

**Pupils' and teachers' perceptions of visual art education:  
A case study based on one of Greece's new secondary  
arts schools**

**Volume 1 of 2**

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as a thesis for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Education  
In September 2010**

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## **Abstract**

This study sets out to interpret pupils' and teachers' perceptions about learning in visual arts in the context of the third year visual art class of one of the three specialist arts schools in Greece.

The rationale for the research was to understand how pupils and teachers in this type of specialist arts school perceived the learning process, which could have some transfer value to other contexts of learning in the visual art subject. The research may contribute to the body of knowledge and the practice of art education in Greece, and possibly inform future curriculum development in the subject.

In Greece, since 1985, the development of art education and pupils' aesthetic understanding has been one of the five fundamental aims for secondary and primary education. To improve art education at the primary and secondary level, the Greek Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs has undertaken several initiatives. One such initiative has been the development of specialist arts schools. These alternative specialist schools exist in several European countries. In 2003 the Greek Ministry of Education announced the establishment of the first arts school of the country. The year the research was conducted 2008-2009, three arts schools were operated in Greece.

The research endeavoured to understand issues related to the learning process in one of the new specialist arts schools, as perceived by third year pupils (aged fourteen and fifteen years old) and their visual art teachers. The research used the interpretive research paradigm, as it is the most suitable method to explore the socio-cultural reality in which the pupils and teachers are situated. Qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews, observations, and focus groups. The analysis of findings revealed a learning experience very closely related with the philosophy and the content of the Greece's national curriculum of visual art. However, according to the findings of this study further attention needs to be given to the issue of developing imaginative thinking, within the framework of the art curriculum. The study proposes an alternative version of the art curriculum, with a view to facilitating imaginative thinking, in

the art curriculum of specialist arts schools in Greece as well as the teaching of art in normal secondary schools.

It is hoped that the results of the study will offer ground for discussions and oppositions in the area of art education in Greece, in which area not much research has been undertaken. The study's proposal for the revisions to the existing art curriculum for the specialist arts schools, as they are resulted from evidences embedded in pupils and teachers views, stress on the significance and the originality of the findings and for this reason it is hoped to concern the writing aspect of Greece's future curriculum writers. This will add to the development of art education in Greece and further will foster relationships between the members of the particular school where the research was carried out.

## **Acknowledgment**

I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Leslie Cunliffe (period 2003-2010), Senior Lecturer at the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, University of Exeter. His wide knowledge and his way of thinking have been of great value for me. His personal guidance has provided the basis for the present work.

I am grateful to my supervisor Professor Anna Craft (period 2006 – 2010), School of Education and Lifelong Learning, University of Exeter for her detailed comments and for her important support and encouragement.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to my supervisor Christine Bennetts (period 2003 – 2006), who gave me important guidance during my first steps of this study.

I own my sincere gratitude to Dr. George Sigalas, Counselor on Art Education at the Greek Pedagogical Institute, for his valuable advice and friendly help. His extensive discussions around my work have been very helpful for this study.

My warm thanks are due to Mr. Athanasios Nikolopoulos, Director of Secondary Studies at the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (period 2008 – 2009) and to Mr. Panagiotis Matsoukas, art educator, for supporting this study.

I am grateful to Mrs. Susan Nuttall, Mrs. Judith Cadorath, and Mrs. Katerina Tzilivaki for revising the English of my study and Mrs. Maria Maraveli and Mrs. Dimitra Strogili, for their essential assistance in secretarial work.

During this work I have collaborated with many colleagues and pupils for whom I have great regard and I wish to extend my warmest thanks to those who have participated to my study.

The support of all people working to the administration office of the University of Exeter is gratefully acknowledged.

I would like to thank all good friends for their positive vibes and their good mood.

I own my loving thanks to my family, my father Panagiotis Tsimboukidis, my mother Anastasia Tsimboukidou and my brother Ioannis, P. Tsimboukidis. Without their ideals, encouragement and love, it would have been impossible for me to go through this difficult task.

Athens, Greece, September 2010

Irene Tsimboukidou

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## Abbreviations

**BERA.** British Educational Research Association

**DBAE.** Discipline-based art education

**EIN.** Nations Institute of Youth

**EPEAEK.** Unified Program of Primary Education and Professional Grounding (foundation program)

**GGNG.** The General Bureau of Youth

**MA.** Ministerial Act.

**NACCCE.** National Advisory Committee on Creativity and Cultural Education of U.K

**OIELE.** The National Organization of Primary and Secondary Teachers

**PA.** Presidential Act

**PI.** Pedagogical Institute

**QCA.** Qualification and Curriculum Authority

**SEPED.** Integrated Administrative Sector of Studies, Adult Education and Innovations, Department of Aesthetic Education

**UNESCO.** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

**YPEPTH.** Greek Republic Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs (Ypepth, has been renamed on October 2010. The new name is: Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs)

**YPPO.** Greek Republic Ministry of Culture

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

## **CHAPTER ONE- IDENTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

### **1.1 Aims of the chapter**

In this chapter, the research problem will be introduced, and how this relates to wider international educational initiatives will be clarified. This will be followed by an outline of the significance of the study and a description of the nature of the study. The final section of the chapter will summarize the structure of the entire study.

### **1.2 Introduction**

Education in the western world has undergone several attempts at reconstruction since the 1980s. This process of reconstruction involves many dimensions of education such as educational structures, programmes and teaching methodologies. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has considered that all countries should support and prioritize the topics of lifelong learning, intercultural education and school integration, familiarization with new technologies and provision of art education (UNESCO 1999, as cited in Vergidis & Vaikousi, 2003). This last priority, concerning the provision of art education, the area of my research, was a significant topic for UNESCO during the General Conference in 1999, when it launched a strong appeal to all its nation-members to improve the provision of art education (Vergidis & Vaikousi, 2003). The director, Koichiro Matsuura, called on all member states to take the appropriate administrative, economic and legislative measures to promote art in all levels of education.

Greece followed this pioneering international stream of reconstructing education, which had started in the late 1980s. National educational authorities were quick to mobilize, liaising with teachers, artists and cultural institutes so as to secure the conditions for a smooth cooperation between academia and the arts. The Greek educational authorities, with a series of strong institutional, administrative interventions in the primary and secondary education, reformed the picture of art education. To begin with, in the law No 1566, legislated on 1985 (see Appendix 1), which defines the framework for the “structure and

function of primary and secondary education and other provisions,” five general aims were specified:

- To broaden pupils’ value system (moral, national, humanitarian and other values) so that they can regulate their behaviour to conform to these ethical concepts: direct their emotional world towards creative goals and humanitarian actions
- To supplement and combine the acquisition of knowledge with analogous social reflections, so that they can deal successfully with a variety of situations and seek solutions to life's problems in a responsible way, in a climate of creative dialogue and collective effort
- To cultivate their use of the language so that they can express their thoughts correctly and clearly both orally and in writing
- To develop their bodies in a normal way so that they can improve their physical fitness and cultivate their talents and physical skills
- To become acquainted with various art forms and develop aesthetic criteria useful for their own creative expression, and to become aware of their own abilities, inclinations, skills and interests; to acquire information about various trades and professions and to try and improve themselves within the context of their cultural, social and financial life, so that they can develop in harmony, both as individuals and as future working people, understanding the equal contribution of mental and manual work to social progress and development.

As previously touched on, the last aim refers to the development of art education. For the development of this basic aim, the Greek educational authorities have initiated several measures, such as the launch of various projects for art education, the creation of music and arts schools, and the institution of art school festivals. These measures signified a new era for the provision of art education in Greece, which started in the second half of the 1980s.

This study deals with only one of these measures for the provision of art education in Greece: the new specialist secondary<sup>1</sup> arts schools, which are an alternative type of school offering a comprehensive curriculum but with a special for visual and performing arts emphasis. The research concerns pupils' and teachers' perceptions about learning in one such arts school. The study hopes to offer findings with some transfer value.

### **1.3 The significance of the study**

As specialist arts schools were only started in Greece in 2003, their creation is a very important step in education provision. These secondary schools, equal to the general secondary schools, differ significantly from them, because they give special status to, and offer a comprehensive curriculum for, the visual and performing arts, which are taught by specially qualified teachers, who are selected for their interest in art.

This research focuses on exploring the learning process in the context of one of the three arts schools in Greece. However, international research in education has already underlined that the promotion and development of art education cannot be limited or ensured by reforms to the curriculum and teaching methods, or more generally by using innovative administrative measures (Acker, 1990; Vergidis and Vaikousi, 2003; Robinson, 2006). The provision of art education is also influenced by people's perceptions and attitudes which affect the educational process. This assumption is the key to this study.

This view is confirmed by Acker (1990) and Robinson (2006) who have also identified the significant role of pupils' and teachers' perceptions in the learning process.

The interest of my research centres precisely on this topic as a great amount of effort, time and money has been spent on the part of educational authorities, art

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<sup>1</sup> The Greek secondary education system is divided into two stages: The lower stage is mandatory for all children between the ages of twelve (12) and fifteen (15) and is known as the *gymnasio* stage (the high school). The higher stage, for children between the ages of fifteen (15) and eighteen (18), is not obligatory. This stage is known as the *lyceio* stage.

educators, parents, and other authorities on the design and running of arts schools in Greece. For this reason it is important to carry out an in-depth interpretive study in order to clarify the learning situation within the art subject in one of the arts schools. Therefore, within the framework of the operation of one new specialist arts school, the issue becomes that of identifying the pupils' and their art teachers' perceptions of the learning process, and how these relate to the aims of the arts school?

Analysis of the data reveals pupils' and art teachers' perceptions about:

- the value of art education
- the teaching methods of art education
- the aims of art education.

The research attempts to develop an insightful way of looking at this particular art class. This may contribute to a new understanding of the purposes of art education in my country. The results of the study will be made available to Greece's educational community in the hope that it will add extra knowledge to the development of art education, and provoke further reflection on art education, and, at the very least, foster the relationships between the members of the particular school where the research was carried out.

The provision of the arts in education is an area of research that has gained the attention of researchers in Greece (Ypepth & Pi, 2003). Numerous surveys about the role of art education in the formal education of young people have also been carried out in Europe as reported by the Council of Europe (Robinson, 2006; Eurydice, 2009). In addition international organizations have also commissioned research about issues of current art education (NACCCE, 1999; Bamford, 2006; European Parliament, 2009). The topic of this study is related to a wide range of research in art education that focused on the process of learning and issues concerning the content and purposes of the curriculum, and the associated instructional methods (Egan, 1989, 1992, 1997, 2002; Bruner, 1996; Salla, 1996, 2008; Brewer, 1998, 1999; Wolf and Perry, 1998; Tuman, 1999; Hafeli, 2000; Hickman, 2000, 2010; Vaos, 2000, 2003; Burton, 2001; Congdon, Blandy, & Bolin, 2001; Efland, 2002; Vergidis, Vaikousi, 2003; Taggart, Whitby & Sharp 2004; Cunliffe, 2006, 2007).



#### **1.4 Research location and research participants**

The research seeks to gain understanding of the learning process of the third year of gymnasio stage visual art class at one of the three arts schools in Greece. This specific art year class was chosen because it is the graduate class of the lower secondary school level in Greece; thus, it provides an opportunity to research pupils' and teachers' perceptions of art education in their school which have been formed over three years of study.

#### **1.5 The nature of the study**

The research was carried out within the framework of an interpretive paradigm, where reality and knowledge are formed from people's interactions, which is an appropriate to research my topic given that the research question concerns pupils' and teachers' perceptions of learning in art. The use of an interpretive research paradigm offered a methodological framework which was the most suitable to comment participants' social realities. Qualitative data were collected from semi-structured interviews, observations and focus groups. The case study method was used to provide a detailed and illuminating understanding of the particular art class (Wellington, 2000). The research used two levels of sampling. The first level, participants in observation, consisted of the whole of the third year visual art class [twenty-six (26) pupils, aged from fourteen (14) to fifteen (15)] and their two (2) art teachers. The case study also used a second level of sampling, participants in the semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Six (6) pupils, their two (2) art teachers and the researcher completed this sample. The qualitative data were analyzed with the use of the grounded theory method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A pilot study, based on a few lessons, was initiated nine months before conducting the main study.

The following four central interpretive philosophical dimensions guided the research:

- subjective reality
- socially constructed knowledge
- qualitative research approach
- ethical considerations.

### 1.6 Research design

The study was designed to follow the time schedule outlined below, divided into three periods: the pilot study, the main study and the data analysis period.

Research conducted		Time period
Pilot research		March 2008
Main research	1 <sup>st</sup> stage	November 2008
	2 <sup>nd</sup> stage	February 2009
Data analysis		March 2009 – January 2010

**Table 1.1: The research design**

The following total amount of time was scheduled per period and per research instrument.

Total research hours per instrument:

a. main research

four (4) hours focus group with teachers

four (4) hours focus group with pupils

four (4) hours interviewing pupils (1 hour with each of the four pupils)

two (2) hours interviewing teachers (1 hour with each of the two teachers)

six (6) hours observation of the art class

b. pilot research

one (1) hour interview with the teacher  
 one (1) hour focus group with the pupils  
 three (3) hours observation of the art class.

<b>Lesson hours needed for conducting observations</b>				
November 2008	Three lesson hours	March 2008	Three lesson hours	Total lesson hours
February 2009	Three lesson hours			Nine
Main study		Pilot study		
<b>Lesson hours needed for conducting individual and focus group interviews</b>				
November 2008	Seven lesson hours	March 2008	Two lesson hours	Total lesson hours
February 2009	Seven lesson hours			Sixteen
Main study		Pilot study		

**Table 1.2: The time table for the pilot and the main study**

**(All observations, individual and focus group interviews lasted approximately forty-five (45) minutes - forty-five minutes is the length of one lesson hour in the Greek education system)**

**1.7 The structure of the study**

The thesis has nine chapters.

Chapter one is an introduction that identifies the research problem, discusses the reason for researching this particular topic and its importance, and finally situates the research inquiry within the framework of a qualitative research paradigm.

Chapter two introduces the research topic, which is framed within the context of current Greek art education and the wider structure of art education in Europe.

Chapter three surveys the relevant literature. It discusses several models of art education which have emerged in Europe and the USA in the last hundred years, which are related to the themes of creativity, cognitive processes, purposes and values of the curriculum, all of which are considered in relationship to Greek art education. The current visual art curriculum designed for the specialist arts schools is outlined and discussed, in relationship to the previously mentioned models of art education.

Chapter four situates the methodological design of this research within the interpretive research paradigm.

Chapters five to seven present the analysis of the pilot study, followed by the two stages of the main study. These are followed, in chapter eight, by a discussion of the findings in relation to the literature, and, in chapter nine, the implications of the study.

## **1.8 Chapter summary**

This chapter introduced the goal of the research, and the significance of this study, in relationship to international educational research. In the next chapter, the research topic will be presented.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH STUDY**

## **CHAPTER TWO – BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH STUDY**

### **2.1 Introduction**

As has already been described in chapter one, Greek art education is the subject for this research. In particular, the study focuses on the specialist secondary arts schools, which are a new institution in Greece.

### **2.2 Aims of the chapter**

This chapter introduces the research topic and the aims of the research. It frames the content of the study to the current context of art education in Greece, and to the wider context of art education in Europe.

### **2.3 Background**

Over the past twenty (20) years, the Greek Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs has undertaken numerous initiatives to improve art education in both public and private primary and secondary schools. Several measures including new study programmes and other innovations that aimed at promoting art education using open, creative and autonomous learning approaches, have been explored. These innovations are part to a wider concern to improve arts education. Below is a brief outline of the steps that have so far been taken by the Ministry to develop the arts in education and to enrich the curriculum a bigger engagement with art and culture.

Initiatives to improve art education of Greece after 1988:

- 1988 - The creation of specialist secondary music schools
- 1993 - The launch of an annual art festival titled “The National Student Cultural Games” for primary and secondary school pupils
- 1999 - The launch of the “Let’s Go to the Cinema” (*Pame Cinema* in Greek) project
- 2003 - The creation of specialist visual and performing arts schools
- 1994-2004 – The creation of the pilot project titled “Melina Education and culture, arts in primary school”

- 2003 - The creation of the educational position of “Cultural Events Officers”  
In addition to the above, this was another important initiative related to the development of art education:
- 2003 - The launch of a new “cross-thematic curriculum of study” for all school subjects at primary and secondary levels. This included the introduction of the “flexible zone for creative and cross-curricular activities” at the primary school level and the “zone of innovative actions” in the early secondary school level.

## **2.4 Research origin**

The philosophical inspiration for the new interest in arts schools in Greece is based on ideas about the importance of art education as a process. This includes Gardner’s (1980) idea of multiple forms of cognition, with art education offering pupils something unique that is unavailable in other subjects (Efland, 2002). The cognitive capacities which inform the process of art making and art thinking about it have been described by Goodman (1978), Gardner (1980), and Eisner (1982). Goodman (1978a, 1978b), for instance, justifies the unique ability of art education to develop a communication system that enables specific meanings to be enacted and negotiated. Influenced by Goodman’s thinking, Gardner (1980) further argues for the unique cognitive abilities that art education develops, which are not nurtured by other disciplines. With regard to Eisner (1982), he thinks art is exceptional for exploring the intelligence of feelings, which are cognitive in kind, in comparison with other systems of representation found in alternative subjects that do not offer such possibilities. The logic for the curriculum in all the disciplines of arts schools in Greece is based on this recent work in cognition and art education, that mental development in the learning process can be related to art (Arnheim, 1954).

Realizing the importance of developing art education, in 2003 the Greek authorities founded the first public specialist secondary arts school.

The arts schools differ from normal Greek secondary schools in that they offer a specially-designed art curriculum and an extended art programme. The teachers of all disciplines at these arts schools have a keen interest in the arts,

with many having postgraduate degrees in such subjects. The pupils who want to attend these schools are required to sit a special entrance examination to assess their art ability.

My initial interest in arts schools began during my studies in Bulgaria. I studied Fine Arts in the National Academy of Fine Arts in Sofia during 1989 and 1995. Unlike Greece, in Bulgaria there is a long tradition of secondary specialist arts schools, with the first secondary specialist school being established by the Closer Connection between School and Life Act of 1959, along with all other specialist schools for language, mathematics and sports (Eurydice, 2007).

The arts schools are well respected by the Bulgarian people, by pupils and teachers, and are highly regarded by the state. The curriculum of such schools is aimed at developing strong technical skills and critical insights through the study of aesthetics. Until the 1990's, the main aim of the visual arts secondary schools in Bulgaria was to understand art within a social, cultural and historical context. This is why these schools offered contextual studies.

#### 2.4.1 Specialist arts schools in Bulgaria

Robinson's (2006) report refers to Bulgaria's "specialist system of schools of arts and culture." These schools, which are supervised by the Ministry of Culture, aim at providing special training and development for talented young people who aspire to a professional career in the arts. The 2007 Bulgarian National report on education, submitted to the Eurydice Network (Eurydice, 2007), as part of it, refers to the existence of nineteen (19) public and one (1) private arts schools that were operating in the academic year 2003-2004. This number remained stable for the following academic year but increased to twenty during the academic year 2005-2006.

The framework for specialist schools in Bulgaria allows for music (including classical and folk music), fine and applied art, as well as other types such as the National Secondary School for Ancient Languages and Culture, the National Choreographic School, the Polygraphy and Photography School, and the National Educational Centre of Culture.



The curriculum at these schools is divided between a discipline of the arts and general education. According to Robinson's, (2006) Council of Europe Report these schools also offer a broad range of extra-curricular activities, such as concerts, exhibitions, and literature readings, as well as participation in national and international art competitions and exhibitions. The report also notes the existence of school clubs in the areas of fine arts, music, choreography, modern dance, photography, theatre and cinema. Furthermore, in-class instruction is complemented by regular visits by professional artists, choreographers, conductors and musicians. Their input contributes to the teaching of the arts within the compulsory curriculum.

The same report also provided information about the pupils' enrolment, the qualifications of the teaching staff and their graduate status. As regards enrolment, these schools hold very competitive entrance examinations. The teaching staff includes key cultural figures and prominent artists who specialize in various disciplines. Upon graduation, pupils are awarded certificates or diplomas: with those completing primary and basic education, given certificates while those who successfully complete secondary school are given diplomas. These diplomas are valid for admission to university.

According to the Council of Bulgarian State, the specialist schools are jointly funded by central government and regional authorities. The Bulgarian National report on education (2007) published as part of the Eurydice Network refers to this type of school as innovative.

During my time at the Academy of Fine Arts, Bulgarian students told me about the specialist schools, and I visit to observe an art class in Sofia during the period 1993 –1995. This was a positive experience that greatly increased my interest in specialist arts schools.

After my graduation from the Academy of Fine Arts in Sofia and my return to Greece in 1997, I was appointed as a permanent full-time art teacher at a Greek public normal secondary school on the island of Crete, where I worked until 2003.

#### 2.4.2 Specialist arts schools of Greece

The Greek government announced the creation of the country's first arts school in Athens in 2003. The task of its creation was assigned to the Greek Education Ministry's department for art education. I applied for a secondment to this department for the academic year 2003-2004, and, on appointment, I hoped to join in the preparations for this ambitious educational endeavour. It turned out to be a very demanding year for the department and for myself as well.

The second arts school was established in Crete. I applied for an art teacher position in the school, for the academic year 2004-2005, so as to have personal experience. This was a great challenge for me, but I was motivated by personal interest and was supported by the Ministry's art department to undertake this venture. I consider my involvement in Greek secondary arts schools, from the beginning of their establishment in 2003, until today (2010), as the starting point for my immersion in this research. Thus, my inspiration to conduct this research is grounded in my experience in Bulgaria, which was followed by my work with the Greek education ministry's art department in laying the foundation for the country's first arts school and from my work as an art teacher in the specialist arts school in Crete.

As the art curriculum for this school that will be the context of this research is specially designed and extended, and the pupils and art teachers choose to attend this particular type of school, the development of learning in art at the school is an important issue for Greek education. Thus, the basic research interest of this work is to understand how pupils and their two visual art teachers perceive such learning in an art class at this type of school.

### **2.5 The institution of arts schools in European countries**

The survey conducted by the Greek Pedagogical Institute (Pi.) and the Greek member of the Eurydice network (2007) sees the existence of specialist arts schools, as an alternative educational structure in several member countries. For example, Lithuania, United Kingdom (U.K.), Slovenia and Liechtenstein, are

some of the countries reporting such information (The information provided for the U.K. relates specifically to England, although the situation in Wales and Northern Ireland is broadly similar). Over the past few years, the U.K. Government has been developing a Specialist School Programme at secondary level. Under this programme a secondary school can apply for specialist status in one or two of ten areas, including art. The survey reported that there are two thousand six hundred ninety five (2,695) specialist schools in total, of which four hundred and eight (408) are specialist arts schools being in one of three broad areas – performing, visual and media.

In Lithuania there are four (4) specialist arts schools that operate at the primary, lower and upper secondary level. The curriculum for the four arts schools is determined at the discretion of the school subject to the approval of the Ministry of Education and Science. These schools hold entrance examinations for the selection of pupils.

In Slovenia there are operating specialist arts schools (known as Art Gymnasias), in the levels of upper secondary education. In Art Gymnasias, teachers must possess a university degree in the specific subject they teach, which is then supplemented by a pedagogical qualification from a special post-degree course. Liechtenstein has one (1) arts school, which, however, is not a formal part of the education system.

## **2.6 The research question of the study**

The aim of my research was finalised at the end of the academic year of 2005, when I was working as an art teacher at the specialist arts school in Crete. This experience, combined with my previous participation in the planning and launch of the state's specialist arts secondary schools as part of my work with the Ministry of education, showed me that, beyond the government's plan (a factor that has significance for the orientation of the identity and the profile of arts schools), the most important aspect for the new arts school was the perception of pupils' and their art teachers' of the learning process.

The value of the art experience in education has been a topic of international researchers. According to Efland (2002), there are two reasons why art is usually esteemed as a curriculum subject: It is a source of delight and embellishment or beautification, and it is a source of insight, knowledge and understanding. By interpreting the participants' perceptions about learning visual arts at this particular school, various issues were explored, such as:

1. The significance of the art subject for both pupils and their teachers
2. The reality of this particular art class, as understood in relation to the challenges of the current art education inquiry.

A further insight into pupils and their teachers' experiences was helpful for interpreting their intuitions, motives, purposes, curiosities, aspirations, prior knowledge, interests, desires and expectations.

This study claims that teaching art should not be considered as something that is built solely around the curriculum and textbooks, but something that also takes into consideration the established thoughts and perceptions, about the practice of art education (Vergidis & Vaikousi, 2003). That is why part of this research is geared towards understanding the construction of learning art through the views of the participants. Perception as a specialized form of thinking (an intellectual activity) can reveal awareness through the use of reflective and strategic questions. Perceptions are formed through a complex system of beliefs and thoughts. The perceptions of participants about learning revealed what they believe to be significant in learning visual arts at this particular school. It can be understood, as a result, that pupils and teachers are rational about the art education experience.

The research is interested in pupils' and teachers' perceptions about the learning process. This is an issue that has attracted the attention of Greek educational researchers under the framework of the "Melina, education and culture" (Vergidis & Vaikousi, 2003), as well as the interest of international researchers (Acker, 1990; Robinson, 2006). Acker (1990) highlights the fact that teachers' cultures precede from any ministerial initiative.

My research was conducted during the academic year 2008-2009 at one of the Greek specialist arts schools. The sample for my study consisted of the pupils of the third-year visual art class and their two visual art teachers. This class is unique in that the teachers and pupils have already completed the mandatory stage of the secondary education, the gymnasio, at this experiential school (see Chapter 1.4).

### **Research question**

**How do fourteen (14) - fifteen (15) year- old pupils and their teachers in a new arts specialist secondary school, perceive art learning, in relation to the aims of the curriculum and teaching methods?**

### **2.7 The aims of the research**

The research sought to interpret participants' perceptions in order to produce data concerning the following three issues:

- the perceived status and significance of visual arts as a secondary school subject
- how art impinges on the reality of the research participants, as this is clearly understood by exploring their realization
- how the first and second issues relate to the wider challenges and comparisons found in alternative models of art education.

The two main aims of this research were the following:

AIM 1: To investigate and attempt to clarify the learning process in visual art in relation to the curriculum and the teaching methods in the context of the visual art classroom of the third year at this arts school.

AIM 2: To interpret the participants' perceptions of the learning process.

There were two possible ways of understanding how these two learning factors are developed under this research setting:

1. By analysing and interpreting how learning is developed in this research setting, as it is perceived by the participants in relation to the approaches specified in the literature review.
2. By conducting a more detailed analysis of the learning process, in relation to how the participants perceive it and how it corresponds to the general research of the learning theory and to the current aspects of art education and curriculum design.

Once interpreted, the three research themes – learning, curriculum and teaching methods – may provide valuable insights about the reality of this art class and how knowledge is acquired in this art class.

## **2.8 The purpose of the study**

The scope of the research was to analyze, to better understand and interpret the learning process in the subject of visual arts, as pupils and their two art teachers perceive this in this particular class. The study sought to gain an insight into the assumptions and concepts that underpin the visual art education of the selected subject in the context of the chosen school, which is one of the three secondary arts schools in Greece. The purpose was to reveal an informed judgment about the qualities of visual art experience (how this experience was organized and understood), in this particular educational setting.

Findings from the research, it is hoped will be valuable for the development of the visual art curriculum and visual art education in Greece in the future. The research data may also help to further generate new ideas, which will modernise art education in Greece, both theoretically and practically.

## **2.9 Limitations of the study**

The school is considered to be a breakthrough for art education in Greece. It would be inappropriate to generalize the research findings, due to the uniqueness of this type of school. However, thoughts and ideas for further proposals and reflections about the visual arts curriculum may be generated from the findings (see Chapter 9.8).

## 2.10 Problem statement

As mentioned earlier, the secondary arts schools are an educational innovation of the Greek educational system. They are included in the framework of the so-called “*orientation* schools.” An orientation school is an alternative, organizational, educational variation structure at the level of secondary education, equivalent to secondary schools. The different types include ecclesiastic schools, minority schools, intercultural schools, experimental schools, music schools, arts schools and specialist needs education schools. Other organizational variations in secondary education are, sports facilities schools and second chance schools (Eurydice, 2008). Finally, studies, at the level of secondary education, is also offered to young pupils who are prisoners [under eighteen (18) year old], and to pupils hospitalized. These pupils attend studies in prison and in hospital, respectively.

The initiative to establish orientation schools at the secondary school level was undertaken by the Greek Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs in order to provide an oriented education to pupils with different needs, interests and talents. All orientation schools feature an extended programme of special subjects (Educational Research Centre, 2006). More specifically according the 2008 Greek National Report of Eurydice, the following types of orientation schools are operating in Greece (Eurydice, 2008).

### 2.10.1 Ecclesiastic Education Schools

The aim of Ecclesiastic Schools is to educate pupils with the values of the Orthodox Christian faith. Attendance in Ecclesiastic gymnasio is for three years. Pupils in Ecclesiastic gymnasia and Ecclesiastic Public lyceia follow the same curriculum as in general secondary education schools. In addition the Old and New Testament, Byzantine Music, Hagiology and Liturgy are taught.

### 2.10.2 Minority Schools

For the education of the Muslims who live in Thrace (The North East part of Greece) there are (Meionotika) Minority gymnasia and lyceia. These schools operate on the basis of the Lausanne Treaty (1923). In these schools Greek and Turkish curriculum is applied. Secondary schools: two (2) gymnasia, two (2) lyceia, and two (2) seminaries.

### 2.10.3 Intercultural Education Schools

Intercultural schools are for the pupils from foreign countries or repatriated Greeks. The aim is for pupils to be integrated into the Greek educational system. Intercultural Education (Diapolitismiki Ekpaidefsi) has been offered since 1996. In the Intercultural Education Schools (Diapolitismika Scholeia) the curriculum is applied and adapted to the particular educational, social and cultural needs of their pupils. The teachers in these schools have special training and are selected because of their knowledge of intercultural education.

### 2.10.4 Music Schools

Music schools offer comprehensive study in music and prepare pupils for professional careers in music. The curriculum at these schools includes subjects of general education, as well as aesthetic education. The teaching of music can be either collective or personalized. In 2008, there were thirty-six (36) secondary music schools in Greece.

### 2.10.5 Sport Facilities Classes

Gymnasio Sport Facilities Classes were established for the first time in 1988. In these classes the subject of physical education is taught as part of an extended curriculum, with general education also offered. Pupils are selected after special examinations for each sport and attend classes in the sport for which they have been chosen. In 2008 there were athletic facilitation classes in one hundred and eighty-four (184) gymnasia and specialist athletics facilitation classes in forty-four (44) lyceia around the country.



#### 2.10.6 Experimental Schools

In experimental schools, an experimental application of programmes and teaching is offered. Pupils are registered in the first year class of gymnasio on the basis of a lottery scheme. In 2008 twenty-seven (27) experimental gymnasia (Peiramatika Gymnasia) operated in the entire country. Those graduating from the gymnasio then registered in the first year class of lyceio, of which nineteen (19) operate in the entire country.

#### 2.10.7 Special Needs Education Schools

In the levels of gymnasia, lyceia, and Vocational Educational Schools (Technika Epaggelmatika Ekpaideftiria-TEE), Specialist Education Departments, (Tmemata Eidikis Agogis) are for pupils with special educational needs.

#### 2.10.8 Second Chance Schools

Since the school year 1999-2000 second chance schools (Scholeia Defteris Efkaerias) have been operating for individuals of eighteen (18) years of age or more who have not completed their nine-year compulsory education.

#### 2.10.9 Arts Schools

In 2003, the Greek Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs passed a series of presidential decrees and ministerial decisions aimed at developing the structure of arts schools. The aims of the arts schools are to support and encourage pupils' interests in the arts and to prepare those who wish for a future career in the arts. Arts schools offer three faculties for study: Visual arts, Dance and Performing arts (Drama and Movie studies).

A report published by the Educational Research Centre in 2006 lists the number of orientation schools in relation to the normal schools according to the secondary school level for the academic year 2004-2005.

Type of school	Lower secondary gymnasio	Unified Upper secondary lyceio	TEE (vocational education)	Total
Normal schools	1,632	1,120	432	3,184
Experimental	24	19		43
Music	30	27		57
Athletic	94	11		105
Special Education	51	7	5	63
Intercultural	8	5		13
Ecclesiastic	4	15		19

**Table 2.1: Orientation schools of Greece for 2004-2005**

Since the publication of that report the Eurydice network in association with the Greek National member of Eurydice (2008) has published a more recent picture of the orientation schools in Greece. Some changes in the number of orientation schools that were operating in the year 2008 can be seen. According to this latest report, a number of arts schools are now included:

Type of school	Lower secondary	Upper secondary
Intercultural schools	8	4
Music schools	36 music schools all over the country	
Arts schools	3	1
Sport facilities	184	44
Experimental schools	27	19
Ecclesiastic schools	10	17

**Table 2.2: Orientation schools of Greece for the year 2008**

To conclude with the presentation of orientation schools, at the level of secondary education, it is important to refer that pupils, graduates from all types of orientation gymnasio, can attend to any type of orientation lyceio, as well as normal lyceio. Due to the high financial cost of orientation schools, at the time that the study was conducted, there are not sufficient numbers of orientation schools operating to cover needs of applicants who desire to study in them. However the establishment of more orientation schools is in the plans of the Greek educational authorities.

Specialist schools and their value has been a research topic in international level (Chitty, 2001; Croxford, 2001; Schagen et. al, 2002).

## **2.11 Current status of art education in Europe**

Today art education in Europe faces the problem of being considered as a low status discipline among the other disciplines, despite all the effort to support its important role in education (Bamford, 2006; Robinson, 2006, Eurydice, 2009). The report by the Council of Europe (Robinson, 2006) provides information regarding the current status of art education in Europe and sheds light on the diversity of art teaching methods applied across Europe. This experience takes into account factors such as the broad variation of cultural tradition and values.

Across Europe, then national policy statements on education stress the importance of promoting cultural, artistic and creative skills of young people. The report (Robinson, 2006) that collected these national policy statements, however, draws attention to the considerable gap between theory and practice. The report cites numerous research findings about the status of the visual art discipline among other school disciplines (Robinson, 2006). According to these findings, the arts are considered to be less important than subjects such as mathematics and science.

Robinson's survey (Robinson, 2006) confirms that patterns of provision for art in schools vary considerably between European member states. Several examples exist where art is positively highlighted in national policy statements, where schools are strongly encouraged to develop art both in and outside the formal curriculum. This however, is not the case in most countries, as mentioned. In addition, the same report of the Council of Europe makes note of initiatives taken in some countries, either at the ministerial government level or through the influence of universities, the aim of which appears to be to eliminate or significantly reduce arts in the general curriculum and to accommodate subjects which are considered to be more directly relevant to students' academic success.

According to the Council of State, art education in northern European countries has a more prominent status in the policy statements than in countries of southern Europe. Although art education is compulsory at primary school level

and up to the first two or three years of secondary school, in the last years of secondary school it is optional. The most common art disciplines taught are music and visual art.

As regards the teaching methods and the content of the subject, across Europe, the report of the Council of Europe highlights two divergent views. On the one hand, in some countries, the national education system gives teachers freedom to design their teaching based on the local circumstances and other unique factors; decisions about the design and development of the curriculum and teaching methods are at the discretion of teachers and schools. On the other hand, in other countries there is a system that is closely defined, where the teaching methods and the subject content are narrowly outlined, following a set of national assessment criteria; there are strict prescriptions regarding content and assessment criteria for all subjects that schools and teachers must follow (Robinson, 2006). Bamford (2006) research into international art education highlights the casual link between arts subjects' low status and the lack of attention given to the assessment and monitoring strategies used to in the teaching process of such subjects.

The survey conducted by Robinson (2006) emphasises the significantly important role that teachers play in the learning process. In some countries, such as the United Kingdom, teachers may take specialized-training programmes for the arts for primary and secondary schools at university level. In other countries, primary school teacher training takes place at pre-university level, while in others, teacher education supplements to first-degree qualifications.

As regards the amount of time devoted to art education, this varies from one country to the other. According to a survey conducted by the Greek Pedagogical Institute (Ypepth & Pi, 2003) referring to instructional time in all disciplines in the countries of Europe for the school year 1997-8, the visual arts received yearly one hundred and five (105) hours of instruction out of a total of six hundred and fifty-five (655) hours for pupils aged seven (7), and fifty-two (52) hours of a total of seven hundred and sixty-one (761) hours for pupils aged ten (10). Similarly, also for 1997-8, visual art in the frame of secondary school

was taught for fifty-three (53) hours over the year out of a total of nine hundred twenty six (926) hours for pupils aged thirteen (13) (see Appendix 2).

## **2.12 Current status of art education in Greece**

Art education in Greece since 1982 has been referred to as “aesthetic education” (see Chapter 3.7.3). It is part of the statutory curriculum for Greek schools, and it includes the subjects of music, visual arts and drama. In the primary school (ages 6-12) art is compulsory and is taught by the general teacher, except for the subject of music, which is taught by specialized teachers. In the gymnasio (ages 12-15), music and visual arts are also compulsory subjects but are taught by specialized teachers. In the lyceio, arts (visual art, drama and music) are optional subjects taught by specialized teachers.

A significant step for the provision of art in the country was taken with the Presidential Decree enacted in 1990 (see Chapter 3.7.3 and Appendix 9), which was aimed at modernising art education in Greek schools mainly by improving art teaching. The Pedagogical Institute (Pi.) published new textbooks for theatre education and visual arts. The weekly timetable of aesthetic education (visual arts, music, drama) in primary and secondary schools, which is still (2010) in operation, is the following:

### **Art education in the primary school**

In the primary level, art education comprises 9.2% of the total lesson hours.

Primary school	Total number of hours for art classes taught yearly per year class						Total percent
	Year class A (ages 6-7)	Year class B (ages 7-8)	Year class C (ages 8-9)	Year class D (ages 9-10)	Year class E (ages 10-11)	Year class F (ages 11-12)	
Aesthetic education: Visual arts, music, drama, dance	88 hours/ year	88 hours/ year	88 hours/ year	88 hours/ year	60 hours/ year	60 hours/ year	
	3 hours per week	3 hours per week	3 hours per week	3 hours per week	2 hours per week	2 hours per week	
% per year class	11.7%	11.7%	9.8%	9.7%	6.3%	6.3%	9.2% of the total taught hours

**Table 2.3: Art education in the primary school**

The weekly time allocation for the six year classes of primary school for aesthetic education is three hours per week annually (30 weeks), or eighty-eight (88) hours, for the first four year classes, A' to D', and two hours per week, or 60 hours annually, for year classes E' and F' (Eurydice, 2008).

A significant role in art education at the primary level is played by the all day primary schools (Oloimera Demotika Scholeia). All-day primary schools offer extended study timeframe, morning and afternoon. In this type of primary school, established by the law No 2525, legislated on 1997 (see Appendix 1) and still in force, a unified viewpoint of analytical curricula for primary education is provided. Time allocation for aesthetic education subjects in all day primary schools is enhanced in comparison with the normal primary schools. For the first and second year class, six hours weekly are scheduled for teaching art; for the third, fourth, fifth and sixth year classes three teaching hours weekly are scheduled for teaching art (Eurydice, 2008).

Year class	Year class A	Year class B	Year class C	Year class D	Year class E	Year class F
Hours	6 hours	6 hours	3 hours	3 hours	3 hours	3 hours
Aesthetic education is taught for 10% of the total taught hours						

**Table 2.4: The weekly timetable of aesthetic education in all –day primary schools per year class**

Art education in the secondary school

In the *gymnasio*, art education (visual arts and music) is compulsory and accounts for only 5.7% of the total lesson hours. Visual arts and music are each taught for one hour weekly.

The upper secondary level includes two types of schools:

1. The unified upper secondary school (*lyceio*)
2. The technical vocational training school

At the *lyceio*, all art disciplines are gradually becoming elective subjects, with two (2) hours per week of aesthetic education, for year class A and year class B, and one (1) hour for year class C. At the technical vocational school, art education accounts for 6% of the total lesson hours.

Secondary school	Total amount of teaching hours in art classes yearly per year class						Total per-cent
	G y m n a s i o			L y c e i o			
	Year class a (ages 12-13)	Year class b (ages 13-14)	Year class c (ages 14-15)	Year class A (ages 15-16)	Year class B (ages 16-17)	Year class C (ages 17-18)	
Aesthetic education Visual arts, music, drama and dance	54 hours/ year	54 hours/ year	54 hours/ year	OPTIONAL			5.7 % of the total taught hours

**Table 2.5: Art education in the secondary education**

Of the seven thousand forty-eight (7,048) teaching hours (in all subjects) at primary and secondary school level, art accounts for six hundred and thirty (630) teaching hours, or 9 % of the total.

### **2.13 Art institutions at the primary and secondary school level in Greece over the last twenty years (1988 – 2010)**

In the last twenty (20) years Greek education at the level of primary and secondary education has taken an initiative so as to further support the development of art education, with the following being important steps in that direction:

#### **2.13.1. Music schools**

The Greek Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs passed a series of presidential decrees and ministerial decisions to establish a music school in 1998 (see Appendix 3). The aim of music schools is to educate and train pupils who wish to pursue a career in music ensuring that they are not deficient in general knowledge, in case they finally decide to pursue another scientific or professional field. The curriculum of music schools includes general education courses, aesthetic education and afternoon study courses. The teaching of music courses and exercise in workshops may be collective or personalized. It was decided by the Ministry that a five-member artistic committee would be created, comprising experts in the operating sectors of music schools and acknowledged pedagogues. The committee members change every three years. The work of the artistic committee is to study the curricula at music schools and to supervise and monitor the organization and operation of the schools as regards staffing and the evaluation of pupils' performances in the music subjects. The committee examines pupils' level of ability in rhythm, acoustic and vocal skills, and discernment of tones and, optionally, a musical instrument recognized by the Ministry of Culture. The progress of pupils in music subjects is the criterion for their remaining in the music gymnasio and music lyceio.



The first music secondary school opened in 1988 in Pallini, Attica, on an experimental basis in order to apply experimental programs and experimental teaching methods. During the school year 2007-8 there were in total thirty-six (36) music schools throughout the country: music gymnasia and music lyceia.

Primary school graduates are selected for registration in the first school year of the music gymnasio. The parents of pupils who wish to participate in the selection process should apply to the music school of their vicinity during May each year. The schools are funded by the Ministry of Education and by the founding program “Unified Program of primary education and professional grounding EPEAEK II” (5.2 cat. of Operation).

### 2.13.2 National Student Cultural Games

The establishment of the National Student Cultural Games in 1993 was a new institution for primary and secondary school education (see Appendix 4). The aim of the games is to introduce pupils to the empirical value of arts in relation to education, focussing on ancient and modern drama, dance, visual arts and music. The games are organised each year and are held on two levels: regional and national; participation is open to all public and private schools and to pupils from across the country, from the large cities to mountain villages and the smallest islands.

Nearly twenty-eight thousand (28,000) pupils from around the country participated in the games held during the academic year 2000-1 (Education Research Centre, 2003). A total of four thousand nine hundred fifty eight (4,958) pupils participated in the field of drama, another nine thousand nine hundred ninety two (9,992) in visual arts, six thousand one hundred eighty five (6,185) in music and six thousand eight hundred thirty four (6,834) in dance. A closer look at the data shows that 15 percent of all primary and secondary school pupils from both private and public schools across the country participated in the drama games. Some 21 percent of pupils nationwide participated in the dance portion of the games, while 18 percent participated in the music section. A significant 46 percent of pupils participated in the visual arts section.

A considerable total of seventy six thousand (76,000) pupils nationwide participated in the games, during the school year 2002-3. More than four thousand (4,000) pupils from two hundred and one (201) schools participated in the theatre workshops; some ten thousand and five hundred (10,500) pupils from five hundred and seventeen (517) schools participated in the visual arts workshops (Ypepth & Pi, 2003). In the school year 2006-7 nearly twenty thousand nine hundred sixty six (20,966) pupils from around the country participated in the games (Ypepth, emphasis e-emphasis 7-11-2007).

The National Student Cultural Games is an institution established by Ypepth, co organized with the support of the General Bureau of Youth (GGNG) and the National Organization of Primary and Secondary Teachers (OIELE).

#### 2.13.3 Cultural events officers

The National Student Cultural Games also started a new trend of posting teachers as cultural event officers at each of the one hundred and twenty six (126) (fifty-eight at the primary school level and sixty-eight at the secondary school level) directorates around the country (see Appendix 5). Each directorate has one cultural event officer overseeing primary schools and another officer for the secondary schools; each is posted for four years. Their job is to promote and develop issues of cultural interests among pupils at the primary and secondary school level. Each directorate is responsible for several schools.

