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TAPESTRY OF EMOTIONS – PICTURE-BASED METHODS IN TEACHING ART HISTORY: A TEACHING EXPERIMENT CARRIED OUT IN A VOCATIONAL COLLEGE IN FINLAND

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Abstract

The paradigm of art history has changed drastically during the past decades. Instead of tracing the intentions of artists or studying works of art in their cultural and social contexts, recent art historical research has increasingly paid attention to the role of the spectator, as well as experiences that arise when perceiving works of art. This paper discusses picture-based methods in teaching art history in the frame of pictorial and emotional turns in recent art history. 25 students majoring in Visual Expression in a Finnish vocational college participated in the research and produced data by reflecting their study experiences. The data was analyzed qualitatively using content analysis and discourse analysis. The results of this study show that picture-based methods generated a variety of emotions activating students to reflect on art historical topics, as well as motivating them to study art history. The results of this study may function as encouragement for teachers of history and art history to apply picture-based methods.

Keywords

Pedagogy of Art History, Emotions, Drawing, Painting, Sculpting

1. Introduction

Within a couple of decades, the paradigm of art history has undergone drastic changes. Whereas the earlier art history can be characterized as connoisseurship focusing on exact and objective attempts to classify old masterpieces, contemporary art history encompasses a variety of approaches to studying and interpreting the past and present, as well as ‘low’ and ‘high’ forms of visual culture (Belting, 2002; Kraynak, 2007). The scope of the discipline has widened geographically beyond its original concentration on Western visual cultures, now embracing non-Western visual cultures as well (Van Damme, 2008; Zijlmans, 2008). In addition, instead of merely trying to trace the intentions of the artist and contextual determinants of artistic creation, today’s art history is increasingly interested in the processes involved in perceiving and interpreting art (Belting, 2002; Kraynak, 2007), which has given rise to emotional and affective approaches within the discipline (Koivunen, 2010; O’Sullivan, 2001). Following the pictorial turn in the humanities and social sciences, many art historians have begun to call for an art history that is more closely anchored to the visual qualities of works of art and to experiencing them (Harris & Zucker, 2016; Mitchell, 2005; Moxey, 2008). It is the “compelling visuality” (Zwijnenberg & Farago, 2003) of art and the totality of reactions generated by it that has attracted increasing attention in art historical research.

The traditionally dominant – lecture-based and text-oriented – methods used in teaching art history (Elkins, 2008) do not appear as relevant in terms of all contemporary approaches within the discipline. That is why various collaborative and visually oriented instructional practices have been developed within the pedagogy of art history (Chanda, 1998; Rose, 2012; Rose 2016). Furthermore, new digital applications, as well as social media, offer a variety of possibilities to enrich instruction related to art history (Donahue-Wallace, La Follette, & Pappas, 2008; Harris & Zucker, 2016; Simon, 2003).

Following the picture-oriented, emotional, affective, and sensory approaches of recent art history, this article discusses picture-based methods of teaching art history in Finnish upper-secondary vocational education and training (Vocational Qualification in Visual Expression). This study is part of a larger teaching experiment in which 25 students majoring in a studio arts-

based degree in Visual Expression studied art history through picture-based methods and reflected on their learning experiences during their studies. The aim of the research is to study what kinds of experiences and emotions picture-based teaching methods of art history generated in students, and to evaluate their appropriateness in light of contemporary approaches within the discipline.

Leaning on Wetherell's (2012) conception, emotions are not seen in this research only as traditional basic emotions – such as anger, happiness, sadness, surprise, disgust, and fear (Ekman, 1992) – but also as affective practices interlacing psychological, bodily, and social, as well as conscious and unconscious, substrata. In this approach, emotions refer to qualitatively versatile experiences appearing in social life (Wetherell, 2012).

I start by discussing the pictorial, affective, and emotional turns of art history, concluding with an explication of the contents and requirements of art history studies in the curriculum of Visual Expression. This is followed by a description of the research methodology and data analysis. The results will be discussed in the frame of contemporary art history. Finally, conclusions will be drawn about the relevance of picture-based teaching methods in relation to current approaches in the discipline.

