the experimental group for the TCT results of pretest and posttest  $r = 0,64$ , is statistically significant  $p < 0,001$ . It means that correlation is strong, while the high values of the “creativity” variable in pretest are accompanied by its high values in the posttest.

In the control group no statistically significant differences between the creativity level obtained in the initial assessment and the final assessment occurred:  $z = -1,89$ ; statistically insignificant.

<sup>6</sup> The normal distribution of variables TCT and TCT POST as well as for the successive self-esteem subscales has been tested, in both experimental and control groups, and in the examined fractions, by means of the Kolmogorow-Smirnow (K-S) test for one sample.

In the between groups comparisons, in the pretest, a statistically insignificant difference was obtained between the creativity levels received in the groups:  $t(205)=1,82$ ; statistically insignificant.

In the final assessment the higher creativity level was obtained in the experimental group:  $U = 3630,0$ ;  $p < 0,001$ . It proves that the experimental assumption about a better result in the experimental group has been fulfilled.

### *The influence of the experiences initiated in the creative workshop on self-knowledge*

The self-knowledge ratios were two variables in the realized experiment – self-esteem and sense of identity. In order to evaluate the differences between the means obtained in both assessments for the successive components of self-knowledge, a t-student test for dependent samples was used <sup>7</sup>. In for variable „competences” a Wilcoxon test was used.

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<sup>7</sup> The normal distribution for the examined variables in posttest and pretest has been confirmed, by means of the Kolmogorow-Smirnow (K-S) test for one sample.

Table 2. *Self-esteem – statistics (within groups comparisons)*

zmienna	the experimental group, N=104					the control group, N= 104				
	pre-test	post-test	differ- ence	t	df	pretest	post- test	differ- ence	t	df
moral self-acceptance	29,71 (3,46)	41,03 (5,91)	-11,32	- 16,87 ***	103	38,48 (6,17)	29,94 (3,27)	8,54	11,48 ***	103
physical attractiveness	31,16 (7,34)	31,99 (7,81)	-0,82	-2,10*	103	32,52 (6,69)	29,30 (3,64)	3,22	4,39* **	103
general self-esteem	31,32 (7,23)	32,07 (7,43)	-0,75	-1,8~	101	32,57 (7,99)	31,60 (3,07)	0,97	1,14	102
being loved	37,77 (7,45)	37,75 (7,40)	0,01	0,04	103	35,90 (7,77)	28,78 (4,17)	7,11	6,93* **	103
defensive self-esteem reinforcement	52,79 (8,85)	54,05 (9,23)	-1,26	-2,17*	99	50, 55 (8,87)	48,97 (6,15)	1,08	0,87	103
popularity	35,04 (5,98)	34,53 (6,34)	0,59	1,56	100	34,97 (5,77)	30,70 (3,00)	4,26	7,07* **	103
self-control	33,39 (7,72)	34,75 (7,47)	-1,35	-1,97*	103	33,07 (6,20)	31,42 (3,89)	1,86	2,36* *	102
identity integration	33,09 (7,01)	32,86 (7,13)	0,23	1,15	103	33,29 (6,82)	31,21 (3,98)	1,70	1,95	103
leader capabilities	32,23 (6,59)	32,19 (6,14)	0,03	0,72	103	33,25 (6,02)	31,76 (3,52)	1,48	2,97* *	104
vitality	32,12 (7,70)	32,47 (8,75)	-0,34	0,41	103	33,04 (7,88)	29,71 (3,46)	3,33	4,77* **	103

~ tendency; \* $p < 0,05$ ; \*\* $p < 0,01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0,001$

Table 3. *Competences Wilcoxon test – statistics (within groups comparisons)*

zmienna	the experimental group, N=104				the control group, N= 104			
	pretest	post-test	differ- ence	z	pretest	posttest	differ- ence	z
com- petences	35,47 (6,23)	35,82 (7,93)	-0,35	-0,16	34,48 (5,46)	31,82 (3,01)	2,66	-4,31***