During the academic year 2006-7, one thousand two hundred eighty five (1,285) cultural programmes were organized and realized with the participation of nineteen thousand two hundred seventy five (19,275) pupils of primary education and two thousand five hundred seventy (2,570) teachers (Eurydice, 2007).

#### 2.13.4. The Melina Education and Culture project

The pilot project Melina Education and Culture (arts in primary school) ran for ten (10) years, between 1995 and 2004 (see Appendix 6). According to the report published by the Council of Europe in 2006 (Robinson 2006), the aim of the Ministries of Education and Culture in launching the project in 1995 and was

to raise the status and improving the quality of the cultural dimension in education. The project proposed a restoration of daily school activities through the indissoluble power of art and culture. This included a network of "satellite actions" that focussed, among other things, on specialist education and the development of the European Network of Artwork Schools (ENAS). The project also encouraged the widening of the curriculum content in the arts, to include theatre, the visual arts, modern dance, music, photography and literature. It also proposed a broad development of practical collaborations between schools, artists and cultural institutions through well-planned visits by pupils to cultural centres, especially museums and other sites of historical or archaeological interest, and through residencies and visits by artists.

Participation in the project was as follows:

1995-6: Forty-six primary schools

1996-7: Seventy one primary schools

1997-8: Eighty-one primary schools

1998-9: Eighty five primary schools

1999-2000: Ninety-nine primary schools

2000-1: Ninety-two primary schools, including two schools from Cyprus (Vergidis, Vaikousi, 2003).

The project was completed in 2004 with the participation of ninety-four primary schools (Eurydice, 2007).

Each school participating in the project outlined the extra-curricular activities it offered in its annual programme. These activities included the organisation of art exhibitions at the schools, visits to theatres, exhibitions and concerts.

#### 2.13.5. The "Let's Go to the Cinema"

The "Let's Go to the Cinema" (*Pame Cinema* in Greek) project was organised in 1999 by the Ministries of Education and Culture and the Thessalonica Film Festival. This project was initially designed for primary school pupils but was later extended to the secondary school level. The project introduced pupils to cinematography and to prominent people in this field and participating schools produced short-length films that were shown at the Thessalonica Film Festival.

#### 2.13.6. The cross-curriculum approach to learning

In an effort to improve the quality of teaching and learning at Greek public schools, the Greek Ministry of Education in 2003 prompted a shift to a pupil-centred schooling that corresponds to pupil's life world. It is under this framework that the Greek Pedagogical Institute (Pi.) proposed a cross-curriculum approach to the learning process. This approach revised the aims and methods of teaching, as well as the content of school subjects. It allowed an interconnection between school subjects and an overall analysis of basic concepts.

The new cross-curriculum programme of study of 2003, for all school subjects, was developed for primary and secondary school education. It introduced a "flexible zone for creative and cross-curricular activities" in primary schools and a "zone of innovative actions" in lower secondary schools. Within the framework of the cross-curriculum approach the role of art figures as an essential component of the learning process. For this reason the cross-curriculum approach is considered very important for the provision of visual art education in Greece.

#### **2.14 Secondary arts schools in Greece**

In 2003 arts school (Kallitechniko Scholeio) aimed at educating pupils in the arts and supporting their preparation, if so wished, for a future career in Theatre-Cinema, Dance and Visual Arts. The arts school curriculum includes general knowledge subjects as well as art subjects, with the following timetable:

1<sup>st</sup> school year: twenty nine hours of general knowledge and sixteen hours of art subjects;

2<sup>nd</sup> school year: twenty eight hours of general knowledge and seventeen hours of art subjects;

3<sup>rd</sup> school year: twenty nine hours of general knowledge and sixteen hours of art subjects.

Faculties		Visual arts	Dance	Performing arts
Weekly teaching hours for subjects of general education	Year class	a': 29 hours/week b': 28 hours/week c': 29 hours/week	a': 29 hours/week b': 28 hours/week c': 29 hours/week	a': 29 hours/week b': 28 hours/week c': 29 hours/week
Weekly teaching hours for subjects of arts education	Year class	a': 16 hours/week b': 17 hours/week c': 16 hours/week	a': 16 hours/week b': 17 hours/week c': 16 hours/week	a': 16 hours/week b': 17 hours/week c': 16 hours/week

**Table 2.6: Timetable for the gymnasio**

More specifically, the weekly timetable for the faculty of visual arts in gymnasio is the following:

a' gymnasio class		b' gymnasio class		c' gymnasio class	
Faculty of visual arts					
General education subjects: twenty nine hours weekly.		General education subjects: twenty eight hours weekly.		General education subjects: twenty nine hours weekly.	
Total hours of art subjects	Sixteen hours	Total hours of art subjects	Seventeen hours weekly	Total hours of art subjects	Sixteen hours weekly
Visual arts:	Eight hours/week	Visual arts:	Ten hours/week	Visual arts:	Nine hours/week
Art history:	Two hours/week	Art history:	Two hours/week	Art history:	Two hours/week
Dance:	Two hours/week	Technology:	One hour/week	Technology:	One hour/week
Performing arts:	Two hours/week	Dance:	One hour/week	Dance:	One hour/week
Music:	One hour/week	Performing arts:	Two hours/week	Performing arts:	Two hours/week
Creative writing:	One hour/week	Music:	One hour/week	Music:	One hour/week

**Table 2.7: Timetable for the faculty of visual arts in gymnasio**

The timetable for the lyceio is as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> school year: thirty hours of general knowledge and sixteen hours of artistic subjects.

2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> school year: no general knowledge courses are eliminated – given the particular nature of the curriculum in lyceio - while fourteen and sixteen hours of artistic subjects are added respectively.

Faculties		Visual arts	Dance	Performing arts
Weekly teaching hours for subjects of general education	Year class	A': 30 hours/week B': 24 hours/week C': 17 hours/week	A': 30 hours/week B': 24 hours/week C': 17 hours/week	A': 30 hours/week B': 24 hours/week C': 17 hours/week
Weekly teaching hours for subjects of arts education	Year class	A': 16 hours/week B': 14 hours/week C': 16 hours/week	A': 16 hours/week B': 14 hours/week C': 16 hours/week	A': 16 hours/week B': 14 hours/week C': 16 hours/week

**Table 2.8: Timetable for the lyceio**

The weekly timetable for the faculty of visual arts in lyceio is the following:

In A' lyceio class, general education subjects are taught for thirty hours with sixteen hours of art subjects.

In B' lyceio class, general education is taught for twenty four hours with fourteen hours of art subjects.

In C' lyceio class, general education is taught for seventeen hours weekly, with sixteen hours of art subjects.

Pupils graduating from the *gymnasio*, the lower secondary school stage, are given certificates. Diplomas, which are valid for university entrance, are given to those who graduate from the *lyceio*.

Teaching positions at these schools are very attractive and competitive. The teaching staff employed at the arts schools are expected to hold a graduate

degree in the arts and to have more than five years of teaching experience, as well as artistic experience. As regards the head teachers, they are usually prominent cultural figures and are hired for four years by the local educational councils.

Based on the decision of the Minister of National Education and Religious Affairs (see Appendix 8a), a five-member committee of arts schools is set up of comprising experts and acknowledged personalities. Enrolment of pupils in the first year class of arts school is made after selection per direction. In order to facilitate attendance, pupils are transferred to school by special buses and also have lunch there.

During the academic year 2008–2009, the year of my research study three arts schools operated in Greece: in Athens, in Crete, and in Thessalonica. The same year 279 pupils were enrolled in the school in Athens, 132 pupils in Crete, and 80 pupils in Thessalonica. From 2003 to the present (2010), these schools continue to operate under a pilot framework. The funding comes from the Ministry of Education and the EPEAEK II-funding programme. The institution continues to develop as two more arts schools are being built in the wider district of the directorate of Athens (Ypepth, emphasis e-emphasis 7-11-2007).

## **2.15 Chapter summary**

This chapter has outlined the thesis question. It has reviewed the profile of Greece's secondary arts schools within the context of national art education and in relation to the framework of art education in Europe.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**



## **CHAPTER THREE – LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the literature in relation to the research topic on models of curriculum and the related theories of learning that have influenced art education over the last hundred years.

### **3.2 Aims of the chapter**

The aims of this chapter are:

- to review various models of art education and the related theories of teaching and learning that have emerged in Europe and the United States of America (USA) during the last one hundred years
- to compare these models of art education and teaching and learning theories to Greek art education of the twentieth century, particularly the model of curriculum and views of teaching and learning as designed for the new specialist secondary school of art, where the research was carried out.

The comparative analysis aims to establish a broader context for understanding the chosen research topic on the art curriculum and related theory of learning as found in the school where the research was carried out (see Table 3.1).

<b>AIMS</b>				
Review: Models of art education, curriculum, and teaching and learning theories over the last hundred years Other issues		Review: Models of art education in Greece over the last hundred years  The curriculum and teaching and learning theories in the new arts schools of Greece		
<b>Components</b>				
1. Art education models in Europe and the USA	2. Learning theories in Europe and the USA related to models of art education	3. Art education in Greece over the last hundred years	4. The visual art curriculum and the teaching approach in the new arts schools of Greece	
<b>Other issues</b>				
Modernist/ Post- modernist divide	End points for different models of art education	Creativity in art education	Cognitive processes in art education	Values of the art curriculum

**Table 3.1: Aims of the literature review**

### **3.3 The connection between the basic strands of the research**

The basic strands of my research are the curriculum, teaching and learning. Linking these three strands has been justified by the literature. Learning, as the central aim of education, is connected with curriculum – the map of what is to be taught, and teaching – the activity that will be followed to achieve acquisition of knowledge. Addison and Burgess (2004) underline the connection of teaching and curriculum and the strong degree of influence of this connection to learning. They claim that “Learning does not take place in a vacuum. The ethos of the school, its rules, regulations, shared values, the individual beliefs and interests of teachers all form part of the pupils’ curriculum” (Addison and Burgess, 2004, p. 58).

Various different models of art education arose in the twentieth century, which have impacted on art education in different ways (Vaos, 2003). In describing models of art education, Efland (2004, p. 693) refers to “analytic devices used by students, a curriculum to map the organisation of ideas within a given educational setting.” A number of recent publications have attempted to highlight

what are considered to be very important analytical devices used in art education. For example, according to Swift (1999), curriculum and teaching are two key factors that make up the educational process. These factors (plus the methods for examination and inspection to which he also refers) unlock the “what” and “how” of the learning process. Both curriculum and teaching “link to ideas of how learning takes place” (Swift, 1999, p. 99) and can be viewed as the creation of forms of intervention that structure the learning process.

In this respect, Erickson (2004) argues that conceptions and practices of curriculum, teaching and learning reveal the following values:

- what is considered to be the purpose of art education
- what is thought to be the essential content of the art curriculum and
- how the instructional process should be designed and carried out in relation to promoting the first two values.

In addition Erickson emphasizes the interaction of art curriculum and teacher. She characterizes the relationship between the art curriculum and the teacher as the major influence on the process of art education. Furthermore, the power relationship between learner and teacher has been identified by the literature to play a significant role in the learning process (Manke, 1997). In this respect, Boughton (2004) thinks that students and teachers play an equal role, that of critical partners who develop their ideas, conveying all their personal experiences by sharing a wide range of texts and images from inside as well as outside the school.

Because the structure of the curriculum and the role of the teacher and learner are seen to be significant for art education by these authors, I will now attempt to put their perspective in a wider framework by reviewing different conceptions of the curriculum and related matters that have prevailed over the last hundred years.

### **3.4 Models of art education in the twentieth century**

Throughout the twentieth century, art education was carried out under the general influence of modernism (Efland, 2004). Modernism reflects a commitment to what are often conflicting foundational ideals that include self-

expression, claims to objectivity, and the related view that art is constituted in a basic visual grammar, not to mention the need for art education to engage with social and cultural relevance. Modernism is also closely tied to dilemmas associated with advances in technology, and the increasing movement towards bureaucratic and environmental control. Modernity and modernism are concerned with forms of essentialism (Freedman, 2003) and “the discovery of absolute forms of knowledge” (Crotty, 1998, p.185). The modernist notion of aesthetics was broadly derived from the Kantian idea that argued for the separation of aesthetic experience from cognitive processes. Learning in art education, in the bosom of modernism, stresses its natural and organic mark. Learning is a product that comes from an activity isolated from its cultural context and is considered as an aptitude of mind. Describing art education models before and after the cognitive revolution period, Cunliffe (1999, p. 116) explains that the modernist paradigm “saw creativity and learning as residing in the head of the subject rather than seeing individual minds in relationship to culture.” Learning in art education under modernism promoted forms of authority and individuality (Freedman, 2003; Addison & Burgess, 2004) and inhibited forms of metacognition. The modernist curriculum stresses decontextualized features (Gombrich, 2002), is “intended to be reproductive” (Freedman, 2003, p. 108), and highlights the singular meaning in works of art (Cunliffe, 2010a). Knowledge is “represented as stable” (Freedman, 2003, p. 108).

The following is an outline of the various models of art education that emerged during the twentieth century in Europe and the USA (Freedman, 2003; Efland, 2004; Cunliffe, 2006). Each model is characterized by a different orientation towards curriculum, teaching and the learning process. The presentation of the models has been organized in terms of their historical emergence in Europe and the USA.

The purpose of this outline is to relate and compare researchers’ perceptions of learning in the particular context and in the wider context of models and approaches of art education of the twentieth century and until today.

### 3.4.1 Art Education as Self-Expression

#### *a. Idea*

At the beginning of the twentieth century, a child-centred model of art education emerged that was opposed to academic art in favour of creative self-expression. This model views art education as a subjective escape from the academic curriculum. Art education as self-expression was derived from the expressionist theory of art and the romantic approach to learning that emerged in the nineteenth century, as found in Rousseau's work, where the concept of freedom and nature rather than culture plays a key role. Rousseau's vision for education is based on the idea of freeing the student's imagination in order that they can express their feelings (Efland, 2004). The approach was further supported by the Freudian premise that "art is an expression of deep feeling in a sublimated symbolic form" (Efland, 1979, p. 22, as cited in Addison and Burgess, 2004). This approach to art education played a very important and influential role in art education in Europe and the USA during the first half of the twentieth century. In the 1920s, a new impetus was given to self-expression in art education as a wider understanding of education process as a therapeutic process in the post-World War I era (Freedman, 2003). Art education as self-expression gained widespread support from those who structured their pedagogy on the significance and value of free expression (Efland, 2004). Self-expression not only inspired the free expression movement in the 1920s, but went on to influence the creative aesthetic education movement in the 1950s and 1960s. This approach to art education was promoted by many prominent art educators, including Cizek in Vienna, Richardson in England, and Victor D'Amico and Lowenfeld in the USA (Efland, 2004).

#### *b. Curriculum*

In the model of Art Education as Self-Expression, drawing is considered a subjective process, a unique response of each child's inner life. Based on this view, the centre of interest is on pupils' feelings, expressions and imagination, which are nurtured by eliminating rules and other forms of discipline that might impinge on the child's natural creativity.

*c. Learning process*

Pupils' development is thought to be an innate ability. Expressiveness emerges as a feature that operates in isolation from social surroundings and educational interventions.

*d. Teaching process*

With this model, there is no reason to relate pupils' artwork to their social settings, or to relate their work with that of adults. The role of the teacher is to provide pupils with a sheltered but unmediated environment. The teacher's role is to prevent influence or intervention from others (Addison and Burgess, 2004).

*e. Criticisms*

It could be argued that a rich repertoire of learning endpoints, including the cultivation of the imagination, may be a positive outcome of the self-expression model of art education. However, such an aspiration to develop the imagination requires being harnessed to a range of cognitive processes. This approach to artistic experience has tended to flounder unless there is a careful cultivation of such capacities. Another problem with this model is that art is centred on the originality of personal expression to the exclusion of understanding adult practices of art or having children reflect about their own art (Freedman, 2003; Dobbs, 2004). Understanding adult art requires more than practical activities, it also requires declarative knowledge (Cunliffe, 2005a).

### 3.4.2 Art education as Formalism and Basic Design

#### *a. Idea*

Formalism in aesthetics is an early twentieth-century development (Freedman, 2003). It is an approach to art education that is derived from art criticism as developed by Clive Bell (Freedman, 2003). In art education, formalism illustrates the modernist ideal of rationality. The focus is on the analysis of physical and perceptual characteristics of art objects, as divorced from their wider socio-cultural meanings and practices. Formalism has dominated more recent approaches to art education in the USA (Freedman, 2003) and the UK (Cunliffe, 2005c). Efland (2004) traces the emergence of formalism in art education in the USA to the pedagogy of Dow (1913), who claimed that art, like science, has its own principles. He argued that pupils should learn such principles through a sequence of instructional exercises that are aimed at developing their ability to organize art in a formal way. In order to make this possible, teachers provided pupils with a simplified picture of what Cunliffe (2005b) described as visual art grammar.

#### *b. Curriculum*

As the name of this model of art education – Formalism and Basic Design – suggests, this approach teaches pupils the basic elements or principles for practical work. Learning focuses on the analysis of physical and perceptual characteristics of art objects and involves the reduction of form to elements (such as line, shape, and colour) and principles of design (such as rhythm, balance and unity) (Freedman, 2003). The curriculum activities usually followed a sequential or stage-by-stage development (Freedman, 2003). This type of curriculum focuses on a selection of particular activities designed to direct the pupil's interest to a single learning endpoint, which is the ability to represent the formal properties of art as reflected in examples from early modernism.

### *c. Teaching process*

Artistic knowledge is realized only by representing formal characteristics. Teachers provide pupils with a simplified picture of what constitutes that which is described as visual art grammar. In art education this grammar includes imitation, process-based instruction, ready-made formulae and closed procedures (Vaos, 2000).

### *d. Learning process*

This approach to learning overlaps with behaviourism and the ideas of logical positivism that came to dominate learning theories in the first half of the twentieth century (Efland, 2002). Behaviourism focuses on the environmental conditions that stimulate human responses. Watson (1913), Thorndike (1905) and Skinner (1938, 1974) are the key theorists who promoted behaviourism. Pring (2000) describes how learning in behaviourism is understood as a response that follows a stimulus, and that learning is developed through the establishment of general laws and conditions, which enable a predictable and desirable outcome through the establishment of principles of reinforcement and reward. With behaviourism, pupils depend on their teacher to pass on knowledge and give directions for learning, a process supported by negative and positive forms of reinforcement. Popper (1972) described behaviourism as “the bucket theory of the mind.” A corollary is that the behaviourist approach to learning tends to play down diversity and ignore prior knowledge.

### *e. Criticisms*

Freedman (2003) argues that because the Formalism and Basic Design approach to art education understands artistic experience to be based solely on representing visual, formal relationships, it inhibits meaning and the development of understanding works of art in their social, cultural and historical settings. Therefore, learning in this model of art education is historical, restricted and individualistic, and can be somewhat authoritarian (Freedman, 2003). This model also fails to assist pupils to understand art’s role in human history (Dobbs, 2004), and to address declarative knowledge in art education (Cunliffe, 2005a).



### 3.4.3 Art Education as Grounded in Daily Life

#### *a. Idea*

Another model of art education was based on understanding how art can enhance daily life. This model emerged in the USA, where it was dominant between 1930 and 1960, most notably during the Great Depression, which explains why it was predicated on enhancing daily life.

#### *b. Curriculum*

By focusing on teaching art and design for the purpose of daily life in the community (Winslow, 1939, as cited in Efland, 2004), the idea was to understand art education as a means of realizing modest but important community goals. The model aimed at educating pupils to make artworks that were useful and practical for everyday life (Haggerty, 1935, as cited in Efland, 2004).

#### *c. Learning process*

The approach to learning in this model is derived from the behaviourist theory of learning. Artistic thinking was developed in connection to the immediate social context, so that art's value is its practical utility in daily life.

#### *d. Teaching process*

Imitation and process-based instruction are developed in order to produce a desirable, practical outcome, that is, one important for everyday life.

#### *e. Criticisms*

The types of activities devised in this model, because they were based on reduced, poor and simplified forms to meet a practical purpose, meant that art was valued only in terms of its utility in relation to daily life. Any concern for dealing with "esoteric experience" in art education is marginalized in this model

(Winslow 1939, as cited in Efland, 2004), and from this, it can be assumed that the experience of art in this model loses connection with various forms of transcendence.

#### 3.4.4 Art Education as Engaging with Adult Disciplines

##### *a. Idea*

Discipline-based art education (DBAE) was a vision that emerged from research in cognitive psychology that was undertaken in the 1950s and 1960s, although in reality such reforms were only systematically worked out in art and design from the 1980s onwards (Cunliffe, 1999). It was a part of the more general curriculum reform movement that was stimulated by the need to keep American education competitive during the Cold War.

DBAE followed the idea that school art education should follow the path of adult practices or disciplines of art by combining the cognitive processes needed for making art with those needed for understanding art. The model was initiated by the idea that art education should reflect the disciplines of adult communities to include the practice of studio art and understanding art through engaging with the separate disciplines of art history, art criticism and aesthetics (Dobbs, 1992).

##### *b. Curriculum*

Under the DBAE model, pupils develop competencies in creating works (art production), describe, interpret, evaluate and theorize about works (art criticism), learn how to inquire into the historical, social and cultural contexts of specific art objects (art history), and raise and examine questions about the nature, meaning and value of art and what distinguishes it from other phenomena (aesthetics) (Tapajos 2003; Efland, 2004). These new components for art education require the development of multiple learning repertoires that challenge pupils' technical, aesthetic, social and personal forms of inquiry. In contrast to the views of self-expression and formalism, this model of art education considers art to be a forum for social and cultural inquiry and thinking that relates to historical and contemporary contexts. Hence, this form of curriculum

aims to develop students' ability to formulate meanings by combining procedural and declarative knowledge (Ryle, 1949; Cunliffe, 2005b), and by establishing stronger associations between artistic experiences and socio-cultural contexts.

*c. Teaching process*

In DBAE, pupils are instructed through engaging in active learning. Teachers motivate pupils by focusing on the value of the artwork of adults, which act as exemplars and adds meaning to their own work. Referring to the discipline-based model, Short (1995) writes that studio experiences alone do not enhance students' ability to understand or appreciate well-known historical works of art. To facilitate this, she argues, the understanding of art should shift from one context to another, with the curriculum including critical activities of talking and writing about works of art.

*d. Learning process*

The approach to learning in this model is derived from cognitive learning theory. The core idea for cognitive learning is to focus on meaning making, which is radically different from the stimuli-response approach that underpins the behaviourist learning theory (Bruner, 1990). Foundational perspectives for the first phase of the cognitive revolution were Piaget's (1963) research with the cognitive perspective of biological constructivism. Initially the cognitive revolution was focused on individual minds, but during its second phase this was eclipsed by Vygotsky's (1978) social and historical psychology, the cognitive perspective of social constructivism that saw mind as distributed, so that learning becomes embedded in social and cultural settings, which act as the background to the development of learning (Cunliffe, 1999; Harre, 2001). The cognitive revolution and associated research programme undermine thinking of art education from dichotomous perspectives, such as form versus meaning, formalism versus context. The cognitive learning theory claims that making more connections establishes better learning, and thus enhances understanding of human experience (Freedman, 2003).

#### *e. Criticisms*

Burton (2004) thinks that DBAE results in a form of art education that creates passive learning and conservative thinking. This is because it uses an instructional approach based on the “Western canon,” which, he argues, limits individual creativity and expression. Even though a taste for the Western canon was implicitly cultivated in earlier approaches to art education, it was only at the end of the twentieth century that the preference for cultivating the Western canon became subject to criticism. Burton also argues that DBAE puts forward a narrow conception of how adult disciplines actually operate. For example, Burton thinks DBAE fails to acknowledge the role of power in influencing the way certain ideas become privileged over others, which is reflected in the way real adult disciplines engage in contesting ideas and practices. However, while taking note of these criticisms, what is also important to acknowledge is that DBAE established a view of art education that attempted to balance procedural and declarative forms of knowledge (Cunliffe, 2005a).

### 3.4.5 Post-modern Art Education and Visual Culture

#### *a. Idea*

Post-modern art education is a critical and conceptual model of art education that emerged at the end of the twentieth century (Efland, Freedman and Stuhr, 1996). It focuses on the idea of difference to include practices of art that have been considered of marginal significance in previous versions of art education. In doing so, both DBAE and modernist approaches to art education were criticized as forms of elitism that sustained mono-cultural conformity, existing grand narratives and dominant sensibilities of modernism.

#### *b. Curriculum*

According to post-modern art education, curriculum is not a neutral enterprise as it deals with how knowledge is formed in relation to values, beliefs, the cultural environment and social structures (Freedman, 2003). The dominance of western fine art practices is challenged, so that the curriculum is open to multiple visual

forms of creation beyond painting and sculpture to include computer graphics, advertising, folk art, television, environmental design and cartoons (Efland et al., 1996). Such an approach is seen as an ethical stance against power in favour of an inclusive, pluralist paradigm for art education. However post-modern art education builds on the idea found in DBAE that art education requires both procedural and declarative forms of knowledge.

Essential to the debate surrounding post-modern art education are issues of difference as understood within the context of race, social class, sex and cultural identity. The issues that pupils and art teachers must address include the formation of a cultural identity, the pluralistic meaning of visual information and narratives, and the critical awareness and reflection on the potential interdisciplinary nature of future education. Post-modern art education attempts to address the tension between tradition and innovation, conservatism and liberalism, popular culture and traditional art, with the latter no longer automatically favoured over the former as meaning is relative (Marriner, 1999).

#### *c. Learning process*

Based on this model, knowledge is situated in a socio-cultural context, as developed by Vygotsky in the 1920s and 1930s (Efland, 2002). Vygotsky's social cognition has since become widely accepted (Brown et al., 1989; Bereiter, 1994; Cobb, 1994). Learning involves pupils comprehending the world in a pluralistic way, in which the art room is considered a place where negotiations between teachers and their pupils occur.

#### *d. Teaching process*

The socio-cultural approach sees the pupil as an active, methodical and reflective learner, who is responsible for his or her own personal development. Cognitive learning theorists generally agree on the importance of prior knowledge in the construction of new knowledge (Joyce and Weil, 1986; Marzano, 1992; Freedman, 2003). A corollary is that the teacher is sensitive to the pupils' background knowledge and experience (Joyce and Weil, 1986;

Marzano, 1992; Freedman, 2003). Pupils and teachers form reciprocal relationships (Freire, 1985; Giroux, 1992, as cited in Addison and Burgess, 2004).

The post-modern art classroom is seen as a broadly based area of intellectual pursuit that includes the technical aspects of art (manipulation of materials and formal qualities) and the conceptual side of art (ideas, imagination, styles and so on). Language and other cultural forms are used as tools for advancing human development.

*e. Criticisms*

Critics claim that learning under the life world paradigm of education restricts the students to the cultural experiences in which they are already immersed. Cunliffe (2006) argues that this approach in post-modern art education leads to nihilism because it fails to identify a hierarchy of meaningful differences in practices of art.

### 3.4.6 Re-constructivist Art Education

*a. Idea*

The reconstructivist model of art education is critical of certain strands in both modern and post-modern art education. It identifies modernism as perpetuating a meta-narrative about self-expression and creativity being only concerned with experience. In contrast, post-modern art education develops the opposite point of view, that all narratives equally significant, which promotes leveling and nihilism at the expense of developing excellence within the pluralist notion of art education (Cunliffe, 2006).

*b. Curriculum*

Reconstructive art education requires an approach to curriculum aimed at developing cognitive processes for both procedural and declarative forms of knowledge, so that a rich network of meanings can be mutually formed that

allows students to navigate a variety of art and the related cultural practices. In contrast to the way post-modern art education privileges new technologies, re-constructivist art education favours autographic processes for developing understanding of practices of art based on such skills (Cunliffe, 2003).

### *c. Learning and teaching process*

Knowledge is understood as situated in a socio-cultural context, but priority is given to nurturing meta-level thinking, so that pupils learn how to learn using both procedural and declarative forms of knowledge. Thus, pupils develop critical thinking and the ability to learn how to learn. Such an approach is supported by Addison and Burgess (2004), who argue for the need to develop critical inquiry in art education, as the absence of such thinking can lead to misunderstanding, misrepresentation and misevaluation.

## **3.5 Summary of the models of art education**

The outline of different models of art education provides an important background for analyzing decisions about curriculum design and the related chosen methods of teaching and learning (see Table 3.2). Such a luminous view can be used to understand the chosen research topic better and to analyze the data.

## **3.6 Topics connected with the approaches to art education**

From the discussion above of six models of art education, five overall themes can be identified:

1. The modernist/postmodernist divide
2. End points of art education
3. Creativity in art education
4. Cognitive processes in art education
5. Values in the art curriculum.

### 3.6.1 Art education as operating in a modernist or postmodernist paradigm

#### *a. The modernist paradigm of art education*

Most twentieth-century models of art education as self-expression, formalism and basic design, and art as grounded in daily life, have been conceptualized within a modernist rationale and paradigm. Although these modern approaches to art education have different perspectives they share common features, particularly the idea of individual autonomy. According to Posnock (1991, p. 56, as quoted in Crotty, 1998, p. 185), “instrumentality and autonomy are correlative qualities constituting modern subjectivity in modernism.” The idea of individual autonomy is obvious in the model of art education as self-expression, in which subjective reality is dichotomized with the objective world. Learning is considered an intuitive quality of the learner.

Art education as formalism can be linked to the modernist rationale of individuality from the fact that promotes the ahistorical and decontextualized learning approach: Understanding of art is separated from its social and cultural context. Art education as grounded in daily life is based on American pragmatism in which knowledge is practical and can be generalized (Crotty, 1998, p. 193). The idea of instrumentality is practiced in learning.

#### *b. Art education models under a post-modern paradigm*

The discipline-based art education movement is a matter of special interest when it comes to analyzing whether it belongs to a modern or post-modern paradigm of art and art education. The fact that knowledge acquisition is developed around the cultural and historical aspects of art education, to include the world's cultures, provides a rationale for this form of art education that can operate under an interpretive paradigm, as it escapes from the historical sphere and the related construct of an objective reality. However, the use of artists who are considered to be the best exemplars of practices of art maintains the modernist tradition of grand narratives, which results in playing down any local or small narratives of art making (Efland et al., 1996). When this is combined with the lack of acknowledgement of the role of power in the selection of the



curriculum, it could be argued that, in this respect, this gives DBAE a rationale that is somewhere between modernism and postmodernism.

The contrasting and alternative thinking introduced by postmodernists reveals what is hidden from the conventions and the constraints of modernism (McCornick, 1990; Shusterman, 1992; Bauman, 1993; Crowther, 1993; Hein, 1993). In this respect, the late decades of the twentieth century introduced a more pluralistic, multidimensional understanding of art and visual culture. Rather than depending on oppositions, the purpose of study in postmodernism is to develop a more complex understanding of knowledge and practices, which often cause conflicting opinions rather than resolutions (Freedman, 2003). For this reason, the focus in postmodernism is on the importance of understanding the social origins of knowledge, the underlying social structures, assumptions, relationships and the power process so as to be able to deconstruct social "texts," and connecting logical and emotional states of affairs, all of which makes it necessary to contextualize practices by giving attention to social settings (Freedman, 2003, p. 81). Therefore, the content of a post-modern curriculum also includes the "selection of critical concepts" (Freedman, 2003, p. 53).

The post-modern emphasis on a pluralist and inclusive curriculum overlaps with the reconstructivist model of art education, but with the difference that the latter gives a special emphasis to understanding different practices of art but without the nihilism that is implicit in the former (Cunliffe, 2010a). Reconstructive art education also aims to develop critical thinking, but only in so far as this leads to a deeper ethical commitment to a sense of wonder in the natural world (Cunliffe, 2009).

### 3.6.2 The end points of different models of art education

From the summary above it can be seen that each model assumes a different purpose or end point for art education. For example, the aim of making art is just such an end point, as is the aim of understanding art in its context, which is also the case with being open to a pluralist approach to art, as is the aim of excellence within the pluralist curriculum. The same idea of the importance of purpose or end point of art education can be found in the literature. In this

respect, Efland (1992) describes the history of modernist art education as either engaging with the product or the process. What is common to both is the singular emphasis on procedural knowledge, as is the case when the aim is to achieve formal, technical skilfulness, or self-expression, or in the practical outcomes in the version of art education as grounded in daily life. These approaches also share the common characteristic of associating art education with low levels of cognition as divorced from the socio-cultural framework for understanding a practice of art.

The preference for procedural knowledge continues to dominate today's practice, as revealed in the manipulation of elements and techniques or when technical qualities are considered as the ultimate aim in the teaching of art. Pariser and Zimmerman (2004) reveal that, in the teaching of art in China, technical skilfulness is a single end point in the process of artistic development and is considered to be indispensable for the future development of true artistic ability. They also found that Chinese teachers believe that creativity cannot be developed without learners first becoming skilled in the relevant techniques.

Burton's (2001) survey of the quality and quantity of instruction in private and public secondary schools suggests that most teachers prefer to teach a curriculum that focuses on studio practice. This involves working one-to-one with pupils and implementing a step-by-step learning approach with little emphasis on discussion, open-ended questioning, reflection on practice, collaboration, learning about history and criticism, or using advanced technology. Gray and MacGregor (1991) found the same tendency.

According to Addison and Burgess (2004), such forms of art education tend to be aimed at developing extrinsic values, which they see as external to personal and individual needs.

Recent studies (Wolf & Perry, 1988; Wolf, 1994; Pariser, 1995; Kindler and Darras; 1994, 1998; Kindler, 1999; Colomb, 2002; as cited in Kindler, 2004) argue for the significance of a variety of multiple end points in art education, some of which use declarative knowledge to address the critical and conceptual aspects of curriculum by focusing on developing judgments about meanings and

aesthetics (Cunliffe, 2006). Freedman (2003) argues that contemporary conceptions of artistic development must include a consideration of the influence of post-modern visual culture on students. Freedman argues that an art classroom should be an area of intellectual pursuit that includes the technical aspects of art (manipulation of materials and formal qualities) and the conceptual side of art (the imagination, understanding styles, and so on).

It is important in this part of the work to discuss further the idea of intrinsic and extrinsic values in art education as presented by Addison and Burgess (2004) and relate this to what has been discussed previously in relation to models of art education and their related endpoints.

Intrinsic qualities of art include material processes and the significance of a medium, aesthetics and communication. Intrinsic values of art also include its worth as a means of interpreting and understanding human experience. Such a perception of art's role as part of interconnecting systems of knowledge, communication and understanding that enrich the learning experience is in stark contrast to the view that considers art to be a discrete and formalist discipline aimed at developing extrinsic values.

With discipline-based art education, post-modern art education and reconstructivist art education, art experience is developed as part of interconnecting systems of knowledge (Addison and Burgess, 2004). With such approaches the study of the technical and conceptual aspects of art results in multiple learning endpoints.

An international survey of curricula by Sharp and Le Metais (2000) similarly revealed multiple endpoints across many countries. The research makes reference to different national curriculum objectives of various countries that combine the development of purely artistic skills (principles, techniques, design processes) with the development of aesthetic judgment, and social, cultural and personal outcomes.

Anglin (1993), who studied the art curriculum at forty middle schools in the USA, reported that teachers emphasize the use of media for making art, and also that

teachers shared many frustrations about the teaching of art history, art criticism and aesthetics. More recent research, for example, Taggart and colleagues' (2004) international survey of the aims of curricula in art education found evidence of similar aims among the countries regarding; artistic skills, understanding skills, opening to a variety of art forms, and further aims regarding personal and social qualities such as self-esteem and group work. Research carried out by the European network (Eurydice, 2009) on art education in EU member countries revealed the same tendency, notably the focus on the development of artistic skills, critical appreciation, skills for understanding art, creativity, cultural heritage and social skill.

### 3.6.3 Creativity and the different models of art education

Creativity is one of the central aims of the national curriculum in many countries (Sharp and Le Metais, 2000; Eurydice, 2009). The different models of art education discussed above have developed varied approaches to nurturing creativity. In this section I will review studies into creativity carried out in the twentieth century in relation to different models of art education.

Studies conducted in Europe in the early twentieth century about creativity in art education were influenced by the theme of genius (Craft, 2005). This point of view was a legacy of the romantic approach to learning wherein creativity was a case of inspiration rather than more formal approaches to the subject (Abbs, 1987).

In art education as self-expression, nurturing creativity is achieved by eliminating any form of discipline, procedure or rules (Clark et al., 1987). This belief encourages pupils to explore creativity as an inner process that somehow operates outside social and cultural reality (Cunliffe, 2010b).

Research carried out after 1950 perpetuated the tradition of exploring creativity as an aspect of giftedness as condensed in the traits of prominent persons (Mackinnon, 1975; Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; Simonton, 1984; Shaw and Runco, 1994; Eisenman, 1997, as cited in Craft, 2001). Large-scale

positivist studies attempted to measure the role of intelligence and traits in determining the necessary components of creativity.

In art education as grounded in daily life, creativity is understood as a conditioning behaviour that complements conventional learning, which has the tendency to sustain more stereotyped views. The need to take into account the social context of the research situation when interpreting the findings has been a point of interest for the research of the latter period.

Research published after the 1970s shifted the focus of creativity away from psychological processes and traits towards a socio-cultural understanding of the “process of creativity” (Sternberg and Lubart, 1995a, b; Csikszentmihalyi, 1998; Rhyammar and Brodin, 1999; Jeffrey and Craft, 2001, as cited in Craft 2001). The new approach has roots in social psychology and the importance of social structures in developing individual creativity. This viewpoint opened up the possibility of understanding creativity as something applicable to all people.

The shift to a socio-cultural perspective meant that researchers’ interest became focused on ordinary people and ordinary processes, which supported the idea that each person has the potential to be creative. Such an approach explores the person who interacts with his/her social, cultural and natural environment when engaging the process of creativity. Based on this view, creativity becomes an ordinary process that can produce extraordinary results. As such, creativity came to be considered as a process that can be consciously driven by a person, and therefore is not something beyond voluntary processes, as the previous romantic view had tended to promote, but rather a characteristic that can be psychologically and socio-culturally promoted (Ochse, 1990; Weisberg, 1999). A corollary was that creativity came to be seen as “democratic and everyday” (Craft, 2005, p. 52).

This view of creativity has influenced the more recent models of art education, including engaging with adult disciplines, and post-modern art education, visual culture, and the re-constructivist model of art education. These models of art education offer opportunities for realizing creativity within a constructivist framework for learning. Creativity is fostered in a collaborative process between

pupils and teachers, in which knowledge is co-constructed. In this case, these models of art education are consistent with a democratic approach to creativity.

The methodology for exploring creativity in the new socio-cultural paradigm shifted from the large-scale positivist surveys conducted in the first half of twentieth century to forms of qualitative research that focused on the processes used in creative practices.

In conclusion, the democratic approach to creativity that emerged from the new research paradigm has influenced educational policies in many countries (NACCCE, 1999). At the beginning of the twenty-first century, creativity is integrated with the national curricula of many countries by focusing on the rights of all pupils to participate in the creative process (Eurydice, 2009). In the case of Greece's current art curriculum, the position is close to the democratic approach of creativity in education: that every child needs to participate in the creative process (see Table 3.5).

#### 3.6.4 Cognitive processes and the different models of art education

Cognitive processes, as already briefly discussed in relation to models of art education, focus learning on meaning making, so that knowledge in art education needs to be meaningful. This happens when learners co-construct new knowledge based on prior learning and in relation to the meaningfulness of artistic practices when situated in their social and cultural context. This means that, with a cognitive approach, learning in art becomes historically meaningful by reconciling the learner's life history with the wider understanding of the role of art in its social and cultural reality (Efland, 2002).

Such an approach to learning relates to the idea of cognitive flexibility (Spiro et al., 1987), as knowledge acquisition in art education is not limited to strategies commonly used in well-structured knowledge domains and the related application of formal instructions and generalizations (Spiro et al., 1987). Art requires a repertoire of strategies to be activated to include some of the strategies developed in well-structured knowledge domains as well as strategies like the use of metaphor, developing the ability to interpret and judge

meaning in social and cultural structures and artefacts, as well as developing expressive abilities, as found in complex learning domains (Efland, 2002).

Another ability developed through a cognitive approach to art education is that of human agency (Bruner, 1990; Efland, 2002). Teaching art requires the personal engagement of the learner with the learning process, including a willingness to engage with metacognitive strategies (Cunliffe, 2007a).

### *Models of art education and the role of cognitive processes*

The models of art education discussed above deploy various approaches to knowledge acquisition. In the model of art education as formalism and basic design, and art education as grounded in daily life, art is conceptualized as a well-structured knowledge domain that is capable of being reduced to a streamlined curriculum that is taught with a limited number of strategies (Efland, 2002). Such simplified, well-structured curricula and related instructions distort learning in art education, especially art's capacity to develop higher order cognitive abilities like knowledge transfer (Spiro et al., 1987). It also prevents learners from engaging with art's significant role as a cultural activity, namely its capacity to articulate meaning through deploying a range of complex and expressive visual symbols and the corollary of learning how to interpret art in its social context (Efland, 2002).

By contrast, in discipline-based art education, post-modern art education and visual culture, and re-constructivist art education, pupils experience a curriculum and approach to learning that integrates a variety of cognitive processes and forms of knowledge (declarative and procedural) that is more consistent with art as it operates in different cultural practices.

### 3.6.5 The value of the art curriculum and different models of art education

The role and the status of art in school curricula varied during the twentieth century, as can be understood from the discussion of models of art education above, with each one revealing a variety of perspectives on what counts as most valuable and significant for learning in art education.

The basic value of art in art education as self-expression is grounded in the emotional pleasure and expressive freedom associated with something thought to be aboriginal, like childhood itself. In this respect its most important feature is the ability of the pupil to express raw feelings, an outlook influenced by the romantic doctrine of art as inspiration grounded in deep emotion (Abbs, 1987). Graham (2005) argues that the view of art and art education as “the outpouring of emotions” ends up as reporting on feelings that are unmediated by more complex forms of creative endeavour such as the use of imagination and other deliberate acts of cognition.

By contrast, the values that underpin the models of art education described here as formalism and basic design elements, and art in daily life, are grounded in what could be described as “aesthetic” experience; however, such aesthetic experiences and ideals are known to vary from culture to culture, an insight that is precluded when art as aesthetic experience operates in an autonomous way.

In the USA and Europe, value in art education was located in the expression of the emotions, or in autonomous, aesthetic experience, throughout the first half of the twentieth century. This shows a resemblance to what was considered the source of value in Greek school art education at the time. During the last forty years, such values that have underpinned art education have lost their attraction, being replaced with the idea that value in art education is best located in the cognitive, social and cultural processes that underpin art. This is a view that is in keeping with discipline-based art education, post-modern art education and visual culture, and reconstructivist art education.

The value of art education in these forms stresses the importance of enhancing pupils’ understanding of human nature. Art is considered a form of knowledge



and in order to do this acts of mind like the use of the imagination, and the ability to justify interpretations, are employed. By using such cognitive processes pupils are more able to understand art as a process of learning.

To conclude, broadly speaking, the twentieth century produced two phases in art education that are also reflected in Greek art education. Phase one involved self-expression and the autonomy of creativity. It also focused on formalism and basic design exercises aimed at developing an autonomous approach to art and aesthetic experience. Phase two emerged from the cognitive revolution, in which art is understood as the operation of mind in specific social and cultural settings. With the second phase, art education is valued because it engages complex forms of cognition such as the use of the imagination, the ability to give justified forms of interpretation, and other cognitive resources and strategies (Cunliffe, 2008b) which not only illuminate learning through art but contribute in a wider way to understanding human beings and their potential.

### **3.7 Greek art education in the twentieth century**

The following outline of Greek art education during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries draws on the work of Vaos (2000) and Xanthoudaki (2003) (see Appendix 9). (In order that the reader can make sense of this outline, it is important to keep in mind that the subject of art in the two accounts above and the related historical documents is often synonymous with “drawing,” “sketching,” “calligraphy,” “drafting,” “plastic art,” “handicrafts” and “technical drawing”).

It is possible to identify four periods in the development of art education in Greece during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. These are:

Period 1: The beginning of the twentieth century – art education is under the influence of nineteenth-century educational values and historicism.

Period 2: During the period 1910–1969 art education is influenced by the ideas of the “Educational Society.”

Period 3: From 1977 to 1999 – art education is part of more general educational reforms.

Period 4: From 2003 onwards – art education is part of a new cross-curricular approach based around themes.

The teaching of drawing and crafts as part of Greek primary and secondary education at the beginning of the twentieth century was regarded as a means of enhancing pupils' skill development, necessary for their professional futures. The teaching approach was based on behavioural learning theory. The curricula of periods 3 and 4, mainly from 1990 and onwards, made efforts at contextualized studies of art establishing the relationship between art understanding and cultural and social context.