2. Theoretical Background: Emotions, Affects, and Senses within Art History

In the 1960s and 1970s, proponents of the new art history began to criticize the dominant formalistic approach of art history calling for study in which artistic production, as well as its research, was discussed as an ideological and political act (Fernie, 1988; Pooke & Newall, 2008). Epistemologically, knowledge of art history was no longer regarded as objective, but as positioned, which – in a way – paved the way for the contemporary multi-voiced art history, in which knowledge is regarded as constructed from various interests and perspectives (Chandra et al., 2016; Kraynak, 2007). Thus, the “art historical attitude” is no longer characterized by the researcher's objective detachment from the target of study, but rather by their dialogical relationship (Bal & Bryson, 1998; Sienkewicz, 2016).

In the aftermath of the pictorial turn (Mitchell, 1994), several art historians have called for art history that places the material and visual qualities of the objects of visual culture, as well as the ways of experiencing them, at the heart of the discipline (Kraynak, 2007; Moxey, 2008). The recognition that art historical inquiries that focused on mere rational problematization ruled

out the potential of the visual objects to address the audience at a non-rational level made some art historians approach art historical topics through their emotions. By the end of the 20th century, affects and emotions – as spheres of embodied experience merging body and mind – were gradually introduced into art history as perspectives, based on which its topics could be discussed (Koivunen, 2010; O’Sullivan, 2001). Apart from the emotional and the affective, the turn towards experiencing art has also been referred to as the sensory turn of art history, challenging the prioritization of vision at the expense of the other senses and advocating the inter-connectedness of all sensory experiences (Jay, 2011; Lauwrens, 2012).

Art history is studied and taught at various levels of education – from primary schools to universities – with each level having its own contents and goals. This research discusses the teaching of art history in Finnish upper-secondary vocational education and training in the qualification of Visual Expression. In the curriculum of Visual Expression, the purpose of art history studies is to familiarize students with art history so that they are able to use it as a resource in propositioning their own visual works within the continuum of artistic tradition, as well as to use it as a toolbox consisting of various materials, techniques, and ways of expression. Another key goal is that students develop skills in participating in societal discussion on art and its meaning in contemporary societies. In addition, the curriculum explicates the importance of experiences and emotions in everyday life by emphasizing the ability both to produce them through visual expression and to appreciate other people’s visual expression, in order to promote mutual well-being. (Finnish National Board of Education, 2014)

The teaching methods in this experiment were built on the foundations of constructivist and experiential learning theories (Dewey, 1938; Matthews, 2000; Phillips, 2000), as well as on conceptions of learning-by-doing (Dewey, 1953; Schön, 1988) and active learning (Heikkilä, Lonka, Nieminen, & Niemivirta, 2012; Lonka & Ketonen, 2012). The picture-based methods used in this teaching experiment were making pictures, writing about pictures, discussing pictures, and lecture-discussion. These methods are not new innovations as such, but the picture-based and collaborative manner of their implementation, utilizing principles of learning-by-doing, seems to be fresh in terms of art history instruction. In the assignments, students observed, analyzed, studied, and reflected on objects of visual culture visually (making pictures using various materials and techniques) and verbally (discussing and writing about visual objects or participating in lecture-discussions on them). The assignments interlaced visual and verbal

methods of learning, which was designed to provide multimodal learning possibilities and experiences. Each method was designed so that students first observed pictures from the perspective of their life-words, expressing their prompt thoughts and emotional reactions to the pictures selected by the teacher. After this initial step, students were guided to adopt versatile perspectives for studying the pictures.

3. Research Method

Twenty-five students of Visual Expression took part in the study and produced empirical material during the whole year. The material consists of eight questionnaires in which students reflected in writing on their learning processes and the contribution of different ways of learning – or teaching methods – to learning art history. In this study, these questionnaires were called ‘reflection questionnaires,’ emphasizing their central role in the teaching model. The primary function of the ‘reflection questionnaires’ was to promote students’ learning, and to be the connective bridge between art history and their own feelings and thoughts. Furthermore, these reflections formed the empirical data for the research.

The data was analyzed using methods of qualitative research, since this study was interested in the nuances of experiences generated by the teaching methods (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Muhaiyuddin, Bakar, & Hussin, 2016). First, the data was analyzed by content analysis, which is often regarded as the basic method of analysis (Cohen & Manion, 1995). As is typical for content analysis, it was used to detect and classify meanings and themes (Cohen & Manion, 1995) in order to get insight into the spectrum of emotions that arose during the research period. Content analysis was used inductively, aiming to reveal new conceptions about the research topic, which Krippendorff (2004) regards as a central contribution to content analysis. In sum, content analysis was used to detect and classify various emotions that students experienced during the art history course. In the next phase, the findings of the content analysis were analyzed using discourse analysis. As the target of discourse analysis is not individual but social practices, it was used to contextualize the findings of content analysis (Fairclough, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1989; Silverman, 2000), namely to discuss the spectrum of emotions within the frame of contemporary art history.