\*\*\* $p < 0,001$ Table 4. *Self-esteem – statistics, the between groups comparisons*

zmienna	pretest, N=104			posttest, N= 104		
	mean differ- ence	t	df	mean difference	t	df
moral self- acceptance	2,50	3,09**	206	11,09	16,74***	206
physical attractiveness	-1,36	-1,40	206	2,68	3,17**	206
general self- esteem	-1,05	-1,00	206	0,53	0,67	204
being loved	1,87	1,77	206	8,97	10,76***	206
defensive self- esteem reinforcement	2,23	1,78	199	4,77	4,34***	199
popularity	-15,22	-14,34***	203	-14,65	-16,74***	206
self-control	-1,57	-1,66	206	4,04	5,12***	206
identity integration	0,01	0,20	205	1,63	2,04*	206
leader capabilities	-1,06	-1,14	206	0,59	0,85	206
vitality	-2,35	-2,54*	206	0,64	0,71	206

~ tendency; \* $p < 0,05$ ; \*\* $p < 0,01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0,001$

Table 5. *Competences- U-Manna Whitneya test – statistics, the between groups comparisons*

zmienna	pretest, N=104		posttest, N= 104	
	difference	U	difference	U
competences	-0,35	4221,0**	2,66	3013,0***

\*\* $p < 0,01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0,001$ Table 6. *Sense of identity – statistics*

the experimental group					the control group			
Pretest M(SD)	Posttest M(SD)	difference	t	df	Pretest M(SD)	Posttest M(SD)	difference	z
20,32 (2,62)	20,79 (2,62)	-0,47	-2,04*	102	20,62 (2,34)	20,25 (2,35)	0,37	-1,98*

\* $p < 0,05$ 

In the experimental group were obtained higher values of the variable „sense of identity”, in the control group the value was lower.

The between groups comparisons did not statistically valid differences in the level of variable „sense of identity” in pretest:  $U=5084,0$ ; statistically insignificant. In posttest the level of variable was higher:  $U=4503,00$   $p < 0,05$ .

## Discussion

The results obtained prove that for the variable „creativity” the experimental assumptions were fulfilled. It possible to confirm the influence of the experimental variable on creativity.

For the variable „defensive self-esteem reinforcement” were fulfilled the experimental assumptions.

For variables „physical attractiveness”, „self-control” and „sense of identity” the condition of the assumption about an unchanged result in the control group was not met. In the control group the result of the final assessment is indeed lower as compared to the initial assessment. This indicates the effect of the disturbance variable.

Confirmation of a majority of experimental assumption for „physical attractiveness”, „self-control” and „sense of identity” variables makes it possible to assume, with certain care, that the influence of workshop experiences cause they to increase. The fact that the final assessment in the experimental group showed an

increase in the level of variables as compared to the initial assessment supports this statement.

The small range of influence of workshop experience on the components of self-esteem should be linked with the workshop's problems – the contents of workshop inspiration, which neglected the majority of self-esteem areas. The individual approach of the participants to the examined areas of self-knowledge is important, too. The ultimate focus on certain aspects of the "ego" is defined by its subjective importance for the individual (Crocker, Wolfe 2001),

The obtained result proves, however, that workshop experiences can influence self-esteem. It should be suspected that the range and degree of influence are determined by the range of problems outlined in the workshop – nevertheless, this statement requires verification in further research.

## Conclusions

The discoveries made prove that the creative workshop activities are an area of subject development. The analysis of the research material makes it possible to formulate the following conclusions:

1. The experience resulting from the activities planned in the creativity workshop are conducive to creativity development.
2. The experience obtained in the creative workshop affect self-knowledge formation, especially bring about shaping self-esteem and increasing a sense of identity. The development of self-esteem occurs in the areas: physical attractiveness, self-control and defensive self-esteem reinforcement.

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## ANNEX

### Identity scale

In questions 1 – 5 tick a number which reflects your opinion according to the following scale:

1. – to a very low extent 5 – to a very high extent

1. I know myself
2. I aware of my own aims
3. My opinions and beliefs result from my own reflections
4. I have the right to follow my own aims in life
5. I aware of my own values