I will now describe each one of these phases of art education in Greece in more detail.

### 3.7.1 Art education at the beginning of the twentieth century

During this period, art education in the Greek state school system came under the influence of nineteenth-century ideas and the legacy of the classical world, which not only served as a contact with shared European values of the time but also had a more specific historical connection with the study of Greek antiquities and thinking.

In state schools these ideas were worked out in the following way. The art curriculum for primary education that was published in 1894 (see Appendix 9), refers to the study of calligraphy and sketching, which were aimed at developing skills thought necessary for pupils' professional future (Lefas, 1942). However, the actual practice of sketching at this time turned out to be more like developing the ability to copy original art works. This approach used didactic, formal methods of teaching based on behavioural learning theory and its related stimulus-response mechanical view of knowledge acquisition, which required students to act only when instructed to do so, and in accordance with the teacher's demonstration. The teaching was of a formal nature and took place in a formal setting.

In secondary education, a book published in 1907 on visual art (notably calligraphy and sketching) coded the teaching methods for these disciplines, in which themes are harmonized with the ideals of classicism by developing mechanical routines based on imitating the Greek classics. Such an approach prescribed starting with linear work with drawings done from objects, which are then finished by applying the rules of perspective and the recording of volume with light and shade. This form of art education came to be increasingly questioned as its only goal was to cultivate the skill of reproduction, which also had the effect of discouraging any original thinking and self-expression.

### 3.7.2 The period influenced by the ideas of the “Educational Society”

A new era for Greek education began with the new approach introduced by the “Educational Society,” a group of progressive Greek teachers who founded this organization in 1910 with the aim of reforming the education system. Their approach was influenced by the new views on pedagogy generated in the USA and Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century. The new approach to pedagogy meant that the previous mechanistic view of learning by the imposition of rules was rejected in favour of the spirit of collectivism and giving priority to experience and active participation.

The Educational Society’s curriculum, which was proposed for primary education to the Greek education authority in 1912, recommended that children in the early years of primary be free to draw objects or scenes from fairytales, memory and their personal life, with children in the later years of primary education being taught free drawing, shading and perspective. A cross-curricular approach to learning was proposed in which visual art was to be integrated with the teaching of other subjects. The spirit of collectivism, which would be accomplished by group work, was also proposed with the instructional role of the teacher being aimed at applying a “unique influence” on the children.

The progressive views of the Educational Society were severely criticized for provoking a “suspect educational rebellion” (Vaos, 2000). They were met with harsh resistance and rejected. Even though the proposed reform of primary education was rejected by the Ministry of Education, it did influence the views of

pedagogy during the rest of the twentieth century. Also, the Educational Society's views can be seen in the curriculum for primary education as described in 1913. For example, the new primary art curriculum of 1913 which was approved by the Greek Ministry of Education, was centred on the development of sketching and calligraphy, and was written for all the six classes of primary schooling. In the curriculum for early years, the art curriculum anticipates the move towards the teaching of drawing and sketching from memory, in contrast to the more formal programme that preceded it. It was only in the later years of primary education that the teaching of perspective and shading were advocated. The time devoted to teaching aspects of visual art was double that of the curriculum of 1894. In addition, after the publication of the 1913 document, the necessity of visual art in education was embraced by the majority of educators, a view that was sustained until 1969 (Salla, 2008).

A parallel initiative took place with the publication in 1914 of the secondary curriculum (see Appendix 9), which increased the time allocated to art to nine hours weekly for all the three years of lower secondary school (three hours weekly per year class). In 1918 crafts were added to art curriculum, with the overall teaching hours allocated to visual art occupying 13% of the school timetable, that is, five hours weekly for year class a', five hours weekly for year class b' and four hours weekly for year class c'.

In 1931 a new art curriculum was issued for secondary education that renamed the subject of art as "technicals." It became compulsory and was taught for eight hours weekly with a total of 180 hours weekly for six year classes of lower and upper secondary education, or 4.4% of school time. Even though the curriculum was characterized by the spirit of reform that the liberal government of the day sought to establish, many features of the old curriculum were maintained, including the more formal approach to teaching that prevailed before the influence of the Educational Society became more widespread. Those actually involved in the educational process began to demand more change, but the conservative policies and the accompanying formal and mechanistic approach to curriculum and teaching still prevailed. The policies and social conditions of the country at the time emphasized productivity, elegance, knowledge and usefulness as the aims of the art class.

In 1935, and throughout the time of the Metaxa dictatorship (1936–1941), visual art was taught as 3.3% of secondary school education, which represented a reduction on previous arrangements. The decades that followed, despite some innovations, featured; reduction in the hours of instruction for art, dominance of the more formal approach to teaching the subject, adherence to the formalistic view, and differentiation between the subject materials based on pupils' gender. In 1961, art accounted for 3.6% of the secondary school education, and in 1967 it was reduced to 2.7%. Two years later, it was further reduced to just 1.9%.

### 3.7.3 The period of educational reforms: the art curriculum 1977–1999

The period from 1977 to 1999 saw reforms both minor and major in education in Greece, including art education. The new approach for primary education that emerged in 1977 (see Appendix 9) moved away from the formal emphasis of the previous curriculum towards embracing the ideas of the Educational Society and its stress on cultivating the spirit of self-expression and active participation. The central aim for art education became the cultivation of free thought by providing opportunities for pupils to express themselves and develop their imagination (Xanthoudaki, 2003) using teaching methods that aim to foster experimentation and novelty. The 1977 curriculum for primary education was influenced by the ideas of Read (1943), who argued that education through art should be built around the expression of feelings. However, the curriculum still retained the need for the gradual application of correct sketching activities and skills that could be useful for a pupil's future professional life. As part of these proposals, art was required to be taught for twelve hours for all six year classes (two hours weekly for each of the six year classes) accounting for 7.5 % of primary education.

In 1982, the subject of art was renamed “aesthetic education” (see Appendix 9), “Aesthetic education” was a term that was introduced during the 1960s and was aimed at including within art education the fields of criticism, art history, aesthetics, and other arts disciplines like music, theatre, dance and literature (Smith, 1987a, as cited in Salla, 2008, p. 209). In Greece, the term aesthetic education referred to the study of drawing, crafts, painting and music

(Xanthoudaki, 2003). Such a curriculum began to allow for pupils' real interests and abilities, as well as giving greater time for the contextualized study of art.

In primary education, aesthetic education was more concerned with "pupils' emotional and sensory development as well as at the acquisition of artistic skills" (Xanthoudaki, 2003, p. 109). The curriculum "emphasized the importance of investing in pupils' individual abilities, needs and interests; and encouraged the development of their cultural awareness" (Xanthoudaki, 2003, p. 109).

In 1985, a new art curriculum (see Appendix 9) was published for secondary education which included painting, drawing, sculpture, and etching. Its more general aim was to nurture pupils' interpersonal skills, responsibility, collaboration, creativity, self-esteem and emotional development. Other aims were to develop cultural awareness and critical thinking about art and its capacity to communicate meaning. The curriculum also stressed the significance of integrating art with the rest of school life, with the themes for the year-one class being developed on the basis of pupils' social life and contemporary issues about art. For the second and third years, themes were selected to enhance skills. The 1985 curriculum envisaged art being taught for one hour per week for each of the first three years of the lower secondary stage and one hour per week for the upper secondary stage.

In 1990, a new art curriculum (see Appendix 9) was published for primary education. New textbooks to support art teachers covered not only art but also music and drama. Pupils' aesthetic development is understood to be best enhanced through creative self-expression and developing cultural awareness through studying past and present art works. This latter aim involved greater co-operation with museums, ateliers and factories (Xanthoudaki, 2003). With this new model of the art curriculum, it was a requirement that the subject be taught for four hours per week for the first four classes of the primary school and two hours per week for the last two classes of the primary school.

In 1999 (see Appendix 9), a unified framework for all school curricula was published that was to be followed by all schools, from the kindergarten to upper secondary education. This change in approach was underpinned by the

realization of the importance of offering all pupils a consistent and continuous framework for their education based on a unified philosophy. This approach aimed at making better transitions not only from one year class to the next, but also from one level of education (primary education) to the next (secondary education).

#### 3.7.4 The cross-curriculum approach to learning in art education

The new curriculum of 2003 (see Appendix 7) adopted an interdisciplinary approach to knowledge, which contrasted with the previous view of disciplines for primary and lower secondary education. In aiming to improve the quality of teaching and learning, the education authorities encouraged active participation and a creative approach to new social requirements. Within this philosophy, cross-curricular links or interconnection between subjects and basic concepts was proposed. The cross-curricular approach to learning was not a new idea in Greek education as the Educational Society had introduced the idea many decades before (see Chapter 3.7.2).

The publication of the 2003 cross-curriculum approach to learning in art education consisted of two parts: The first part introduced the cross-curriculum approach in art learning and was titled: “Cross-Thematic Curriculum Framework for Art” (see Appendix 7a). The second part introduced the “Analytical Curriculum for Art” (see Appendix 7b).

The introduction of the 2003 version of Greece’s national curriculum of aesthetic education, and the related opening of new specialist arts schools that were established, meant that a specially designed art curriculum was issued (see Appendix 8b). The start of my research coincides with the introduction of this new art curriculum.

### **3.8 Summary of Greek art education in primary and secondary education during the twentieth century**

During the first half of the twentieth century, art education was taught under the strong influence of the formal approach to education. With this uniform approach, common attitudes towards beauty and the ability to reproduce skills and knowledge were considered the most important goals of art education. This view changed in 1977 when the new curriculum proposed a greater emphasis on self-expression and innate creativity as isolated from any reference to the contextual study of art. During the 1980s serious efforts were made to tackle this inadequacy by attempting to contextualize the study of art in the curriculum. The art curriculum of 1999 gave a more explicit understanding of the way cognitive processes operate in primary and secondary art education, which was consolidated in the 2003 version.

This summary of the evolution of Greek art education generates the following issue for this study: whether the pupils' and their art teachers' attitudes and perceptions of learning in art in one of Greece's new arts schools converge with the aims of art education as envisaged by the new curriculum. This concern is provoked by evidence found in international literature that highlights mismatches between the ambitions of government reforms of art curricula and how these actually work out in practice (Acker, 1990; Vaikousi and Vergidis, 2003).

This section has presented a view of how art education has developed in Europe, the USA and Greece over the last one hundred years or so. The next section analyses the art curriculum of the new specialist arts schools (see Appendix 8b), and points out its differences with the art curriculum of the normal schools (see Appendix 7b).

### **3.9 Analysis of the art curriculum of Greece's specialist arts schools**

The following analysis of the art curriculum for the arts schools is based on the following categories:

- cognitive processes
- views of creativity



- forms of knowledge
- values.

### 3.9.1 Cognitive processes

The main focus of learning in Greece's specialist arts schools is on cognitive processes and meaning making (see Chapter 3.4.4.d and 3.6.4). This can be identified throughout the curriculums: aims, coded as A., core objectives, coded as C.O., specific objectives, coded as S.O., methodology, coded as M. and assessment, coded as AS. (see Appendix 8b).

#### *Aims*

Three aims are conceptualized as programmes of study: Investigating art (familiarizing, researching, A.1), making art (creating, preparing, A.2, A.5), and valuing art (enjoying A.3, appreciating A.4).

Each aim is given learning targets that specify the form of achievement pupils are expected to achieve:

- understanding art (“engage in research activities and the creation of artworks, so as to develop their skills in creating and appreciating art”) (A.4), (“to familiarise themselves with art by researching deep into the inner workings of this discipline”) (A.1, 2) and
- making art (“to develop their skills in creating”) (A.4), (“prepare the pupils for a future career in art”) (A.5).

Equally significant is the aim that pupils should be satisfied by experiencing art education: (“to enjoy themselves”) (A.3). The keywords used to describe the aims are: familiarize, research, enjoy, appreciate, create, prepare (for future career).

These keywords provide opportunities for the development of cognitive strategies, as described by Cunliffe (2007b, p. 34) when identifying the cognitive processes that underpin expert creative performance. More specifically, the word “familiarize” as used in the aims links to Cunliffe’s description of a cognitive strategy of “recognizing and defining the problem,” and phrases like “appreciating the arts” and “research into the inner workings” match two other

significant cognitive strategies that Cunliffe identifies as “gathering and organizing all relevant information” and “planning tactics.” Finally, the ability to “create art” engages cognitive strategies that Cunliffe describes as “checking performance against original aims,” monitoring performance” and “evaluating performance.”

### *Core objectives*

The curriculum describes four core objectives, each of which engages a discrete but related cognitive process necessary for making and understanding art that also integrates procedural and declarative knowledge.

- Creativity (C.O.1) “Develop pupils’ creativity, as well as their ability to produce works of art and to promote their participation in art”
- Art making (C.O.2) “Enrich pupils’ knowledge and their ability to utilize materials, methods, tools and resources in a variety of different art forms”
- Art criticism (C.O.3) “Cultivate pupils’ perceptive response and understanding, as well as their critical approach and analysis of art and of arts in general”
- Aesthetics (C.O.4) “Deepen pupils’ understanding of the cultural dimension of the arts and its contribution to society over time”

The development of procedural knowledge is mainly achieved in relation to the first two core objectives (C.O.1) and (C.O.2), while declarative knowledge is put to work by prescribing the last two objectives, (C.O.3) and (C.O.4).

### *Specific objectives*

The curriculum describes specific objectives, which can be grouped in the following way:

- exploring and developing ideas (S.O.1)
- investigation (S.O.2, 3, 4) and expression (S.O.10)
- communicating & understanding of art (S.O.5–13).

The phrases used in the text of the curriculum imply that cognitive skills can be developed in art, given that the process by which the knowledge is acquired is given significance.

1. Generate ideas from direct visual and tactile experiences, memory and imagination (S.O.1).
2. Realize the power of expression, which can arise from experimenting with many different types of materials, techniques and in all dimensions (level, volume, space and time) (S.O.2).
3. Experiment and express themselves using different types of visual aids (books, photographs, transparencies, photocopies, posters etc) so as to generate ideas that will encourage the creation of individual works of art (S.O.3).
4. Improve [pupils] through observation, their skills and their abilities to record, select and analyse different sources of inspiration. This will assist them in the better organization and production of art work (S.O.4).
5. Understand the importance of creating and developing art under the prism of modifying the initial idea, either by themselves or after consultation with others' criticism and external influence (S.O.5).
6. Convey and adjust their experiences and knowledge of art works in the creation of their own artwork (S.O.6).
7. Communicate through visual artworks, but also through any alternative visual medium so as to sense and evaluate the impression and the influence that these have on their own personalities (S.O.9).
8. Express themselves and communicate verbally using the correct art terminology (S.O.10).
9. Understand the different ways of approaching and working with ideas drawn from different artists and relating them to the meaning behind a particular work of art and understand that views, which vary over time, can influence the form, content and expressive style of each work of art (S.O.7).
10. Recognize the aesthetic value of the natural and the constructed environment, and to develop the ability to take a critical stance on the activities that influence them and to define the relationships between them (S.O.8).
11. Understand that the arts and their applications are related to many different professions (S.O.11).

12. Approach the complex phenomenon of the arts in a well-rounded way and understand the mutual relationship and interplay between theory and practice (S.O.12).

13. Perceive the relationship between art works and the arts in general, works of science and the wider issues and problems that relate to mankind, society and nature (S.O.13).

To meet the specific objectives pupils are required to work in a variety of materials and techniques, experience plural forms of art, achieve meaning making, make judgements, and be critical. The cultivation and combination of declarative and procedural forms of knowledge is required to achieve these aims (see Appendix 8b, T.A. 1-6).

### *Methodology*

The text of the art curriculum continues with the description of methodology. The section that deals with methodology, like the rest of the curriculum document, can be understood as aiming to cultivate pupils' cognitive processes. In this case, it is their ability to acquire and use declarative (M.4, M.6, M.5, M.10, M.11, M.12) and procedural forms of knowledge (M.2, M.3, M.4, M.5, M.6, M.7, M.8, M.9, M.10, M.11, M.12, M.13, M.15) to represent thinking (see Tables: 3.3 and 3.4):

Cognitive strategies that nurture the development of creativity and good performance in art education have been identified by Cunliffe (2009, p. 20). The relevant strategies involve "gathering and organizing information," "planning tactics," "checking performance," "revisiting plans and strategies," "evaluating performance," (M.8, M.9, M.11) and the role of "curiosity and task commitment" (M.3).

In the methodology section there is a clear description of how learning should be structured, and the role of the teacher and pupil in such a process:

i. The learning approach

The approach to learning outlined in the methodology section belongs to the socio-cultural paradigm (M.5, M.14), and includes an emphasis on active learning (M.10) (see Chapter 3.4.5.d) with knowledge acquisition being based on pupils' prior knowledge (M.14).

#### ii. The role of the teacher

The teacher's role is described as actively (M.1) encouraging pupils to develop their creative and critical thinking skills (M.10) and responsible dispositions (M.3). Furthermore teachers should be creative agents (M.4, M.5, M.6) who are well prepared (M.13, M.16, M.12).

#### iii. The role of the pupil

The pupils are expected to learn through being actively engaged (M.1, M.8), so that they can co-construct the meaning of what is learned (M.14).

### *Assessment*

Formative assessment (Cunliffe, 2007a) is carried out during the learning process to evaluate learning and teaching and improve pupils' development (AS.1). Other, more open-ended assessment methods, as described in Burton (2004), such as discussion, reflection on practice, critique and use of questionnaires, are also recommended in the curriculum (AS.5).

Other issues such as participation, interest, employability, achievement, effort and self-assessment are also advocated (AS.2, AS.3, AS.4, AS.6). Teachers' self-assessment is also emphasized (AS.7).

To sum up, the content of the curriculum for the specialist arts schools maps the following cognitive processes that Efland (2002) identified as significant for art education:

- pupils' new knowledge is built on prior knowledge (M.14, S.O.5)
- knowledge acquisition is made meaningful by linking it to pupils' social context (M.5, M.14, S.O.3, C.O.3)

- cross-curriculum approaches to learning (M.7, C.C.S.W.1)
- pupils monitor their own learning using meta-cognitive strategies that engage discussion, reflection, and critique (A.S.5, A.S.6, T.A.6)
- pluralism in art forms and practices of art is emphasized (T.A.1-6, M.2, M.5)
- the role of human agency in the learning process is emphasized (M.1, M.8, M.12, M.11, M.13).

To conclude, the curriculum for the specialist arts schools draws on a cognitive approach to learning (M.10) that operates within a socio-cultural paradigm (M.5, M.14) to develop active learning strategies (M.1, M.4, M.5, M.6, M.8, M.10) as recorded in tables 3.3, 3.4 and 3.6.

### 3.9.2 Views of creativity

I will now relate the content of the curriculum to the issue of creativity, identifying strategies highlighted by Craft (2005) (see Table 3.5):

The teacher:

- builds new knowledge on prior learning (M.14, S.O.5)
- explicitly shares the process of education by encouraging pupils to speculate (M.3)
- enhances pupils' self-esteem (M.4, M.6, M.8, M.9, A.3, AS.2, AS.3)
- mediates new knowledge through employing a cross-curricular approach to learning (M.7), (C.C.S.W.1).

More generally, a more democratic approach to creativity (see Chapter 3.6.3) is used, in which pupils are understood as agents responsible for shaping their own learning and creativity.

### 3.9.3 Forms of knowledge

As argued previously, the structure of the curriculum for the specialist arts schools favours an approach based on cognitive processes as embedded in social and cultural settings. This is why the new curriculum also encompasses a critical and contextual understanding for underpinning the idea of difference in

art. This view is based on the following statements from the curriculum document (see Appendix 8b):

*a. The development of active learning*

The curriculum advocates that learning in art should be situated and related to the context in which it is carried out and based on pupils' prior knowledge and experience. The curriculum document states that the art discipline should be carefully matched with pupils' personal experiences, based on activities that deal with their life world and drawing on issues which have value and meaning in their lives (see Appendix 8b, M.5, M.14, S.O.5).

*b. The development of cross-curricular learning approach*

The curriculum gives instructions and paradigms by which teachers can understand how to integrate art with other disciplines (see Appendix 8b, M.7, and C.C.S.W.1).

*c. The development of procedural and declarative knowledge*

The curriculum proposes the development and use of declarative and procedural knowledge. It mentions the need to relate making art to understanding practices of art, with time being devoted to combining declarative and procedural knowledge (see Tables 3.3 & 3.4).

The use of language to talk and write about art is recommended as an important tool for conveying knowledge, with many of the learning targets focused on the development of pupils' ability to interpret art works, including their understanding of art in its sociocultural and historical context.

*d. The development of multiple visual forms of creation*

The curriculum document specifies that art should be experienced through traditional fine arts as well as other forms of visual culture like computer graphics, comics and multimedia (see Appendix 8b, T.A.1-6).

### 3.9.4 The role of values in the new art curriculum

The new curriculum often mentions the need to relate art education with pupils' life world. Thus it can be argued that the value of the art curriculum can be identified in its ability to enhance pupils' understanding of their social and cultural reality as evidenced by their ability to be creative by making art, and by being able to appreciate the cultural dimension of art and its diachronic and synchronic contribution to society.

### 3.10 Differences between specialist secondary arts schools and normal schools

The art curriculum for the specialist arts schools (see Appendix 8b) and for the normal schools (see Appendix 7b) differs in the following ways.

#### a. Aims

Specialist arts schools share four aims (see Appendix 8b) with normal schools (see Appendix 7b) but also have an extra aim. The aims that both types of schools share are:

- pupils familiarize themselves with art
- pupils research deep into the inner working of the discipline and enjoy themselves
- pupils engage in research activities
- pupils develop their art skills in creating and appreciating art.

The additional aim of specialist schools is:

- prepare pupils for a future career in art, if they so desire (see Appendix 8b, A.5).

#### b. Time

Specialist arts schools are allocated sixteen (16) hours per week for art, while normal schools only have two hours per week. It is interesting to note that, according to a survey of Greek education authorities (Ypepth, 2003), the extended school time is a qualitative rate factor for the educational



process. Thus, the extended learning time frame of specialist arts schools, according to the survey of Ypepth (2003), adds to the quality of pupils' studies. According to Vergidis and Vaikousi (2003), broad instructional time offered for art education specifies a qualitative component for the teaching. Finally, according to Bamford (2006) time, space and resources, are also key factors that foster the success of arts education in a school curriculum.

c. Pedagogy

Specialist arts schools use two art teachers to teach the same class. Normal secondary schools have just one teacher. The learning process in the arts schools benefits from the increase in the number of teachers.

### **3.11 The relation between the approach to art education found in the curriculum of specialist arts schools and the wider initiatives in the USA and Europe**

The incorporation of both procedural (see Table 3.3) and declarative knowledge, the development of multiple visual forms of creation, the contextual approach to understanding art issues (see Table 3.4), and the use of active, experiential learning structured by a cross-curricular learning approach (see Tables 3.5 & 3.6) justifies the description of Greece's specialist arts schools' curriculum as post-modern.

The art curriculum for the specialist arts schools of Greece responds to the current initiatives for art education that is manifested in both the European and US contexts in the following points:

Firstly, as regards active learning, Freedman (2003), Efland (2004) and Parsons (2004) advocated that learning in art should be situated to the context in which it is carried out and based on pupils' prior knowledge.

Secondly, as regards the cross-curricular approach to learning, Efland (2002) argues that learning experience is rich and develops pupils cognitive potentials, when a rich array of subjects is used.

Finally, as regards the development of multiple visual forms of creation, currently the international community of art educators supports the same view for today's art education by striving to embrace a broader range of visual art and cultural

issues (Duncum, 1990; Hicks, 1990; Barbosa, 1991; Congdon, 1991; Blandy, 1994; Garber, 1995; Neperud, 1995; Freedman, 1994, 2000; Smith-Shank, 1996; Jagodzinski, 1997; Garoian, 1999; Hernandez, 2000; Tavin, 2000; Ballenge & Morris and Stuhr, 2001 as cited in Freedman and Stuhr, 2004).

### **3.12 Summary of the chapter**

This chapter started by reviewing six models of art education and the related theories of learning and curriculum that underpin them that have emerged in Europe and the USA during the last hundred years. It related these models of art education to what is known about Greek art education in the twentieth century, and what has been designed for the new secondary art curriculum for specialist arts schools in Greece initiated in the twenty-first century. The chapter has argued that the development of the curriculum for the new arts schools in Greece is broadly in line with recent developments in the USA and parts of Europe. It has further argued that the new arts schools are an important step for art education in Greece, which raises two further questions: Will the attitude of teachers and pupils involved in the new arts schools be able to respond to this important initiative? How will pupils' and their art teachers' views be challenged by the new educational aims? These questions will be pursued further in the rest of this study by exploring the participants' perceptions of art education as revealed by researching the learning that goes on in an art class of a specialist arts school, which, in turn, could furnish the educational community of Greece with further insights about art education.

### **3.13 Overview of the remaining chapters**

The fourth chapter will deal with the methodology that structures the research question. The fifth chapter will deal with the analysis of data generated during the pilot study. The sixth chapter deals with analysis of data created in the first stage of the main study. The seventh chapter analyses the data generated during the second stage of the main study. The eighth chapter relates and discusses the findings with the literature. The ninth chapter discusses the implications of the study.

<b>Models of art education</b>	<b>Values:</b>	<b>Main focus:</b>	<b>Core idea &amp; view of learner:</b>	<b>Core idea/view of teacher:</b>	<b>Criticism:</b>
<b>Self-expression:</b>	Originality and authenticity	Self-expression and articulation of a pure uncontaminated imagination	Active and inward process	Supporter	Potential for isolating individualism from social context
<b>Formalism and basic design elements:</b>	Mastery of basic visual grammar	Training of basic visual elements	Passive	Instructor	Potential for authoritarianism and oversimplistic
<b>Daily life:</b>	Art's utility for everyday life	Practical activities of art that serve everyday life	Pragmatic	Instructor	Potential to be non-spiritual and playing down the esoteric and ambiguous in art
<b>Discipline based art education:</b>	Nurturing expert performance as identified in adult disciplines	Art as making, art as understanding as modeled in adult disciplines	Active in which learner uses a variety of cognitive processes	Mediator of knowledge and insight based on adult disciplines	Potential for passive learning and authoritarianism
<b>Post-modern art education:</b>	Pluralism	Inclusive approach that prioritizes pupils' life world and the related life narrative and context	Active in which learner uses a variety of cognitive processes, already empowered to make decisions concerning artistic preferences due to being immersed	Critical and reflective; especially conscious of power relationships	Potential for nihilism

			in a life world		
<b>Re-constructivist art education:</b>	Aspiration towards understanding art as a cultural practice	Good heuristics for deliberately building procedural and declarative knowledge for understanding how art operates in a variety of cultural contexts	Active in which learner uses a variety of cognitive processes that enable them to learn how to learn	Mediator of knowledge and insight; critical and reflective	Potential for elitism

**Table 3.2: Models of art education**

(Source: Cunliffe, 2006; Efland, 2004; Freedman, 2003)

<b>Heuristics for procedural knowledge</b>		The importance of process for realizing quality in final work.
<b>As listed in Cunliffe (2007b)</b>	<b>As coded against the new art curriculum for Greece's specialist arts schools</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The importance of knowing how to plan, investigate and make art.</li> </ul>	C.O.1, S.O.4, S.O.1, S.O.2, M.8, AS.1, A.4, M.12.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The importance of understanding the relationship between process, media, technique and product.</li> </ul>	C.O.2, S.O.1, S.O.2, S.O.3, S.O.4, S.O.5, M.13, A.4.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The importance of knowing about appropriate media to choose and processes that complement and improve pupils' learning.</li> </ul>	S.O.3, C.O.2, M.4, T.A.1, AS.3.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The importance of knowing about the logic of drawing systems and how to exploit the specific properties of different media.</li> </ul>	C.O.2, S.O.2, M.2, T.A.2.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The importance of being broad, bold, and being willing to take risks in approaches to problems in art.</li> </ul>	M.3, M.7, M.9, M.10, M.11, T.A.1-6.	The importance of experimentation & explanation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The importance of knowing of the work of artists, exemplars and traditions, for developing schemata for own art.</li> </ul>	M.2, M.5, M.15.	The importance of exemplars.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The importance of communicating and simulating communication with an audience.</li> </ul>	M.6.	Matching media & techniques to audience.

**Table 3.3: Evidence of heuristics for procedural knowledge as embedded in the new art curriculum for the specialist arts schools as mapped against Cunliffe (2007b)**

(Source: Cunliffe, 2007b)

<b>Heuristics for declarative knowledge</b>		<b>Understanding context for determining tistic practice and meaning.</b>
<b>As listed in Cunliffe (2007b)</b>	<b>As coded against the new art curriculum for Greece's specialist arts schools</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The importance of knowing that social, historical, economic, religious, technological, geographical and artistic parameters influence art to different degrees in different contexts.</li> </ul>	C.O.3, C.O.4, S.O.8, S.O.12, M.4.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The importance of locating meaning in a wider social and cultural matrix.</li> </ul>	T.A.5, C.O.3, S.O.7, M.11, M.10.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowing why art changes according to time and culture.</li> </ul>	S.O.7.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using spoken and written language to represent an understanding of art.</li> </ul>	S.O.10, AS.4, AS.5, T.A.3-6, C.C.S.W.1, M.12, M.6, M.5.	

**Table 3.4: Evidences of heuristics for declarative knowledge as embedded in the new art curriculum for the specialist arts schools and mapped against Cunliffe (2007b)**

(Source: Cunliffe, 2007b)

<b>Heuristics for cultivating creative performance</b>	
<b>As listed in Craft (2005) and Cunliffe (2007b)</b>	<b>As coded against the new art curriculum for Greece's specialist arts schools</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing task commitment, curiosity, independency, self-esteem.</li> </ul>	M.3, M.4, M.6, M.8, M.9.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Base learning on pupils' prior knowledge.</li> </ul>	M.14, S.O.5.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employ cross-thematic learning approach.</li> </ul>	M.7, C.C.S.W.1

**Table 3.5: Evidences of cultivating creativity of the art class**

(Source: Craft: 2005; Cunliffe, 2007b)

<b>Heuristics for mediation (requirements of the pedagogy to be used)</b>	
<b>As listed in Cunliffe, 2007b</b>	<b>As coded against the new art curriculum for Greece's specialist arts schools</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of showing approval of participation and developing the enthusiasm and desire about learning during the learning process.</li> </ul>	M.6, M.3, M.4, A.3, AS.2, AS.3.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The idea of participating, both pupils and teachers, actively, in the learning process.</li> </ul>	M.1, M.8, M.12, M.13, M.11.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of developing both the pupils and teachers processes for self-assessment and evaluation of their work.</li> </ul>	M.12, AS.6, AS.7.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of preparing well planned lessons so that pupils are helped to achieve objectives with least effort.</li> </ul>	M.16.

**Table 3.6: Proposed pedagogy approach**

(Source: Cunliffe, 2007b)

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **METHODOLOGY**



## **CHAPTER FOUR – METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I discuss the different paradigms used in educational research and I justify why I situate my research question within the interpretive paradigm. Later, I discuss the research question in relation to the chosen research methods with special reference to the ethical implications and the instruments that I used to collect data. Lastly, I present the design of both the main and the pilot studies.

From the beginning of my postgraduate studies at Exeter University, I problematized questions such as what the focus of my research into art education should be, what I wanted to achieve, if and what benefit would derive from this research, how I would design the research study. With the recommendation of my supervisors I started to study the methodology of educational research and the research paradigms so as to frame my study within a philosophical viewpoint. My study of educational methodology made me realize that my research inquiry had to be framed within the interpretive paradigm.

### **4.2 Philosophical paradigms in educational research**

Educational research addresses issues of educational practice. The undertaking of such research raises issues that the researcher's stance on central problems pertaining to philosophy, mainly the nature of reality, the nature of knowledge and the nature of truth, as well as ethics. The rationalisation of these concepts can influence researchers' philosophical views in conceptualising the research world. To make sense of the world, researchers approach educational inquiry through distinctive views. The different views in educational research are called paradigms. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), a paradigm can be defined as a net that includes researchers' ontological, epistemological, and methodological premises. Guba (Guba, 1990, p. 17) says that a paradigm is "a basic set of beliefs that guides actions."

### 4.3 Philosophical orientation of paradigms

At this point, I attempt to discuss the philosophical premises of the three different paradigms that dominate educational research, in doing so, I will follow the typology of Carr and Kemmis (1986).

#### Positivist paradigm

The positivist paradigm follows the philosophical camp of positivism. Positivist thinking, which is influenced by the spirit of Enlightenment (in contrast with the Middle Ages premise of the metaphysical origin of knowledge), sees the nature of knowledge as objective. Positivist thinking is aimed at “the wellbeing of society” (Crotty, 1998, p. 21). Referring to Comte (1798-1857, the nineteenth-century French philosopher, and founder of positivism) and his “zeal for social reform” (Crotty, 1998, p. 21), Crotty argues that the wellbeing of society implies a “stable and equitable society, valid and comprehensive social science.” Positivists apply the same methods that natural scientists use to explain physical phenomena in the social sciences (human actions and social affairs). Scientific methods recognise as a valid fact only that which can be explained and verified and that which is open to scientific examination. Positivist thinking insists on the neutrality of social inquiry. Research within the positivist paradigm is based on quantitative research methods that put the emphasis on measurement and causal relationships between variables.

According to positivists, all meaningful statements of theories and the body of knowledge that people develop must be logically reduced into statements about experiences. If these cannot be reduced into statements about experience, positivists do not consider them to be genuine statements at all.

Positivists believe only in the explanations of the world that can be verified with evidence. In their opinion, only empirical statements and logical/mathematical statements can be verified, and it is from these statements that generalisations of similar circumstances can be made (Ayer, 1946; D. J. O’Connor, 1956).

Therefore, the positivist paradigm in education seeks to reveal valid, objective and experientially verified truth. It also seeks to generalise the research findings. It presents the world as an objective and measurable reality in which knowledge

and facts exist independent of human subjective thought. Its purpose is to present causal explanations of social phenomena. Quantitative methods are used in order to generate accurate knowledge as regards the objective truth.

However, even though positivists' underlying rationale is based on research in the natural sciences, they are concerned about approaching social sciences with "an overly mathematical approach" (as is the case in the research of natural sciences) (Crotty, 1998, p. 22). Comte made a distinction between the search for "certainty in science" and the mistaken numerical precision (Simpson, 1982, p. 69 as cited in Crotty, 1998, p. 22). He believed that positivist scientists, when exploring the natural or social world, must look for the scientifically established "laws" that will result in the certainty of the science. These laws, which are established after observation, experimentation and comparison, are facts concerning individuals and phenomena. Research findings in this paradigm are considered objective truths that assert validity which allows for generalisation. Positivism embraces important philosophical perspectives, (mainly from the standpoint of the Vienna Circle, such as the tenet of Logical positivism) which even though they might vary, do not reject the basic presumptions, the spirit and the agenda of the positivist paradigm.

#### Interpretive paradigm

The second paradigm follows the philosophical tradition of the interpretive theory. In interpretive research, the nature of knowledge is seen as relative. The emphasis is on the person rather than on physical things. This paradigm seeks to understand how people think. To understand a person's actions presupposes an understanding of their intentions and interpretations. According to Pring (2000, p. 96), "interpretive researchers claim that the social world constitutes the intentions and meanings of social actors and as a consequence to this [as opposed to positivist paradigm] there is nothing to study, objectively speaking." According to the interpretive paradigm, research in education seeks to understand people's meanings, their intentions and their actions through which they understand their social reality (Collingwood, 1961; Schultz, 1962). In the interpretive paradigm, the world is viewed as multiple realities constructed by people (Ball, 1991). Knowledge is considered to be something that is created

and negotiated between people (Van Maanen, 1990; Candy, 1991). Qualitative methods for collecting data are used to reveal people's understandings.

This paradigm reflects upon the various important perspectives of the interpretive theory. It can be viewed as a philosophical umbrella of several interpretive theories (phenomenology, cultural studies), which, aside from their different perspectives of the process of understanding, work together within relativist ontologies, interpretive epistemologies and interpretive methods.

### Critical paradigm

The third paradigm is the critical paradigm. It is based on critical theory, which concerns the ideological assessment of power, privilege and oppression.

Research within the critical paradigm focuses on social and cultural analysis, which aims for transformation and emancipation (Freire, 1972; Habermas, 1972; Horkheimer, 1973). Research conducted within this paradigm is aimed at uncovering the constructs of inequality and injustice and, at the same time, displacing these with democratic institutions. One basic characteristic is the existence of social participation in actions.

The differences between the three paradigms, as applied by educational researchers, exist mainly on the basis of their different philosophical perspectives of the following four concepts:

- a)** Ontology (which seeks to explain the nature of reality, its objectivity/subjectivity and what kind of being is a human being)
- b)** Epistemology (which relates to the nature of acquiring knowledge, how we know what we know, the relation between the researcher and the known truth and its verification)
- c)** Methodology (which delves into how we can systematically know the world)
- d)** Ethics (which deal with issues concerning how one can be a moral person in the world).

	<b>Positivist</b>	<b>Interpretivist</b>	<b>Critical</b>
Ontology	Measurable / Objective	Experience / Feelings / Relative	Experience/Feelings/Linked to political and social frame
Epistemology	Objective	Subjective	Subjective
Methodology	Quantitative	Qualitative	Co-participative
Ethics	Out there	In here	Together

**Table 4.1: The different philosophical perspectives of the three paradigms**

As characteristically mentioned by Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.18), “the researcher approaches the research situation with a set of ideas and a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology), which he/she then examines in specific ways (methodology, analysis).”

Consequently, researchers working within the positivist paradigm believe in an objective reality – one that is driven by scientifically established laws that are based on verified statements. This reflects the ontological premise of the paradigm. According to Pring (2000), positivist thinkers believe that a person’s body of knowledge is formed through verified statements that are tested and re-tested by scientific experiments. There is a distinction between the researcher and the “who” or “what” that is being researched. Knowledge is independent of people’s thinking, not constructed by them (Pring, 2000). The verified findings, in other words the knowledge, can be generalised. Educational researchers, following the positivist paradigm, seek to empirically determine the conditions and the scientifically-established laws for achieving certain educational goals using the methods of observation, experimentation and comparison. These laws will secure a valid and objective truth that can be generalised. The basic objective of positivist research is to reach the “end” (contrasting with the role of the means, of the “how,” which is an issue of high importance in interpretive research).

Such enquiry does not appear to be appropriate for addressing the problems of lived experience and understanding people’s perceptions, since understanding people’s intentions cannot be grasped within general laws. For that aim a quite different tradition of educational research has emerged.

According to Pring (2000, p. 96), researchers using the interpretive paradigm approach education as a “subjective” world constructed by the meanings of social actors in their effort to “understand and experience life.” The world has as

many constructions and multiple interpretations of reality as there are individuals relating to these constructions. The assertion of multiple realities is a corollary of the ontological premise of the paradigm. The interpretive paradigm considers the world as a function of human thought and perception. Interpretive research seeks to study how knowledge is constructed through the interaction of people. The purpose of interpretive research is to interpret each person's account of a situation, which ultimately reflects a unique perspective. Truth is considered a matter of "consensus." This is consistent with the epistemological premise of this paradigm. The methods used to understand people's perceptions are qualitative, through observations and interviews based on people's own accounts. The research findings serve only as interpretations. Participants are respected in the sense that they are the subjects who construct the world they live in based on their own personal views.

The critical paradigm asserts that the world is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values. In this paradigm ontology is based on historical realism. The assertion is that transactional and subjectivist knowledge forms the epistemology. The methodology in the critical paradigm is both dialogical and dialectic (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). People, according to this paradigm, play the role of activists. Research within the critical paradigm seeks to challenge and change the taken-for-granted beliefs, values and social structures by developing an emancipation consciousness that ultimately aims for social transformation. It is the people who are the agents of the reality that they live in.

So far in this chapter, I have attempted to describe the different philosophical positions that encompass the three main paradigms in educational research. Even though the selection of a specific paradigm is a very important tool for researchers, as regards understanding educational practice, the distinction between the paradigms reveals a sharp contrast between two philosophical theories. This contrast is between the positivist view, which utilises a quantitative research approach that is appropriate to the physical world, and the non-positivist camp, (which encompasses interpretive and critical) which applies a qualitative research approach that addresses issues relating to meanings.

Dewey, (1916, Chapter 25) has criticised this contrast as one that presents a dichotomy and a false dualism. Pring (2000), in critiquing this dualism, writes that researchers fall into a philosophical trap following the dichotomy between the objective world, which is independent of our thinking, and the subjective world, which consists of multiple interrelated realities. The positivist paradigm can ideally serve an inquiry that can be explained with measurements and the comparison of numerical data. However, its inability to address issues relating to understanding and interpretation and the “how” questions, is a significant concern.

The interpretive approach seems more appropriate to make sense of pupils and teachers issues of lived experiences since the researches’ inquiry is on the real life experiences of pupils and teachers, for the construction of knowledge in a particular social context.

Non-positivist approaches, however, have been criticised because researchers cannot generalise the findings. Also, the issue of individual subjectivity has been denied by critical theory (Carr and Kemmis, 1986) since subjectivity can be skewed by the relationship between powerful negotiators and weak negotiators. Responding to the false competing contrasts, Ryle (1954, as cited in Pring p. 45) argues that “the world of real life cannot be captured by either the one or the other [referring to quantitative and qualitative research] and indeed there must be integration and overlapping of the two.” Crotty (2000, p. 51) makes the claim that because world is conceived differently by “different societies and social groups,” “those differences may well reflect different practical interests and different traditions.”

#### 4.4 The research question of the study

In this section I confirm the research question and place my research within a philosophical orientation.

As already described in chapter two (see Chapter 2.6 & 2.7) the research question and the two main aims are the following:

<b>How do 14 – 15 year-old pupils and their teachers in a new Greek arts specialist secondary school, perceive art learning in relation to the aims of the curriculum and teaching methods?</b>
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**Table 4.2: Research question**

The two main aims of this research were the following:

- to investigate and attempt to clarify the learning process in visual art in relation to the curriculum and the teaching methods in the context of the visual art classroom of the third year at this arts school;
- to interpret the participants' perceptions of the learning process.

#### 4.5 Philosophical view of this research study

My justification for situating my study within the interpretive paradigm lies in the following assumptions:

Making sense is based in participants systems of meaning

I was seeking to understand the learning process in the art class from the point of view of the participants. I was not seeking to predict or to discover explanations and facts, which would suggest positivist inquiry, neither was I seeking to change or to transform the research reality, which would constitute critical inquiry. The anticipated goal was to develop the condition for thinking about the issues regarding the learning process of this art class.

Interpretive thinkers believe that actions are products of meaningful subjective understandings. According to Max Weber (1964: 88, as cited in Radnor 2002, p. 5), an "action" is included in all human behaviour when and in so far the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it. As an interpretive researcher, my main concern was to understand pupils' and teachers' meaningful actions



concerning the art class. I would be able to understand these meaningful actions and people's perceptions if I explored the intentional context of their actions and the system of meanings attached to these actions. I believe that the interpretive paradigm was the appropriate to fulfil the aim of my research, which was to interpret the all-meaningful perceptions and how the pupils and their teachers understood their actions regarding the art subject.

This research was mainly interested in the voice of the pupils and their teachers. Lincoln & Guba (2000) discuss the ability of the interpretive paradigm to adequately address issues surrounding the voice of the participant. The participants' discussions about the reality they live and their interactive relationships require them to be able to speak about their life.

#### Understanding in terms of multiple interacting factors

In this research, I had two considerations. The first consideration was that the art class is a world reflecting many realities that are constructed by the subjective accounts of the pupils and their art teachers. The process of "consensus" shapes these accounts. The second consideration was that, in order for me to understand the art class, I should need to be a part of this research situation and to fully participate in it. The main aim was neither to give a report to any agent nor to transform the research reality, but rather to understand the learning process of the particular art class from the point of view of the pupils and their teachers, and their interaction with me as the researcher.

#### Understanding of individual cases

Since the interpretive paradigm puts the emphasis on making sense of lived experience, I believe that this was the most appropriate approach for understanding pupils' and teachers' perceptions about the learning process in the art class, especially in relation to how the curriculum was conveyed, and the style of teaching of the subject. Setting up experiments or using measurements cannot cover such an inquiry, since I was seeking to uncover people's perceptions. Perceptions cannot be measured, only understood. The interpretive paradigm focuses on interpreting people's understandings of their actions (Pring, 2000). It aims at understanding the different perspectives and shared

meanings and at gaining insight into situations (Wellington, 2000). Thus, the goal was to capture not only the activities of the participants, but also what they thought about the activities and their views about visual arts.