4. Results

When studying art history through picture-based methods, students experienced a number of various emotions. Verbal reflections described a variety of emotions, ranging from experiencing the classroom atmosphere to feeling empathy toward artists and foreign visual cultures. In the results, reflections of emotions are classified into four categories. The first three summarize the emotions students felt during the art history course, and the fourth category explicates students' opinions about emotions in relation to art history studies. The results will be elucidated by excerpts of students' reflections.

4.1. Boredom and Joy

At the beginning of the course, the students were asked about their previous experiences of studying art history. The majority of the students had not studied art history previously. However, all of them had studied history, which was usually regarded as a boring subject due to monotonous and teacher-centered teaching methods based on remembering in previous schools. Some students were even afraid of art history lessons.

"I regarded history as boring (...) because the teacher taught in a boring way and we just had to write down notes." (student 19)

"I am a little bit afraid of studying history, because I forget years and names quickly. (...) In previous school studying history was cramming and learning by heart." (student 11)

The first lessons on the art history course surprised a number of students. The student-centered and picture-based methods of teaching were not what they expected. The collaborative and conversational methods activated students, resulting in a change of mind.

"This is not boring! (...) Instead of reading and writing, we have discussed a lot. I have enjoyed being in the lessons." (student 18)

"Art history is much more fun and interesting than I thought. We don't just sit and be quiet." (student 24)

Studying art history using picture-based methods was experienced as fun. Students seemed to involve themselves deeply in tasks of picture-making, which generated flow-experiences. Besides picture making, collaborative discussions on works of art were also considered to be fun. Students seemed to be genuinely interested in hearing the views of their fellow students.

"Practical assignments are fun. It is interesting to study and learn art history by making pictures. I enjoyed them." (student 4)

“Giving your own opinions and listening to other students’ opinions is nice because then you notice that people can understand and experience the same work of art in a very different way. When you hear other students’ views, you may see the work differently.” (student 12)

The fact that students laughed a lot during the lessons seemed to be something they experienced as untypical of school lessons. However, the joyful discussions on art were not experienced as unnecessary chatting, but as effective means of learning art history – in a relaxed atmosphere.

“Discussing pictures makes learning and observation easier. It is fun and efficient at the same time. Doesn’t even feel like school. (...) We have laughed so much.” (student 19)

4.2. Meaningfulness, Motivation, and Courage

The data showed that students experienced picture-based methods of active learning as contributing positively to learning. Learning-by-doing assignments activated students to use their own imaginations and direct the course of the study process. Students regarded this as rewarding and as sustaining interest throughout assignments.

”Honestly – the most interesting assignments during the whole year. (...) The guidelines were clear but left much room for own decision-making (...) and imagination. This maintained the interest throughout the assignment. I really liked these assignments of making pictures, and this way I also understood the terminology better than only listening to lectures.” (student 23)

Students’ reflections also revealed that the majority of them experienced picture-based assignments that combined visual and verbal reflection as more efficient than assignments that used only verbal media. Thus, multimodality seemed to positively contribute to motivation, interest, and intensity of learning.

“When I wrote summaries of Icelandic Sagas and illustrated them, I got a deeper insight into them. I felt that I understood better what the Sagas are about. This made me even more interested in the subject matter.” (student 16)

It also seemed that picture-based methods of active and collaborative learning were key constituents in creating an open and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom. It seemed that they fostered students’ feelings of togetherness – belonging together and contributing to each other’s learning.

“Conversations about works of art and making pictures have been the best. (...) I learned a lot when I heard other students’ comments and was able to express my thoughts and opinions as well. Maybe the others learned something from me as well.” (student 1)

The assignments involving students in expressing their own thoughts about works of art, by using their own experiences of life as a resource in interpretation, seemed to increase the sense of meaningfulness of art history. It emerged that, for some students, art history was not important only in terms of their study field, but also in terms of identity.

