

## ART EDUCATION – INSPIRING WAY OF HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

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**Abstract:** *The paper presents examples of integration of the education for health into art education in primary schools and possibilities of its inspiration for the healthy lifestyle*

**Keywords:** *General Education Programme for Primary Schools (RVP ZV), art education, healthy life-style, activity, creativity*

To be healthy is the intrinsic wish of everybody. If we study how we live and what we do for our health, we will come to the conclusion that we more or less sin against our own health. There are phenomena, which we are unable to affect. Despite the human being is able to live “healthy” in our conditions.

The human **health** is understood according to General Education Programme for Primary Schools RVP ZV (2007: 72) as the *balanced state of physical, psychological and social comfort. It is created and affected by many aspects, e.g. lifestyle, health preventive behaviour, quality of human relations, quality of environment, human safety, etc.* The **way of living** is determined by the *character of activities executed by the individual, experienced procedures and by the time consumed for the activities. It is affected by material conditions, human personality, character of labour and by the lifestyle prevailing in the society.* **Lifestyle** is a typical method of arrangement of activities, actions, relations of people, awareness of values, norms and material environments in the society integrating ways of living of the individuals (Pedagogic Dictionary, 1998: 324).

The way of living is characterized by certain, we can say, miscellaneous qualities. As claimed by J. Němec (2005: 31), we live in the secondary world of mediated perception and our own true experience dies away. Our children prefer passive spending of their leisure time which fails to offer the real image of the world and leads to alienation from the environment in which they live. They grow in the social isolation and, as stated by the author, *they become the affected consumer of this lifestyle.* Education and schooling should respond to the acute problems named as follows:

- decline of physical activity of young people
- passive way of entertainment
- decline of the overall activity
- lack of human compassion
- lack of meticulousness
- decline of initiative actions (Hanuš, R.; Vážanský M., 1996: 12–21)

Educational RVP ZV sector *Man and Health* integrates the sector *Education for Health*, continuing by its content the educational sector *Man and his World*.

Nowadays education for health can be realized at the first grade of the primary schools in more subjects, e.g. elementary teaching, natural science, physical training. If objectives of the branch Education for Health accommodate supporting healthy lifestyle, then the means of their realization have to be looked for in the primary education as a complex whole. The possibilities are also offered by the subject Art Education incorporated into the educational sector *Art and Culture*.

Though we do not want to be concerned with curative possibilities of art, we would like to draw attention to utilization of their means in context with the monitored issue of the primary education. J. Šicková-Fabrici, devoting herself to art therapy actively, mentions the social and therapeutic potential of the art – art for the man and art for health (2002: 18). The author points out certain art features like *metaphoricity, the capability to integrate a person (group), to facilitate (support) communication, the capability to become the tool for ventilation of emotions, sublimation and catharsis*.

Art is the starting point of the art education, the objectives of which are stipulated by RVP ZV. Therefore the art features as above will find its firm place even in the sector of the primary education. If we want to determine contribution of the art education to the process of creation of the healthy lifestyle of the individuals, we can highlight those subject characteristics that defend the requested contribution.

L. Čarný, the Slovak specialist in pedagogy and art education theorist (2005: 79), has formulated the following characteristics defending status of this subject in the sector of compulsory education:

- art education is the subject in which the pupils are **active for the whole time** and realize nearly everything what is the very content of the lesson;
- in the lower grades the subject can support **spontaneous child's expression** and natural interest in **innovative perception** of materials, tools, techniques and means of expressions and motives to a certain degree,
- the subject enables to **express basic concepts** of the pupils up to their **own fantasy concepts of the world** and at the same time enables to **work with the symbols** reflecting their visions or referring to the external facts.

Let's return to the issues of the current lifestyle – the art education offers a whole range of means and tools leading to their overcoming. Active time spending through creative activities supports interesting and non-traditional art means as well as methods and forms of labour. The children can for instance create out of the school premises, where they discover the environmental possibilities how to realize themselves through art, how to implement their own ideas and cooperate with other

children in the works of art. The art education can support education for health also by executing the activities “not only” in the ideal climatic and temperature conditions. Severe conditions can even intensify experience of creation, which can be documented on the example of the action painting realized in frosty weather on white snow-covered areas where the children poured, sprayed, etc. liquid paints. Intensive experience can also be brought by the creation inspired by the ground art. The children look for interesting natural materials and things and modify them in a creative way, install miscellaneous art materials that they can combine and put finishing touches by other art tools. The arisen works are in the majority of cases of short-lived character, but impacts on personality of the child should be of permanent character. The child in direct contact with the nature or urban environment moves in it, enjoys art games and experiments, applies its own creativity and eliminates unsuitable habits connected with the passive lifestyle. Activity and active lifestyle can also be supported by the art activities running inside the classroom. The children should not be prevented from purposeful movement – acquisition of the art tools as well as during the process of creation and verification of communication impacts. Activity is also supported by room arrangement, e.g. the children work on a large horizontal or vertical area and stand.

It is also necessary to mention the contents notified by the children through the art testimony. They reflect experience, adventures of the children as well as their problems – even state of their health – which can be hidden to direct sight or communicable with great difficulties only. Therefore the teacher should adopt a sensitive approach not only to choice of topics of the art activities, but in particular to assessment of the process and outcomes of creation. The art creation can become not only the tool for child’s relief, relaxation, game, but also the means of self-knowledge which should run in the positive tuned climate.

Should it contribute to fulfilment of modern education objectives, no activity, the art activity in particular, can be realized under pressure or in the environment of fear and stress. As claimed by S. Kikušová (In Pupala, B., 2001: 108) *the climate, where the children are relieved of fear, anxiety, worry and psychic stress and where they can work – learn smoothly without restraint, is considered the optimum school (classroom) climate*. The work atmosphere of friendly and stimulating character takes part in pupil’s success, affects his self-confidence and communication between the teacher and the pupil positively. The child subject to fear of failure would communicate through the art creation with great difficulties only. The necessity to share the ideas and thoughts through the work of art is always based on the trust that the commentaries, defending, clarifying and commenting the created work, are listened to sensitively. Fear of failure, bad marks or ridiculing and mockery can lead not only to passivity and unwillingness of art reflection, they can even impact mental health of the pupil negatively. The teachers must be aware of their possibilities and utilize them actively in their pedagogic practice in favour of the child and its health and this fact is of utmost importance.

## **VÝTVARNÁ VÝCHOVA – INSPIRACE PRO ZDRAVÝ ŽIVOTNÍ STYL**

**Abstrakt:** Příspěvek prezentuje příklady integrace výchovy ke zdraví v rámci výtvarné výchovy primárního vzdělávání a možnosti její inspirace pro zdravý životní styl.

**Klíčová slova:** RVP ZV, výtvarná výchova, zdravý životní styl, aktivita, kreativita