#### Limitations of the research approach

Even though I decided to situate my research within the interpretive paradigm, I will mention two limitations of this research approach. Firstly, Garrick (1999), mentions what positivists claim, that the findings of interpretive research cannot be generalised. Interpretive researchers, however, do not aim to present data that can be generalised. As stated earlier, research in qualitative study takes into consideration the multiple constructions of the world and not the objective reality of quantitative research, in which verified laws could be implemented in other similar fields. However, qualitative research offers enough description of the research case to allow the reader to form his/her own conclusion. It also allows for some transfer of insight and knowledge.

The second limitation stems from critical theory researchers and postmodern insight. Theorists of the critical paradigm consider that personal experience, which is the “starting point of interpretive research” (Garrick, 1999 p. 148), can be the subjective experience of a weak negotiator, skewed under the influence of a dominant ideology or a powerful negotiator (Giroux, 1983; Usher, 1993; Casey, 1995; Wexler, 1995). Experience is discursively constructed, as understanding is “structured historically in the traditions prejudices and institutional practices that come down to us” (Taylor, 1993, p. 59). As regards these claims, this research was underpinned by the view that individuals were the active agents in the formulation of social affairs since they had the ability to judge and decide for themselves.

In conclusion, I situated my inquiry within the philosophy of the interpretive paradigm. Firstly, I did this because of my personal involvement in the arts schools of Greece and secondly, such a paradigm allows the participants to engage in a socially interactive and dynamic processes. In addition, because the qualitative approach stresses “the liberal value of respect for the person” (Garrick, 1999, p. 149), it recognises that people are agents who determine their own life.

Based on these beliefs, I will now discuss four central interpretive philosophical dimensions that guided the design and the process of my research.

#### **4.6 The interpretive philosophical dimensions of this research study**

The following four central interpretive philosophical dimensions guided the design of the research:

- Ontological premise: subjective reality
- Epistemological premise: social constructed knowledge
- Methodology: qualitative research approach
- Ethics: ethical considerations.

##### 4.6.1 Ontological premise

The first dimension discusses the ontological premise of this research. The world of the art class was considered as a subjective construct of various understandings and beliefs of the pupils and their teachers. The diversity of the subjective understanding of the pupils and their teachers constituted the many different truths of the art class. These truths were formulated as a matter of negotiation and consensus. The ontological premise of this research can be summarised as the multiple realities in the art class at the particular school, which were constructed dialectically, by the various understandings of the pupils and their teachers. This is the ontological position of the interpretive paradigm, which claims that the world is a construction of many multiple realities, as many as there are individuals (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Pring 2000; Radnor 2002).

##### 4.6.2 Epistemological premise

The second dimension relates to the epistemological premise of the research. Based on my line of reasoning, the focus of interest was not on how perceptions of the pupils and their teachers about the learning process were in themselves, but on how they were constructed. Rather, these perceptions can be shaped and can shape the perceptions of others within the developmental process of social relationships. This developmental process entails an interpretive

approach with regard to epistemology. As an interpretivist researcher, I took into serious consideration the pupils' and the teachers' personal understanding of what was happening and how they perceived what was happening in the art class. I should be able to understand and interpret their perceptions if I, as a researcher in this interpretive study, interacted with the pupils and their teachers by listening, watching, discussing and interpreting more accurately as the human instrument for collecting and analysing the data. Crotty (1998) points to the unique role of dialogue as a way for researchers to become aware of and to interpret the perceptions, feelings and attitudes of the pupils. This premise was the basis for the *interactional* epistemological stance of the interpretive paradigm in which knowledge is constructed from the interaction of human beings, in this case the interactive process and relationship between all participants and the researcher (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Pring 2000).

#### 4.6.3 Methodology

The third dimension in the description of the paradigmatic assumptions of this research is that of methodology. Within the interpretive paradigm, which maintains *interactional* epistemology, I applied a qualitative approach. The considerations about multiple realities and socially constructed knowledge (Merriam, 1998) are linked with a qualitative research approach. The qualitative research approach can cover a research inquiry that is interested in understanding how people make sense of the world they experience and live in (Merriam, 1998). The qualitative method for data collection and analysis is based on discussions and not on numbers. It aims at gaining a deeper understanding of social phenomena. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), words that are arranged into a narrative are more meaningful to a reader than a summary of numbers.

My concern was to explore pupils and teacher's life histories, their everyday experience toward the visual art class. I chose qualitative methods to provide a deeper understanding of the research situation, in this case of the learning process in visual art classes. Thus, the qualitative approach allowed me to interpret the thoughts and perceptions of the pupils and their teachers about the learning process in art.

The scope of qualitative research is to understand how people make sense of the world. Merriam (1998) describes the key characteristics of qualitative research, which underpinned the process of this particular study, involving two stages: firstly, the study attempted to understand the situation from both the participants' and researcher's perspectives; secondly, the researcher took on the role of the research instrument to sensitively collect and analyse the data. My plan was to be physically present in the art class, so as I was able to interact with the participants for the purpose of collecting authentic data.

*a. Case study method*

The case study method was applied in order to approach the art class at this particular arts school in Greece. According to Merriam (1998), the case study approach is appropriate if the researcher is seeking to answer "how" and "why" questions. My research involved the "how" question; specifically, the question was: **How do 14 – 15 year-old pupils and their teachers in a new Greek arts specialist secondary school, perceive art learning in relation to the aims of the curriculum and teaching methods?** Quoting from Sanders (as cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 33), "case studies help us to understand processes of events, and programmes and to discover context characteristics that will shed light on an issue or object."

There are two reasons why the case study method was used in this research. Yin (1994 p. 13), describes a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." This definition relates closely to the topic of this study. The particular educational setting, which is an innovation for Greek education, is defined by its context: firstly, the context for the study is one of only three specialist arts schools that exist in Greece; secondly, the art curriculum is specifically designed for this type of school. This, by definition, sets the school apart from other secondary schools in Greece, as it has an extended timetable devoted to the arts. Pupils enrolled at the school have a keen interest in the arts and must pass special entrance examinations that assess their drawing and painting skills. Furthermore, the

faculty consists of qualified art teachers. All these factors set the school apart from other secondary schools.

Apart from the aim to understand this unique phenomenon of contemporary Greek education, the research was undertaken because of my personal interest in gaining a better understanding of the concept of learning at this particular school. Stake (1995) suggests that intrinsic case study is undertaken because, first and last, the researcher wants a better understanding of a particular case.

This study is about what was going on in the particular setting through what Agar calls “encountering a world first hand” (Agar as cited in Silverman 2001, p. 43). This research located its research attention in interaction talk. The initial question was a general one: what is going on in the art class? This was followed by a second question: how do pupils and art teachers do things in their learning and teaching (social) life in this art class (individually and collectively)? With these general initial questions I attempted to draw a picture of the learning process from the insiders’ accounts, describing and understanding the research culture from its members’ point of view.

#### *b. Research Sample*

In this study I applied two levels of sampling. The first level consisted of twenty-six pupils who made up the third (c’) year visual art class at the school where the main study was conducted (14 -15 year old pupils) and their two art teachers, during the academic year 2008-2009. The criterion used for selecting the particular class for the research was that it was “a typical class” (Wellington, 2000) in terms of their sex and range of ability. The pupils and the art teachers who made up the sample had voluntarily chosen to participate in the only third year art class of the school. In the Greek educational system, the graduate year of the lower secondary stage is the third year. The participants had already been in the school for three years, and so represented some of the unique features that result from being taught in a specialist school. The sample was a non-probability purposeful sample. With this type of sampling, we are not seeking to generalize the results of the research but to understand “what occurs,” and “the relationships linking the occurrences” (Honigmann 1982, p.84, as cited in

Merriam, 1998, p. 61). The decision to use a non-probability purposeful sample was directly linked to the decision to work within the qualitative research method (Merriam, 1998). Non-probability purposeful samples are generally used for qualitative research when seeking to gain insight and to understand the implications of what occurs in the research situation (Merriam, 1998).

The case study used a second level of sampling. Those involved in the second-level sampling will engage in individual and focus group interview. Six pupils, their two art teachers and myself as the researcher made up this sample. Such a convenience sample was used with a significant advantage, since the problem of gaining access to the first sample had already been overcome (Wellington, 2000). The characteristic of participants in this type of sampling is that they are willing and interested, and that they are accessible and available to the researcher (Merriam, 1998). The basic criterion for selecting convenience sampling was the participants' interest in further participation. The convenience sampling assisted the researcher by providing further understanding of the learning process.

One limitation of this study relates to the fact that my familiarity with the school setting could have created problems for the research, as I had previously taught there: my participation in the class under study might hinder my ability to make observations. For this reason, I decided to be a teacher in a fellow class, and not the particular one, during the year, so the research was conducted with my familiarity and it did not prove to be a disadvantage.

### *c. Instruments for collecting data*

The instruments used for this study were individual interviews, participant observation and focus group interviews. Applying these methods gave the pupils and the teachers the opportunity to reflect upon the reality of the art class in which they actively participated and constructed. Their use, as expected, offered rich descriptions of the lived experience of the art classes (see Appendices 10 and 11). This combination of data collection tools allowed for triangulation (see Tables 5.3, 6.12 and 7.11) and provided a more comprehensive approach to

understanding the actions of the pupils and their teachers, as the data collection was viewed from more than one position (Denzin, 1970).

As the researcher, I asked the participants for permission to tape-record the sessions, collecting data from this and also from detailed note taking. The combination of notes taking and tape recording improved the accuracy and quality of the data (Wellington, 2000).

The focus of interest in the individual and focus group interviews and the observation was on how the pupils and the teachers did things during the visual art classes; so they spoke about the reality they lived in and constructed in the visual art classes.

The instrument that was used first was participant observation; it was expected that this instrument would allow the researcher to identify issues that might be overlooked by the participants due to their familiarity with the situation, and to understand the research situation firsthand, participating rather than just observing people at a distance. Silverman (2001) defines the aims of observational research as the viewing of events, actions, norms, and values. The rules that Goffman (1959) suggests in order to help the researcher understand how the social interaction is organized focus on observing who is able to do what, to whom and in what way.

The participant observation provided first-hand experience in the research situation (Merriam, 1998) and generated issues which could be discussed and triangulated during the individual and focus group interviews. This ultimately strengthened the internal validity and trustworthiness of the research. A structured observation schedule was used for collecting the data; open-ended field notes were also generated (see Appendix 10).

The second step was to collect data through the use of interviews, with pupils and interviews with teachers which are considered a major source of qualitative data for the understanding of the research situation (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1990). A semi-structured interview was used that allowed for some open-ended questions that were flexibly worded and asked in no pre-determined order.



These types of questions allowed participants to develop their own descriptions about the reality of which they were a part. The questions were formulated based on the information obtained from the observations. The interviews lasted approximately forty-five (45) minutes.

The third step in collecting data was the use of focus group interviews, which are "ideal for gaining insight" of the deepest significance in order to understand the particular case that is being researched (Wellington, 2000). Two focus groups participated in the research. The first group consisted of six pupils and myself as the researcher; the second consisted of the two visual art teachers and myself as the researcher. Each of the two groups consisted of a homogenous group of people with common features, enabling focussed discussions (Wellington, 2000). It was planned that each focus group would meet once at the end of each of the four weeks during which the research was conducted. Each group session lasted forty five minutes, setting an agenda in each case. Discussions were on issues that had transpired from the previously made observations and the individual interviews. The interaction of all group members enhanced the understanding of the situation.

One of the problems of this process is that of potentially over-dominant group members (Wellington, 2000). In this study, this potential danger was controlled by encouraging an atmosphere of good group interaction, which is actually the chief strength of the method (Wellington, 2000). In arguing for the benefits of group interviews, Sorrell & Redmond (1995) claim that shared meanings are revealed because the members of the group relate their personal ideas and thoughts to those of other group members.

As the researcher, I asked the participants to permit me to tape-record the sessions, transcribing these and also from detailed note taking. The analysis of the data collected through the observations, and individual and focus group interviews allowed me to make sense of what happened, and to draw out ideas about art education.

Major concerns I took into account when conducting the study related to internal validity, trustworthiness, generalisability, and ethical considerations

#### *d. Internal validity*

According to Merriam (1998), internal validity can be enhanced by the use of the following strategies:

- triangulation of methods: the three-view strategy for the collection of data ensured internal validity because it provided a more detailed account of the phenomenon being researched (see Tables 5.3, 6.12 and 7.11)
- peer examination: discussions with an independent peer enhanced credibility. The national counsellor for Greek art education reviewed and commented on the findings (see Appendix 12b)
- long-term observation (see Chapter 6.1).

#### *e. Trustworthiness*

As Merriam underlines reliability is a problematic concept for qualitative research as “the question is not whether findings will be found again, but whether the results are consistent with the data collected” (1988, p. 206). For this reason the techniques of audit trail (see Appendix 12c) and triangulation (see Tables 5.3, 6.12, 7.11) ensured that the results were dependable. Trustworthiness was secured by describing in detail how the study was conducted and how the findings were derived from the data collected. In order to improve trustworthiness, data was discussed (Wellington, 2000) with the national counselor of art education, who is an outsider to the research context (see Appendix 12b). The technique of member checking (Guba & Lincoln, 2000) was also used for establishing credibility in all three stages of the study (the pilot study and the two stages of the main study) (see Chapters 5.9, 6.13, 7.13).

#### *f. Generalisability*

Although interpretive researchers do not aim to present data for generalisation, they do acknowledge that some of their findings might have transfer value to other contexts. This case study is interesting because of its unique features, as they represent a potential break-through for Greek art education. The nature of the intrinsic case study cannot be considered appropriate for generalisation. Qualitative research takes into consideration, as stated earlier, the multiple

constructions of the world and not the objective reality of quantitative research, where verified laws can be implemented in similar fields. It offers sufficient description of the research case so that the reader can form his/her own conclusion. What was researched, because of its unique character, cannot be appropriate and open to generalization, but the insights gained from the researched case can have transfer value, as the unique situations are in some aspects unique but not in others (Pring 2000).

Stake (1994) comments that even intrinsic case study can be seen as a small step toward generalization especially in those cases that run counter to the existing rule.

Therefore, for those researchers seeking insight and understanding the emphasis on discovery requires one to maintain a highly vigilant stance when dealing with issues of validity and reliability (Kirk & Miller, 1986). This involves sound reasoning, systemic analysis and sustained focusing along with the process of subjecting the emerging findings to continual empirical challenges as new observations inform existing interpretations transmitting cultural heritage.

#### 4.6.4 Ethical considerations

The research followed the University of Exeter's and BERA's (2004) ethical guidelines for research, which are based on the principle that in all research, teaching and professional activities, the interests and rights of others must always be respected and protected. A major ethical concern for the researcher working in the interpretive paradigm is to secure an ethical code that will create the necessary conditions for protecting participants from any physical or psychological harm. Respect for the participants was reflected in the selection of the particular paradigm, which took into account each person's intrinsic worth and unique social construction of reality. With regard to the research topic, it attempted to find out people's views of their own reality. According to Garrick (1999, p. 149), "the interpretive model stresses the liberal value of respect for the person."

Ethical problems could have arisen during the observation and individual and focus group interviews, causing harm to the participants, and jeopardising the

reliability of the research. As the integrity and the respect for the participants was the top priority, I followed the steps outlined below:

- I requested the consent of the Ministry of Education to conduct this research, (see Appendix 12a)
- After this approval I then informed the school's head teacher and asked for approval to conduct the research (see Appendix 13)
- I then informed the pupils, visual art teachers, the pupils' parents, or legal guardians about the research, its aim, purpose, method, and about any possible risks involved. I requested and received their written permission at this time (see Appendix 13)
- Participants acted voluntarily: they had the right to leave the research at any time for any and so reason
- Regarding the participants' right to privacy and confidentiality, the anonymity of the participants was maintained. All personal data was coded, concealed and published under strict anonymity.

However dilemmas arose in terms of confidentiality, given the small number of Greek specialist arts schools, it could be quite easy to work out which school participated in the research, in which teachers and classes I have worked with, making so the confidentiality aspect difficult to be maintained. Among the ethical questions that a researcher may encounter, Wellington (2000, p. 55) refers on the way the researcher will give "details of context, eg. Size of school, region, gender / age of an informant, without compromising confidentiality / anonymity." Taking into consideration what Wellington refers to, I tried during the writing of all chapters to avoid portraying directly or indirectly, the particular arts school that participated in the research. This was happened:

- Firstly, in the cases where demographic information about the size of the school of the three arts schools was presented in relation to demographic information of the research school (see Chapter 2.14 and Table 6.1). It is impossible to identify which of the three arts schools was the research school, as the information about the size of the visual art class presented in table 6.1, could be a visual art class in all three arts schools. Intentionally no further information was presented in table 6.1, as regards the number of pupils in each year class as the total number of pupils given by this

information in relation to information given in chapter 2.14 could have brought to light the research school.

- Secondly, in the case where it is mentioned how many arts schools are operating in Greece. As the year of establishment was not the same for all three arts schools, intentionally it is not referred the establishment year of each of them (except for the first one which signals the beginning of the arts schools institution in Greece) so to avoid identify in which of the three arts schools, the year the research was conducted (2008 – 2009) a c' year class of gymnasio was operated (It is mentioned that the establishment year of the institution was 2003 with the operation of a' year class in the first arts school).

Finally, I believe that the researcher's ethical responsibility is not limited to the implementation of a code of ethics during the research: the researcher's role, as someone acting within the interpretive paradigm, must always be to protect the participants from risk.

#### **4.7 Design of the research**

The research was conducted during a four-week data period from late 2008 to early 2009. There were two weeks of observations and individual and focus group interviews planned over periods of two to three days (see Table 4.3). The first sample group participated in the observations. This was the group of twenty six pupils and their two visual arts teachers. The second sample group participated in the focus groups in the following way: the first focus group consisted of the group of the six pupils and myself as the researcher and the second focus group consisted of the two visual art teachers and myself as the researcher. Each one of the two groups was homogenous, enabling focussed discussions to take place (Wellington, 2000). Each focus group was planned to meet at the end of each of the four weeks during which the research was conducted. Each session had an agenda and lasted for forty five minutes. The second sample group also participated in the individual interviews. The participants were the group of six pupils, their two visual arts teachers, and myself as the researcher.

A set of data from observation, focus groups and individual interviews was collected during the third and the fourth weeks of the study, following the same schedule, after a three-month break. At the end of each period of two weeks, the data was compared with the previous set of collected data.

The following is the research design divided into two periods. Each period lasted two weeks and was carried out two times. As mentioned above, between the two research periods there was a three-month break to allow for managing the data already collected during the first research period and for preparing the second research period. The design followed the instructions for conducting the observations, focus group and individual interviews, as outlined by Wellington (2000).

The design of the research was influenced by emerging themes as these are described in chapters five, six and seven (see Chapters 5.1, 6.2 and 7.1).

<b>NOVEMBER 2008</b>				
<b>Week one</b>				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Observation	Observation	Observation	Pupils' focus group	Teachers' focus group
<b>Week two</b>				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Interview with teachers	Interview with pupils	Interview with pupils	Pupils' focus group	Teachers' focus group
Intermission of three months				
<b>FEBRUARY 2009</b>				
<b>Week three</b>				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Observation	Observation	Observation	Pupils' focus group	Teachers' focus group
<b>Week four</b>				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Interview with teachers	Interview with pupils	Interview with pupils	Pupils' focus group	Teachers' focus group

**Table 4.3: The design of the main study**

**(All observations, individual and focus group interviews lasted approximately forty-five (45) minutes - forty-five minutes is the length of one lesson hour in the Greek education system)**

#### **4.8 Data analysis**

The qualitative data was analyzed using the grounded theory method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The reasons for using the grounded theory method emerged primarily by the type of research question, which concerned with a: “what is going on” issue. One basic goal of grounded theory is to conceptualize what is going on with the incident under research.

Thus, once again the research question was:

**How do 14 – 15 year-old pupils and their teachers in a new Greek arts specialist secondary school, perceive art learning in relation to the aims of the curriculum and teaching methods?**

To continue, the choice of using grounded theory aimed at the generation of concepts that would explain pupils and teachers actions. In the case of grounded theory, the goal is to formulate hypothesis, based on emerged conceptualized ideas. And so it happened; the two core findings of the research question resulted from the process of conceptualizing data that firstly was collected, then coded, grouped, merged into categories and constantly compared clusters of data between them. This is an iterative process by which the analyst becomes more and more “grounded” in the data so that they develop an increasingly richer model of the phenomenon being studied (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). The process of conceptualizing data (that includes coding, grouping, categorizing, constantly comparing and modifying) was developed and progressed in three different time steps (during pilot study and during two stages of the main study). It is the case of grounded theory where theory is shaped build up as the researcher goes back and forth through the data collected, constantly comparing modifying and reflecting on clusters of data between them. The data collected by interview and focus group methods was transcribed verbatim. The data collected during the first round of the research, the first two weeks, revealed further themes, which could be explored in a second round of interviews and observations. Some of the developing concepts and categories were connected with findings from previous research studies from the literature review and other chapters of this work.

The collection of data was developed with the use of the following procedures: the data was divided into discrete incidents and ideas, and then represented by code numbers. Then ideas with common content were matched with wider groups of ideas. Groups with related content were matched in concepts of data. These groups of ideas and concepts of data were continuously compared, and provided insights into the participants’ perspectives regarding their school’s practices and revealed issues needing further classification based on the interview data. Data was examined line by line. This enabled movement both backwards and forwards, so the data was more quickly interpreted and revealed certain initial concepts related to the classroom’s forms of communication. Data analysis was undertaken in conjunction with data collection so it became more meaningful and enlightening. This process of combining the collection and



analysis of data ensured that the data was not confusing, repetitive, or overwhelming (Merriam, 1998).

#### 4.9 Pilot Study

A pilot study, which employed the same methodological procedures and ethical code as the main study, was initiated nine months before conducting the main research, in order to provide an insight into the feasibility of the development of the research plan. The purpose of conducting the pilot research was to better understand the amount of time required for conducting the focus group and individual interviews, and to ensure the comprehensibility, and the feasibility of the issues and the questions that were discussed during observations and interviews. The pilot also allowed for a first attempt at using qualitative analysis, such as forming data categories, documenting participants' attitudes towards learning in the particular type of school, and researching issues like interaction, collaboration and the roles played.

In the pilot study two levels of sampling were applied. The first level, consisted of the second (year b) visual art class and their two art teachers, was observed. The second level, consisted of six pupils, one art teacher and myself as the researcher, involved in the focus group and interview.

The schedule was as follows:

<b>MARCH, 2008</b>				
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
Observation (1 lesson hour)	Observation (1 lesson hour)	Observation (1 lesson hour)	Focus group with pupils (1 lesson hour)	Interview with a teacher (1 lesson hour)

**Table 4.4: The design of the pilot study**

Letters were sent out informing participants, schools head teacher, and pupil-participants' parents about the research and asked for their permission to conduct the research. Data collected from the pilot study was tape-recorded and notes were kept. Even though there are few schools of this kind in Greece, anonymity and confidentiality of participants were assured, since the school is not the only arts school operating in Greece, but one of the three in the country.

#### **4.10 Chapter summary**

In this chapter I discussed the different paradigms used in educational research and justified why I situated my research question within the interpretive paradigm. I presented the research question and the chosen research methods with specialist reference to the ethical implications and the instruments that I used to collect data. Chapters five, six and seven, are concerned with the data analysis.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DATA ANALYSIS OF THE PILOT STUDY**

## CHAPTER FIVE - DATA ANALYSIS OF THE PILOT STUDY

### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will present the data from the pilot study, addressing the main research question of **how do 14-15 year-old pupils and their teachers in a new Greek arts specialist secondary school, perceive art learning in relation to the aims of the curriculum and teaching methods**. The chapter begins by reiterating the importance of pupils' and teachers' beliefs in the construction of their daily reality in this type of school. This assumption is central to the qualitative paradigm and guides the qualitative research method (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, Merriam, 1988).

As I have already mentioned in chapter four, in order to provide an insight into the feasibility of the development of the research plan, a pilot study was conducted nine months before the main research interventions were carried out. The purpose of conducting the pilot study was: a) to better understand the time needed to process the questionnaires and the interviews to be used with the focus groups, b) to ensure that the issues and the questions used to structure the interview with one of the two teachers, the focus group interviews with the pupils and the lesson observations were both feasible and that all concerned understood them and c) to try out analysis. The pilot study used the same methodological procedures and ethical principles as adopted in the main study, as these are described in chapter four (see Chapter 4.8 and 4.9).

In the pilot study two levels of sampling were applied. The first level that consisted of the second (year b') visual art class (27 pupils) and their two art teachers was observed. The second level that consisted of six (6) pupils, one (1) art teacher and the researcher was involved in the focus group and the interview.

The sample of the second level has equal numbers of boys and girls, is of mixed ability, and made up of those willing to participate in the study. The sample is both feasible and representative of the class as a whole.

The research tools and the samples involved were as follows:

- a. lesson observations: a second year<sup>2</sup> visual art class (the same class was retained for the main study when they were in their third year)
- b. focus group<sup>3</sup>: six pupils and the researcher
- c. semi-structured interview: one of the teachers, coded as teacher A, given for the needs of securing anonymity the pseudonym Katina<sup>4</sup>.

The pilot study was carried out in March, 2008. The main study took place in the school year 2008-2009, the last year of high school. The schedule for the pilot, as originally outlined in chapter four (see Table 4.4), had to be changed to account for changes in the school's time table. This meant that the three days of planned classroom observation, each of forty-five minutes duration, had to be changed to two days. The first day's observations were based on a forty-five minute lesson. The second day's observations involved two consecutive lessons, making up a total of ninety minutes (see Table 5.1, below).

A focus group with pupils was conducted for forty five minutes, the equivalent of one school lesson. Katina was interviewed for another forty five minute period.

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<sup>2</sup> During the pilot study (March, 2008) the class that participated was the second year visual art class of gymnasio during 2007- 2008. This particular class of pupils was the third year visual art class of the arts school, of gymnasio the next school year (2008-2009) during the main study, as it was the last year of high school and the year that the study is based upon.

<sup>3</sup> The pseudonyms of pupils that participated in the focus group: girl A with the pseudonym Vassiliki, girl B with the pseudonym Anastasia, girl C with the pseudonym Marika, boy A with the pseudonym Ioannis, boy B with the pseudonym Panagiotis and boy C with the pseudonym Politimos.

<sup>4</sup> According to the visual art curriculum for the arts school of Greece, two visual art teachers participate with equal responsibility during the art lessons of the classes. During the pilot study the two art teachers of the second year class, coded as teacher A given the pseudonym Katina and teacher B given the pseudonym Dimitros, participated in the observation. Teacher A, Katina also was interviewed, as a result of their common decision.

<b>SCHEDULE FOR PILOT STUDY</b>				
<b>Monday (3/3/2008)</b>	<b>Tuesday (3/4/2008)</b>	<b>Wednesday (3/5/2008)</b>	<b>Thursday (3/6/2008)</b>	<b>Friday (3/7/2008)</b>
Observation forty- five minutes (1 lesson hour)	Observation ninety minutes (2 lesson hours)	X – no observations or focus group interviews	Focus group with pupils, forty- five minutes (1 lesson hour)	Interview with Katina, forty- five minutes (1 lesson hour)

**Table 5.1: The schedule for the pilot study conducted from March 3-7, 2008 (forty-five minutes equals' one lesson hour in the Greek educational system)**

	<b>Observation</b>	<b>Focus Group</b>	<b>Interview</b>
Pupils	•	•	
Katina	•		•
Dimitros	•		

**Table 5.2: The data collection tools**

Grounded theory was used to analyse the data. The steps of analysis that were used followed the process of:

- coding the ideas from the data gathered from observation, focus group and the interview (see Files A, B and C) and identify thematic topics, built from the ideas of each of the files
- matching of ideas, with related content, into groups (see Chapter 5.6)
- shaping of concepts from the relation of groups (see Chapter 5.7 and 5.8).

This process was developed on the basis of comparison and reflection between the data and brought out two explanations of research question (see Table 5.3).

This process provided participants' perceptions, regarding learning in an arts school. The combination of using data of case study to build grounded theory was argued for the reason of shared a common area of interests, as regards the facts:

- the task of the research: the study of a phenomenon happening in its natural setting
- the content of the research question: the research question is open-ended and seeks to explore "how" something happened
- the data analysis and theory are in a reciprocal relationship.

The emphasis of the research was to build theory from within the data discovered during the study of the case. All the interview data was tape-recorded and notes were kept of lesson observations. The data was recorded in three files (see Appendix 14):

File A: observations of the art class (hundred and thirty-five minutes in total from the first two days).

File B: the interview with the focus group, which aimed at providing insights into pupils' perceptions of the learning process in art (forty-five minutes during day four).

File C: the interview with Katina aimed at gaining a better understanding of her perceptions of the learning process in art (forty-five minutes during day five).

## **5.2 File A: Analysis of data gathered from observations**

What follow is a summary of the pilot observations and some analysis of this, using Merriam's (1988) organisational framework. This is a method of observation around five elements. The five elements are:

- a. The physical setting
- b. The participants
- c. Activities and interactions
- d. Conversation / classroom interaction
- e. Subtle factors.

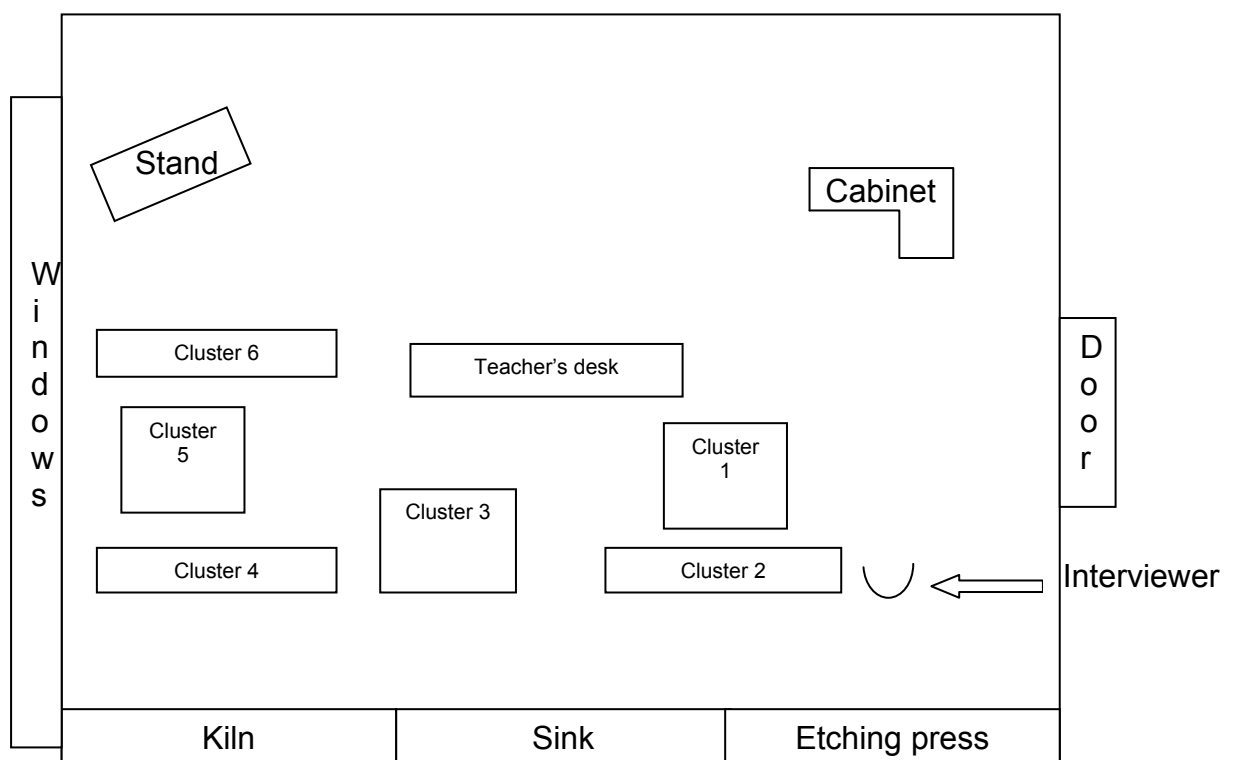
Introductory information was given by the description offered from elements a, b, c and e. This information is necessary so to establish facts before proceed to the analysis of findings from File A. Analysis procedures of data (coding, identify of thematic topics) started in the description offered by element d.

There, ideas of pupils and teachers about teaching and learning in art curriculum were coded and thematic topics derived from ideas were identified.

## Introductory information

### a. *The physical setting*

The classroom is situated on the ground floor of the school. It is adjacent to the principal's office. The classroom is spacious and divided into four separate areas. There is an etching press in one area and a kiln used for ceramics in another area. The third area has a sink for rinsing painting equipment. Large bay windows provide plenty of natural light. The fourth area is the room occupied by pupils' and teachers' desks (see Figure 5.1).



**Figure 5.1: The physical setting**

The pupils' desks are arranged in six clusters of four to six so as to create spaces for drawing, painting, and working with ceramics. Free choice groups of pupils were assembled around six tables to work collaboratively. These groups were not directed by teachers. Pupils have decided the content of these ensembles. The clusters of desks take up half the classroom. In the other half of the room, several desks are also arranged in a cluster and used for still life compositions. These desks are located in the northeast part of the classroom. In this part, there is also a cabinet for storing a wide range of materials. The teacher's desk is in the middle of the room. The walls are covered with pupils'



art work, though these have not been maintained in good condition. The desks, chairs, and the cabinet are old and in poor condition. The store cabinet for materials is not filed or in good condition. The furniture looks as if it were second-hand.

From the interviews, I learned that the classroom environment does not inspire the pupils or the teachers. This can also be discerned from the fact that the pupils do not tidy up at the end of each period. The teachers do not encourage them to do so.

*b. The participants*

The number of participants was already discussed in chapter 5.1. It is important for the better understanding of data to underline the two (2) following points: First that all the pupils in this study are selected for the school based on their performance in an examination in which they respond to a given theme set by a committee of art teachers, and second that the art curriculum in Greece's specialist arts schools requires two art teachers to participate, with each having equal responsibility for the lessons.

*c. Activities and interactions*

At the beginning of each lesson, the teachers and pupils usually engaged in verbal interactions structured by closed questions. In other words, the teachers' lectured and the pupils replied with either a "yes" or a "no" and only when they were directly asked whether they understood the learning task at hand. The exception to this rule was a brief dialogue initiated by a comment made by one pupil when she tried to link the task to a computer-animated figure. The teachers responded by posing open-ended questions. Although significant group discussion was not developed by the teachers, they did talk to each individual about their work. Most of the pupils appeared rather anxious about their art abilities.

During the last half of each of the two lessons (during day one and day two), the pupils started to plan their art work. There was no significant discussion among

the pupils about this. The teachers tried to control pupils' responses by timing the activities and reprimanding those who misbehaved.

To conclude during the observations, the teachers did not appear to exercise much control over the class. Few pupils paid attention to the learning content for the lesson, and those who did asked questions about technical or content-related matters. There were signs of weak planning, and poor management and monitoring of learning. Teachers were forced to shout over the noise made by the class in order to establish quiet.

#### Coding of data

##### *d. Conversation / classroom interaction*

###### *i. The first day of observation*

I arrived at the classroom about five minutes before the pupils and their two teachers. This allowed me to observe the classroom interactions prior to the pupils entering the room. As I took a seat at the back of the class, the two teachers discussed the day's lesson, while pupils began to trickle into the room. The pupils did not take their seats quietly. Instead, they formed groups of two and three and continued to chat loudly amongst themselves for about ten minutes (see Table 5.3, idea 12). As more and more pupils arrived, the noisier they became, while the two teachers, who were positioned at the front of the classroom, waited patiently to begin the lesson. They repeatedly asked for quiet, but to no avail (see Table 5.3, idea 12).

After fifteen minutes, Katina began to speak to the class even though pupils were still noisy. The two teachers repeatedly asked for quiet. Gradually, the pupils turned to look toward Katina. The topic for the lesson was based on making human figures appear half hidden in space. As explained by Katina, in art human figures and other forms are not always portrayed in their entirety but are sometimes only partially represented as if they are in a fog. The teachers had decided to use this topic because at that time of year a carnival was celebrated and the teachers thought it could act as a stimulus for representing

obscured forms in space. Katina identified the theme that she wanted pupils to understand, the idea of representing figures in space.

Katina, assisted by Dimitros, spoke about shadow theatre puppets and carnival figures. Katina continued to explain how pupils could develop their thinking on the project by asking the pupils to imagine a theatre stage on which there are a lot of people acting in what seems to be a cloudy, obscure setting. Katina: *“Imagine a scene on a stage with people acting, but not clearly seen...”* With the cooperation of Dimitros, she then provided pupils with some verbal technical instructions that explained how figures are represented in the foreground and background (see Table 5.3, idea 9). One pupil said he did not understand anything and several other pupils nodded their heads in agreement. Another pupil asked anxiously how they will succeed in this task (see Table 5.3, idea 2). Also another pupil followed up the question by asking, *“How will we make the figures half hidden?”*

Very few pupils asked questions. Most of them continued to disrupt the class by chatting amongst themselves. There seemed to be some concern among pupils about their capability to understand this task. Both teachers repeatedly asked the pupils to be quiet, but to no avail. One of the pupils complained loudly that even if they succeeded in representing what they had in mind with their pencil, the use of colour would disturb it.

The period ended before the teachers managed to talk with all the pupils personally. Most of the pupils, however, were able to meet with the teachers after the class and ask for further help for their work.

#### ii. The second day of observation

The pupils began arriving at 1:30 pm, mostly in groups of two and three. By 1:35 pm all twenty-seven were in the classroom. The two art teachers were already in the classroom and sat at their desk discussing the day's lesson. It is worth noting that this was the last week of the school semester and right before teachers gave pupils their grades.

Katina took the attendance register in the first five minutes of lesson. The pupils were then told to prepare for the lesson. Several minutes later, Katina began to speak about the day's lesson. The pupils formed six groups, each at a separate table. The groups were not selected by the teachers. Pupils were allowed to organize the groups for themselves.

Katina recapitulated on the topic, which was analysed in the previous lesson, *"how to portray obscured figures in space."* Katina spent ten minutes orally providing pupils with technical instructions. Katina and Dimitros then highlighted some of the elements of design related to describing form and space, to structure pupils' approach for engaging with the topic for the lesson.

*Katina: "Let's see how we can represent something in the background and in the foreground."*

Katina, with the help of Dimitros, repeated the technical instructions (see Table 5.3, idea 9). Katina was interrupted by one pupil who asked about the procedure and the learning objective for the lesson. Two other pupils also asked the same question (see Table 5.3, idea 2).

*Pupil: "What should we be doing? And how?"*

The teachers repeated their instructions and asked if everything was understood. The pupils replied with "okay" or "yes" when answering the closed question.

*Katina: "Was it understood?" and "Is it clear?"*

A discussion was initiated when one pupil announced she was going to draw a Japanese manga figure. Dimitros asked her about the decision. The pupil explained that she wanted to draw this particular figure because she liked it. When the teacher asked what aspects of the figure she liked, the pupil said she enjoys drawing figures from computer games (see Table 5.3, idea 1).

Katina and Dimitros visited each individual pupil to monitor their work considering their technique. The pupils did not respond to their teachers' comments, mainly because closed questions were mostly used.

*Katina:* (to all the class) *“How do we draw objects in the foreground? Are they big or small?”*

*Pupil:* *“Bigger”* (see Table 5.3, idea 9).

It took about half an hour for Katina and Dimitros to consult separately each pupil. Afterwards, the teachers asked the class to discuss the lesson’s learning objective. Katina posed mostly open-ended questions, as though inviting pupils to a conversation. She seemed to be open to the pupils’ interests in relation to the topic for the lesson topic.

*Katina* [referring to Ioannis]: *“Can you describe the main objective?”*

And later checking pupils’ understanding about the issue of representing figures in space, Katina posed the following question.

*Katina:* *“How can you tell that a figure is in the foreground?”*

The pupils, however, were generally very noisy (see Table 5.3, idea 12). They did not provide much feedback and they answered questions with just one or two words. It seemed as though they were not interested in this discussion. Nevertheless, the reflection on the learning process continued for about another ten minutes, until the end of the period. By that time, however, only three pupils were participating in the discussion. While one pupil tried to describe the whole learning objective, two other pupils interrupted him and asked questions about techniques. It was at that moment that the teachers called on pupils to pay more attention to the lesson.

#### *e. Subtle Factors*

When making classroom observations, it is very important to identify particular kinds of behaviour as revealed in activities and the interactions between teachers and pupils. The classroom setting should not be disregarded when observing the teaching of art. Tools, brushes, paper and other materials (except those used in ceramics) were left out and poorly maintained. This kind of mismanagement is difficult to understand in relation to stated expectations for classroom management in a specialist arts school in Greece.

The classroom was also disorganised. Even though there are tables for pupils to use, and cabinets for filing work away, both were in a state of disrepair. The drawers and tables were unstable. The chairs creaked. Pupils' work could not be filed safely away as the drawers were broken and abandoned. In better condition such equipment could have been used to support pupils' learning but instead its state of disrepair and poor management meant that it inhibited the learning process. The only exception to this was the treatment of pupils' ceramic work, which was collected and put safely into the kiln room. In addition, the special surfaces, "the pallets" to work with ceramics, are also filed away in the same place.

### Thematic topics of ideas

The description of the first and the second day generated an assortment of ideas about teaching and learning in art curriculum. The following thematic topics of the ideas can be identified from the coded ideas:

#### *a. The improvement of technical skills*

During the first and the second day of observation Katina emphasized on issues concerning technical skills improvement. She, with the help of Dimitros, during the first day provided pupils with some technical instructions and during the second day the same were repeated (see Table 5.3, idea 9).

With regard to this point of view pupils correspond to teachers questions about technical issues:

*Katina:* (to all class) "How do we draw objects in the foreground? Are they big or small?"

*Pupil:* "Bigger" (see Table 5.3, idea 9)

#### *b. The need for better classroom and behaviour management*

A series of incidents during both days of observation brought out the need for setting class behaviour rules. During the first day, the pupils' entrance in the classroom was clearly noisy (see Table 5.3, idea 12). Both teachers often asked for quiet, but to no avail (see Table 5.3, idea 12).

During the second day generally pupils were noisy (see Table 5.3, idea 12).

*c. The need for clear learning objectives*

Two incidents, one for each day of observation register the need for setting clear learning objectives.

During the first day and after Katina provided pupils with some technical instructions one pupil said that he did not understand anything and several other pupils nodded their heads, in agreement (see Table 5.3, idea 2).

Again, during the second day again a group of pupils asked about the procedure and the learning objective for the lesson.

Summary of File A data analysis

To sum up, during observation, visual art learning targets on:

- the improvement of technical skills
- the need for clear learning objectives and also
- the need for better classroom and behaviour management.

**5.3 File B: Analysis of data gathered during the pupil focus group**

The focus group with the pupils occurred on day four of the pilot study and involved six pupils (three girls, three boys) who had been observed. It generated a rich assortment of ideas about visual art education, and identified the following aims based on their perception of art as a subject at their school.

What follows is a list of thematic topics that emerged either by the similar content of the ideas coded or by the strong emphasis of pupil on an idea.

a. Success in exams

The pupils said they believed the learning process in art was aimed at preparing them for success in future exams, as reflected in this comment:

*Vassiliki: "The learning process in the discipline of the visual art, the way that it is developed at this particular school, will help us succeed in future university entrance exams once we graduate." She continued, "The more technical instruction in the visual art, the better we will do in our university entrance exams" (see Table 5.3, idea 3).*

b. Personal fulfilment

The pupils listed personal fulfilment as one of the most important features of the learning process in art. Ioannis said the fact that he is doing something he enjoys is what is most important for him. *"I am doing this for my own satisfaction"* he said *"I like painting very much"* (see Table 5.3, idea 4).

Another pupil spoke about her sense of joining in with the art experience.

According to Marika, it is very pleasing and desirable to learn how to draw by watching a television show, which presents art procedures and techniques in a step-by-step way: *"I like this type of programme because the painter who hosts the show paints nice paintings without a lot of effort"* (see Table 5.3, idea 4). Marika's view was shared by pupils Ioannis and Vassiliki during the focus group, and was underlined by them with the purpose to show that this is what art at school should be like.

c. The ability to express feelings and emotions

The pupils advocated the importance of expressing feelings as one of the main aims of learning in art. Ioannis, for example, said that drawing allows him to express his emotions and ideas. He also said his ability to express feelings and emotions has improved during the lessons at the school (see Table 5.3, idea 5): *"Drawing is a way to express things. As you grow you develop this ability."*



d. The need to communicate with others

Anastasia said: *“The learning process in visual art, at this particular school, is a symbol of unity with others”* (see Table 5.3, idea 7). Other pupils also commented that they want to be able to communicate with those who are also interested in visual art. Panagiotis, for example, made the following noteworthy statement.