“I noticed I was more interested in art history than I thought when I realized how important the knowledge of the past is for my own developments in the field of art and in life in general. Still, I have much to learn.” (student 16)

“I became more interested in art history because I noticed that it also tells about us – today’s people. It also gives me tools to understand contemporary phenomena: why they are the way they are and how we have ended up here. It also “structures” me, when I know that I am a part of this continuum of history.” (student 17)

Studying art history through methods concentrating on pictures clustered the emotions generated in the situation with emotions evolving from past experiences of life. This seemed to contribute to the meaningfulness of art history in general, since works of art were not experienced as telling only about other people – but also about the students themselves.

“I chose a painting of Joan Miro. (...) Last summer I visited Tate Modern Museum in London and saw the painting there. Those days I was tired of painting and art in general, doubting my skills. This is one of the paintings I saw in Tate Modern – and I fell for it. It encouraged me to keep on painting and judge my paintings and skills more positively.” (student 16)

Without exception, students considered art history studies to be beneficial in terms of the contents and goals of their study program in Visual Expression. Picture-based methods in which works of art and other objects of visual culture were at the focus of visual and verbal processing seemed to increase the sense of applicability of the subject.

“I can use the knowledge and experience of the art history course both when making my own works of art and interpreting works of art made by others. Art history has given me tools for interpreting art.” (Student 19)

Students were of the opinion that making pictures as a method of studying and teaching art history taught them to apply art historical knowledge in their field of study more than other methods. As a method of learning-by-doing, making pictures integrated art history and studies of visual expression in a very concrete way.

“When you apply the knowledge of art history in your own work, you learn much more than when only reading it.” (student 23)

“Through visual assignments, I have learned to construct visual messages in my own works better because I know more about ways of artistic expression.” (student 20)

The sense of improved knowledge and skill in interpreting and making works of art was experienced as highly rewarding. Through careful observation of works of art, students seemed to realize that works of art have multiple layers that may not be discovered all at once, but need a longer period of time.

“I chose ‘God as an architect’ by William Blake (...) my perceptions have become deeper and more reflective. The more I studied the work of art, the more important it became to me. It was also great to notice how I discovered more things in the painting when I studied it further. (...) I felt I reached a level that I couldn’t imagine in advance. (...) This motivates me to concentrate on observing works of art, as well as studying art history.” (student 12)

Studying art history made a number of students feel more confident in terms of talking about art and expressing their opinions about it. It seemed that by offering tools and vocabulary previously unknown, art history encouraged students to participate in conversations. In addition, several students were of the opinion that studying art history had also given them new insight into ways of artistic expression that they could use both when analyzing works of art and when making their own art. This resulted in feelings of increased self-confidence in general, since students regarded art as an important means of self-expression.

“I have started to talk about art with people. I have also started to observe works of art in a different way. (...) Art history is beneficial.” (student 3)

“I have gained more self-confidence in terms of my art and life in general. Somehow, I define myself through my art. It is such a big part of my identity.” (student 19)

In addition, the conversational methods of teaching art history were experienced as encouraging students to express their thoughts in class. The data revealed that discussing pictures

as a method of teaching provided students with the possibility to practice their communication skills.

“I think it is good that we first discuss the pictures in small groups. After that it is easier to comment on them in the whole class.” (student 13)

4.3. Empathy and Identification

Assignments of making pictures seemed to absorb students so that they concentrated on the topic deeply. The data revealed that making pictures was not only “drawing” or “painting” or “sculpting,” but a nucleus of multi-layered visual processing that made students reflect on their relation to the topic in question, to unfamiliar visual cultures, and to the artist’s creative process – among others. From this visual processing emerged a kind of empathy, resulting in a personal relationship to the subject matter.

“Without making the picture myself, I wouldn’t have got a proper understanding – and experience – of how demanding and time-consuming it is to make a painting imitating Australian aboriginal paintings. And originally, they were made on bark!!! (...) In this way, the whole topic became much closer and more personal to me.” (student 14)

“When I made my version of an African wood statue, I began to realize how skillful the sculptors have been. I began to appreciate the culture much more through my own experience of making a statue.” (student 12)

It was not only the assignments of making pictures that generated feelings of empathy, but also verbal reflections, especially when writing about pictures. Writing emerged as a process in which students seemed to “carve” deeper layers of the pictures with the help of their own observations and source literature. In this process, the subject matter or persons depicted in the paintings became important for the students on a more personal level.