*“I want to communicate with people who have an interesting opinion or view and who know something about art”* (see Table 5.3, idea 8). He continued: *“These people can process our thinking in art by asking questions like, what is this? What do you think about that? How do you think that is made and why is it made like that?”*

He also said that when he studies visual art it is important for him to recall his *“own real-life experience.”* He would like to be able to claim that the learning process is considered to be part of his life and shaped by personal meaning (see Table 5.3, idea 1): *“I want to share my views and let others know what I think about art”* (see Table 5.3, idea 6).

These comments by the pupils give voice to the importance of communication in art since this contributes to the construction of knowledge. Based on what they said, communication for them has to do with thinking, reflection and the meaning-making process.

e. The improvement of technical skills

Politimos stressed the importance of striving to do his best and to improving his technique (see Table 5.3, idea 9). With regard to this point of view, the pupils repeatedly expressed their desire to learn to *“represent reality,”* as described by Marika in this way:

*“We want to achieve the ability to represent the space of reality”* (see Table 5.3, idea 10). She continued: *“that is why we try to experiment with many different types of techniques, various dimensions (levels, volume and space) and expand on our drawing skills.”*

f. Cultivating the imagination

Considering the ability to cultivate the imagination, Ioannis said: *“What I would like to learn is how to combine what I imagine with what exists in reality”* (see Table 5.3, idea 11). The pupils highly value the cultivation of the imagination as an aim of learning in art. For instance, Anastasia said she wants to develop her imagination in order to learn how to draw something that seems like it exists even though it does not (see Table 5.3, idea 11). She expressed her desire to use her imagination through visual metaphors as conveyed by a coherent, visual code. In general, the pupils believe that the cultivation of the imagination is closely related to the use of metaphors, which can reveal deeper meaning in their art work.

In her attempt to represent the visual world, Anastasia said she is helped by using the process of illusion. Ioannis added that he wants *“to learn how to draw things that are not physically present in reality, but which can reflect a meaning.”*

g. Using knowledge from other school subjects to better understand the visual arts

Vassiliki said that knowledge from other subjects is important for understanding art.

h. The need for a better mediation and understanding of the learning objectives

A number of pupils expressed their concern at not being given clear instructions in respect to learning objectives, as stated by Vassiliki: *“Teachers announced what the task is, but they don’t give details. They do not explain it”* (see Table 5.3, idea 2). Politimos stressed the importance of clearly understanding the task: *“I need teachers to explain the purpose of the task”* (see Table 5.3, idea 2). Marika also said that the tasks were often unclear to her: *“Many times, I don’t know the purpose of what I’m working on.”* She added: *“The teachers often confuse us”* (see Table 5.3, idea 2). The pupils clearly attach great importance to being able to have a clear understanding of the task at hand, as well as being able to work and use strategies needed to achieve this.

i. The need for better classroom and behaviour management

Politimos raised another important issue regarding classroom management: *“When teachers start to explain, we start messing up and disturbing the class”* (see Table 5.3, idea 12). Other pupils also stressed the importance of learning in a well-organised environment. Vassiliki said:

*“I would like to have the chance to draw a still life set by my teacher at any time of the day. But in the classroom at the moment, I can see only stupid things around me. I would prefer if interesting objects were available for observation and study”* (see Table 5.3, idea 13).

Based on these views, it seems that improving learning and teaching methods, and organising classroom and behaviour management more satisfactorily, are important for maximising the overall learning process and the acquisition of knowledge in art.

j. The need for better monitoring of the learning process so as to address a richer curriculum

The pupils said the learning process in art could be more interesting if they were motivated to do more research for their work. Vassiliki said they should be encouraged to *“conduct more research about art by using books and audiovisual material”* (see Table 5.3, idea 13). The pupils also stressed their desire to study art history, and said this could also enrich the learning process. For instance, Ioannis said he would like to study more art history for inspiration. *“It would be helpful if teachers showed us photographs of works by painters so that we could come up with new ideas and learn how artists have worked in the past and present”* (see Table 5.3, idea 13).

## Summary of File B data analysis

To sum up, the focus group reasoned that learning in art needs to encompass and combine the following:

- relate learning to real life experience
- ensure success in exams
- develop personal fulfilment
- express feelings and emotions
- integrate, communicate and develop ideas for visual art with other subjects, including art history
- achieve technical skilfulness
- learn in an environment that has good resources
- cultivate the imagination
- communicate the learning objectives and the related criteria for success for each lesson so that everyone can understand them
- create a good classroom ethos that has clear rules for expectations and behaviour.

### **5.4 File C: Analysis of data gathered during interview with Katina**

The data collected from the interview with Katina provided a cluster of ideas about how learning in art should be experienced by both pupils and teachers. The teacher expressed concerns about how art is experienced by the particular class being researched as part of this study, and for this reason, perhaps, she oriented the discussion more towards what should be the case as opposed to what is currently the case.

As in File B what follows is a list of thematic topics that emerged either by the similar content of the ideas coded or by the strong emphasis of the teacher on the ideas.

Katina's personal view is that the learning process in art is rather complicated, as highlighted by the following.

a. Technical Skilfulness

Katina stressed that developing one's technique, and everything that is related to this, such as understanding the elements of design, are central to the learning process in visual art (see Table 5.3, idea 15). The curriculum must delve deep into the formal study of design principles. However, she also noted that teaching technical skills is not the only concern of art at the school, which for her is the easiest part of her job: *"Of course I will show pupils some techniques about how to use colours and how to sketch, but this is the easiest part of my work."*

b. Development of the imagination

At the beginning of the interview, Katina noted that for her the main goal is to cultivate pupils' imagination: *"I would like to help them compose from their imagination."* She believes this may be accomplished by linking pupils' out-of-school interests with the art work they do in school: *"My aim is for pupils to be able to compose art based on their imagination and their personal life experience, as well as their emotions"* (see Table 5.3, ideas 14, 16 and 17).

c. Communication

Katina stressed the importance of helping pupils cultivate a deeper understanding of themselves, the world around them, and their role in it. She stated that art in school requires pupils to search to understand their role in the cultural context and the society in which they live:

*"First I have to discuss with the pupils, to ask for their ideas about topics we are working on. I cannot limit my involvement in the learning process to asking them to draw a particular theme"* (see Table 5.3, ideas 20 and 24).

She also added that it is just as important for pupils to realise how they relate to daily life, as this helps to better understand themselves and others around them

(see Table 5.3, idea 14): *“Through experience in art pupils can understand the reality they live in... this is what I would like to do.”*

Katina recommended a “narrative” access to a topic, arguing that this method encourages pupils to develop creative learning skills. *“I introduce teaching tasks by calling pupils to enter in a context they will imagine. The aim is for pupils to relate themselves to the reality through the art experience”* (see Table 5.3, idea 24).

Katina also spoke about an obstacle to learning, that of her pupils’ conservative tendencies concerning art. Such conservative tendencies, as she described them, are reinforced by television programmes that show quick and easy procedures for sketching and drawing using a wide range of themes (see Table 5.3, idea 20). Katina: *“This can be a topic for further discussion in the class,”* implying that pupils must learn to reflect on ideas.

#### d. Self-esteem

Katina also spoke about the importance of nurturing pupils’ self-esteem through the visual art curriculum. This is the need for pupils to appreciate and to value themselves, and to understand their abilities as developed through art. She argued that the main aim of the art curriculum or subject is to develop pupils’ self-esteem and self-respect. *“Through my teaching, I will try to help pupils realise their personal merit as individuals and as young people”* (see Table 5.3, idea 18).

#### e. Behaviour and good classroom management

Katina also spoke about the significant problems she faces when trying to teach art. She specifically mentioned pupils making a mess and losing focus as obstacles to good classroom and behaviour management (see Table 5.3, idea 19). She said that pupils had to show the following responsibilities in shaping the learning process in art:

- a serious commitment to participate in the learning process (see Table 5.3, idea 21)
- having appropriate dispositions, including being willing to consider different ideas and views about art (see Table 5.3, idea 20)
- paying attention, being polite and maintaining passion about learning (see Table 5.3, idea 21).

As regards classroom management, Katina stressed the importance of fostering a creative atmosphere in the classroom (see Table 5.3, idea 13). She also thought it was important to develop consistency so that the pupils maintained their obligations to their own learning (see Table 5.3, idea 21).

Katina's view about the teacher's role in art education equated with that of an advisor. She stressed that she cannot teach pupils anything if they do not want to learn. "*I will facilitate their effort to learn,*" she said, "*but I cannot oblige anyone to learn*" (see Table 5.3, idea 23).

#### f. Fostering learning by using a cross-curricular approach

She also noted the importance of developing learning in the context of cross-thematic work since the school's curriculum is designed to provide such learning opportunities (see Table 5.3, idea 22).

#### Summary of File C data analysis

Based on the range of topics discussed during the interview with Katina, it is clear that she believes that visual art involves the following:

- improving technical skills
- developing imagination
- improving communication
- developing self- esteem
- behaviour and good classroom management
- fostering learning by using a cross-curricular approach.

The important point to consider for this pilot study is that the learning process in art that I observed with this particular class was not the one the teacher hopes or wants it to be, as indicated above. The teacher's comments were concerned more with what she would have wanted to happen and not what actually happened in the lessons I observed, which can be grasped by comparing what she said with what I observed and what the focus groups reflected on in their discussion with me.

## **5.5 Summary of Files A, B and C data analysis**

During the pilot study, the pupils and teachers were able to identify a number of ideas in regard to the experience of learning in visual art (see Table 5.3). These, combined with the insights from the lesson observations, are summarised below.

The pupils related learning in visual art with their need to express and discuss ideas with others and to construct meaning by reflecting on their ideas and the quality of their thinking. They also related learning in art with the need to competently represent both the world of phenomena and the imagination. They also identified the development of technical skills, enjoyment, personal fulfilment, working in a well-resourced and organised classroom, and understanding clear learning objectives that are shared and welcomed, as very important features of art education. Finally, pupils identified a strategic aspect of art education as preparation for university entrance exams.

Some of Katina's ideas about learning in art overlapped with the pupils' views. In particular, Katina spoke about the need to develop pupils' technical skills, to cultivate their imagination, and their ability to express themselves and have good self-esteem. The teacher also highlighted the significance of linking teaching to the events of everyday life, and adopting a cross-curricular approach to support the construction of meaning, understanding, and further reflection on ideas. Furthermore, the teacher identified the importance of having a good classroom ethos and clear rules for behaviour, so that pupils could fulfil



their potential by being fully engaged with the learning process. The teacher also considered the role of the teacher to be that of an advisor.

From the notes of my observations, it would also seem that there are important issues related to planning and teaching procedures to include the way problems are specified for the pupils and how their response is monitored in class.

## **5.6 Interpreting the data: grouping the key ideas**

After completing the process of coding by drawing on the key points of the data, I noticed that the content of some of the key points could be used to support issues and matters that have similar content, which allowed groups to be created. Such groupings justified the creation of even broader gatherings groups of similar content, and so the analysis of the data made it possible to develop a conceptual framework. This conceptual framework generated explanations for the research question:

**How do 14-15 year-old pupils and their teachers in a new Greek arts specialist secondary school, perceive art learning in relation to the aims of the curriculum and teaching methods?** (see Table 5.3)

### 5.6.1 The first group: Sharpening the ability to express emotion

To begin with, both the pupils and Katina believe that art education should improve the ability to express emotion (see Table 5.3, group i). In the focus group, Ioannis said that drawing allows him to express his emotions and ideas. He also said his ability to express his feelings and emotions improves the more he studies at the school (see Table 5.3, idea 5). In addition, Katina articulated the idea that art education should promote expression: *“My aim is for pupils to be able to compose art based on (...) their emotions”* (see Table 5.3, idea 17). Some support this idea of art education as the *“expression of emotions,”* in lesson observations. One pupil thought that representing the world and being able to make personal choices, for example, by incorporating a manga figure from a computer game (see Table 5.3, idea 1) was a declaration not only about his personal interest but also a declaration about expressing a personal choice.

The idea that art education is concerned with expression seems to be significant for all the participants of this study, as it cropped up in the pupils' focus group, the interview with Katina, and was recorded in notes of lesson observations.

#### 5.6.2 The second group: Representing both seen and imagined worlds

A number of participants spoke about their interest in learning to represent both the world of phenomena and the world of imagination (see Table 5.3, group ii). The focus group expressed a desire both to learn how to represent reality [Marika, Ioannis] (see Table 5.3, idea 10) and the imagined world (see Table 5.3, idea 11). Ioannis said: *"What I would like to learn is how to combine what I imagine with what exists in reality."* Continuing to explain the same idea, Anastasia said that she wants to learn *"how to draw something that seems like it exists even though it does not."* A similar view was given by Katina, who emphasised a main aim for learning in art as the cultivation of pupils' imagination: *"I would like to help them compose from their imagination"* (see Table 5.3, idea 16).

Katina was observed providing pupils with technical instructions so as to enable them to represent the visual, everyday world, as when she taught the group how to create a size gradient by representing figures in the foreground as larger than those in the background. The teacher also attempted to develop pupils' imagination by asking them to draw ambiguous figures half hidden in space. These observed incidents reveal pupils' and teachers' intention to represent the real, seen world and the imaginative world.

To close the discussion of this category of ideas, I will also refer to one pupil's desire to represent figures from the world of computer graphics (see Table 5.3, idea 1), and one pupil's intention to integrate a scene from virtual reality. All these comments clearly show that the issue of representing the real and imaginative world, the seen and the unseen, was highly significant for both Katina and the pupils.

#### 5.6.3 The third group: Technical skills

Another aspect that can be identified from the pupils' and Katina's comments is that of the importance of technical skill in art (see Table 5.3, group iii). The focus group described the need to improve their technical skills, which is reflected in a comment by Vassiliki: *"The more technical instruction in the visual arts, the better we will do in our university entrance exams."* Politimos and Marika also stressed the importance of improving their art techniques (see Table 5.3, idea 9). This aspect of acquiring technical skills was mentioned by Katina as one of the aims of learning in art, but she also said that *"this is the easiest part of my work"* (see Table 5.3, idea 15). However, during my observation, both Katina and Dimitros dedicated a lot of time trying to get pupils to attend to their instructions about technical skills (see Table 5.3, idea 9).

To conclude, technical skills were identified by all the participants as an important aim of learning in art, which is significant for this study.

#### 5.6.4 The fourth group: Classroom Ethos

Another set of ideas can be grouped around the ethos of the classroom as both Katina and the focus group commented on the need to set and follow clear rules for classroom behaviour (see Table 5.3, group iv). During the observations, on several occasions I recorded the many times teachers asked for quiet but to no avail, and those pupils had a poor attitude to their work. In the focus group, Politimos expressed his view of the problem: *"When the teachers start to explain, we start messing up and disturbing the class"* (see Table 5.3, idea 12). The interview with Katina revealed the same level of concern. She said that making a mess and losing focus were the main obstacles to good classroom management (see Table 5.3, idea 19). Thus, it is clear that class behaviour seems to be a concern for all the participants.

#### 5.6.5 The fifth group: Communication about issues that emerge from the experience in art

The importance of communication as a feature of art education was identified by the pupils and Katina (see Table 5.3, group v). In the focus group, Politimos said that he wanted to share his views with others about visual art (see Table

5.3, idea 6a). Katina also referred to the importance of prioritizing pupils' discussions about their ideas (see Table 5.3, ideas 20 and 24). One example of this is when, during observation, a pupil related the computer visual world with his understanding about the visual world (see Table 5.3, idea 1).

A point of view similar to that of Politimos's and Katina's was expressed by Anastasia, who perceives visual art to be about making and discussing the meaning. According to this pupil, art at school is *"a symbol of unity with others,"* which implies discussing shared meaning (see Table 5.3, idea 7). This idea of *"unity with others"* is consistent with but not identical to Katina's stress on the importance of pupils understanding themselves and the world around them through their engagement with art education (see Table 5.3, idea 24).

In addition, Panagiotis's view, expressed in the focus group, described the importance of sharing insights about art with other, knowledgeable people. Panagiotis said:

*"I want to communicate with people who have an interesting opinion and point of view and who know something about visual art" (see Table 5.3, idea 8). He continued: "These people can process our thinking in visual art by asking questions like: What is this? What do you think about that? How do you think that is made? And why is it made like that?"*

This thought shows that Panagiotis is open to a new experience in art that will enable him to progress in his thinking.

Katina refers to a similar idea when she highlights pupils having conservative tendencies, which are reinforced by television programmes that present quick and easy drawing and other procedures in art (see Table 5.3, idea 20). The teacher expressed her concern about the impact of these programmes on pupils' thinking, but also said that the same programmes offer the opportunity to mobilize and reflect on the ideas they stimulate.

The focus group's understanding of the importance of communication for learning in art can be linked to Katina's reference to developing learning in the context of a cross-thematic approach, in which the communication and understanding of ideas have a central role (see Table 5.3, idea 22). Pupils also stressed the need to use knowledge from other fields of study to better

understand the visual art, as reflected in Vassiliki's comment that knowledge from other school subjects is important for understanding the arts (see Table 5.3, idea 6b).

#### 5.6.6 The sixth group: Personal benefits

Another category that can be identified from the insights formulated by the focus group and Katina is that art education provides personal fulfilment and other benefits (see Table 5.3, group vi). Ioannis considered personal fulfilment one of the main aims of art education: *"I am doing this for my own satisfaction."* He also said *"I like painting very much"* (see Table 5.3, idea 4). The connection between joyfulness and art experience is mentioned by Marika, who says that she likes T.V. programmes about art and drawing because the paintings presented are nice and are made without a lot of effort (see Table 5.3, idea 4). With this comment Marika implies that experience of art in this school is like experiencing art in the T.V. program.

Katina expressed her belief that art has the power to develop pupils' self-esteem (see Table 5.3, idea 18). She emphasized her role in enabling pupils to appreciate and value themselves through their experience of art: *"Through my teaching, I will try to help pupils to realize their personal merit as individuals and as young people."*

#### 5.6.7 The seventh group: Roles and responsibility in the learning process

Another set of ideas that can be grouped from the pupils' and Katina's comments is that of pupils' and teachers' roles and responsibilities when learning in art. Katina emphasized the need for pupils to show commitment to their learning in art; she sees such commitment as vital for learning in art, and emphasised the importance of pupils showing serious commitment towards their learning, which includes giving the appropriate levels of attention, passion, and politeness in the classroom (see Table 5.3, idea 21).

In addition, Katina stressed the importance of shared obligations and consistency of expectations for all concerned with learning art (see Table 5.3,

idea 21), adding that pupils need to show commitment as the teacher cannot oblige pupils to participate in art classes: *"I will facilitate (pupils) effort to learn ... but I cannot oblige anyone to learn"* (see Table 5.3, idea 23). This comment indicates that she sees her role primarily as that of an advisor or facilitator of learning in art (see Table 5.3, group vii).

#### 5.6.8 The eighth group: Real life experiences

Another set of ideas shared by Katina and the pupils is that art should be linked with real life experiences (see Table 5.3, group viii). In the observation of a lesson I noted that one pupil, as already mentioned, referred to an image from computer imagery, which is a significant part not only of her world but of most Greek teenagers (see Table 5.3, idea 1). Katina also spoke about the importance of relating learning in art to real life experience by building on national celebrations like the annual carnival (see Table 5.3, idea 14). In the focus group, Panagiotis spoke about the significance of discussing ideas through art, and said that it was important for him to recall his own real life experience (see Table 5.3, idea 1). Furthermore, Katina stated that she wanted to develop pupils' ability to use their personal life experience in their art (see Table 5.3, idea 14). The issue of relating art to real life, although found in the pupils' and Katina's comments, is not facilitated by the way it is practised. The learning experience as observed lacks those supportive learning procedures, such as actions of interpretations and communicative skills that would facilitate the connection between the pupils' life world with the art world.

### 5.6.9 The ninth group: The planning and mediation of varied learning

Another set of key ideas identified by the pupils, which was also verified through the lesson observations, is the significance of well organised teaching for art education (see Table 5.3, group ix). The pupils expressed their concern about the way the teaching was disorganised and badly structured, and referred to a number of problems related to the methods and strategies used with their class. They were particularly concerned that their teachers did not set clear learning objectives (see Table 5.3, idea 2). They said that the teachers did not specify the tasks with enough detail or give clear explanations [Vassiliki]. For example, Politimos said that teachers did not explain the purpose of the task. Marika added that on several occasions she did not know the purpose of what she was working on and that the teachers had often confused the pupils (see Table 5.3, idea 2). The focus group mentioned the absence of good planning and clearly explained learning objectives as a handicap for the learning process. Vassiliki said: *“Teachers announce to us what the task is, but they don’t give details. They do not explain it.”* Politimos stressed the importance of clearly understanding the task: *“I need teachers to explain the purpose of the task.”* Marika also said that the tasks are often unclear to her: *“Many times, I don’t know the purpose of what I’m working on,”* adding that the teachers often confuse them.

Politimos raised another important issue in regards to classroom management. He said that *“When teachers start to explain, we start messing up and disturb the class.”* Vassiliki said that she thought that the role of the teacher was to create a dynamic classroom environment. Specifically, she emphasized the need for teachers to provide opportunities to delve deeper into the subject of art. For instance, Vassiliki wanted her teachers to encourage her to study pictures and the ideas of works dating from different periods so as to enrich her overall understanding of the subject (see Table 5.3, idea 13). Vassiliki also said that she would like to be encouraged to conduct more research about art that required the use of books and audio-visual material. Ioannis also expressed the same desire to study art history: *“It would be helpful if our teachers showed us photographs of works by painters so that we could come up with new ideas and learn how artists worked in the past and present”* (see Table 5.3, idea 13). Vassiliki also stressed the importance of a well-organised, stimulating environment for

learning in art: *"I would like to have the chance to draw a still life set by my teacher at any time of the day. But in the classroom I can see only stupid things around me. I would prefer if interesting objects were available for observation and study"* (see Table 5.3, idea 13). Katina mentioned the need to foster a creative atmosphere in the classroom (see Table 5.3, idea 13).

The notes from my lesson observations describe the problematic nature of the classroom interactions, which were characterised by *poor teaching and classroom management*. The planning, monitoring, and evaluation of each session were generally inadequate. There was a lack of clear expectations, with many pupils being allowed to arrive late and to be unprepared for the lesson. The room was not kept tidy by the pupils or their teachers. The pupils were usually unfocused and noisy, and teachers had to raise their voices to maintain control.

Based on the pupils' views, it is easy to understand that better classroom management and the use of more powerful teaching and learning methods would improve the overall learning process and the acquisition of knowledge. The pupils attached great importance to being able to clearly understand the task at hand, as well as knowing about the ultimate aim of their work and the strategies needed to achieve this.

Katina spoke at length about the problems she faced. She expressed concerns about pupils' lack of attention in the classroom, their unfocused and unruly behavior, and their conservative views about art.



#### 5.6.10 The tenth group: Preparation for university entrance examinations

The last key idea expressed by one pupil was that studying art in the school was important because it would prepare him for university examinations (see Table 5.3, idea 3). This view was not expressed by any other participant in the pilot study; however, it does converge with one of the school's main aims for the visual art curriculum (see Appendix 8b, A.5).

As the different aspects noted during the lesson observations together with the pupils' and Katina's ideas about art education have already been grouped, I will now condense these groups into key concepts.

#### **5.7 Key concept a, that explains the research question: developing thinking and other skills**

The first concept emerged from the categorization of groups converges around the concept of **developing a variety of thinking and other skills** (see Table 5.3, concept a) and includes the ability of pupils to express emotions (see Table 5.3, groups i, viii), to discuss ideas and communicate (see Table 5.3, group v), and to represent both the seen and the unseen world (see Table 5.3, groups ii, iii).

#### **5.8 Key concept b, that explains the research question: roles and responsibility**

The second concept emerged from the categorization of group converges around the concept of **roles and responsibility**, which includes all participants carrying out a consistent role in the learning process (see Table 5.3, concept b). This includes the following: pupils' obligation to co-operate, work with others, **and be responsible** (see Table 5.3 groups iv, vii); the need for pupils to develop self respect (see Table 5.3 group vi); the need for teachers to foster understanding, to advise pupils, to plan and mediate good teaching and learning strategies, to set high expectations for classroom behavior (see Table 5.3, group iv), and to better organize the learning environment and the teaching process (see Table 5.3, group ix).

**Two explanations** can be condensed from the process of reducing the concepts that emerged from coding the data of this pilot study into groups and then concepts: These two explanations respond to the research question:

**How 14-15 year-old pupils and their teachers in a new Greek arts specialist secondary school, perceive art learning in relation to the aims of the curriculum and teaching methods?**

The two explanations claim that:

- I. the pupils and their teachers have a number of overlapping expectations about learning in art and the abilities that need to be developed (see Table 5.3, explanation I) and
- II. the classroom interactions and learning environment did not support participants' expectations, which explain why both pupils and teachers focus their remarks on issues related to teaching and learning strategies (see Table 5.3, explanation II).

Table 5.3 presents all phases of analysis. The first phase involves the open coding of all ideas. The second phase involves the axial coding of ideas, by matching the ideas of similar content, into groups. The third phase involves the refinement into over-arching codes.

## **5.9 Conclusions**

The analysis of findings as outlined in table 5.3, was given back to Katina, Dimitros and the pupils, on June 2008, asking for their comments and feedback. The plausibility of the findings was confirmed orally by them during a meeting between me as the researcher, both teachers and the pupils of the focus group, taking time in June 20, 2008 at school.

As already discussed (see Chapter 5.1) the purpose of conducting the pilot study was to check instruments and practicalities such as time plans and to try out analysis.

As regard the aim of checking the instruments, the pilot study made me realize the importance of collecting data from three different instruments. In fact, the triangulation of data helped greatly to the emergent of groups derived from the ideas, as it is presented in table 5.3.

The other significant lesson that I learned from doing the pilot study was that I lost the opportunity to collect further data because I did not plan for or use follow up questions. I therefore decided to include semi-structured interviews as part of the main research, as these can provide greater insight as regards the research questions.

As regard the aim of checking time plans, what I learned from the pilot was the following:

I have discovered that the research must take account of the school timetable. This means that, even though I had designed my research schedule according to the needs of my study (see Table 4.4), I had not considered this in relation to the school's actual timetable, which cannot be interrupted for the purposes of facilitating my research.

As for the analytic approach, it was an important experience for me, as a researcher, as I understood how explanations of the research question can emerge from a series of singular ideas.

The pilot study identified groups of ideas (see Chapter 5.3) which almost all are related to the finding of the main study.

The research experience I gained from the pilot study informed the research procedures of the main study in the levels of the data collection and the data analysis.

As regard the data collection, the procedures during the main study, took account of what I have learned from the pilot study about the use of follow up questions and the schools timetable.

As regard the data analysis, the procedures, during the main study built on the experience of generating theory from ideas, gained from the pilot.

TABLE 5.3: PILOT STUDY DATA ANALYSIS											
PHASE 1: OPEN CODING					PHASE 2: AXIAL CODING			PHASE 3: REFINEMENT INTO OVERARCHING CODES			
	Key ideas about visual art experience in one of the arts schools of Greece. Visual art learning experience is about the following:		Triangulation			Grouping according to the similar content of ideas. Visual art learning experience is about the need to:		Categorizing the group's, around the following concepts:		Explanation for the research topic what was found	
			Obs	P.F.G.	T.I.						
Expressed by pupils	1	Relations with computer visual art world (manga figures) and with life experience	⊙	✓	✓	Sharpening the ability (5,17,1 triangulation) to express emotions	i	The wish for developing a variety of thinking skills (a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ability to express emotions (i, viii), &amp; communicate ideas (v)</li> <li>• The ability to represent the seen and the unseen world (ii, iii)</li> </ul>	Expectations for developing thinking skills	I
	2	The need for setting clear learning objectives	✓	✓							
	3	Being well prepared for exams to the university		✓							
	4	Enjoyment, personal fulfillment		✓							
	5	Being expressed	⊙	✓	✓						
	6	Communicating with others (a) and discussing ideas of different fields (b)		✓	✓						
	7	Constructing meaning		✓	✓						
	8	Reflecting on thinking		✓	⊙						
	9	Improving technical skillfulness	⊙	✓	✓	Representing both seen and imagined worlds (triangulation, 10, 11, 16, 1)	ii				
	10	Representing world as it is seen	✓	✓							
	11	Representing imaginative thinking or world	⊙	✓	✓						
	12	Need for setting class behavior rules	✓	✓	✓						
	13	Need for learning on art resourceful environment		✓	✓						
Expressed by teacher and observed	14	Building teaching on celebration events (carnival) and real life experiences	✓	✓	✓	Classroom ethos (triangulation, 12, 19)	iv	Roles and responsibilities (b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants wish for being committed to the process</li> <li>• Pupils obligation to co-operate, co-work with others and be responsible (iv, vii)</li> <li>• Self respect (vi)</li> <li>• Teachers role to foster &amp; advise (vii)</li> </ul>	... but an unpowered context to be developed	II
	15	Providing technical skills	⊙	✓	✓	Communication (6, 7, 8, 20, 22, 24, 1)	v				
	16	Develop the imagination	⊙	✓	✓	Personal benefits (4, 18)	vi				
	17	Develop the ability to express emotions	⊙	✓	✓						
	18	Develop pupils self esteem			✓	Rules and responsibility in the learning process (21, 23)	vii				
	19	Need for setting class behavior rules	✓	✓	✓						
	20	Need for being open to accept and reflect on ideas		✓	✓						
	21	Need for pupils to be eager for learning			✓	Real life experiences (1, 14 triangulation)	viii				
	22	Cross thematic approach to learning		✓	✓	The planning and mediation of a variety of learning (2, 25, 13)	ix				
	23	Teachers advising role			✓	<b>ISSUE NOT GROUPED</b>					
	24	Constructing meaning		✓	✓	Preparation for university entrance examination (3)	x				
	25	Need for organizing teaching procedures (planning, definition of problem, monitoring)	✓	✓							

**TABLE 5.3: DATA ANALYSIS: PILOT STUDY SHOWING STAGES AND OUTCOMES OF ANALYSIS**

Obs: Observation; P.F.G.: Pupils focus group interview; T.I.: Teachers interview.

O: not strongly evidenced, indirectly evidenced.

(The following two chapters present the analysis of the findings from the main study).

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **DATA ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST STAGE OF THE MAIN STUDY**

## CHAPTER SIX - DATA ANALYSIS: STAGE ONE (November 2008) OF THE MAIN STUDY

### 6.1 Introduction

Data gathered from the main study, was conducted during the school year 2008 – 2009. This data was collected in two stages, each lasting two weeks (see Chapter 4.7), designed in this way for better data analysis. The analysis took place during two periods: November 2008 (stage one) and February 2009 (stage two). The rationale for splitting the data collection in two stages leans on one of the principal types of triangulation the “time triangulation” (Denzin, 1970; as cited in Wellington, 2000, p. 24). Time triangulation is a methodological research strategy, applied by the researcher who puts the data to the test of time influence, using a cross sectional design for the data collection. This test strengthens the internal validity of the findings. Merriam (1998, p. 204) considers the “long-term observation” as one of the basic strategies to enhance internal validity. This was the reason that data was collected in two stages. This chapter presents the analysis of stage one data while chapter seven presents the analysis of data from stage two.

The pupils remained the same during the pilot and both stages of the main study. The focus group consisted of the same group of pupils, the only difference being that during the year of the pilot study (2007- 2008) they were in year class b’, and in the main study (2008-2009) they were in year class c’. During the year 2008 – 2009 the following, number of pupils, studied in the c’ year class, per faculty, and in all.

<b>Pupils attendance at c’ year class</b>			
Faculty:	Visual art	Dance	Drama
Number of pupils:	26	21	15
Overall:	62		

**Table 6.1: Number of pupils attending the c’ year class during the school year 2008 – 2009 per faculty**

Before outlining the data, it is important to refer to the conditions of the research context, and to differences in the ways in which data was collected and analysed in the main study compared with the pilot study.

#### Differences in context

There were three differences in context from the pilot to the main study.

##### *a. Staffing and conditions of service*

The first difference between the main and pilot studies relates to the wider school context. There were different head teachers over this period, despite the school remaining the same, although both were positive and supportive of my research. The art teachers participating in the study were also different, involving people who were working under different conditions of service: during the pilot study the two participating art teachers (and all the other teachers at school) had been working with temporary, annual contracts. During the main study there were two new participants: teacher A coded as Ermis and teacher B coded as Aphrodite, both of whom had permanent positions, like the rest of the teachers of general education (Temporary teachers of the visual art subject were no longer in the school since permanent positions were given to teachers of art subject in the school year 2008-2009 after a demand for permanent teaching posts in all arts schools; until that time, as mentioned, the teachers had been on temporary, annual contracts). The school year 2008 – 2009 the following number of teachers, per school subject, worked at the school.

<b>Number of teachers</b>
General education: 31
Arts education: 24
Visual art: 8
Dance: 6
Drama: 9
Music: 1 (+1 pending)
Head teacher: 1

**Table 6.2: Demographic, regarding the teaching staff of the arts school under research during the year of the main study (2008 – 2009)**

*b. My physical presence in the classroom*

Unlike the pilot study, my presence in the classroom was no longer new, as pupils had grown familiar with me being around. As a result, the pupils welcomed me back to carry out the main study.

*c. Evolving structure of the school*

As the new school was developing year by year by becoming more organised and coherent, the wider background of the main study was a little different from the pilot: specifically, facilities such as a new snack bar and more organized administrative services made school life easier.

Differences in the ways the data was collected

Most of the data collection methods were the same in the main study as they had been in the pilot with the exception of the way I carried out the focus group interviews. For when collecting data during both periods of the main study, far more use was made of supplementary prompts and questions, following reflection on the elaboration of conventional data from the pilot, which revealed a need to prompt further. This meant pupils had more chances to enlarge on the thoughts and views that were expressed, as part of the semi-structured interviews carried out with the focus groups. The follow up questions generated further comments and created rich data for analysis. During the pilot study, follow up questions were not asked.

Examples:

*a. File E (first stage of main study - November)*

After agreeing that one of the learning objectives was to understand symbols in art, I was able to prompt pupils to expand on their point of view. Their further description gave a fuller view of what they perceived to be important.



*b. File E (first stage of main study- November)*

Pupils provided more detailed data when they were asked to explain why autographic processes are important to them, in their experience of art education.

*c. File J (second stage of main study - February)*

When pupils described the significance of understanding the learning task, they were able to offer more thoughtful responses when they were invited to develop this issue.

*d. File B (pilot research)*

Although I was given chances to ask pupils follow up questions to enlarge on their descriptions of their perceptions regarding their art experience, during the pilot study, I did not take advantage of the opportunities. As a consequence, the data that was collected for analysis was poorer than the data collected for the main study. Thus, for example, Ioannis' comment concerning his view that the main aim of learning in art is the pleasure he gets from the experience, was not followed up by a further prompt or question that could have provoked further insight (see Chapter 5.6.6).

## **6.2 The first phase of the main study November 2008**

The data of the first period was recorded in six Files (see Appendix 15):

File D: Observations of the art class

File E: The interview with the focus group of pupils, which aimed at providing insights into pupils' perceptions of the learning process in art

File F: The interview with Vassiliki aimed at gaining a better understanding of her perceptions of the learning process in art

File G: The interview with Anastasia aiming the same as File F

File H: The interview with Ermis, aimed at gaining a better understanding of his perceptions of the learning process in art

File I: The interview with the focus group of both teachers, which aimed at providing insights into teachers perceptions on the learning process in art<sup>5</sup>.

<b>SCHEDULE FOR FIRST PERIOD OF MAIN STUDY</b>					
	<b>Monday (11/3/2008)</b>	<b>Tuesday (11/4/2008)</b>	<b>Wednesday (11/5/2008)</b>	<b>Thursday (11/6/2008)</b>	<b>Friday (11/7/2008)</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> week</b>	One hundred and thirty five minute observation (3 lesson hours)	Forty five minute observation (1 lesson hour)	Forty five minute observation (1 lesson hour)	Ninety minute focus group with pupils (2 lesson hours)	Forty five minute interview with Vassiliki (1 lesson hour); forty five minute interview with Anastasia (1 lesson hour)
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> week</b>	<b>Monday (11/10/2008)</b>	<b>Tuesday (11/10/2008)</b>			
	Forty five minute interview with Ermis (1 lesson hour)	Forty five minute focus group with teachers (1 lesson hour)			

**Table 6.3: The schedule for the first stage of the main study conducted from November 3-11/2008 (forty five minutes equals one lesson hour in the Greek educational system)**

The data collected during the first stage of the research was as follows:

- Five hours of classroom observation
- Two hours of focus group interviews with the pupils
- Two hours of interviews with two pupils, one hour each
- One hour of interview with one of the two art teachers
- One hour of focus group interview with the two teachers.

This is shown in table 6.3.

<sup>5</sup> The pseudonyms of pupils participating in the focus group are already given during pilot study (see Chapter 5, footnote 3). Once again girl A is given the pseudonym Vassiliki, girl B is given the pseudonym Anastasia, girl C is given the pseudonym Marika, boy A is given the pseudonym Ioannis, boy B is given the pseudonym Panagiotis and boy C is given the pseudonym Politimos. The pseudonyms of the two art teachers participating in the main study are: Ermis, the pseudonym of teacher A and Aphrodite the pseudonym of teacher B.

	Observation	Focus group pupils	Focus group teacher	Interview pupil	Interview teacher
Ermis	•		•		•
Aphrodite	•		•		
Vassiliki	•	•		•	
Anastasia	•	•		•	
Marika	•	•			
Ioannis	•	•			
Panagiotis	•	•			
Politimos	•	•			

**Table 6.4: The data collection tools**

The total research hours during stage one came to eleven hours. With the following differences, the time table for stage one is almost the same as the one planned in the preparation phase (see Table 4.3):

- Two additional hours for classroom observation. The extra time provided more opportunities to think about my comments
- Two hours of focus group interviews had been scheduled for the art teachers, but in the end only one hour was used. This was due to the teachers' busy school programme. However, this loss of time does not seem to have been significant, yielding rich data
- The focus group interview with the pupils was conducted over two hours rather than two separate one hour sessions
- Only data from the three hour observation was analyzed, and therefore no discussion of the data collected during the one hour observations is included (see Chapter 6.3 File D, section d. Classroom interactions).

As regards the method of data analysis during the main study, this remains the same as that of the pilot study as it was described in chapter four (see Chapter 4.8). Grounded theory was used to analyze the data. The steps followed were:

The ideas from the data gathered from observation, focus group and interview (see Files D, E, F, G, H, and I) during the first stage main study were coded and thematic topics of the key ideas were identified. The thematic topics with related content were matched into groups. Finally, the relation of the groups shaped concepts. This process was developed on the basis of comparison and reflection and brought out two explanations of the research question (see Table

6.12). Once again the research question was: **How do 14-15 year-old pupils and their teachers in a new Greek arts specialist secondary school, perceive art learning in relation to the aims of the curriculum and teaching methods?**

### **6.3 File D: Analysis of data gathered from observing the third-year art class**

What follow is a summary of the first stage main study observations and some analysis of this using Merriam's (1988) organizational framework. As described in chapter five (see Chapter 5.2) this is a method of observation around five elements. The five elements are:

- a. The physical setting
- b. The participants
- c. Activities and interactions
- d. Conversation/ Classroom interactions
- e. Subtle factors.

As in the pilot study, introductory information, necessary to establish facts before proceed to the analysis of findings from File D, were given by the description offered from the elements a, b, c and e. Analysis procedures of data, that include firstly coding of ideas of pupils and teachers about teaching and learning in art curriculum started from the description offered by element c and continued throughout the description offered by the elements d and e. Analysis procedures, right after the end of the description offered by element e, continued with identifying of thematic topics derived from the coded ideas.

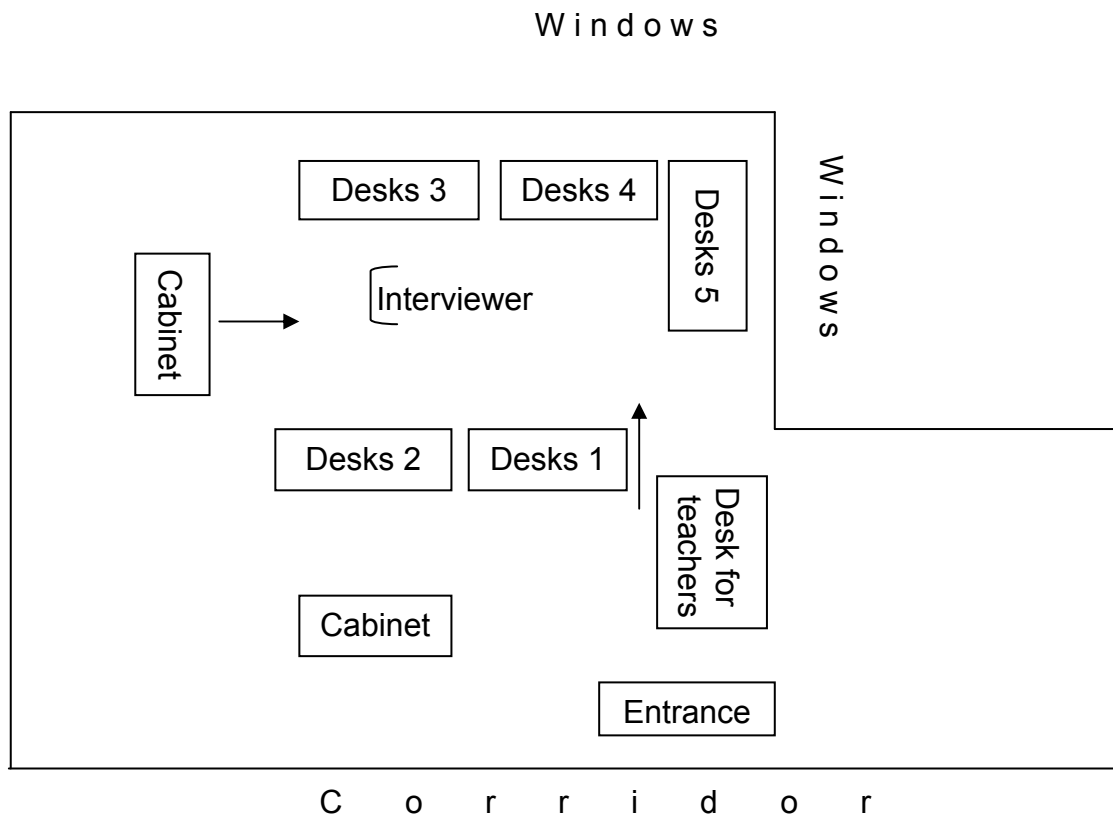
Even though the presentation of observation analysis is quite descriptive it was followed to offer a vivid insight into what is happening in the classroom (see Chapter 4.5 / Limitations of the research approach).

## Introductory information

### *a. The physical setting*

Unlike the pilot study, due to lack of available classroom space to accommodate all the classes, the observations were conducted in a vacant space of the corridor on the ground floor of the school building that was being used as a classroom (see Figure 6.1). The art class occupied the widest end of the corridor. Two wall-sized storage cabinets serve to separate that part of the corridor (see Figure 6.1). The cabinets are kept locked, though during classes pupils and teachers have access to them. This area of the corridor, even though it was not meant to be an art room, has two big bay windows which provide a lot of light.

The pupils sit at desks that are formed in five clusters of four to six pupils each. Free choice groups of pupils were assembled around the five clusters of desks. These groups were not directed by teachers but by pupils themselves. The arrangement of the desks covers most of the floor area with an empty space in the centre. On the surrounding walls there are objects for sketching still life, and smaller work tables with paints and sculpture made by the pupils. The desk shared by the teachers is to the right as you enter the corridor. The objects are not stored in a cluttered or messy condition, but it looks as if someone has made an effort to maintain them in good condition, and while pupils are free to take and use the materials, they return them to their place before the end of the class.



**Figure 6.1: The physical setting**

*b. The participants*

Eighteen pupils were present on the day of the observation. The class had one less pupil from the time I observed them during the pilot study the previous school year. The loss of a pupil is symptomatic of a larger problem of dwindling enrolment at the school. This is an issue widely discussed by parents and teachers, who put most of the blame on the extended time table of the arts school, which has forty-five lesson hours per week, while pupils attending regular secondary schools have only thirty-five hours per week. The pupils present in the art class have been attending this school since the first year.

Coding of data

*c. Activities and interactions*

During the observed sessions, both art teachers appeared to have control of the class. They managed that in a “relaxed way,” which means, without having to shout. All pupils paid attention. They listened to the teachers, asked questions,

interacted and participated during the lesson. Though pupils asked fewer questions and took fewer initiatives to speak during the first fifteen minutes of the lesson, this changed during the remaining three-quarters, when they became more active. The atmosphere in the classroom was quiet, yet they seemed to be focused (see Table 6.12, ideas 5 and 15).

However, six of the pupils announced at the beginning of the lesson that they had forgotten to bring their sketch books and colours. This was a problem. Ermis told them to take the materials they needed from the cabinet. Even though this caused some distraction in the classroom, the pupils proceeded quickly and quietly (see Table 6.12, idea 20). Ermis continued explaining the lesson to the pupils.

#### *d. Classroom interactions*

I have decided to present the first day's findings, because the data from the three lesson hours of observation provided richer data than the two hours of observation on the second and third day.

The topic of this week's lesson was the national flag as a visual image (see Table 6.12, idea 21). I arrived at the classroom with Ermis and Aphrodite about five minutes before the lesson was scheduled to start. The pupils began to trickle in several minutes after the first bell. I took a seat to the left of the classroom, behind two clusters of desks (see Figure 6.1). Ermis spent the first five minutes asking several pupils about their paintings.

*Ermis* (to Panagiotis, while the class was getting prepared): *"I've got some sketches for you to have a look..."*

*Panagiotis*: (opening a dossier of illustrations that the teacher had given him) *"Are they yours? (With enthusiasm)"*

*Ermis*: *"No, they are not mine, let's talk about them later..."* (see Table 6.12, idea 8), (see Table 6.12, idea 19).

Aphrodite spent this time checking and clearing away some of the materials from the cabinets. The pupils took five minutes to find a seat (they do not sit in the same place every time). They chatted quietly. Ermis asked the pupils for

their attention and got it, quite easily, in just five minutes (see Table 6.12, idea 20). While Aphrodite sat quietly, Ermis announced to the class that they would spend the week working on the Greek national flag. He asked pupils to work either individually or in groups and to think about how to construct a flag to be exhibited during an upcoming school ceremony marking Greek National Day (see Table 6.12, ideas 21 and 14).

*Ermis: "I suggest to use as regard medium, aquarelle or ink...both, you know are fine and require delicate use, they cannot be corrected. Pick up the appropriate brushes, think about and organize the scene first. Make sketches to see what works ..... you can use the effect of stencils here....when you need to define an area, they are appropriate" (see Table 6.12, ideas 16 and 3).*

One pupil, however, complained about being bored with doing the same things every year since primary school in order to mark National Day.

*Pupil: (bored) "National flags? Again... it's as if we're back in grade one!"*

*Ermis: "That's rather childish of you. Isn't it?"*

The pupil's comment and the teacher's response were used by the teacher to open up a conversation with the class and to develop pupils' further thinking (see Table 6.12, idea 6). The teacher exploited the pupil's spontaneous and insolent response to his call for researching on a topic that initially seemed to be boring and to offer no challenge or interest to the pupils to raise important issues about the task and help pupils express their own ideas (see Table 6.12, idea 2).

When the pupils rejected this idea, claiming there was no challenge in the topic, the teacher replied by inviting the whole class to reconsider the importance of the topic. He did this by introducing two new issues for further discussion: the value of autographic art and the meaning of symbols and colours (see Table 6.12, idea 7). Ermis lead a discussion by offering the class his expert knowledge and personal interpretation, which had the effect of fostering pupils' interest in developing their interpretations. In doing this, Ermis guided the learning process by outlining the following strategy and steps: defining the problem, in this case trying to understand how the national flag as a visual symbol works; and organizing the autographic processes, which are used in art to analyze the meaning of symbols (see Table 6.12, idea 14).



A discussion was initiated by Ermis<sup>6</sup>, who encouraged the pupils to research and think about the significance and value of autographic art works (see Dialogue 1) and the meaning of the symbols and colours (see Dialogue 2) as regards the visual representation of the Greek national flag.

After Ermis's intervention, a pupil posed a question about why each person had to paint a flag when they could just photocopy one. This led the class into a deep discussion, in which Ermis turned the pupil's question back to the class.

(Dialogue 1, part a):

(Ermis and pupils)

*Ioannis: "Why don't we just make a hundred photocopies of the flag?"*

*Ermis: "Isn't there something more special about autographic art? If it did not matter to us, we would simply go to a photocopier and make copies. Can you think of a reason why not pay to buy flags? (Meaning, purchase or photocopy flags instead of making them on their own). Why does it matter to be autographic, original? Does it make this art?" (see Table 6.12, ideas 6, 7, 9, 13 and 18).*

*Ioannis: "It's more personal and gives you a sense of familiarity. It is important to be authentic because it conveys a sense of familiarity" (see Table 6.12, ideas 3 and 10).*

Ermis asked the class why they thought people would prefer autographic work over copies. After listening to the pupils' ideas, Ermis said: "*Authentic works carry a person's gestures in contrast with products of technology that are void of human gestures.*" Ermis then referred to the invention of the camera, and stressed how liberating this invention had been for artists who could start focusing more on expressing their thoughts through symbols, meanings and emotions that did not require truth to their appearances.

(Dialogue 1 continues, part b):

(Ermis and pupils)

*Ermis: "Did you know that when the photograph was invented everyone at the time thought that painters would be out of work. This did not happen. On the contrary, the need to portray things through paintings developed even further... and painters began*

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<sup>6</sup> For facilitating the analysis procedures, some extracts are coded as numbered dialogues. Different numbers in dialogues signify different thematic content of each dialogue. Different parts into one dialogue signify different ideas presented in one dialogue.

*to convey emotion and symbolism through their work. When something is not necessary, no matter what happens, things can progress. Just because there are machines, this does not diminish the value of a human being. Even in the age of the robot, a person remains human (see Table 6.12, idea 2). And in the arts, this is what we strive to find – the human factor. The other reason is that by depicting a symbol which has been given to us either in a good or bad way, the symbol is a weapon in our hands... It is just like all the crimes against humanity that have been committed in the name of Jesus Christ, even though Christ didn't have anything to do with them. I would very much like to see the symbol that represents you. I would like to see you in each flag. You can do it using a ruler or you can do it in your own way, with your own innocence.”*

Ermis concluded by stating that *“the invention of photography liberates artists from the task of simply copying and turns their interest to the search for other qualities of visual art experience.”* Pupils were listening eagerly (see Table 6.12, idea 15). One pupil asked how many lines the Greek flag has and another pupil answered (see Table 6.12, idea 4). Ermis asked the class why the flag has nine lines (see Table 6.12, idea 13). One pupil guessed that it could be a secret code that only Greeks could break (see Table 6.12, ideas 4, 10 and 15). Ermis seemed pleased with the pupils. The teacher appeared enthusiastic when he answered the question about the nine lines (see Table 6.12, idea 19). According to the teacher, the nine lines stand for the phrase “freedom or death” (see Table 6.12, idea 17).

The ensuing discussion (Dialogue 2) revolved around the importance and use of symbols in visual art, in which Ermis structured the discussion of the topic by providing pupils with the opportunity to understand the concept of the Greek national flag in relation to culture, history and science (see Table 6.12, ideas 1, 9, 12 and 21). Ermis did this by asking pupils why the colours, blue and white, had been used in the Greek flag. Most of the pupils said they thought the colours had something to do with Greece's geographical location.

(Dialogue 2, part a):

(Ermis and pupils)

*Ermis: "What do you think the nine blue and white stripes are all about? Is there a specific reason why they have been used? Why must there be nine stripes in order to symbolise the phrase 'freedom or death'? And what does this mean? Is it just a catchy advertising slogan, some clever gimmick that someone came up with?"*

*Pupil: "It's a secret code."*

*Vassiliki: "It's because we were under rule."*

*Ermis: "It's bipolar – just like a battery has two poles, positive and negative. Just like life and death. Freedom means life. It means that freedom is so important that it takes the place of life... freedom is just as important as life. What do you think of that? Is there anyone who can tell us what the word freedom means? What is its ancient Greek root? Can anyone tell us? There's a whole world hidden in words, secret treasures buried deep inside. I am very satisfied with the symbol that talks about freedom. The word eleftheria (freedom in English) comes from "elefsis erotas", which means to love things and to become one with them. For example, we say that we have a love of painting. Love (erotas) steps from the ancient Greek verb 'airo' – something that you desire."*

*Ermis: "So why are the colours white and blue?"* As explained by Ermis, the choice of colour has to do with psychology. *"The light blue colour generates a positive and peaceful mood and a sense of freedom and free thinking."* He also discussed the colours in nature and concluded that colours send social messages and meanings. Pupils asked about other colours.

(Dialogue 2 continues, part b):

(Ermis and pupils)

*Anastasia: "Because the sea is blue and the sea gives you a feeling of freedom."*

*Ermis: "Have you ever thought that maybe colours have another affect on us? Have we ever thought 'Oh, that's a nice colour?' How did that affect us? Is it psychological? Is there a psychological reaction? Does anyone know anything about this? Chromatography answers many questions that even adults don't know the answers to.*

*There is a material that we usually paint with. It's metal oxide, copper (copper rust). This material can absorb the light. It can take in the light rays and give off a blue ray. White light and many rays enter the prism...*

*The light is a beam, a ghetto of rays. How is a rainbow made? Each ray of light does not run in the same direction. So the beam of light travels through the prism of light and then breaks off into various colours and appears like a projector on a screen. This is sort of how the orange light is created in a sunset. These colours, because they exist in our daily life, affect our psychology. Each colour has a different psychological affect on us and that is why they symbolize something. Like we said, the colour blue reminds us of the sea and the sky. The sky is blue when it is not raining, when the weather is good, and this lifts our spirits. So the psychological impact of clear skies creates a relaxing mood. The sea creates a sense of freedom. Is this true or false? So the colour blue represents reflection. What does the colour purple represent? The colour black reminds us of mourning and symbolises other things. Black is used at demonstrations. And this is why we have to carefully observe our life. Red was the colour used by empires. The Byzantine Empire had the colour purple. All the countries that waged wars..."*

*He continues: "The colour white symbolizes purity, wisdom (light), innocence, freedom, concentration. In religion, it is the colour of the resurrection. War campaigns used the colour red because there was a lot of blood. Thus blood is symbolized by the colour red. But blood is also the basic essence of life. This means that behind every war and each life lost, there is love and passion. So, life and death go hand in hand. What affect does green have on us? It reminds us of nature. We mainly use it to soothe children because it is at harmony with the natural environment. So each colour makes associations with the reality. It is time to think about your favourite colour - white, pink, turquoise, black, blue. The two colours (white and black) symbolize two people because they are opposites.*

*You can work freely enough as long as the two colours blue and white serve as your base. You can also use dark purple if you wish. The theme that you girls are doing is very good, I like it" (see Table 6.12, idea 12).*

*Ermis concluded: "If you want, you can combine several things together with colours. (The teacher is viewing the development of the flags by the children). Feel free to ask any questions. The colours are the result of electromagnetic rays. Wouldn't you like to make a rainbow in the room? In physics, there is a way to do this. It's the electric coil, which is like an electromagnet. It has four coils, and a metal ball suspended in the air. Apart from electromagnetic reflection, the colours remind us of situations in real life, like blood, smoke, the sea, the sky and the absence of colour. Through associations like this, the colours have an effect on each of us."*

Ioannis, as if she were thinking aloud, said that red is an aggressive colour and started to name countries with red-coloured flags (see Table 6.12, idea 4). Ermis responded by saying that Greece had not started any wars (see Table 6.12, idea 19). Another pupil, however, refuted this claim by pointing to Alexander the Great (see Table 6.12, ideas 1, 3, 4, 10 and 15). Ermis replied that the blue and white-striped flag is the flag of the Modern Greek nation, while red flags have mostly been used by emperors. The teacher gave an example of the Byzantine Empire (see Table 6.12, idea 19).

(Dialogue 2 continues, part c):

(Ermis and pupils)

*Pupil: "I have seen illustrations of red flags dating from the period of Alexander the Great..."*

*Ermis: "Yes and also the flags of the Byzantine era were red. The countries that waged wars usually had the colour red in their flag because there was a lot of blood. Blood is the essence of life... but we are talking about the national flag of Modern Greece."*

Ermis asked the pupils what they thought about the cross that is found on the Greek flag (see Table 6.12, ideas 6, 16, 13 and 11). Most of the pupils said it had to do with the fact that Greeks are Orthodox Christians. Ermis explained

that the cross is a symbol with deep meaning for many cultures even before Christianity. He added that the cross was a tool used for torture [(see Table 6.12, ideas 3, 4 and 6)] a. (This parenthesis was closed into brackets followed by an a, as later some parenthesis will be closed into brackets followed by a, b or c. This will serve the analysis procedures).

One pupil reasoned that the cross might symbolise the north, south, east and west [(see Table 6.12, ideas 3, 4 and 6)] b.

Ermis asked pupils if they could think of other national symbols and made specific reference to the Jewish star (see Table 6.12, ideas 13 and 18). Ermis asked if any pupil knew about the design and the meaning of the British flag (see Table 6.12, ideas 17, 13, 11 and 12). Ermis explained that the population of Britain consisted of three races and that this is why the design on the flag is an X crossed stripes. Later one pupil referred to the swastika, the symbol used by the Nazis during World War II. The pupil also said that the swastika was used as a decorative pattern in ancient Greek civilization (see Table 6.12, ideas 4, 10 and 15). In response, Ermis said that visual symbols have been used against humanity throughout history.

(Dialogue 2 continues, part d):

(Ermis and pupils)

*Ermis: "The more we know about symbols, the easier it is for us to use them. What does the cross mean?"*

*Pupil: "It's related with cross, the symbol of Christian Orthodox."*

*Vassiliki: "The cross symbolizes the cardinal points."*

*Ermis: "The crucifixion of Christ: the cross was a tool used for torture. Regardless of what the Romans did, the cross existed as a symbol before Christianity. The guillotine would only symbolize torture. The guillotine is not easy as a symbol. The cross symbolizes the four parts of the world (East-West-North-South). It symbolizes the world of humans (horizontal line) and the spiritual world (vertical line). The swastika shows the movement of things, because it seems like smoke on the rise... The English live in the southern part of the island and the Scottish in the northern part. The English ruled the Scottish and enslaved them. Both parts became one nation. The English had the cross of St. George and the Scottish had the cross of St. Andrew and the two were combined" (see Table 6.12, ideas 1 and 12).*

Ermis asked one pupil to summarise the discussion during the last fifteen minutes of class. By this time, all the pupils had finished their artwork. One pupil summarised by stating that they had discussed and analysed the national flag

theme, the concept of autographic visual works and the importance of the use of symbols in visual art (see Table 6.12, ideas 2 and 14).

*e. Subtle factors*

It should be pointed out that a classroom set in a corridor does not seem to do justice to the high level of attention paid by the pupils to the learning experience.

Thematic topics of ideas

The description of the first stage of the main study observations recorded an assortment of ideas of pupils and teachers about art learning in relation to the aims of the curriculum and teaching methods. These ideas were coded in the following topics.

*a. Establishing purposeful discussions about lessons' topic* (Table 6.12, idea 3)

*Ermis: "I suggest to use as regard medium, aquarelle or ink...both, you know are fine and require delicate use, they cannot be corrected. Pick up the appropriate brushes, think about and organize the scene first. Make sketches to see what works, you can use the effect of stencils here....when you need to define an area, they are appropriate" (see Table 6.12, ideas 16 and 3).*

Also the extracts coded as part a, of dialogue 1 and part c, of dialogue 2, justify this claim.

*b. Relating experience with a platform of ideas, concerns and values about human existence* (see Table 6.12, idea 2)

Part b, of dialogue 1 justifies this claim.

*c. Relating art with the context it is generated* (see Table 6.12, ideas 1, 16, 21)

All parts of dialogue 2, (parts a, b, c and d), justify this claim.

d. *Use analogies from different subjects for understanding art* (see Table 6.12, ideas 12 and 10)

All parts of dialogue 2, (parts a, b, c and d), justify this claim.

e. *Pupils personal and as a group interest for participation* (see Table 6.12, ideas 4, 5, 15 and 10)

Part b, of dialogue 1 and parts c and d of dialogue 2, evidence such incidents.

f. *Teachers supportive role* (see Table 6.12, ideas 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20):

- i. particularly, the incidents coded as ideas 7, 8, 9, 11 and 13 of table 6.12 evidence teacher's commitment to the idea of increasing pupils' willingness to participate, discuss ideas and achieve self-respect
- ii. the incidents coded as ideas 18 and 17 of table 6.12 evidence teachers' ability making choices for initiating the inquiry and for defining and solving problems
- iii. furthermore, the incident coded as idea 20 of table 6.12 evidences teachers' readiness to deal effectively with problematic behaviour
- iv. finally, the incident coded as idea 6 of table 6.12 involves teachers' scaffolding pupils, to think more deeply.

g. *The use of a well structured lesson plan as regards planning and monitoring* (see Table 6.12, idea 14)

Ermis announced to the class that pupils would spend the week working on the Greek national flag. He asked pupils to work either individually or in groups and to think about how to construct a flag to be exhibited during an upcoming school ceremony marking Greek National Day (see Table 6.12, ideas 21 and 14). And later, the following incident justifies a well structured lesson plan: Ermis guided the learning process by outlining the following strategy and steps:

- i. defining the problem, (in this case trying to understand how the national flag works as a visual symbol) and
- ii. organizing the autographic processes, which are used to analyze the meaning of symbols (see Table 6.12, idea 14).

#### Summary of File D data analysis

To sum up, during observation, the art learning targets were based on:

- the establishment of purposeful discussions about lesson topic
- relating the experience with a platform of ideas, concerns and values about human existence
- relating art with the context it is generated
- the use of analogies from different subjects for understanding art
- fostering pupils personal and as a group interest for participation
- the development of teachers supportive role
- the development of a well structured lesson plan.

#### **6.4 File E: Analysis of data gathered during the focus group interview with the pupils**

The focus group interview was conducted during two continuous periods and not as originally scheduled. This was due to the second week being reorganized for a special event. The focus group generated a rich assortment of ideas about art education and identified the following aims based on pupils' perception of art as a subject at their school.

What follows is a list of thematic topics that emerged either by the similar content of the ideas coded or by the strong emphasis of pupil on an idea.

- a. Developing keen participation, individually and as a class unit, in purposeful discussions (see Table 6.12, ideas 3, 4 and 5)

Anastasia reporting her personal interest said: *"I asked about the meaning of other countries' national flag"* (see Table 6.12, idea 4). Later she added: *"We have these talks, with our ideas that make some issues more clear"* (see Table 6.12, ideas 3 and 5). Pupils underline the significance of understanding concepts related to



the lesson topic, such as authorship and autographic process. They mentioned the importance of understanding the concept of authorship for understanding an art work (see Table 6.12, ideas 2, 3 and 4).

*Ioannis: "Knowing about the authorship of an art work can help to understand its cultural context, to understand a specific way of life, and the related thinking and feelings."*

*Ioannis said: "In contrast to visual art generated by technology, art as an autographic product makes me feel more proud and satisfied with myself, because of the kind of processes that are involved in making it are more profound than the process involved in a computer programme" [(see Table 6.12, idea 2)]a, and idea 3)]b.*

b. Relating art with the context it is generated (see Table 6.12, idea 1)

Panagiotis provided an explanation about how the cultural context of art influences an art work. He said: "A context is an identity that dictates to an art work things like the meaning and value of symbols, as well as ethical, cultural and historical values" [(see Table 6.12, idea 1)] a; (The parenthesis was closed into brackets followed by an a for serving the needs of the analysis of the data. Later on brackets followed by b, c and d will appear).

*Interviewer: "Why is it important to learn about the symbolism of the flag? Why is it something that we should learn?"*

*Vassiliki added: "People also thought differently in different times and they believed different things about symbols and values in different times." [(see Table 6.12, idea 1)] c.*

*Anastasia: ".....And in each era in which it belongs. It draws upon the history of the country. It is in their identity and their daily life" (see Table 6.12, ideas 1).*

*Vassiliki added: "We tried to understand how national flags reflect the history of a country, as well as other factors like culture" [(see Table 6.12, idea 1)] b.*

Anastasia said that factors like culture, perception, and geographic position influence a work of art [(see Table 6.12, idea 1)] d.

c. Establishing research on a platform of ideas, concerns and values about human existence (see Table 6.12, idea 2)

An interesting discussion emerged related to the significance of autographic processes in art. Previously, it has been mentioned what Ioannis thinks about autographic process. Furthermore pupils added:

*Interviewer: "What does an autographic work involve? What is it about this process?"*

*Anastasia: “The character of the artist. If he wants to make something, he can see himself in it. It is made by a person, not a machine” [(see Table 6.12, idea 2)] b.*

*Ioannis: “A person injects his feelings in it, while a machine does not have feelings” [(see Table 6.12, idea 2)] c.* Finally speaking about the symbolism of the flag Anastasia offered an interesting view. She said that [the symbolism of the national flags] *“draws upon a people’s identity and the ethos of an artist”* (see Table 6.12, idea 2).

d. Using analogies from different subjects (see Table 6.12, idea 12)

Lastly, the focus group mentioned the importance of including views and thoughts from different disciplinary areas in discussions. For example, Vassiliki said: *“It’s all one,”* meaning an approach to learning that links different disciplines (see Table 6.12, idea 12).

#### Summary of File E data analysis

The focus group offered valuable insights into pupils’ understanding of how they experience learning art. Pupils related learning to purposeful discussions (see Table 6.12, idea 3) about the cultural context in which a work is situated (see Table 6.12, idea 1). They highlighted the significance of establishing their research on a platform of ideas so that they could understand concepts and values in relation to human nature (see Table 6.12, idea 2). They also spoke of the significance of learning art by engaging individual as well as group interests (see Table 6.12, ideas 4 and 5). Finally, pupils related learning to the use of analogies from different subjects (see Table 6.12, idea 12).

#### **6.5 File F: Analysis of data gathered during an interview with Vassiliki**

The interview with Vassiliki provided valuable insights into the role of interactions in the process of learning art. These interactions regard the following:

a. Purposeful discussions (see Table 6.12, idea 3), that relate art with the context it is generated (see Table 6.13, idea 1)

Vassiliki spoke specifically about opportunities for learning which arise from purposeful discussion between pupils and teachers about the lesson's topic. She repeatedly used the following phrase: *"We discussed..."* (see Table 6.12, idea 3). Later she said that she thought about what they were talking about: *"Later on I rethink all the things that have been said"* (see Table 6.12, idea 3). Later she added: *"We tried to understand how national flags reflect the history of a country, as well as other factors like culture"* (see Table 6.12, idea 1).

b. Keen participation of pupils, individual and as a class unit (see Table 6.12, ideas 4, 5)

Vassiliki believes that learning is based on the participation of the pupils and the teachers in a process of discussing and negotiating ideas. She stated that they not only listen, observe record and imitate, but also negotiate and discuss ideas. In particular she reported listening to ideas and questions asked by others (see Table 6.12, idea 5). She referred to the method she followed for understanding the idea and the theme which was being taught, saying that the discussions were based on a series of questions posed by the pupils and the entire group. *"I ask questions"* (see Table 6.12, idea 4) and *"I think about the questions that others ask"* (see Table 6.12, idea 5). She described the process which engages pupils' personal interest in the formation of ideas in relation to how a theme is taught: *"We were all thinking about the symbols of flags and how they relate to a country's history"* (see Table 6.12, idea 5) and *"We were all thinking about..."* (see Table 6.12, ideas 4 and 5). From these comments, according to Vassiliki, the pupils' role in the learning process is based on a process of interacting with others and communicating their views, all of which can be considered a fertile ground for pupils' contribution in the construction of ideas.

c. Teachers' supportive role (see Table 6.12, idea 6)

Vassiliki also described the characteristics of the teachers' role in the learning process. Specifically, she said that the teachers listened to what they discussed and asked them to think about it and to explain their ideas (see Table 6.12, idea

6). She repeatedly used the following phrases: *“The teacher told us about...”* (see Table 6.12, idea 6).

#### Summary of File F data analysis

The interview with Vassiliki revealed that she relates learning art to purposeful discussions about ideas and opportunities to express views (see Table 6.12, idea 3) about art and other disciplines (see Table 6.12, idea 1) and that the learning experience in art demands both the participation of pupils and teachers (see Table 6.12, ideas 4, 5 and 6).

#### **6.6 File G: Analysis of data gathered during the interview with Anastasia**

The analysis of the data in File G offered valuable insights as regards this pupil’s perception of the learning process. It is interesting to note how the pupil understands her participation in the learning process in art. The following thematic topics were identified:

a. Developing personal and as a class unit interest for the lesson (see Table 6.12, ideas 4 and 5)

Anastasia frequently repeated the verbs *to listen*, *to ask* and *to think*; she said: *“I listened with interest to the teacher’s arguments about the selection of the particular media and the techniques for producing our national flags... I was all ears”* (see Table 6.12, idea 4). Anastasia also underline the classes’ interest for the lesson that progress her thinking. She said that:

*“More minds are better than one”* (see Table 6.13, idea 5). She added: *“I listened to what the teachers asked us to do and to what they said when relating the design of the Greek flag with its meaning and the ideas about the symbols of its design and the historic significance of the national flag of Greece”* (see Table 6.12, ideas 4 and 6). She added: *“I asked questions continuously”* (see Table 6.12, idea 4).

Based on what Anastasia stated about how she sees her role as a pupil, I came to the conclusion that she has developed a personal interest in the art

experience related to the learning theme of the lesson hour. She stressed her feelings of enjoyment at being able to explore learning and working in a group.

b. Experience teachers' supportive role (see Table 6.12, ideas 6, 13, 15, 16 and 18)

When asked what the teacher does during the class to facilitate the learning, she said that the art teachers listen and ask questions in order to encourage deeper thinking:

*Anastasia: "The teachers trigger my thinking. Good teachers are very important (see Table 6.12, idea 6). They work to put us on the right path. The teachers we have this year help us develop our critical thinking through daily analysis in order to better understand the lessons" (see Table 6.12, idea 6).*

*Interviewer: "Can you explain this more? How do they trigger your thinking?"*

*Anastasia: "Teachers provide the class with suitable examples drawn from history, culture, science and music (see Table 6.12, idea 1) in order to help us better understand the meaning of the national flag" (see Table 6.12, ideas 3 and 6).*

[This statement of Anastasia can also be used as evidence that justifies thematic topic c: "Developing purposeful discussions" see below].

Anastasia described one of the teachers as "*an actor who plays a role when he speaks*" in the classroom. She also said that the teacher stimulated her thinking and was able to anticipate what the pupils would ask him, referring to the incidents recorded during observation and coded as follows: (see Table 6.12, ideas 6, 15, 16, 13 and 18), all of which explains why the teacher is always ready for the discussion and is eager to provide explanations and examples (see Table 6.12, idea 6). In addition, she stressed several times how the teachers facilitated thinking about the learning theme. "*The teachers used appropriate references, comments and criticism, they also gave technical advice for the work that was appropriate*" she said, adding that she is inspired by the rapport that Ermis has with his pupils (see Table 6.12, ideas 6, 13, 14 and 18).

Anastasia described the learning process as more of a conversation between them and the teacher than a presentation about a learning theme:

*"The presentation took place throughout the lesson, even though it really wasn't a presentation, but rather a discussion about the flag. We basically discussed this topic for the entire lesson" (see Table 6.12, idea 3).*

c. Developing purposeful discussions that relate art with the context it is generated and with ideas and values about human existence (see Table 6.12, ideas 1, 2 and 3)

Anastasia said she enjoyed the process of asking the teachers and listening to her classmates ask questions about the meaning of symbols that appear in the design of flags from other countries:

*“I asked about the meaning of other countries’ national flags (see Table 6.12, ideas 1 and 4) and I was immersed in thought about this theme, not only during the period of this lesson hour, but over the following days. And this happens very often” (see Table 6.12, idea 2).*

*Interviewer: “Do discussions take place in every subject?”*

*Anastasia: “Yes, discussions like this take place in nearly every subject.”*

Anastasia gave the following example: *“I have been thinking about the concepts of symbols and the meaning of authorship in art and how this influences art works”* and stressed that this type of thinking extended outside the class: *“My thoughts are continuously changing because of these discussions”* (see Table 6.12, idea 3), and *“these [questions] help me to shape an opinion and to come up with new ideas and questions (see Table 6.12, idea 3), I try to answer every related question”* (see Table 6.12, idea 3). She also said that learning is facilitated by the interactions and participation of her group, and that this had inspired her thinking. In her view, the most important part of the learning process was that the more she thought about the theme, the more interesting it became. *“I was often immersed in thoughts,”* she said, *“and for a topic that I considered – at least before the discussion – to be boring and not the least bit challenging”* (see Table 6.12, idea 2). This occurred when the pupils were encouraged to take into consideration historical and cultural concepts that are related to the national flag.

#### Summary of File G data analysis

The ideas expressed during the interview with Anastasia provided valuable insight into how she understands the learning process and the role of her teachers in this process. The pupil argued that her thinking is continuously being constructed during her art lessons. This is achieved by:

- developing purposeful discussions (see Table 6.12, idea 3), that relate art with the context it is generated and with ideas and values about human existence (see Table 6.12, ideas 1 and 2)
- developing pupils personal interest (see Table 6.12, idea 4) and as a class unit (see Table 6.12, idea 5)
- experiencing teachers supportive role (see Table 6.12, ideas 6, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 18).

## **6.7 File H: Analysis of data gathered during the interview with Ermis**

The analysis of the data from the interview with Ermis sheds light on his perception of the learning process in art. The reason why I decided to present the analysis of the interview with Ermis after my observations and interviews with the focus group and Vassiliki and Anastasia is because I think it is the most interesting part.

Ermis identified a number of learning objectives. These are outlined below.

### **a. Theorize about arts (see Table 6.12, idea 11)**

In the beginning Ermis said that he sets the same learning objective for all his classes, regardless of the year class he is teaching: *“My aim is to combine the learning objectives about media with a philosophical approach in thinking and learning about art”* (see Table 6.12, idea 11). Elsewhere he continued:

*“I have one goal and it is for pupils to learn about a material and to gain a deeper understanding of the theoretical background”* (see Table 6.12, ideas 11 and 14).

Ermis continued by expressing his belief that *“When pupils manage to capture what they see, they enlarge their potential capacity for thinking and understanding new things”* (see Table 6.12, idea 11).

Ermis concluded by saying that one of the most important methods he uses is that of listening to his pupils’ ideas and questions (see Table 6.12, idea 9). He uses this in a collaborative way to form the groundwork for deep philosophical discourse, so as to understand art (see Table 6.12, idea 11).

According to Ermis, the most important purpose is to assist his pupils to explain philosophical issues concerning art and to discuss these ideas (see Table 6.12, idea 11).

b. Pupils overcoming insecurity and inadequacy of expression (see Table 6.12, idea 7)

Ermis mentioned that *“It is rather challenging to successfully assist pupils to overcome their fear of inadequacy and insecurity. This is a common fear among artists.”* He combats this fear by showing pupils they have to continuously strive for improvement and that this is what they must focus on (see Table 6.12, idea 7).

(Dialogue 3):

In the content of dialogue 3, Ermis further mentioned:

*“My aspiration for them is to have them processing and analyzing, because this is the state of modern art at the moment”* (see Table 6.12, ideas 7 and 11).  
*Ermis continued: “Look, I had the opportunity to show you two examples from which you may draw ideas from and attain a method of analysis. Because I truly believe that once you have mastered how to use colours and design, you immediately have an urge to create and to make new things. The flag, for me, was a symbolic attempt to portray ourselves on paper and to show what represents us”* (see Table 6.12, idea 7).

c. Teachers foster communication of ideas (see Table 6.12, ideas 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 1 and 18)

*Ermis said: “We have passed the stage of the autistic artist, who creates masterpieces that cannot be deciphered. Art now demands a social role, which, if you want, can also turn into a social lesson, because even education is under pressure. That is why when I manage to foster a conversation it is very interesting and most of all dynamic”* (see Table 6.12, idea 10).

Ermis said the process of communicating and interacting with others is an important educational strategy. He also stressed the importance of verbal communication, which the following dialogue confirms (see Table 6.12, idea 10):



(Extract from dialogue 3):

*Ermis: “As I said, on the one hand I want to know, but on the other hand I don’t want to know. The process of communication is a package of ideas directed to others. This means that you strive for dialogue, as opposed to a closed monologue. You want to discuss with your pupils, testing their understanding and what they have understood and what they cannot express in words. Words are not your first concern because communication is richer if it is through images and gestures. This is multifaceted knowledge. First you must decide what the child has understood, which is reasonably easy to understand. Then, you have to put a problem before them so that they can offer ideas and theories about what you are doing (see Table 6.12, ideas 13, 17 and 18). So, it’s all about engaging them in discussion, forming a theoretical framework and the ability to read the differences in design that each one has produced. Marika created an incredible decorative design and she told me that she wanted to change it because it had no potential. And I told her that potential is for children who do something different and that her design is very nice. But because it doesn’t have potential, it doesn’t mean that we always have to work this way. If we know where a place is, if we want to we can get there, as long as we know the way.”*

Ermis said: *“The underlying aim is to uncover and understand a platform of ideas and values that can serve as a strategic guide for mapping out the learning experience in the arts”* (see Table 6.12, ideas 10).

Ermis explained that his aim was to assist pupils to search for answers in order to understand the symbols and cultural and social meanings behind the flag (see Table 6.12, ideas 1 and 16) and to “read” pieces of art (here the visual image of the national flag).

*“From here, it is easy for us to do some basic chromatology – to discover the psychological affect that colours have on people and to uncover the hidden symbolism. For example, it is not just that the cross is a Christian symbol, but that it is a very well known symbol which man has chosen in order to show things through it. And we can even analyze words (see Table 6.12, idea 10). There are words that we must know where they came from”* (see Table 6.12, idea 12).

He also said that, when pupils ask questions (see Table 6.12, ideas 10 and 15) about the various visual art problems which arise from the learning process, questions like how to place the words on the poster, this was an opportunity to discuss issues relating to perspective by introducing pupils to the significance of wider issues that include historical meanings, as well as philosophical and ideological meanings. In other words, it is an opportunity for him to frame the theme in a wider theoretical context about art.

He stressed the need for pupils to become capable of communicating with others, to participate in society and experience the world through their art (see

Table 6.12, idea 10). Ermis: *“Indeed, I said things that I liked. I could talk to children and did not leave tired. I left pleased.”*

d. Teachers responsive role (by being friendly and supportive, by being serious) (see Table 6.12, ideas 8, 9 and 16)

The teacher argued in favor of the teaching methods that he used, and spoke about how he perceives his role as a classroom teacher. Ermis stressed the desire to be close to the pupils, describing his relationship with them as “friendly” and “familiar.” He also said that this type of relationship is something he tries to achieve, not only with his pupils, but with everybody.

(Extract from dialogue 3):

*Ermis: “I have two methods. One is to appeal to the children, and, if necessary, to do cartwheels in order to grab their attention. Being friendly is a basic part of my approach. I don’t feel that what I do works for everyone. My personality is this way. By being friendly, you show that you are on their side. This is very important in our day and in our society. This is something that has been unfortunately lost – there is a distance” (see Table 6.12, idea 8).*

*He added: “I want pupils to pay attention when I have something interesting to say... rather than have them be absent-minded and their mind drifting.” He also said that it is all about finding one’s rhythm in the learning process, which he described as a series of “crescendos and rests” (see Table 6.12, idea 9).*

*Ermis: “When they understand that what we have to say is something serious and that it demands their attention, they are quiet. It is horrible if the teacher overburdens them by lecturing non-stop from the beginning of the lesson straight to the end. It is important to take a break in everything that you do. I don’t believe in extremes, but in a well-balanced intensity and relaxation - just like rhythm in music. When they understand that something’s going on, they’re with you” (see Table 6.12, ideas 9 and 16). I mean that they’re all eyes and ears, that I have their complete attention and their concentration. This is very important, to achieve a rhythm with the children.”*

Ermis stressed the importance of challenging pupils. This is something he said he tries to do by showing the relationship between philosophical issues and making art. He also mentioned his desire to show pupils he is serious about what he is doing, not only about art and art education, but everything in general: *“You have to show them that you are serious because you have something to say that is worth hearing” (see Table 6.12, ideas 8 and 16).*

## Summary of File H data analysis

Based on the range of topics discussed during the interview with Ermis, it is clear that he believes that the main objectives of the learning process in art are:

- to theorize about art (see Table 6.12, idea 11)
- to overcome, the pupils, their insecurity and inadequacy of expression (see Table 6.12, idea 7)
- to foster, the teachers, the communication of ideas (see Table 6.12, ideas 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 1 and 18) and
- to develop, the teachers, responsible role (see Table 6.12, ideas 8, 9 and 16).

### **6.8 File I: Analysis of data gathered during the focus group with Ermis and Aphrodite**

The data from the focus group interview with Ermis and Aphrodite was collected on the final day of the first stage of the main study.

Although most of the ideas that were discussed had already been stated by the pupils and the teachers in previous sessions, I will now draw attention to the thematic topic that engaged both teachers' interest during the interview.

a. Pupils interest to communicate ideas (see Table 6.12, idea 10)

Ermis spoke about what learning in art involves, and emphasized the development of thinking skills in relation to facilitating ideas (see Table 6.12, idea 10):

*"My concern is to teach within a learning frame with thinking choices and perspectives available." He continued: "...this needs, processing ideas and communication. Children need to enter into a dialogue, that's why we give them a problem to solve and then they begin to think and process ideas." Aphrodite added: "A conversation looks for possible answers by the pupils...we try to allow pupils to look for possible answers" (see Table 6.12, idea 10).*

b. Teachers interest to improve pupils in overcoming insecurity and inadequacy of expression (see Table 6.12, idea 7)

*Aphrodite said: "We try to help the pupils be bold with stating their views. We foster discussions so pupils claim their views."*

Ermis, supporting the same idea, repeated a comment he made during interview (see File Hb) about today's demand for the social role of art as opposed to the stage of the autistic artist.

### **6.9 Summary of the analysis of the first stage of the main study - Files D, E, F, G, H, I**

During the first stage of the main study, the pupils and teachers articulated a web of ideas regarding their perceptions about art learning in the setting of a particular type of secondary school (see Table 6.12). This is a summary of all the key ideas of the thematic topics that have been identified through observations, the focus group interviews with the pupils and the two teachers, the two separate interviews with two pupils and the interview with Ermis.

Pupils and teachers have related the experience of art to the following:

- the understanding of the context in which art is generated (see table 6.12, ideas 1, 12 and 21)
- a platform of ideas, concerns and values about human existence (see table 6.12, idea 2)
- purposeful discussions and dialogues, in contrast to closed monologues, for generating deeper thoughts, exchanging and reflecting on ideas (see table 6.12, ideas 3 and 10)
- pupils and teachers having a keen interest in participation (see table 6.12, ideas 4, 5 and 15)
- teachers using a supportive role that empowers pupils' self respect, development of thinking and knowledge, commitment to realizing the learning objective, ability to communicate thinking, to understand and to interpret concepts and ideas about art (see table 6.12, ideas 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20)

- well organized lesson (see table 6.12, ideas 14 and 10)
- use of analogies from different subjects for understanding and theorizing about art (see table 6.12, ideas 11 and 12).

## **6.10 Grouping the key ideas that have emerged from the first stage of the main study**

What will follow now, after the completion of the process of coding the key ideas from the data, is the grouping of key ideas and the thematic topics throughout Files D to I based on their content. Later, the creation of broader groups of similar content will justify the generation of concepts and explains how the process of data analysis in this stage resulted in seven groups of ideas.

These seven groups concern:

- communication of ideas
- understanding of the context in which art is generated
- understanding of concepts related to the nature of human existence
- pupils interest in participating in the learning process (individually and as a group)
- teachers inspiring role
- well kept classroom rules
- well organized lesson plan.

My interpretation of the data will now be categorized into seven groups with the aim of clarifying the research topic of my study.

### 6.10.1 The first group: Communicating ideas; Learning through active participation and discussion

Both pupils and teachers expressed beliefs that learning art involves the active discussion of ideas (see Table 6.12, group i). Ermis (File H) signaled the importance of learning to discuss ideas in art, which involves: *“communication of a package of ideas, analysis of words, striving for dialogue as opposed to closed monologue, the testing of understanding problems and issues”* (see Table 6.12, idea 10), and *“the interrelation of analogies from different subjects for mapping out the learning experience in art”* (see Table 6.12, idea 12). He pointed out the need for

pupils to be able to communicate through participation in discussion (see Table 6.12, idea 10). This social feature of learning in art has become more prominent in post-modern culture, which is highlighted by the following comment from Ermis: *“The autistic artist created masterpieces that he/she could not decipher”* (see Table 6.12, idea 10).

By *“communicating ideas”* Ermis is referring to the importance of the following:

- discussing a cluster of ideas
- dialogical processes as opposed to closed monologues, thus improving pupils’ capacity to participate in society
- using teaching strategies that challenge pupils to think more deeply and therefore enable them to better understand problems and issues
- using analogies from different subjects
- developing pupils’ ability to become active participants.

Although Ermis spent a considerable amount of time promoting the significance of *“discussing ideas”* for art education, this emphasis needs to be balanced with incidents that were observed while he was teaching. On one occasion (see Dialogue 1) he refers to the values of autographic art, which is a crucial issue for discourse of art today (see Table 6.12, ideas 3 and 10), and by extension art education.

Moreover, in other classroom interactions (see Dialogue 2, parts a, c and d) Ermis engages in a purposeful discussion that aims to enable the pupils to understand a network of symbols and ideas, as condensed in the discussion of the Greek flag (see Table 6.12, ideas 3 and 10). The discussions incorporate references to Greek history and literature, and the use of analogies from different subjects, as the references are not just “decorative” but contribute to the learning process by the significance of values for the subject (see Table 6.12, idea 12). Therefore, when Ermis emphasizes the importance of *“discussing ideas,”* the aim is to exchange ideas in a wide range of disciplines. In the focus group interview, the pupils’ also emphasized the importance of *“discussing ideas”* for their art education. Anastasia, (File E) said: *“We have these talks, with our ideas, that make some issues more clear”* [(see Table 6.12, idea

3)]a. More generally, the focus group gave support to the significance of discussing ideas in art lessons, which is apparently the way they argue about the importance of the discussions relating to the significance of autographic process [(see Table 6.12, idea 3)]b.

During the focus group interviews, the pupils also argued about the use of concepts from different disciplines. This process facilitates their discussion of ideas in art learning and it can be demonstrated in practice [(see Table 6.12, idea 1) a, b, c, d]. Thus, for the pupils, it can be argued that the issue of “discussing ideas” means exchanging ideas from a range of disciplines with the goal of clarifying concepts and problems.

All that has been mentioned in relation to “discussing ideas” during the focus group interviews with the pupils, the teachers’ interview and the class observation can be cross-related with the statements made by Vassiliki and Anastasia during the interviews. Vassiliki in particular said that she has participated in discussions in class: *“I try to think about all these questions”* (that she and other pupils posed) (see Table 6.12, idea 3). It can be assumed from this that the content of these questions was meaningful and interesting for her.

Furthermore, Anastasia said that the classroom discussions helped her further thinking: *“My thoughts are continuously changing because of these discussions.”* She continues by saying that the questions she asks help her shape an opinion and come up with new ideas and questions (see Table 6.12, idea 3). To conclude, the pupil referred as follows to the content of the discussions that helped her approach the learning theme: *“Teachers provide class with suitable examples, drawn from history, culture, science and music in order to help us understand better during the discussion about the national flag.”*

To end with the group of ideas which relates the art learning experience with the discussion of ideas, I add Ermis’s and Aphrodite’s references to this argument (made during the focus group interviews). Ermis was arguing about the pupils’ need to enter into a dialogue. He states his concern in the learning process: *“teaching within a learning frame with available choices and perspectives”* (see Table 6.12, idea 10). Finally, Aphrodite, arguing for the class’s need for conversation,

gives information about the content of the conversations; she emphasizes the importance of making clearer the meaning of the topics, so pupils can approach them better and even develop them.

The table below summarizes the ideas from the pupils and teachers about “communicating ideas” in relation to the visual art learning experience.