“Somehow I regard the work of art as more serious now than before. I also understand that Miro did not plan everything in advance but might paint from the “subconsciousness”. I like the painting more now when I understand it better.” (student 16)

“I felt that the painting became more important to me, when I read about it and wrote about it, reflecting the background knowledge and my own perceptions.” (student 12)

In a larger frame, students were of the opinion that empathy generated through art is important in today’s society at large. A number of students described contemporary people as egotistic, thinking that by generating emotions, works of art can arouse feelings of empathy that

– in turn – can awaken people to take other people more into consideration and to identify them with their own lives.

“The function of art is to make people feel and think. Nowadays we gaze at our navel so much that art should help us see further, to feel for others, to widen our world view.” (student 19)

As a by-product of reflections on various assignments, students frequently reflected on the purposes and functions of art during the art history course. It became apparent that students integrated in their tasks both rational thinking and emotional experiences. This is also what they noticed themselves, when reflecting on their study experiences. Perhaps this realization was transferred to the conception of the functions of art in general, since generating thoughts and emotions was the purpose of art most frequently mentioned in the data.

“The most important task of art for me is to generate thoughts and emotions ... as well as to tell about reality as it has been – or is. Not everything can be read in books.” (student 17)

“The function of art is to make people feel and think. If this does not happen, the work of art is worthless, because then it cannot have an impact on anything.” (student 21)

The potential of art to express and generate emotions was considered as the main means of promoting change in people’s attitudes and in society at large. This emotional potential was considered as even more important in a contemporary life that is often described as hectic.

“The purpose of art is to make people think, feel, and become interested in things. Then you can reach something. For example, if you paint pictures of poor children, people may relate to the topic emotionally and feel empathy. This may make them help poor children. So, art can change people’s attitudes.” (student 6)

“To generate emotions through art is very important. Contemporary time is very hectic, so people don’t seem to have time to think and face their emotions.” (student 11)

Students also reflected on the meaning of art for themselves. The most recurrent meanings of art for them were self-expression, and influencing and connecting people by evoking emotions through their art.

“For me, the most important task of art is that, through pictures, I am able to express and share things that I cannot put in words with other people. Art tells me about myself, my subconsciousness. Perhaps the best thing is when art can console people.” (student 10)

“The most important function of art is to generate thoughts and emotions, because through them you can create a connection to other people. And that’s how art becomes meaningful.” (student 16)

4.4. Interpreting and Expressing Emotions

When the students observed works of art and studied them through visual and verbal means, they often started by describing the feelings they experienced when observing the work of art. From the initial observations of atmosphere and feeling in the work of art, students were guided to proceed to observe the means of visual expression that mediated those feelings. The students paid attention to the qualities of colors, light and shadow, composition, and brushwork – to name only a few. Without exception, the students were very interested in analyzing the visual solutions contributing to their first impressions.

“Gypsy Girl by Frans Hals (...) I think the atmosphere in the painting is warm and intimate. The girl looks chatty and joyful based on her gaze and smile. (...) From her facial expression, I could conclude that the painter and model knew each other. The colors are warm and the model is very close to us in the front of the picture, which creates the feeling of intimacy. (...) Clearly visible brushstrokes construct a lively feeling in the painting.” (student 15)

The students regarded the observation of the visual qualities in works of art as very meaningful in terms of their study field. They realized that by studying the methods of visual expression in works of art, they can learn about the various methods of expression, as well as about the use of various materials and techniques, and apply their knowledge and experience when making their own works of art. This mutually rewarding relationship between art history and studio-based art studies was experienced as highly motivating.

“It was rewarding to realize by observing the visual expression of the painting that the artist has used specific visual choices to create a specific kind of atmosphere. (...) Having realized this, it is easier to construct a certain kind of feeling in my own painting.” (student 14)

For many students, art emerged as a mediator and means of communication between the artist and the spectator. However, they realized that what the artist wants to express with the work of art may not be the same as how the spectator interprets it. It seemed that acting “on both sides” of the picture – as its creator and spectator – helped students realize this characteristic of sending and interpreting visual messages.