<b>“Communicating ideas” includes:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dialogue processes (as opposed to closed monologue)</li><li>• A network of ideas available for pupils to develop in the classroom</li><li>• A testing process for understanding problems and issues</li><li>• Interrelating analogies from different subjects</li><li>• Participation in society</li><li>• References and use of suitable examples</li><li>• Clarification of concepts</li><li>• Shape of new ideas and questions</li></ul>

**Table 6.5: Group i**

#### 6.10.2 The second group: Understanding the context in which art is generated

Ermis, during the interview, when referring to the learning theme of national flag, underlines the importance of discussing ideas in relation to the historical, cultural and social background of the national flag (see Table 6.12, idea 1) for a better understanding. He said: *“My objective is to assist pupils to search for answers, in order to understand the symbols and cultural and social meanings behind this work of art (referring to the national flag).”* What Ermis said during the interview is supported by an incident which occurred during the observed class: Ermis, inspired by an upcoming school ceremony marking the Greek National Day, carried out a brief dialogue with a pupil who tried to understand the relation between the historical background and the creation of the visual image of the national flag (see Table 6.12, ideas 1 and 21). In addition, later in dialogue 2, part d, during the observation, Ermis underlines the importance of understanding the historical and cultural background, as in the formation of the national symbols of other nations such as England (see Table 6.12, idea 1).

The pupils also signaled the importance of relating the learning art experience with the context in which art is generated. During the interview, Vassiliki explained the development of the lesson topic. She underlines the references



which were made during the learning process about *“the history and the culture so as to understand better the national flag as a visual representation.”* She said: *“We tried to understand how national flags reflect the history of a country, as well as other factors like culture”* [(see Table 6.12, idea 1)] b. In addition Anastasia mentioned in the interview that she enjoyed the process of asking teachers and listening to her classmates’ questions about the meaning of the symbols which appear in the design of national flags of other countries. She stated: *“I asked about the meaning of other countries’ national flags”* (see Table 6.12, idea 1).

Furthermore, during the focus group with the pupils, similar references were made by them about the significance of approaching the lesson’s topic via the historical, cultural context. Panagiotis stated: *“A context is an identity that dictates to an artwork things like meaning and values of symbols, as well as ethical, cultural and historical values”* [(see Table 6.12, idea 1)]a. Vassiliki also underlines the importance of studying the cultural context of the national flag for its better understanding. She said: *“People also thought differently in past times and their thinking and beliefs about symbols and values were different”* (see Table 6.12, idea 1)] c. In the same vein, Anastasia added her opinion: *“Conditions like culture, perception, geographic positions are factors that influence a visual art work”* [(see Table 6.12, idea 1)] d.

The group of ideas that signifies the importance of understanding the context within which art is generated in the process of the visual art learning experience (see, group ii) was further supported by pupils and teachers with their choice to integrate knowledge from learning domains, enabling a better understanding of the art work (the national flag) (see Table 6.12, idea 12). To begin with, during the observation, it appeared that Ermis used an insightful learning approach for discussing the lesson topic with the pupils in particular, dialogue 2, in part a, integrates knowledge from Greek literature when analyzing the powerful meaning of the word *“freedom”* and the teacher’s attempt to decode the meaning of the flag’s symbols with metaphorical examples so that the pupils could understand its history and meaning. In File H, in the interview with Ermis, when discussing how the lesson topic is developed, he made a reference which supports the argument for of using analogies from different subjects, stating that a linguistic analysis helps to clarify meanings which are difficult for pupils (see

Table 6.12, idea 12). In addition, during the observation sessions, Ermis made references to chemistry and history to explain the use of colours in the national flag and to open possibilities on pupils thinking (see Table 6.12, idea 12).

The teacher use analogies from other subjects and the integration of knowledge from other domains. In parts c and d of dialogue 2, he relates the history of the countries with the symbols these countries or nations use for the design of their national flags and selection of national symbols (see Table 6.12, idea 12).

The whole of dialogue 2, where the class discuss the meaning of the symbols which are used in the Greek flag, offered an in-depth linguistic and cultural analysis and interpretation. There is evidence of the use of analogies from different subjects employed by Ermis and Aphrodite, in which the rules of history, language, science, religion and ethics provide pupils with more complex and meaningful understanding in their interpretation of symbols. Dialogue 2 helped pupils understand the idea that the visual art experience demands access to a multi-referenced system of domains, from where ideas and concepts can lead to further thinking for a better understanding of the art experience.

This is confirmed by statements from the pupils during the focus group and the individual interviews. During the focus group discussions, the pupils talk about the importance of the references which are made during the learning process, more specifically about the context of the art work [(see Table 6.12, idea 1) a, b, c and d] and the way in which this illuminated the historical, cultural and ethical values of the national flags. This suggests that the learning process integrated domains of knowledge for the better understanding of the topic. In the individual interviews, the pupils also referred to procedures that can be developed within the framework of interrelating analogies from different subjects, so as to understand art work. Vassiliki (see File F) said that the class tried to approach the visual representation of national flags by understanding their historical and cultural context (see Table 6.12, idea 1). She underlines the importance of approaching a lesson topic through the cross-subject approach. Anastasia (see File G) commented: *“The examples were from history, culture, science, and music in order to help us understand easier, during our discussion about the national flag”* (see Table 6.12, idea 1).

The table below summarizes the pupils' and teachers' ideas about the importance of understanding art's context in the art learning experience.

<b>“Understanding the context in which art is generated” includes:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understanding symbols and the cultural, social and historical meanings of art works</li><li>• Using of analogies knowledge from different subjects</li></ul>

**Table 6.6: Group ii**

### 6.10.3 The third group: Understanding concepts related to the nature of human existence

These concepts refer to different characteristic ways of human acting and thinking. The concepts I will discuss refer to the following:

- (a) maintaining a positive attitude towards the development of thinking
- (b) striving for improvement (overcoming insecurity and inadequacy of expression)
- (c) signifying human potential
- (d) being concerned about ethical dimensions of human activity
- (e) theorizing from art.

#### *a. Maintaining a positive attitude*

To begin with I will refer to an incident that I observed, where Ermis strategically (as Ermis admitted in File H) *“fight against pupils’ – young boys’ and girls’ - negativity, in their thinking.”* One pupil expressed unwillingness to participate in a lesson which was in his opinion boring or pointless:

*Pupil: “National flags? Again ... it’s as if we’re back in first grade!”*

*Ermis: “That’s rather childish of you, isn’t it?”* (see Table 6.12, idea 2). The teacher let pupils express their negativity. Another pupil added: *“Why don’t we just make a hundred photocopies of the flag?”*

This was an ideal occasion for the teacher to trigger pupils' thinking and to develop a discussion that encouraged pupils to think further and understand meanings about the national flag. Ermis's teaching strategy was based on his

belief about the pupils' thinking potentials. He did not draw attention to the spontaneous instant and flat responses of pupils that many times discourage teachers from entering into discussions. Besides, Ermis had expressed in File H (the interview) his wish to win pupils' interest and challenge pupils by showing them the relationship between philosophical issues and the making of art. One reason he does that is because, as he said, he wants to show pupils that he is serious about what he is doing: *"You have to show them that you are serious, that you have something to say which is worth hearing and learning"* (see Table 6.12, idea 8).

Based on this teaching position of respect for pupils opinion, the teacher got the advantage to challenge pupils interest. Pupil: *"National flags? Again...it's as if we're back in first grade!"* and (another) pupil: *"Why don't we just make a hundred photocopies of the flag?"* Ermis replied as if he was questioned about the same issues, but mainly he asked the class to rethink the potential simplicity or importance of the lesson topic. He achieved that by putting a problem so that the class could offer ideas and help their further thinking.

The problem that the teacher gives pupils for thought, in this case, is the significance of art's autographic work. Ermis replied to the pupil's comment about photocopying the flag by saying: *"Isn't there something more special about autographic art?"* It is significant that the teachers' response seizes the opportunity to value the capabilities of human nature: *"Even in the robot's era, a person remains a human factor."*

With this *"broadening the minds"* method, the teacher managed to achieve a meaningful dialogue with the pupils, enriched with important ideas (see Dialogues 1 and 2). His teaching strategy seemed to be to change one pupil's negativity towards learning into a more positive position.

The significance of the teaching strategy that Ermis followed was underlined in File G by Anastasia, who mentioned the process of broadening minds and admitted her negative position. In the beginning, she said: *"I was biased towards a topic, which I thought – at least before the discussion – to be boring and not the least challenging"* (see Table 6.12, idea 2).

*b. Striving for improvement*

This idea about developing pupils' positive position for progressive thinking was mentioned by both pupils and teachers. This idea was confirmed in four ways: a) by both teachers during the focus groups (File I), b) by Ermis in File H and also c) during the observation, and d) as implied by Anastasia during the interview (File G).

Ermis (File H), when speaking about how he perceives his role as a teacher in the classroom, says that he considers it important to “*assist pupils to overcome their fear of inadequacy and insecurity of expression.*” He achieves that by showing the pupils that they have continuously strived for improvement and that this is what they must focus on (see Table 6.12, idea 7). His belief in helping pupils overcome their inadequacy of expression is also described in dialogue 3 (see File H, section b).

Ermis repeated the same idea during the focus group interview (File I). In the same vein, of assisting pupils overcome their inadequacy of expression, Aphrodite (File I), commented on the need to help pupils stating their views and clamming about them. In addition, during the observation session, Ermis clearly shows his wish to assist pupils to overcome their insecurity and inadequacy of expression when, by introducing to pupils the concept of autographic process in art, he manages to extract from pupils their personal views on an important issue, a considerable achievement if we remember that, before the discussion, some pupils were negative and were disinclined to participate in the making of the Greek flag.

In File G, Anastasia comments that she immerses herself in her thoughts hours after the lesson, motivated by the discussions they had in class. This also suggests that the learning process manages to capture pupils' interest in further thinking so as to express their concerns (and to overcome insecurity and inadequacy of expression).

### c. *Signifying human potential*

Ermis and pupils signified the importance of autographic work in the art process, which carries the cultural and personal identity of its creator and is a sign of the impossibility of human thinking being replaced by a machine (see Table 6.12, idea 7). During the observation (see part a, of Dialogue 1), Ermis, referring to the autographic process, says that it carries a person's gestures in contrast with products of technology, which are void of human gestures. The teacher later added: *"Even in the robot's era, a person remains a human factor."*

The pupils in the focus group talked about the sense of familiarity with the art work and especially what the autographic process offers to them. A pupil said: *"It's more personal."* In addition Ioannis said: *"Autographic product of art makes me feel proud and satisfied with myself because of the kind of processes that are involved in making it, are more profound than the progress involved in a computer program"* [(see Table 6.12, idea 2)]a. This pupil explained what autographic work involves: *"A person injects his feelings in it while a machine does not have any"* [see Table 6.12, idea 2] c. Anastasia added the same view: *"... (autographic work involves) the character of the artist. If he/she wants to make something, he/she can see himself/herself in it. It is made by a person not a machine"* [(see Table 6.12, idea 2)] b. In File H (interview with one of the teachers) Ermis confirms this characteristic that Anastasia sees in autographic work: *"The flag for me was a symbolic attempt to portray ourselves on paper and to show what represents us"* (see Table 6.12, idea 7).

### d. *Concern about ethical dimensions of human activity*

This relates to the concerns that pupils have about the ethical dimensions of human activity (here the art activity). The pupils in focus group (File E) were discussing the importance of studying the context of art and the importance of getting to know about the ethos of the artist. Anastasia referred to the way in which the context dictated to the art work of its time: *"It draws upon the history of the country. It draws upon people's identity and the ethos of an artist"* (see Table 6.12, ideas 1 and 2). Panagiotis in focus group (File E) concerned about the ethical values that a context conveys to an art work.

e. *Theorizing from art*

Ermis, when interviewed, said: *“My aspiration for them is to begin processing and analyzing because this is the state of modern art”* (see Table 6.12, idea 11). Later, in the same file, he continues in the same vein: *“The most important issue for me is to assist pupils in explaining issues of art philosophically and to discuss but also enhance these ideas”* (see Table 6.12, idea 11). His aim was to assist pupils to “read” a work of art and to rework it theoretically (see Table 6.12, idea 11). During the interview he said that he is trying to work together with pupils in forming the groundwork for deep philosophical discourse around the subject of understanding art. He finds that a promising learning process (see Table 6.12, idea 11). These claims by Ermis were confirmed during the observations. The teacher frequently questioned the pupils to help them understand the meaning of the symbols which formed the topic of the lesson (see Table 6.12, idea 11). The table below summarizes the ideas that some pupils and teachers described about the visual art experience and understanding the concepts related to the nature of human existence.

<b>“Understanding the concepts as related to the nature of human existence” involves:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The desire to remain positive when developing thinking</li><li>• The desire to strive for improvement</li><li>• The desire of pupils to realize their potentials as human beings</li><li>• The ethical dimensions of human activity</li><li>• Acts for theorizing art as a way of enhancing self-understanding</li></ul>

**Table 6.7: Group iii**

6.10.4 The fourth group: Pupils’ interest in participating in the learning process (individually and as a group)

To begin with, during observation, many incidents revealed the pupils’ interest in participation. At the end of part b, of dialogue 1, after the discussions, pupils were eagerly listening, showing their interest (see Table 6.12, idea 15) as a group. Later a pupil initiated a question and another pupil commented on this question, an indication that the pupils were personally interested in what was happening during the lesson (see Table 6.12, idea 4). Furthermore, on many occasions during the sessions pupils initiated talk about a number of topics,

including red-coloured flags, the flag of the period of Alexander the Great (see Table 6.12, idea 4); the symbolization of the cross, [(see Table 6.12, ideas 3, 4 and 6)]b and the symbolization of the swastika (see Table 6.12, idea 4).

Pupils' interest as a group in what was discussed was observed and is mentioned in part c of the observations, under activities and interactions (see Table 6.12, ideas 5 and 15). During the whole class the pupils' focus was on what they discussed and the atmosphere in the classroom was quiet, yet lively. Vassiliki stated her commitment to participation (see File F): *"We were all thinking about... (the ideas of others)"* after earlier stating: *"We discussed ..."* (see Table 6.12, idea 5). Later she mentioned the pupils' interest in the discussions about the symbols. She also said that many times she asked questions (see Table 6.12, idea 4), thought about the questions of her classmates and listened to them (see Table 6.12, idea 5), as well as commenting on her personal interest.

Vassiliki's comments are further supported by data from Anastasia in File G. This pupil stated her personal interest to the lesson: *"I listened with interest to the teacher's arguments about the selection of the particular media and the techniques for producing our national flags... I was all ears"* (see Table 6.12, idea 4). The teacher also commented during the interview (File H) that *"pupils ask questions"* during the learning process about various visual art problems and their philosophical and ideological concerns (see Table 6.12, idea 15).

Finally, in the focus group interview (see File E) the pupils stated their interest in the learning process as a group and as individuals (see Table 6.12, ideas 4, 5). Anastasia mentioned the interest of the class in what was discussed during the lesson: *"We have these talks, with our ideas that make some issues more clear."* Ioannis said: *"Knowing about the authorship of an art work helps me understand the cultural context of the art work, but also understand a specific way of life, thinking and feelings"* (see Table 6.12, idea 4).

Anastasia also stated during File E: *"I asked about the meaning of other countries' national flags"* (see Table 6.12, idea 4).



**“Pupils’ interest in participating (individually and as a group)” involves:**

- Pupils eagerly listening to teachers (individual and group)
- Pupils initiate discussions
- Quiet yet lively class atmosphere
- Discussions among pupils

**Table 6.8: Group iv**

6.10.5 The fifth group: Teachers’ inspiring role

According to the pupils, the teacher’s role was inspirational (see Table 6.12, group v). I will start by discussing the fifth group of ideas according to what the pupils said during the interview related to the theme.

Anastasia (see File G) emphasized the importance of having a good teacher: *“The teachers we have this year help us develop our critical thinking through daily analysis in order to understand the lesson better”* (see Table 6.12, idea 6). And later she added: *“The teachers triggered my thinking. Good teachers are very important”* (see Table 6.12, idea 6). *“They provide the class with suitable examples drawn from history, culture, science and from music in order to help us understand our discussion about the national flag”* (see Table 6.12, idea 6). She went on: *“Teachers used appropriate references, comments and criticism.”* It is worth mentioning that, in this pupil’s view, Ermis looks like an actor who plays a role when he speaks in the classroom. She is inspired by him because he triggers pupils’ thinking and because of the rapport he has with the pupils and his readiness (see Table 6.12, idea 6). The interest in the teachers’ inspiring role can be noted in the comments by Vassiliki in File F referring to the ideas and thoughts that the teachers provided during the lesson (see Table 6.12, idea 6).

It is worth mentioning a part of the discussion of the ideas of group v, where Ermis shows what he believes about this theme. In File H he speaks about how he understands his role in the classroom as a teacher: *“I have two methods. One is to appeal to children. And, if necessary, to do cartwheels in order to grab their attention.”* He also added the importance of being friendly with pupils: *“Secondly, I have to show pupils that I am serious because I have something for them that is worth learning.”* He added that he wants to challenge the pupils with what he has to say (see Table 6.12, idea 8). He asks for pupils’ attention when he really has something to say to them that is important. He said: *“I want pupils to pay attention*

*when I have something interesting to say ... rather than having them absent-minded.”* The teacher further explained his view: *“I don’t believe in extravagances, but in a well-balanced intensity and relaxation – just like in music, creation of rhythm. When pupils understand that something is going on, they’re with you”* (see Table 6.12, idea 9). Ermis characteristically concluded: *“They’re all eyes and ears.”*

The comments from the pupils and Ermis about the ideas of group v can be cross-related with what was observed during sessions. A set of characteristics justified the view that the teacher played an inspiring role, as Anastasia in File G mentioned. It seems that the teacher captured pupils’ interest during the session in the following two incidents:

a. Ermis asked the pupils in the beginning of the lesson for their attention so as to introduce an idea, and got it (see Table 6.12, idea 20). Also, at the very beginning of the three lesson hours (in the first 10 minutes) the same teacher asked for silence. He did not have to ask twice: the entire class sat patiently in attention. Most of the pupils participated silently or contributed to the discussion. I became aware of the silent participation of one pupil, Anastasia, from her comments during the interview: although silent during all three sessions, she was highly committed to learning (see Table 6.12, idea 5).

*Anastasia: “My thoughts are always changing after these discussions. I also continuously ask questions. I try to answer every question related to this issue. Those who listen and who really care can learn very interesting things. Especially pupils who pay attention in class; they ask good questions. I ask questions repeatedly. I do so mainly to exercise my brain. So, I would say that I listen more because I like to think for myself before expressing my thoughts and afterwards I answer questions.”*

b. When pupils announced at the beginning of the lesson that they had forgotten to bring with them their sketch books and colours, Ermis offered an immediate solution to this problem: he had materials available stored in the class and asked pupils to borrow them (see Table 6.12, idea 20).

Furthermore, the teachers’ commitment to the learning process was seen from the enthusiastic way Ermis provided feedback to a pupil, at the beginning of the session. The teacher had brought some illustrations, specifically for a pupil, because in the previous lesson there was a discussion about them. When the

pupil saw the illustrations his interest and enthusiasm were raised and the teacher asked the pupil to discuss them later (see Table 6.12, idea 19).

To end this discussion of the ideas which underline the enthusiastic and inspired way of teaching, I refer to the many times, during the observation that Ermis supported and reinforced the pupils' thinking process. For example, in dialogue 1, part a, he helped pupils broaden their mind by asking questions about the importance of autographic work in art (see Table 6.12, idea 13).

Additionally, in part a, of dialogue 2, in the discussion about the symbolic meaning of the design of the national flag, he initiated an inquiry about the conceptual meaning of the lesson topic (see Table 6.12, idea 17). When a pupil asked about the correct number of lines of the flag, the teacher opened up a discussion about the relationship between the design of the flag and the value of freedom, for the conceptual understanding of the topic.

Furthermore, Ermis helps the pupils' thinking process for understanding issues of art (symbolism) (see Table 6.12, ideas 16 and 18). During dialogue 2, in part c and d the teacher helps the pupils understand the symbol of the cross in the Greek national flag, while, later on, he leads pupils to understand the problems of other countries' symbols. Both teachers tried to encourage the class by asking pupils to share their thoughts with their classmates.

*Ermis: "Can you think of a reason why you shouldn't pay to buy a flag? Why does it is important to make the flags autographic, original? Does it make a difference in art? Why does the flag have to carry nine lines in order to symbolize freedom or death? What is it? Is it an advertising slogan, some clever gimmick that someone made up?"*

Both teachers posed open-ended questions such as *"How do you know that the Greek flag has nine blue and white stripes?"* and *"What do you think that the nine white and blue stripes are all about? Is there a special reason for their use on the flag?"* (see Dialogue 2, part a)

**“Teacher’s inspiring role in the learning process” includes the teachers’ ability to do the following:**

- To help pupils process their thinking
- To relate knowledge drawn from different areas
- To gain rapport with pupils, to appeal to children, to be enthusiastic and serious with them
- To manage problematic behavior
- To challenge pupils’ thinking
- To capture pupils’ attention and interest
- To help pupils participate in dialogues to understand the meaning of concepts

**Table 6.9: Group v**

#### 6.10.6 The sixth group: Well kept classroom rules

During the first stage of the main study, the well-kept classroom rule characterized the development of the teaching process (see Table 6.12, group vi). It appeared that the group of participants (teachers and pupils) was seriously engaged in the process. Pupils’ interest in the process was evidenced earlier in the discussion of ideas of group iv.

Furthermore the teachers’ interest in helping pupils develop their thinking was noted in the discussion of ideas of group v. In addition, during the sessions, there was frequent evidence that the classroom was enhanced with rules that demand the collaboration of pupils and teachers for the development of the learning process.

Ermis, at the beginning of the first observed session, asked for and got the pupils’ attention (see Table 6.12, idea 20). Also, the teacher and pupils acted for the same purpose, where, at the beginning of the lesson, even though they came to class without the appropriate equipment (sketch books and colours), they were able to participate in the class quickly and quietly after the teacher’s readiness to solve prompt solution to this problem (see Table 6.12, idea 20).

<b>“Respect for the classroom’s rules” involves:</b>
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- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The keen interest of pupils in the learning process, both individual and as a group</li><li>• The teachers’ commitment to broaden pupils’ minds</li><li>• The collaboration of pupils and teachers in promoting the development of learning</li></ul> |
|---|

**Table 6.10: Group vi**

6.10.7 The seventh group: The well-organized lesson plan

The seventh set of ideas coalesced around the well-organized lesson plan. Early on in the observation, Ermis, with the support of Aphrodite, introduced to pupils the subject of the week’s plan (see Table 6.12, idea 14). Ermis announced to the class that they would spend the week working on the Greek national flag. He asked pupils to work either individually or in groups and think about how to construct a flag so that it could be exhibited during an upcoming school festival, marking the Greek National Day. Later, Ermis engaged the class with the two core learning issues, through dialogues, which were developed through the class participants (pupils and teachers):

The value of autographic art (Dialogue 1),

The meaning of symbols and colours (Dialogue 2).

Furthermore, at the end of the lesson hours, Ermis asked the pupils to summarize what they had discussed (see Table 6.12, idea 14).

In File G, Anastasia confirms the fact that a well scheduled frame of core learning issues was developed, commenting several times how the teachers facilitated their thinking process about the learning concepts: *“teacher used appropriate references, comments and criticism”* (see Table 6.12, idea 14). Furthermore, it can be assumed that Ermis had a prearranged orientation frame of issues to discuss with the pupils (see File H): *“I have one goal and it is for pupils to learn about a material and to gain a deep understanding of the theoretical background”* (see Table 6.12, idea 14), he said.

<b>“Well organized lesson plan” involves:</b>
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- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teachers’ introduction to the topic and period of discussion of the chosen theme</li><li>• Development of core learning issues</li><li>• Teachers’ pre-arrangement of the learning goal</li></ul> |
|---|

**Table 6.11: Group vii**

By revisiting these seven groups of ideas conveyed by pupils and teachers about visual art in school, it could be seen that they coalesced around two of key concepts.

### **6.11 Key concept a: Particular thinking skills that are developed during the art class**

To begin with, the first concept (see Table 6.12, concept a) can be formulated around the concept of **particular thinking skills that are developed during the visual art class**. These are the interpretive activity developed through the use of integration of knowledge, the activity of mind connections for the construction of meaning and the understanding of the context of art works with the study of the cultural and the social environment of art work for enabling interpretation and understanding of art. Furthermore, the capacity of developing pupils' expressive abilities and the development of thinking connections for solving problems (see Table 6.12, groups i, ii, iii) are also included as the content of concept a (see Table 6.12, concept a).

### **6.12 Key concept b: Participants' keen engagement in the learning process**

The second concept (see Table 6.12, category b) emerged from the ideas related to **participants' keen engagement in the learning process and the degree of serious participation of pupils and teachers in the process**. The content of this concept (see Table 6.12, concept b) refers to:

- the development of pupils' interest in the process;
- the teachers' responsibility for building a learning process on participants' serious commitment;
- reflecting action on personal knowledge and personal understanding (see Table 6.12, groups iv, v, vi, vii).

### **6.13 The first stage main study two explanations of the research question**

The emergence of the two key concepts could be seen that brought out two explanations that respond to the research question:

**How do 14-15 year-old pupils and their teachers in a new Greek arts specialist secondary school, perceive art learning in relation to the aims of the curriculum and teaching methods?**

The two explanations claim that art learning, according to pupils and teachers perceptions, involves:

- I. the development of a platform of ideas and values concerning issues about the nature of human existence, for achieving the meaning making (see Table 6.12, explanation I) and
- II. a degree of thoughtful, serious participation in the process from all participants (see Table 6.12, explanation II).

Table 6.12 presents all phases of analysis. The first phase involves the open coding of all ideas. The second phase involves the axial coding of ideas, by matching the ideas of similar content into groups. The third phase involves the refinement into over-arching codes.

Table 6.12, that presents from which findings the two explanations of the research question were resulted, was given to Ermis and Aphrodite and the focus group pupils asking for their comments. In January 30, 2009 this team of pupils and teachers met me at school. We discussed the findings and they confirmed orally the plausibility of the findings.

## **6.14 Chapter summary**

In this chapter the data gathered from the first stage of the main study was analyzed. Ideas of pupils and teachers, expressed throughout six files, were coded. The ideas with similar content form groups of ideas and the relation of groups shaped concepts. Finally chapter six brought to light two explanations of the research question that resulted from a process of analysis of finding based on grounded theory.

According to these two explanations learning is related to a process that enhances the area of pupils thinking dimensions and choices. The theme of personal and collective responsibility for serious participation in the learning process is also considered as an issue of main importance. The next chapter presents the analysis of data from the second stage of the main study.



TABLE 6.12		MAIN STUDY DATA ANALYSIS		FIRST STAGE									
PHASE 1: OPEN CODING						PHASE 2: AXIAL CODING		PHASE 3: REFINEMENT INTO OVERARCHING CODES					
	Key ideas about visual art experience in one of the arts schools of Greece. Visual art learning experience is about the following:					Triangulation		Grouping according to the similar content of ideas. Visual art learning experience is about the following:	Categorizing the groups around the following concept:	Explanations of the research topic			
	Obs	F.G.P	Int.P.	Int.T	F.G.T								
Expressed by pupils	1	Relating art with the context it is generated for better understanding	✓	✓	✓	✓		Communicate ideas (triangulation, 10, 12, 3)	i	–Developing thinking skills such as: • The interpretive activity • The activity for developing connections and expressive qualities • Using analogies from different subjects	a	a platform of IDEAS and VALUES concerning issues about the nature of human existence for making meaning when experiencing the learning of art	I
	2	Relating experience with a platform of ideas, concerns and values about human existence	✓	✓	✓	✓							
	3	Purposeful discussions about lessons topic (that includes ideas, reflections, thoughts)	✓	✓	✓	✓		Understanding the context in which art is generated (triangulation, 1, 12, 21)	ii				
	4	Pupils personal interest for participation	✓	✓	✓	✓							
	5	Classes participation as a group	✓	✓	✓	✓		Understanding concepts related to the nature of human existence (triangulation, 2, 7, 11)	iii				
	6	Teachers' ability to help pupils for further thinking	✓		✓	✓							
Expressed by teachers	7	Teachers' interest to improve pupils in overcoming insecurity and inadequacy of expression	✓	✓	⊙	✓	✓	Pupils' interest for participation individual and as a class unit (triangulation 4, 5, 15)	iv	- Keen engagement in the learning process • Developing pupils' interest for the process, • Teachers' responsibility for building the process on participant's serious commitment • Reflecting on personal knowledge and personal meaning • (iv, v, vi, vii)	b	degree of (individual and group) thoughtful, serious, participation in the process from all participants frame	II
	8	Teachers' will for winning pupils' interest and respect	⊙		✓	✓							
	9	Teachers' targets for a rhythm regarding children's' concentration	✓			✓							
Expressed by pupils	10	Pupils' will and ability to communicate ideas	✓	✓	✓	✓	⊙	Teachers' role inspiring pupils (triangulation, 8, 9, 19, 6, 13, 16, 17, 18, 20)	v				
	11	Pupils' ability to theorize about arts	⊙			✓							
Observed	12	Using analogies from different subjects for understanding art	✓	⊙	✓	✓		Well kept classroom rules (20, 4, 5, 6)	vi				
	13	Teachers helping pupils to contribute to discussions	✓		✓	✓							
	14	Well structured lesson plan	✓		✓	✓		Well organized lesson plan (14)	vii				
	15	Pupils' interest of what is being discussed	✓	✓	✓	✓							
	16	Teacher A fostering pupils for understanding issues about concepts of art	✓		✓	✓							
	17	Teacher A initiates inquiry about the conceptual meaning of topics and for creating openings for conceptual understanding	✓		✓	✓							
	18	Teacher's A readiness to lead pupils in thinking process for problem solving – problem defining	✓		✓	✓							
	19	Teacher A provides feedback with enthusiasm	✓			✓							
20	Teacher's A readiness to solve problematic behavior	✓											
21	Building teaching on celebration events	✓											

**TABLE 6.12: DATA ANALYSIS: FIRST STAGE MAIN STUDY SHOWING STAGES AND OUTCOMES OF ANALYSIS.**

Obs: observation; F.G.P.: focus group interview with pupils; Int.P: Interview with pupil; Int.T: interview with teacher; F.G.T.: focus group interview with teachers; ideas not strongly evidenced or indirectly evidenced are circled.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **DATA ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND STAGE OF THE MAIN STUDY – THE TWO CORE FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

## **CHAPTER SEVEN – DATA ANALYSIS: STAGE TWO (February 2009) OF THE MAIN STUDY**

### **7.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I discuss the analysis of all data collected during the second stage of the main study, which was conducted from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> February 2009. As mentioned in chapter four and chapter six, it was decided to conduct the main study in two units of two weeks duration, with a four month break in-between. The reason for conducting the main study in this way was to manage the collection and interpretation of the data and to strengthen internal validity of data (see Chapter 6.1). As the two stages of main study ended up with different findings, at the end of chapter seven, the findings of the two stages, along with the findings of the pilot study will be synthesized with the aim to offer one coherent set of responses to the research question. The schedule for the second period of the main study was modified from that outlined in chapter four (see Chapter 4.7) due to circumstance beyond my control:

1. The three observation sessions were carried out in one day, and not conducted separately as originally intended because of schools timetable.
2. The focus group interview with pupils was conducted in one two-hour lesson rather than two separate one-hour lesson because of schools' timetable that had to be protected in its original schedule.
3. The second one-hour focus group interview with Ermis and Aphrodite never happened as it was impossible to find a time when both were free to meet up with me.

In relation to the schedule for the first period of the main study, two less session hours were observed the second period of the main study. The same session hours for interviewing pupils and teachers were conducted between the first and the second period. As regard the method of data analysis during the second stage of main study, it remains the same as that of the first stage. Grounded theory was used to analyse the data. The steps followed were:

The ideas from the data gathered from observation, focus group and interview (see Files J, K, L, M, N, and O) during the second stage main study were coded and thematic topics of the key ideas were identified. The thematic topics,

throughout Files J to O with related content, were matched into groups of key ideas. Finally the relation of the groups shaped concepts. This process was developed on the basis of comparison and reflection and brought out two explanations of the research question (see Table 7.11). Once again the research question was: **How do 14-15 year-old pupils and their teachers in a new Greek arts specialist secondary school, perceive art learning in relation to the aims of the curriculum and teaching methods?**

<b>SCHEDULE FOR SECOND PERIOD OF THE MAIN STUDY</b>				
Monday (2/2/09)	Tuesday (2/3/09)	Wednesday (2/4/09)	Thursday (2/5/09)	Friday (2/6/09)
One hundred and thirty-five minute observation (3 lesson hours)	---	---	Ninety minute focus group interview with pupils (2 lesson hours)	---
Monday (2/9/09)	Tuesday (2/10/09)	Wednesday (2/11/09)	Thursday (2/12/09)	Friday (2/13/09)
Forty-five minute interview with Aphrodite (1 lesson hour)	Forty-five minute interview with Panagiotis (1 lesson hour)	Forty-five minute interview with Ioannis (1 lesson hour)	---	Forty-five minute focus group interview with Ermis and Aphrodite (1 lesson hour)

**Table 7.1: The schedule for the second stage of the main study conducted from February 2-13/2009 (forty-five minutes equals one lesson hour in the Greek educational system)**

During the second period of the main study, I observed and interviewed the same teachers and group of pupils as in the first period (see Chapter 6, note 5).

The second phase of the research involved analysing the following files (see Appendix 16):

File J: Analysis of data gathered during observation of the third-year art class

File K: Analysis of data gathered from the focus group interview with pupils

File L: Analysis of data gathered from interviewing Aphrodite

File M: Analysis of data gathered from interviewing Ioannis

File N: Analysis of data gathered from interviewing Panagiotis

File O: Analysis of data gathered during the focus group interview with Ermis and Aphrodite.

	Observation	Interview	Focus group
<b>Vassiliki</b>	•		•
<b>Anastasia</b>	•		•
<b>Marika</b>	•		•
<b>Ioannis</b>	•	•	•
<b>Panagiotis</b>	•	•	•
<b>Politimos</b>	•		•
<b>Ermis</b>	•		•
<b>Aphrodite</b>	•	•	•

**Table 7.2: The data collection tools**

## **7.2 File J: Analysis of data gathered from observing the third-year art class**

As was the case during the pilot study and first stage of the main study (see Chapters 5.2 and 6.3), what follows is a summary of the second stage main study observations and some analysis of this using Merriam's (1988) organization framework. Once again this is a method of observation around five elements. The five elements are:

- a. Physical setting
- b. Participants
- c. Activities and interactions
- d. Conversation
- e. Subtle factors.

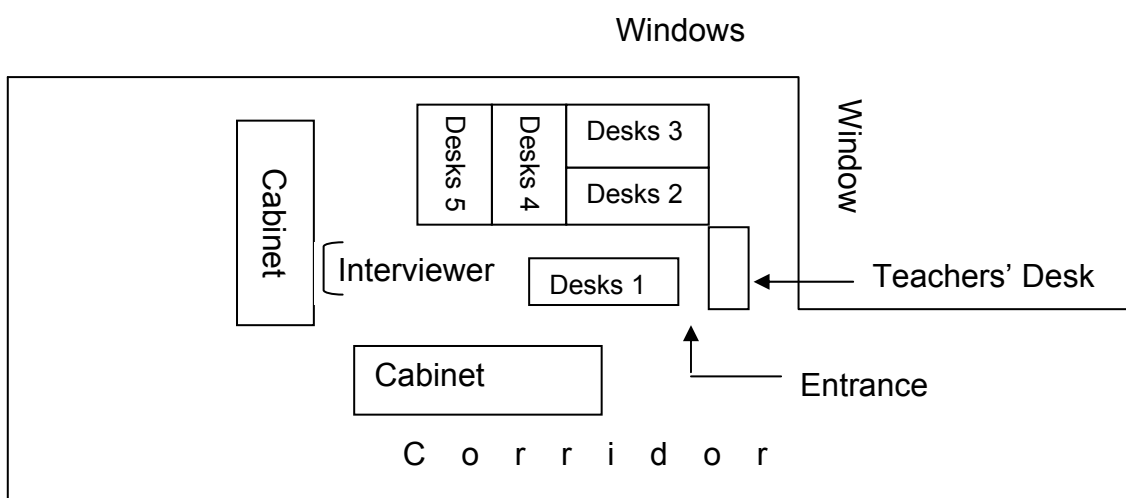
Even though the presentation of observation analysis is quite descriptive it was followed to offer a vivid insight into what is happening in the classroom.

As in the pilot and first of the main study, introductory information, necessary to establish facts before proceed to the analysis of findings from File J, was given by the description offered from the elements a, b, c and e. Analysis procedures of data, that include firstly coding of ideas of pupils and teachers about teaching and learning in art curriculum started from the description offered by element c and continued throughout the description offered by the elements d and e. Right after the end of the description offered by element e, the analysis procedures is continued with identifying of thematic topics derived from coded ideas.

### Introductory information

#### a. *The physical setting*

The observation took place in the same area of the school's ground floor corridor, which had been converted into an art classroom, as shown in figure 7.1 below. As I observed the class, it was clear that pupils' work was in progress and that the room was well organised. The materials were packed away in the cabinet, and while the desks remained clustered in groups of five, their allocation had changed from where they had been placed during my November observations (The desks had been rearranged because the pupils were doing group work).



**Figure 7.1: The physical setting**

*b. The participants*

The entire third-year art class of twenty-six pupils were present. The pupils were engaged in working in groups.

Coding of data

*c. Activities and Interactions*

During all three observation sessions, both teachers managed to have control over the class in that all the pupils were attentive and focused on the objectives for the lesson. The pupils interacted enthusiastically and discussed their ideas about the project assigned to them (see Table 7.11, idea 1).

The pupils listened to the teachers' instructions and also initiated discussion about the project. They also reiterated the objectives. The teachers assisted the pupils by circulating and working alongside each group. They asked questions and prompted pupils to reflect on their plans. Aphrodite rehearsed how she follows the thinking process to help develop ideas for her work. She did this by asking herself explicit questions in a loud and deliberate way so that pupils could follow her thinking (see Dialogues 4 end of part b and 5, part b), as illustrated below.

*Aphrodite: "What do you (pupils) think about your sketches?"*

Here Aphrodite is using an introductory open-ended question to enable pupils to reflect on the process of developing their visual thinking.

Furthermore, Ermis gave two examples of collaboration so that pupils would better understand the significance of cooperating in groups, saying that the first example is found in institutions like the army, with soldiers responding to commands given by a superior officer, and the second example, an analogy with the swarming of birds, is more collaborative. By using this analogy, Ermis attempted to show that collaborative work does not necessarily mean erasing personal thinking, but can be understood as an opportunity to develop deeper thinking through interaction with others.

There was considerable noise in the classroom, although the groups were hard at work. The teachers had to ask for quiet many times when they or a pupil wanted to address the class, which was done several times.

*d. Conversation*

The learning theme which the pupils were working on during my observation was based on a visit the class had made to an exhibition of Escher's work at a well known art gallery in Athens (see Table 7.12). After the visit, Ermis and Aphrodite decided to develop a scheme of work based on Escher's imagery (see Table 7.11, ideas 4, 17), and the way in which Escher composed his work with different images that contribute to a more complex figure-ground composition. Escher's work captured the pupils' interest and motivated them to discuss it with their teachers. Their discussion focussed on his compositions, which were carefully organised while also providing unexpected perceptual disruptions and shifts (see Table 7.11, idea 15).

In order *"to facilitate pupils' compositions"* (see Table 7.11, idea 14), the teachers decided to develop a scheme of work around the theme of *"parts and whole,"* which had emerged from the pupils' comments while visiting the exhibition. The pupils spoke about little scenarios *"that are developed in a 'peculiar' way into the composition of Escher's works"* (see Table 7.11, ideas 6 and 17). The teachers decided to discuss the specific theme of parts and whole rather than a general discussion of the whole work of Escher or the background to his work, as this has been presented by the teachers during their visit time to the exhibition.

After the visit to the exhibition, the teachers asked the pupils for homework to sketch black and white images based on a brief story from their life at school, which they were to bring to the next art class (the day of my observation). At the beginning of the first lesson hour of my observation, Ermis collected the pupils' black and white drawings and re-distributed them to each group of pupils (see Tables 7.13 and 7.14). He then asked the pupils to think about image perspectives and other possibilities that could be developed from these sketches (see Table 7.11, idea 14).



(Dialogue 4, part a):

(Monologue of Ermis that shows how he encouraged the pupils to engage in thinking processes and communication. Even though it is a monologue, it is coded as dialogue 4, part a, so as to remain coherent with the dialogue coding process used in chapters 6 and 7)

*Ermis: "Let's try to come up with one unified idea and think of perspectives to develop a unified work... Can you imagine something all drawings of yours have in common in order to put them together as one?"*

Later, the same teacher explained: *"The drawings may be modified or redrawn in order to serve the needs of composing one unified work"* (see Table 7.11, idea 13). He asked pupils to discuss and agree on a way to develop ideas for their composition (see Table 7.11, idea 12). The idea, he said, may be narrated both visually and verbally (see Table 7.11, idea 3). He also said that the final work can be scanned to create a print.

While the pupils discussed their ideas in groups, Ermis continued explaining that the task was interesting and aimed at developing collective intelligence and ultimately a collective responsibility; he also described how collective intelligence can be developed (see Table 7.11, idea 5).

(Dialogue 4, part b):

(Ermis and pupils)

*Ermis: "The theme we are working on is designed to promote collective intelligence. What is collective intelligence? How do you understand it?"*

*Many pupils (together): "It's collaborating with others"*

*One pupil: "To work on one task with other people"*

*Ermis: "But how do you collaborate with others? How?" (see Table 7.11, idea 14).*

Ermis then followed up his question by stating that there are two ways to collaborate, which he illustrated with examples. The first example focused on how soldiers collaborate under a command structure that does not allow for personal or collective thinking. The second example focused on how birds collaborate through collective thinking by building on the significant

participation of each one. Pupils were listening with interest to his comments (see Table 7.11, ideas 19 and 10).

When Ermis end with his description of collaboration, the pupils grouped their sketches together and considered whether they were successful or not. Their participation indicated that they were stimulated by the process. During this time, the teachers were also very careful about guiding and stimulating the pupils' discussion. The class continued to talk about the ideas they had come up with. Some pupils' said they were thinking about developing a work involving the concept of light and dark. One pupil said his idea was to develop a piece involving empty and full spaces (see Table 7.11, ideas 2 and 1).

Aphrodite then interrupted by saying: *"There is too much noise. You are all speaking at the same time."* This teacher tried to help the pupils think more deeply about their work by making the following comment: *"What do I imagine that can happen here with these sketches of mine? Is it something that makes me more curious to want to search them? What attracts my thinking about them? What do you think about your sketches?"* (see Table 7.11, idea 16).

(Dialogue 5, part a):

(Aphrodite and pupils)

*Aphrodite: "How would you unroll your drawing? Why don't you decide which ideas you will follow in order to develop your sketches?"* (see Table 7.11, ideas 3 and 18)

*Vassiliki: "From dark to light"* (see Table 7.11, idea 2).

*Ioannis: "Picture a night that becomes day or something like that"* (This idea of the pupils will henceforth is referred to as "plan A") (see Table 7.11, ideas 15 and 11).

Later, a different pupil described another idea:

*Politimos: "Or we can build a plan based on the concept of empty and full spaces... or the density of empty or full spaces"* (see Table 7.11, idea 2). (This idea will henceforth be referred to as "plan B".)

*Vassiliki: "The dark and light plan might not clearly show the nuances if the work will be scanned, the empty and full space plan is an idea richer for development and not influenced by being scanned"* (see Table 7.11, ideas 9, 1 and 11).

The teachers assisted the pupils by posing questions and re-directing their interest.

(Dialogue 5, part b):

(Aphrodite, a group of pupils and Ermis)

Aphrodite (to pupils): *“Why don’t you decide what ideas you will develop from your sketches? What do you think about plan B?”* (see Table 7.11, idea 3)

When the pupils agreed on plan B, Ermis said: *“A basic issue about the plan that should concern you is that your work will be scanned”* (see Table 7.11, ideas 7, 11 and 16).

Aphrodite then asked the pupils to think more about these ideas and reminded them that the task at hand involved the visual and verbal construction of an idea (see Table 7.11, idea 16).

From this dialogue, it can be seen that Ermis and Aphrodite organized the way the pupils discussed different ideas.

(Dialogue 6, part a) :

(Monologue of Ermis. As in the case of dialogue 4, part a, part a of dialogue 6, although a monologue, is coded for operational reasons, as a dialogue)

Ermis discussed the idea of uniting different parts into one work. To add meaning to this idea, this teacher referred to the autonomous as well as complementary role of the atom in relation to the molecule and related this to the way microcosms can be projected with the same significance and meaning in the wider scheme of things. He followed this comment by asking the pupils to think about Escher’s sketches, which were unified designs that also had autonomous parts.

*Ermis: “Have you ever noticed that the little tree branches have a shape that is repeated in the larger branches? Microcosms repeat their ideas in the larger world”* (see Table 7.11, ideas 8, 10 and 19).