“The artist may see in their painting totally different things than the spectator, who brings their own experiences and preferences to the process.” (student 18)

The data revealed that students experienced a variety of emotions when studying art history using picture-based methods. The emotions referred to a number of matters: attitudes to art history and studying it, methods used in teaching and studying, the role of art history in the study program of Visual Expression, subject-matter depicted in art works, the artists and the cultures they come from, the students’ own experiences and aims, and the student group as a community, as well as people in general. Picture-based methods used works of art as “cultural mirrors” (Martikainen, 2011) that seemed to generate emotional experiences, activating students to reflect on the meaning of art. It appeared that most of these emotions did not emerge deliberately from the process of observing works of art and analyzing them, as well as processing them through visual and verbal means. The possibility for emotions to become expressed and processed both individually and collaboratively seemed to motivate students, as well as to integrate their own life-worlds into the study of art history. This seemed to increase the sense of meaningfulness of art history. As the data reveals, emotional reactions interlaced with rational reasoning suggest that art history appeared for students neither as a sphere of emotion nor as one of rationality – but as a study field within which they can nourish one another.

5. Discussion and Future Directions

The results of this research show that the experiences and emotions that arose during the art history course were positive. Negative emotions in the data were connected with lecture-based and text-based methods used in teaching history in previous schools. The overall positive outcome may be due to the fact that the participants studied Visual Expression. They had applied for the school, passed the entrance examination, and studied the field of their own choice. Furthermore, it seemed that through collaborative picture-based methods, students quickly learned to know each other better, contributing to the warm and welcoming atmosphere in the classroom. Students also reported that they *“come well along with the teacher”* (student 8), which suggests there were no problems in the interaction between the teacher and the students. This open and informal atmosphere in the classroom – typical for a Finnish education system that values equality and active-learning (Sahlberg, 2007) – seemed to be an important factor facilitating positive emotional experiences. The contextual factors discussed above influence the

results of this research. Students majoring in other subjects may not find picture-based teaching methods as motivating and rewarding as students majoring in Visual Expression. In addition, students coming from other pedagogical traditions may not regard informal and highly student-centered methods as effective methods of learning. Due to these limitations, the results are not generalizable to other educational contexts.

The number of various emotional reactions revealed by the data was extensive. This result is compatible with the prior research, showing that students experience a plethora of emotions in classrooms (Babad, 2009). The “compelling visuality” (Zwijnenberg & Farago, 2003) of the works of art placed at the heart of art history studies by picture-based methods seemed to explain the “emotional flow” in the class. Pictures showing events, people, and other subject-matter seemed to function as “cultural mirrors” appealing to students’ emotions and encouraging them to visualize and verbalize their experiences (Martikainen, 2011). It seemed that it was easier for many students to talk about their emotions when these were anchored to visible objects.

Studying art history did not, however, appear as mere feelings and emotions – but as reflections on them, in which students tried to trace the factors in works of art or in their life-worlds contributing to those emotions. This reflection, guided by emotion, led students to analyze works of art using their knowledge, as well as source literature, paying attention to past and present societies and the visual cultures typical of them, as well as reflecting on the functions of art for themselves and in society at large. In terms of learning strategies, students evaluated and compared the suitability of visual and verbal methods, developing metacognitive skills. In addition, emotional responses made students reflect on their relationships with other people, bringing out collective responsibility for human well-being. These results show that emotions served as perspectives for studying contents and phenomena relevant within contemporary art history (Harris & Zucker, 2016; Jay, 2011; Kraynak, 2007; Lauwrens, 2012; O’Sullivan, 2001). In addition, the emotional approach seemed to foster a historical imagination that is regarded as essential in making art history (Erickson, 1995). As the results reveal, all this was regarded as fun, motivating, and rewarding.

In the future, it would be interesting to apply picture-based teaching methods to teaching and learning other subjects – and examine their contribution to study performance and motivation. In addition, it would be beneficial to study the role of students’ and teachers’

emotions in the classroom more closely as well as their contribution to classroom climate, motivation and study achievement.

6. Conclusion

This study shows that picture-based teaching methods generated a number of emotional reactions in the students. It can be concluded that picture-based methods succeeded in addressing students in a holistic way, integrating rational and emotional processes in studying art history. It seemed to be important that students had a chance to express their thoughts and emotions freely. The purpose of this study is not to argue that emotional approaches to art history are enough, but to show that they can motivate students to study art history and make it appear meaningful at a more personal level.

Pedagogical research shows that students experience a plethora of emotions in the classroom (Babad, 2009; Temel & Ozkan, 2016). How do teachers deal with this emotional substratum in everyday school work? Is it regarded as a possibility or a threat? This study shows that emotions can be meaningfully harnessed to promote learning. In addition, by integrating students' life-worlds more holistically in the study process, emotional approaches may motivate students and deepen their involvement in studying.

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