During the last ten minutes of class, the teachers recapped the learning objectives and checked that the pupils continued to follow the plan and evaluated their performance.

(Dialogue 6, part b):

(Ermis and Aphrodite, Ioannis and Panagiotis. This dialogue occurred in the final part of the lesson when the teachers were recapping)

*Ermis: "You have now decided to develop plan B because you think it is a better way to proceed with your work."*

*Aphrodite: "What is of interest for you about plan B?"*

*Panagiotis: "That the autonomous parts are developed in the making of the whole work."*

*Ioannis: "And they are having relations between them, even though they are autonomous" (see Table 7.11, ideas 11 and 6).*

At the end of the period, the pupils, with the teachers' help, put their work and materials in a safe place.

*e. Subtle factors*

It should be pointed that the pupils showed high levels of commitment despite the inappropriate classroom setting.

Thematic topics of ideas

The description of the second stage main study observation recorded an assortment of ideas of pupils and teachers about art learning in relation to the aims of the curriculum and teaching methods. These ideas were coded. The following thematic topics were identified from the coding of ideas.

*a. Pupils serious commitment to the learning process (see Table 7.11, ideas 2, 1, 15, 9, 6 and 17)*

This is shown when:

i. Pupils initiate ideas (see Table 7.11, idea 2).

The class talk about the ideas they had for developing their work. In dialogue 5, part a, two pupils introduce their ideas to the rest of the class.

ii. Pupils are attentive to the learning process (see Table 7.11, idea 1). Several times during the learning process pupils argue for their ideas.

The following extract of dialogue 5, part a is a clear example that shows pupils interest for the learning process:

*Pupil (referring to plan B): "The dark and light plan might not clearly show the nuances if the work will be scanned, the empty and full space plan is an idea richer for development and not influenced by being scanned"* (see Table 7.11, idea 1).

- iii. Pupils are open to new ideas (see Table 7.11, idea 15).

In dialogue 5, part a, an incident justifies pupils attitude to be open to new ideas. One of the pupils, after listening another pupils' idea, welcomes this new idea by proposing a scenario for developing this idea.

*Pupil (introducing plan A): "From dark to light."*

*Another pupil: "Picture a night that becomes day or something like that"* (see Table 7.11, idea 15).

- iv. Pupils understand and are challenged by the objectives (see Table 7.11, idea 9).

The extract of dialogue 5, part a, that has been mentioned as evidence of pupils' attention to the learning process (see above, thematic topic a, ii) justifies this claim.

- v. The frame for exploring the learning theme and the learning objectives are both based on pupils inquiry (see Table 7.11, ideas 6 and 17).

This is evidenced when Ermis and Aphrodite decided to develop the learning theme "parts and whole," which had emerged from pupils' comments while visiting an exhibition of Escher's work. The pupils spoke about little scenarios *"that developed in a peculiar way into the composition of Escher's works."* The teachers decided to discuss the specific theme of parts and whole rather than a general discussion of the whole work of Escher (see Table 7.11, ideas 6 and 17).

- b. *Teachers facilitate pupils to progress their thinking (see Table 7.11, ideas 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 18 and 19)*

This is shown when:

- i. Teachers help pupils to communicate ideas (see Table 7.11, ideas 3, 12 and 18).

Teachers many times asked pupils to discuss and agree on a way to develop ideas. The following extract of dialogue 5, part a, evidences how Aphrodite fosters pupils' thinking skills for developing their work.

*Aphrodite: "How would you unroll your drawing? Why don't you decide which ideas you will follow in order to develop your sketches?"* (see Table 7.11, ideas 3, 18 and 12).

Ermis also foster pupils' communication by asking them during observation sessions to discuss their ideas for their work (see Table 7.11, ideas 3 and 12).

- ii. Teachers used analogies from different subjects, develop imaginative thinking (see Table 7.11, ideas 5, 8, 10 and 19).

Ermis facilitated communication by relating the learning, theme which was the "parts and whole" to the development of social skills, "the collective responsibility" (see Table 7.11, idea 5) and by encouraging the use of analogies from other subjects (like biology) (see Table 7.11, idea 8).

Ermis said: *"Have you ever noticed that the little tree branches have a shape that is repeated in the larger branched? Microcosms repeat their ideas in the larger world"* (see Table 7.11, idea 8). This extract is also considered an evidence arguing that Ermis used a tool of imaginative thinking, the metaphor, to facilitate pupils achieve meaningful understanding of the learning theme (see Table 7.11, ideas 10 and 19).

Ermis one more time, during observation, used metaphorical thinking to facilitate pupils communicate ideas by giving two examples for making clear to pupils what collective responsibility means (see Table 7.11, ideas 10 and 19).

- iii. Teachers help pupils reflect on ideas (see Table 7.11, idea 7).

Ermis, when the pupils agreed on plan B, focus pupils' attentions on issue for reflection on their ideas. He said: *"A basic issue about the plan that should concern you is that your work will be scanned."*

- c. *Teachers use a planned programme of work (see Table 7.11, ideas 4, 6, 11, 19, 13, 14 and 16)*

That involves:

- i. Teacher's interventions to the process (see Table 7.11, idea 16).

When pupils discussed on which plan, plan A or plan B, to follow, Aphrodite intervened by commenting: *"What do I imagine that can happen here with these sketches of mine? Is it something that makes me more curious to want to search them? What attracts my thinking about them?"*

And later Ermis, when pupils, agreed on plan B, intervened to the process by making a comment important for pupils' work progress. He said: *"A basic issue about the plan that should concern you is that your work will be scanned"* (see Dialogue 5, part b).

In this way teachers maximise the impact of teaching.

- ii. Teachers setting a learning plan (see Table 7.11, ideas 4, 13 and 14).

This is shown by a series of incidents that brought an organized teaching programme. Teachers throughout the lesson described what pupils were expected to learn. Ermis in dialogue 4, part a, made questions to pupils so they understand the theme of parts and whole, and its role in composition (see Table 7.11, idea 14).

Later in dialogue 4, part b, Ermis discusses with the pupils the concept of collective intelligence and collaboration that made up the learning objective (see Table 7.11, idea 14).

Ermis also offered to pupil guidance for enhancing their skills. Ermis: *"The drawings may be modified or redrawn in order to serve the needs of composing one unified work"* (see Table 7.11, idea 13).

Another component that brought an organised teaching programme that is related to the guidance for enhancing pupils skills, is the fact that teachers base learning theme on the work of an expert artist (see Table 7.11, idea 4).

- iii. Teachers developing talks about the learning theme throughout the lesson (see Table 7.11, idea 11).

Parts a and b, of dialogue 5 justifies this claim.

- iv. Teachers developing a meaningful and clear lesson (see Table 7.11, ideas 6 and 19).

Dialogue 6, part a, justify this claim. Teachers develop a clear lesson and this is shown by the finding where teachers share the learning objectives with pupils (see Table 7.11, idea 6). Teachers decided to develop a scheme of work around the theme of “parts and whole” which had emerged from pupils’ comments while visiting the exhibition of Escher. Ioannis supporting the idea that the lesson was clear said: *“All parts are having relations between them even though they are autonomous”* (see Table 7.11, idea 6).

### Summary of File J analysis

The observations revealed that learning in art as perceived by pupils and teachers involved:

- pupils showing commitment, engaging in a high level of participation, being open to new ideas, and having some control over the way the learning progressed and choice of topic (see Table 7.11, ideas 1, 2, 6, 9, 15, and 17)
- teachers facilitate pupils to progress their thinking (see Table 7.11, ideas 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 18 and 19)
- teachers revealing their ability to mediate methods and approaches that supported a planned programme of work (see Table 7.11, ideas 4, 6, 11, 19, 13, 14 and 16).

### **7.3 File K: Analysis of data gathered during the focus group with pupils**

The pupils identified a number of learning objectives based on their understanding of what they learned during observation sessions. These are outlined below.

- a. Understanding the learning objectives (see Table 7.11, ideas 6 and 9)

The pupils agreed that the task was based on the idea of composition in art. They agreed that the concept of composition signifies the ability to link heterogeneous parts into a unified whole.



(Dialogue 7):

(Panagiotis, Ioannis and the Interviewer)

*Panagiotis (explaining the lesson objectives): "To connect small ideas into larger ideas."*

*Interviewer: Can you explain this more?*

*Ioannis: "To build one idea from many different ideas."*

*Panagiotis: "The aim was to find relationships between our different drawings and to imagine ideas for unifying these but without losing each work's own micro significance" (see Table 7.11, idea 9).*

*Ioannis said that he tried to find links between different parts that on the surface seemed to be autonomous: "This effort helps to develop imagination for composing and relating different parts together."*

*Panagiotis: "I believe the purpose of this exercise was to get us thinking about the role of different parts and the role of the whole in visual art" (see Table 7.11, idea 9).*

*Anastasia added: "They [teachers] asked us ..... what we were searching for and what we wanted to achieve....." (see Table 7.11, idea 6).*

b. Developing communicative skills in the learning process and being open to new ideas (see Table 7.11, ideas 5, 12 and 15)

Anastasia expressed an alternative perspective about the theme of *"parts and whole"*. She said that the most interesting and challenging aspect of this exercise was the requirement to work as a group: *"We tried to develop a unified work from considering each part,"* adding that it was difficult because they had to negotiate and participate as individuals and in a group. *"Each of us had different ideas and we had disagreements during the process"* (see Table 7.11, ideas 12, 15 and 5).

Marika added that they had to discuss the merits of each idea before reaching a group decision: *"We could not all agree on which plan to follow. Aphrodite asked us not to shout, but to debate and negotiate as a group."*

According to Marika: *"Aphrodite asked us to think of an image scenario for our drawings."*

Dialogue 4, part b and dialogue 5, part a and b, record the way communication skills were developed in the class.

c. Personal and as a group interest that enhanced participation and encouraged attentiveness and reflection (see Table 7.11, ideas 1 and 7)

When asked about what they gained from this process, the pupils stated it enhanced their ability to work as a group, express their views, and to communicate ideas:

*Panagiotis: "We managed to work all together on one work. We asked each other for ideas, we analysed them and we changed or related them with other ideas from some other works"* (see Table 7.11, idea 1).

Ioannis stressed that teachers helped pupils reflect on their ideas: *"The teacher explained the reasons for using a medium like ink which is quick to dry, flexible to use and provides the ability to create detail"* (see Table 7.11, idea 7).

Marika stressed the importance of the process of making judgments about the works: *"I argued in favour of some drawings because I found them similar to my thinking, but I also argued in favour of some of my drawings because I also understand the thinking behind them"* (see Table 7.11, idea 1).

d. Using analogies from different subjects (see Table 7.11, idea 8)

The pupils mentioned that the analogy that the teacher gave about the atom and the electron helped them to better understand the complementary process of part to whole (see Dialogue 6, part a, and Table 7.11, idea 8).

e. Developing drawing skills in relation to improving thinking skills (see Table 7.11, ideas 3, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 18)

The pupils also stressed that they noticed an improvement in their drawing skills during this particular learning theme (see Table 7.11, ideas 11 and 13).

*Marika: "I argued in favour of some drawings because I found them similar to my thinking, but I also argued in favour of some of my drawings because I also understand the thinking behind them"* (see Table 7.11, idea 11); and *Panagiotis: "I believe the purpose of this exercise was to get us thinking about the role of different parts and the role of the whole in visual art"* (see Table 7.11, idea 11).

The pupils spoke positively about the strategies that they had been taught to follow when developing their work. Specifically, Ioannis referred to the way the teachers' had encouraged them to express their views and to offer good arguments.

*Marika stated: "The teachers helped us to think further and to organise our work"* (see Table 7.11, idea 3). *They often reminded us that we have to follow and develop a*

*plan* (see Table 7.11, idea 14), *and, if necessary, to add new aspects to it*" (see Table 7.11, idea 3).

Anastasia found the teachers helpful. *"They asked us about how the plan was going, what we were searching for and what we wanted to achieve, as well as what we thought about the ideas that the others in the group shared with us"* (see Table 7.11, ideas 16 and 18).

f. Developing imaginative thinking (see Table 7.11, idea 10)

Meanwhile, Vassiliki added that this exercise helped her to "read drawings" by encouraging her to focus more closely on the details to find connections between them: *"I expressed my thoughts, I developed my imagination and I can now walk through a whole composition by looking for the different parts"* (see Table 7.11, idea 10). Marika also referring to the importance of the process of making judgments about the works she stated: *"This process developed my imagination"* (see Table 7.11, idea 10).

#### Summary of File K data analysis

The analysis of the data from the focus group interview with the pupils sheds light on what they consider to be the main objectives of the learning process in art. In particular, they pointed out that their experience of learning in art had involved the following:

- clearly understanding the learning objectives, which were also challenging (see Table 7.11, ideas 9 and 6)
- developing communicative skills in the learning process (see Table 7.11, ideas 5 and 12) and being open to new ideas (see Table 7.11, idea 15)
- personal and as a group interest that enhanced participation (see Table 7.11, idea 1) and encouraged attentiveness (see Table 7.11, idea 1) and reflection (see Table 7.11, idea 7)
- using of analogies from different subjects (see Table 7.11, idea 8)
- developing drawing skills in relation to improving thinking skills (see Table 7.11, ideas 11 and 13) with the teachers' support (see Table 7.11, idea 18), through the teachers using carefully structured questions, prompts and

analogies (see Table 7.11, idea 14), which also helped to organize the working process (see Table 7.11, idea 3) and sustain interest (see Table 7.11, idea 16)

- developing imaginative thinking (see Table 7.11, idea 10).

#### **7.4 File L: Analysis of data gathered during an interview with Aphrodite**

During the interview, Aphrodite focused on the teaching strategies that she used with the group, considering them as important strategies to be used. These strategies include the following:

- a. Preparing a lesson plan, set clear learning objectives (see Table 7.11, idea 14)

According to Aphrodite, the plan is decided ahead of the class: *"We follow a plan. We usually have a plan of what we want to do and how we will do it. We try to follow this plan... What I mean is that we have a plan with set objectives and targets in mind"* (see Table 7.11, idea 14).

- b. Pupils serious personal engagement to the learning process; set of framework that enhances communication skills (see Table 7.11, ideas 5 and 12)

*Aphrodite: "We hoped that pupils would achieve a way of communicating, relating and negotiating their ideas with others. We asked pupils to work and develop their ideas in groups (see Table 7.11, idea 5). This plan involved some rules that we believe helped the children to overcome their fear of freely expressing themselves and arguing, justifying and criticising their own and others' ideas. We strongly wanted the pupils to experience what it means to work in a group. Our aim was to encourage a negotiation process using concepts found in visual art"* (see Table 7.11, idea 12).

- c. Readiness to supplement or transform ideas (see Table 7.11, ideas 7 and 15)

Aphrodite also said that learning process may bring about changes and transform the initial ideas. The process, however, cannot stray too much from the objectives as defined at the beginning of the lesson. She said: *"We tried to*

*follow the plan, but we are always open to modifying it although we tried hard to stay focused with the plan” (see Table 7.11, idea 15).*

According to this teacher, methods of teaching that encourage the pupils to express and to justify their ideas are always used, as well as having pupils evaluate, transform and critique their work (see Table 7.11, idea 7).

d. Using interventions to enhance the learning process and maintain appropriate classroom behaviour (see Table 7.11, ideas 16, 13, 3)

Another significant theme that emerged during the interview with Aphrodite was that of the teacher’s role in maintaining the learning. She said that they intervened in the process when pupils strayed from the stated objective (see Table 7.11, idea 16): *“You saw how we were not absent from the process and how we intervened and expressed our views. We are careful, however, about what we say. We try to have a plan as well.”* The teachers intervened by using prompts to remind the pupils of the learning objectives that were defined at the beginning (see Table 7.11, idea 3). Aphrodite also said that they discuss the ideas with the pupils and that this is an important part of the learning process: *“We try to establish the development of discussions in order to prevent any aggressive behaviour. We continuously ask pupils to justify their thoughts and ideas.”*

She added the following comment that show how pupils can draw on to reliably monitor and evaluate their progress (see Table 7.11, idea 13):

*Aphrodite: “From what you observed, you can understand what I am trying to say. Each pupil wanted to do his own thing. And they shout and fight. We intervened to remind them what we want and what the problem is that we are dealing with. This is how we helped the pupils manage their behaviour. We tried to be close to what the pupils believe and think when engaging in classroom discussion.”*

#### Summary of File L data analysis

The interview with Aphrodite generated the following insights into what she considers important for the learning experience in art to be successful:

- planning lessons with clear learning objectives that are understood by pupils (see Table 7.11, idea 14)

- pupils serious personal engagement to the learning process; set of framework that enhances communication skills (see Table 7.11, ideas 5 and 12)
- readiness to supplement or transform ideas (see Table 7.11, ideas 7 and 15)
- using interventions to enhance the learning process and maintain appropriate classroom behaviour (see Table 7.11, ideas 16, 13 and 3).

## 7.5 File M: Analysis of data gathered during an interview with Ioannis

Ioannis identified a number of ideas that he considers to be main objectives of the learning process in art. In particular he pointed out that his experience of learning had involved:

- a. Keen individual and as a group participation of pupils to the lesson (see Table 7.11, ideas 1, 2, 15 and 7).

This is shown by:

- i. *Pupils attention (see Table 7.11, idea 1).*

Ioannis considered the task put before the class as significant and different from the normal, individual assignments. What is more, he approached the experience of working in a group with enthusiasm. He said: *"I liked this work. I think it was one of the best works that we have done so far this year"* (see Table 7.11, idea 1). He also stated that there was an advantage to working in groups as it assisted him to successfully communicate his ideas to the others. *"I discovered more comprehensive and more mature ways to work with others and to reflect upon their ideas."*

Ioannis also indicated the value he placed on active participative learning (see Table 7.11, idea 1) by using the pronoun "we, not "I". Elsewhere, referring to plan b, he said: *"This had captured my attention. Most of the pupils, I think, leaned toward plan B"* (see Table 7.11, idea 1).

This pupil also expressed his personal commitment to the process of collaboration, explaining how the group reached a consensus (see Table 7.11, idea 1). *"I liked this plan,"* he said, referring to the plan that the pupils had jointly decided to follow.

ii. *Pupils initiating ideas (see Table 7.11, ideas 2 and 15).*

Ioannis said: “We were thinking about each plan as a group by expressing our thoughts and opinions” (see Table 7.11, idea 2).

He continued: “Some of us talked about whether an idea would be appropriate and about why we chose to share the idea with the rest of the group. We described how we could work with an idea and somehow change it” (see Table 7.11, ideas 1, 2 and 15).

Ioannis indicated the value he placed on active participative learning (see Table 7.11, idea 1) by using the pronoun “we,” not “I.”

iii. *Pupils being reflective (see Table 7.11, idea 7).*

Ioannis said: “The teachers asked us to think about and discuss each and every idea and not reject an idea just because it is not ours...” (see Table 7.11, idea 7). “We were trying to picture all the works as unified in one idea. We put all the works together and looked at them.”

b. Teachers supportive role (see Table 7.11, ideas 4, 7 and 9)

This is shown by:

i. *Introducing to pupils the work of an expert artist (see Table 7.11, idea 4).*

Ioannis described the learning process as a scheduled exploration aimed at achieving a certain task. At the beginning of the interview, he described the theme and the task in this way: “We were thinking about Escher’s work and we were discussing how to develop from each of our [individual] drawings one unified work that will mean one story or one scenario” (see Table 7.11, idea 4).

From the above, we can see that ideas have been shaped by Escher’s work and the exploration of his art.

ii. *Fostering reflective thinking in pupils (see Table 7.11, idea 7).*

The content of the key idea a.ii, presented above, justifies this claim.

iii. *Creating a challenging approach to the learning process (see Table 7.11, idea 9).*

Ioannis pointed out that the whole class was interested in the learning objectives (see Table 7.11, idea 9). Ioannis said: “we were thinking about each plan as a group by expressing our thoughts and opinions” (see Table 7.11, idea 9).

c. Communication of ideas (see Table 7.11, ideas 3, 5, 11 and 12) and developing communicative skills

Ioannis pointed out that the whole class was willing to discuss alternative views.

Ioannis described how the teachers asked the group to try to find the strengths and weakness for each plan, referring to the proposed plan A and plan B (see Table 7.11, idea 3). He referred to a series of strategies that the class followed in order to realise the lesson topic. He said it was “*difficult*” for him to follow the strategies as regards the process of communicating and conveying his ideas to the rest of the group, as well as evaluating them (see Table 7.11, idea 11): “*The teachers asked us to think about and discuss each and every idea and not reject an idea just because it is not ours*” (see Table 7.11, idea 5).

*“This is very difficult because each of us has produced different work (...) we could not agree (...) we had disagreements as regards how to progress with the work”. “Most of us, I think liked plan B better,” he said. “We agreed to follow it” (see Table 7.11, idea 11). In the end, he stressed that working in a group was a valuable experience. “I learned how to take others’ ideas into consideration” he said (see Table 7.11, idea 12). Ioannis concluded: “I liked this plan [referring to plan b that the pupils had jointly decided to follow] because each separate work had empty spaces and full areas” (see Table 7.11, idea 11).*

#### Summary of File M data analysis

The interview with Ioannis gave insights into his perception of the learning process in art. The learning experience in art according to Ioannis is based on the following:

- keen individual and as a group participation of pupils to the lesson (see Table 7.11, ideas 1, 2, 15 and 7)
- teacher’s supportive role (see Table 7.11, ideas 4, 7 and 9)
- communication of ideas and developing communicative skills (see Table 7.11, ideas 3, 5, 11 and 12).



## 7.6 File N: Analysis of data gathered during an interview with Panagiotis

Although the interview with Panagiotis did not add anything new, it was valuable as it supported other pupils' perceptions of learning in art. In particular, the pupil spoke about the importance of:

- a. Developing communication skills for communicating through art (see Table 7.11 idea 12)

Panagiotis used the following characteristic phrases to describe his experience of the learning process: "*discuss ideas, exchange ideas,*" "*questioning,*" "*and use reason to explore our ideas,*" "*come to an agreement,*" and, referring to the learning process as based on negotiation about issues of public interest, he said: "*We (pupils) have to come to an agreement about the basic idea through discussion*" (see Table 7.11, idea 12). He also referred to the lesson as a negotiation and discussion between pupils and teachers: "*Mostly we reason, question, discuss and transform ideas.*"

This pupil also spoke about the process for developing the plan by which to execute the work. He pointed out the fact that each pupil could express their thinking and further develop or transform it (see Table 7.11, idea 12): "*This is like a theatrical rehearsal. Each can develop what he/she thinks separately, but the idea is one in the process each (pupil) can transform ideas.*"

- b. Teachers focus pupils' attentions on issues for reflection on their ideas (see Table 7.11, idea 7)

Panagiotis mentioned the support that the teachers had given: "*They often asked questions, spoke about the ideas we discussed, and asked us to use reason to evaluate our ideas*" (see Table 7.11, idea 7).

From what Panagiotis said it seems that Panagiotis was convinced of the significance of group work for developing a framework for the following procedure: asking questions → applying personal views → reasoning → discussion → negotiation → reflection.

## Summary of File N data analysis

The interview with Panagiotis signified two important points of the learning process in art. These are:

- the significance of developing communication skills for communicating through art (see Table 7.11, idea 12) and
- teachers supportive role (see Table 7.11, idea 7).

### **7.7 File O: Analysis of data gathered during the focus group with Ermis and Aphrodite**

The analysis of data from the focus group interview with the teachers sheds light on what they consider to be main objectives of the learning process in art. In particular, they pointed out that experience of learning in art had involved:

- a. Pupils interest to participate in the learning process (see Table 7.11, ideas 2, 9, 15 and 17)

This is shown by the following incidents:

- i. *Pupils initiate ideas and are open to new ideas (see Table 7.11, ideas 2 and 15).*

*Aphrodite said: "I think that in the classroom we were not as powerful as we were in the gallery. In the classroom pupils seemed to be lost as to how to develop their thinking, but it was very interesting for us as teachers when pupils introduced their ideas and discussed them in groups" (see Table 7.11, idea 2 and 15).*

- ii. *Learning theme is based on pupils enquiry who understand and are challenged by the objectives (see Table 7.11, ideas 9 and 17).*

Ermis pointed out that the lesson topic was based on pupils' enquiry, and underlined the significance of the type of visual problem that had captured their attention: *"The pupils have given us (see Table 7.11, idea 17) this fantastic opportunity to work on the issue of part and whole, the dynamic of the part into the whole, in the composition, and the opposite"* (see Table 7.11, idea 9).

- b. Developing discussions about ideas of art (see Table 7.11, idea 11)

Ermis (referring to the learning theme of parts and whole) he said: *“This is something we would like very much to discuss in the art class”* (see Table 7.11, idea 11).

c. Teachers creating a framework for learning (see Table 7.11, idea 14)

Ermis said: *“We try to keep an organized plan with how and what we will do, but we are open and ready for changes by pupils comments”* (see Table 7.11, idea 14). Later Aphrodite added: *“Pupils made comments that motivated us to work in the classroom on this topic”* (see Table 7.11, idea 14).

#### Summary of File O data analysis

For both Ermis and Aphrodite, the learning experience in art is based on the following:

- building the lesson topic on the basis of the pupils’ interests and inquiries (see Table 7.11, ideas 17 and 9), who initiate ideas (see Table 7.11, idea 2) and are open to new ideas (see Table 7.11, idea 15)
- developing and discussing ideas in relationship to art (see Table 7.11, idea 11)
- teachers creating a framework for learning (see Table 7.11, idea 14).

#### **7.8 Summary analysis of the second stage of the main study Files J, K, L, M, N, O**

During the second stage of the main study, both pupils and teachers identified a network of ideas related to the learning experience in art (see Table 7.11). They all agreed on the importance of listening to different viewpoints and being willing to reflect on new ideas (see Table 7.11, ideas 15 and 7). They also thought that good organization was important for productive work (see Table 7.11, idea 3). The development of communication skills (see Table 7.11, idea 12) and the importance of discussing ideas about art (see Table 7.11, idea 11) were also strongly emphasized, a view that overlapped with the significance of

developing social skills (see Table 7.11, idea 5). Both pupils and teachers stressed the role of planning for learning in art (see Table 7.11, idea 14).

In addition, pupils and teachers also considered it important that pupils should pay attention to the learning process (see Table 7.11, idea 1), and learn to initiate and develop their ideas in art (see Table 7.11, idea 2). Furthermore, all the participants stressed the significance of challenging learning objectives, and establishing clarity (see Table 7.11, idea 9) about the learning content (see Table 7.11, idea 6). They all supported the idea of using ongoing interventions to facilitate learning (see Table 7.11, idea 16).

Evidence emerged of a number of actions taken by the teachers that enhanced the learning process; these included basing lesson topics on pupils' interests and enquiries (see Table 7.11, idea 17); explicitly modeling the thinking process to the pupils (see Table 7.11, idea 18); including the use of metaphors to help understand the objectives (see Table 7.11, idea 19); making cross-curricular connections (see Table 7.11, idea 8) and basing work on that of artists, as exemplified by the work of Escher (see Table 7.11, idea 4).

Pupils also mentioned that learning in art should develop the imagination (see Table 7.11, idea 10) and drawing skills (see Table 7.11, idea 13).

## **7.9 Grouping the key ideas from the second stage of the main study**

There were eight key ideas emergent from the second stage of data collection in the main study, according to pupils and teachers perceptions about art learning and teaching in the arts school.

These eight groups concern:

- commitment to the learning process
- management of learning and behavior
- structuring the learning process
- teachers using ongoing interventions
- developing communication skills
- the co-construction of learning
- using metaphor and examples from other subject areas to add meaning and imaginative force to the content
- learning from the work of artists.

### 7.9.1 The first group: Commitment to the learning process

The first set of ideas can be grouped under the category of commitment to the learning process (see Table 7.11, group i). While observing the lesson it was apparent that pupils contributed good ideas and made thoughtful comments related to the work of Escher. They characterized Escher's compositions "as *little scenarios that are developed in a peculiar way.*" Their comments showed that they get close to the core feature of Escher's work, which reflected their serious attitude towards the learning process (see Table 7.11, idea 17). In addition, Ermis admitted that it had been the pupils' explorations of Escher's work that had triggered the idea to work with the theme of "parts and whole," which also reflected the pupils' commitment to the learning process (see Table 7.11, idea 17).

The pupils' commitment to the educational process in art is further reflected in the way they initiated and responded to ideas when I observed sessions (see File J, Dialogue 5, part a; Table 7.11, idea 1), during the pupils' focus group procedure (see File K, Dialogue 7; Table 7.11, idea 1) and finally in the fact that the pupils expressed aloud their interest in the lesson topic (see File M; Table 7.11, idea 1).

<b>"Commitment to the learning process" includes:</b>
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- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pupils are attentive to the process of art education</li><li>• Teachers base the frame for exploring the lesson theme on pupils' enquiry</li></ul> |
|--|

**Table 7.3: Group i**

### 7.9.2 The second group: Management of learning and behavior

The second grouping of ideas can be described as the management of learning and behavior which, in this particular setting, fostered openness to new ways of thinking and pupils being willing to discuss and reflect on their ideas (see Table 7.11, group ii). The files revealed the teachers using interventions to develop deeper thinking in pupils. For example, File J (see Dialogue 5, part a), which deals with pupils discussing the development of their

work, also records Ermis using prompts to maintain their focus on the task (see Table 7.11, idea 7).

In File K, Ioannis speaks positively about the way the teachers used interventions to promote deeper learning (see Table 7.11, idea 7). In File M, the same pupil also highlighted the way the teachers helped the class to focus on issues and respond to ideas (see Table 7.11, idea 7). In File N, the same idea was expressed by Panagiotis, who talked about the supportive role played by his teachers. Panagiotis said: *“They often asked questions, they commented on the ideas we discussed and they asked us to find arguments.”* This comment is consistent with Aphrodite’s understanding that pupils are always encouraged to express and justify their ideas.

The pupils also commented on the way their teachers fostered the ability to be open to new ideas (see Table 7.11, idea 15). Anastasia said: *“We tried to complete the work, all as one, by developing each part.”* She added that it was difficult because they had to agree, negotiate, engage and participate as individuals and a group: *“Each of us had different ideas as a result to have disagreements during the process.”*

Reference to the same idea can be found in File M, by Ioannis (see Table 7.11, idea 15), in File O, by Aphrodite, who mentions the fact that the teachers encourage pupils to exchange and evaluate ideas (see Table 7.11, idea 15), and in File J, data from the observation (see File J, section d. Conversation), when the pupils comment on Escher’s works.

Two further points with regard to this group of ideas relate to comments from participants which provide evidence of practices of discussing ideas about art in this classroom. In File K (see Table 7.11, idea 11) and File M (Table 7.11, idea 11) Ioannis describes his interest in the lesson topic, and the same idea is supported by Marika (see Table 7.11, idea 11).

Finally, in File O, Ermis summarized his view that the discussion of ideas about art (see Table 7.11, idea 11), in this classroom, is something that they plan to achieve during their teaching process.

<p><b>“Management of learning and behavior” includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers focus pupils’ attention on issues for reflection on their ideas</li> <li>• Discussing ideas about art</li> <li>• Being open to new ideas</li> </ul>
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**Table 7.4: Group ii**

7.9.3 The third group: Structuring the learning process

A third grouping, structuring the learning process encompasses the idea of structuring or scaffolding the learning through using lesson plans and learning objectives (see Table 7.11, group iii). Both pupils and teachers underlined the importance of following a lesson plan and understanding the objectives. For example, Aphrodite talked about following a plan (see File L, Table 7.11, idea 14); Ermis (see File O, Table 7.11, idea 14) similarly stated that they followed a plan but remained open to changing the content of the lesson by improvising around pupils’ comments.

In File G, Marika described the benefits of being taught by teachers who know how to organize the pupils’ work, which included giving reminders about formulating and developing a plan. Furthermore, both pupils and teachers highlighted the significance of understanding the learning objectives, which needed to be challenging. In particular, Ermis (see File O) mentioned the way the class had been given an opportunity to work out the issue of part and whole, which had been broken down into a series of tasks structured by the relevant criteria for success. Ermis’s comment can be cross-referenced with what Ioannis said in File K when he stated that the purpose of this exercise was to get us thinking about the role of different parts in relationship to the whole. Panagiotis also gave his view about the purpose of the lesson (see Table 7.11, idea 9).

In addition, the pupils and their teachers underlined the importance of discussing the learning objectives. In File K, Marika mentioned that the teachers asked about the plan: what they were searching for and wanted to achieve (see Table 7.11, idea 6). The process described by Marika can be cross-referenced with File J (see Dialogue 6, part b), in which Aphrodite

discussed the learning objectives with Ioannis and Panagiotis (see Table 7.11, ideas 6 and 9).

<b>“Structuring the learning process” includes:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teachers sharing the learning objectives with pupils</li><li>• Pupils understanding and being challenged by the objectives</li><li>• Teachers setting learning plan</li></ul>

**Table 7.5: Group iii**

#### 7.9.4 The fourth group: Teachers using ongoing interventions

A fourth grouping can be made from ideas expressed about the way the teachers used interventions to enhance the learning process (see Table 7.11, group iv). For example, in File J, when Ermis introduced the project to the pupils, he also helped them to plan their work by getting them to discuss and agree on a scenario for each collaborative composition. He stated that each scenario could be narrated both visually and verbally (see Table 7.11, idea 3). In addition, the teachers facilitated this process by posing questions to re-direct their interest. In File J (see Dialogue 5, parts a and b), Aphrodite commented on the way the two teachers were constantly involved in scaffolding the learning process by using timely interventions, for example, by prompting the pupils to follow up their ideas by thinking about plan B.

Furthermore in File K, Marika and Anastasia spoke about the way the teachers had helped the group to think more deeply and better organize their work. Marika commented on the way the teachers gave prompts that reminded the group to follow and develop a plan, and, if necessary, to add new aspects to it (see Table 7.11, idea 3). Anastasia said that the teachers had helped by asking how the plan was going, as well as what each pupil thought about other group members' ideas (see Table 7.11, idea 16). These views were corroborated by Aphrodite when she spoke about the way the teachers continuously asked pupils to *“justify their thoughts and to explain their ideas to each other.”*

It is clear that all the participants shared a common understanding about the significance of the teachers using ongoing interventions that prompt and motivate pupils to successfully realize the learning objectives.



<b>“Teachers using ongoing interventions” includes:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers foster pupils’ thinking skills for developing and organizing their work</li> <li>• Teachers intervene in the process</li> </ul>

**Table 7.6: Group iv**

#### 7.9.5 The fifth group: Developing communication skills

A fifth grouping can be formulated around the significance given to developing communication skills during learning in art (see Table 7.11, group v). For example, during my observations, recorded in File J, Ermis asked the pupils to enter into discussions about how they would carry out group work as specified for this scheme of work. He stated that having pupils discuss ideas in groups is a very interesting way to develop collective intelligence and, ultimately, collective responsibility (see Dialogue 4, part b). He also linked the learning objectives with the development of social skills as exhibited by the emergence of collective intelligence (see Table 7.11, idea 5).

In File K, Anastasia described how, in the observed art lesson, the pupils participated as individuals and in groups, and in so doing learned how to negotiate, to agree and disagree (see Table 7.11, idea 12). In File L, Aphrodite stated that the two teachers endeavored to have their pupils communicate, negotiate and relate their ideas to each other. She emphasized that the teachers aim to encourage a process of negotiation using the concepts found in visual art. This teacher had already stated that the learning plan highlighted the importance of pupils following rules when communicating ideas, which helps them overcome their fear of freely expressing themselves when they justify and criticize each others’ work (see Table 7.11, idea 12). In File M, Ioannis spoke about the benefits of developing communication skills, and the importance of learning how to take others’ ideas into consideration (see Table 7.11, idea 12).

To summarize, according to the pupils and their teachers, learning in art involved developing communication skills, to include learning how to negotiate, justify and criticize each others’ ideas.

<b>“Developing communication skills” includes:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers relate the lesson topic to the development of social skills</li> <li>• Developing communicative skills for communicating through art</li> </ul>

**Table 7.7: Group v**

#### 7.9.6 The sixth group: The co-construction of learning

A sixth grouping (see Table 7.11, group vi), can be formed around the way pupils were allowed to initiate ideas and influence some of the choices used in the learning process. This was made clear from my observations, as recorded in File J. For example, some pupils said that they were thinking about developing their work based on the concept of light and dark; others wished to develop their art using empty and full spaces (see Table 7.11, idea 2). In commenting on the way the teachers encouraged their pupils to contribute to the learning experience in art, in File M, Ioannis stated that it was a very refreshing feeling to be encouraged to work in this way (see Table 7.11, idea 2). In File O, Aphrodite described the importance of giving a more powerful role to the pupils for the development of the learning process (see Table 7.11, idea 2).

The pupils’ controlling role is also apparent in comments from Aphrodite (see Dialogue 5, part a), during the observation of the sessions, where he asks pupils to outline the plan of ideas that they will follow: *“What ideas will you follow in order to develop your sketches?”* (see Table 7.11, idea 18). This suggests that the teachers invest in pupils’ thinking and abilities and encourage them to adopt a leading role in the learning process (see Table 7.11, idea 18). The procedure that the teachers adopt in fostering the pupils’ controlling role during the learning process can also be noted in the words of Anastasia, in File K, when she refers to the teachers’ support: *“The teachers asked us about how the plan was going, what we were searching for and what we wanted to achieve, as well as what we thought about the ideas that others in our group shared with us”* (see Table 7.11, idea 18).

To summarize, both the pupils and their teachers understood the art experience as engaging active participative learning with the content of lessons being co-constructed.

<b>“The co-construction of learning” involves:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pupils initiate ideas</li><li>• Teachers model the thinking process for the pupils</li></ul>

**Table 7.8: Group vi**

7.9.7 The seventh group: Using metaphor and examples from other subject areas to add meaning and imaginative force to the content

The seventh grouping (see Table 7.11, group vii) can be made from the ways in which the teachers use metaphors and draw on examples from other subjects to add imaginative force and meaning to their teaching. Such strategies made the learning a richer cognitive experience (see Chapter 8.2.1). For example, in my observations recorded in File J (see Dialogue 6, part a; Table 7.11, ideas 8, 10 and 19), metaphorical references were made that drew on other domains of knowledge to enable the pupils to better understand the issues being dealt with in art. An example is the way in which Ermis linked the idea of parts and wholes as found in Escher’s work to the atom and the electron (see Table 7.11, idea 8).

The use of metaphors to enhance meaning and develop imagination is also found in the way Ermis contrasted hierarchical and egalitarian forms of collaboration, which is recorded in the observation notes in File J. When he asks pupils to work collaboratively (see Dialogue 4, part b), he does not restrict himself to the rather naive first perceived meaning of the idea of “collaborative work”; Rather, he offers references so as to enhance the pupils’ ability to evolve their thinking on the idea (see Table 7.11, ideas 10 and 19). In File K, the pupils mentioned how helpful Ermis’s references had been for them to understand the concept in art.

In particular, this learning experience offers pupils a richer and wider view on how they can develop the learning task, and, more generally, on the way they

process their thinking. This is indicated by what the pupils said during discussions (see File Kf & Table 7.11, idea 10).

To summarize, the pupils and Ermis understood the art experience as drawing on metaphors embedded in other subject domains to enhance understanding, generate meaning and develop the imagination.

<b>“Using metaphor and examples from other subject areas to add meaning and imaginative force to the content” includes:</b>
---

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cross thematic learning approach to learning</li><li>• Developing pupils’ imagination and to think in terms of analogy</li><li>• Teachers using metaphors to help pupils understand the learning objectives</li></ul> |
|---|

**Table 7.9: Group vii**

#### 7.9.8 The eighth group: Learning from the work of artists

An eighth grouping (see Table 7.11, group viii) can be formed from the idea of building learning in art on the examples of an artist’s work, in this case that of Escher. This is a two-fold process in that it involved learning through dealing with a theme or idea that is found in the work of an expert like Escher, and learning about methods or procedures as used by such artists to include generating and selecting ideas, and using appropriate media. In the case of the learning experience as observed with this particular class, the lesson was based around a visit to an exhibition of Escher’s work at a gallery in Athens that had been organized by the teachers concerned. The theme of the lesson was stimulated by the visit and derived from the formal qualities of Escher’s work. This understanding of the learning content was supported by comments made by Ioannis, as recorded in File M, that his own understanding of the sessions involved thinking about Escher’s work and discussing how to develop and synthesize each pupil’s drawing in a unified way, as achieved by Escher (see Table 7.11, idea 4).

The second aspect of this grouping, that of learning about methods and procedures from those used by expert artists, is supported by the pupils’ comments as recorded in File K, where they described an aspect of learning in art as concerned with developing drawing skills (see Table 7.11, idea 13). The

pupils remarked that they noticed an improvement in their drawing skills during these particular learning theme. For example, Ioannis referred to the importance of selecting an appropriate media. This second aspect is also identified with the way Aphrodite, as recorded in File L, structured the learning process by using timely interventions which simulated the way artists think and work. In doing this Aphrodite is making explicit what she has internalized through learning how to make art.

To summarize, both the pupils and their teachers understood the art lesson I observed as structured by learning from the example of an expert artist's work, to include using a similar theme and learning about methods and procedures found in the discipline of art.

<b>“Learning from the work of artists” involves:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teachers base lesson topics on the work of expert artists</li><li>• Developing drawing skills</li></ul>

**Table 7.10: Group viii**

From this initial analysis of pupils' and teachers' perceptions about the experience of learning in art, I will now condense these groups into key concepts.

### **7.10 Key concept a**

The first concept to be condensed from the initial analysis, is **pupils' engagement with the learning process and the related level of responsibility needed to make this effective** (see Table 7.11, concept a); this involves:

- a high level of commitment to the learning process (see Table 7.11, group i)
- having some control over the development and the progress of the learning process (see Table 7.11, group vi)
- a plan with learning objectives that is made clear to the pupils (see Table 7.11, group iii)
- developing communication skills (see Table 7.11, group v)

- developing skills in procedural knowledge to include drawing skills (see Table 7.11, group viii) and the ability to visually and cognitively model a variety of ideas
- a responsible attitude and serious engagement with the learning process (see Table 7.11, group v).

### 7.11 Key concept b

The second concept that can be condensed from the initial analysis relates to **the resources that teachers use to structure and develop their approach to the learning process** (see Table 7.11, concept b); this involves the use of the following:

- analogies with the learning approach of other subject disciplines (see Table 7.11, group vii)
- metaphors to develop pupils' powers of understanding and imagination (see Table 7.11, group vii)
- expert artists' themes and working methods to mediate learning (see Table 7.11, group viii).

### 7.12 Key concept c

The third concept that can be condensed from the groupings is **the significant role of the teacher in developing pupils' thinking skills** (see Table 7.11, concept c); this involves:

- planning for learning and then using ongoing interventions to sustain the learning process (see Table 7.11, group iv)
- fostering pupils' disposition to be open-minded when discussing and reflecting on ideas (see Table 7.11, group ii)
- supporting the development of communication skills (see Table 7.11, group v).

In addition ideas 18 and 19 can also support the claim of key concept c.

### **7.13 The second stage main study two explanations of the research question**

The emergence of the three key concepts could be seen that brought out two explanations of the research question:

**How do 14-15 year old pupils and their teachers in a new Greek arts specialist secondary school, perceive art learning in relation to the aims of the curriculum and teaching methods?**

The two explanations claim that art learning, according to pupils and teachers perceptions involve:

- I. a degree of serious participation in the process from pupils and teachers (see Table 7.11, explanation I) and
- II. the development of a net of high capabilities that learning is based (see Table 7.11, explanation II).

Table 7.11, that follows, presents all phases of analysis. The first phase involves the open coding of all ideas. The second phase involves the axial coding of ideas, by matching the ideas of similar content, into groups. The third phase involves the refinement into over – arching codes.

The table 7.11, that presents from which findings the two explanations of the research question were resulted, was given to Ermis and Aphrodite and the focus group pupils asking for their comments. In May 29, 2009 this team of pupils and teachers met me at school. The team confirmed orally the plausibility of the findings.

TABLE 7.11 MAIN STUDY DATA ANALYSIS SECOND STAGE											
PHASE 1: OPEN CODING						PHASE 2: AXIAL CODING				PHASE 3: REFINEMENT INTO OVERARCHING CODES	
Key ideas about art experience in one of the arts schools of Greece. Visual art learning experience is about the following:		Triangulation				Grouping according to the similar content of ideas. Art experience is about the following:		Categorizing the group around the following concepts:			Explanation of the research topic
		Obs	FGP	IntP	IntT						
1	Pupils are attentive to the process of art education	✓	✓	✓			i	The relation between pupils' engagement in the learning process and the level of responsibility for the process (iii, i, v, vi, viii)	a	Level of serious participation (concepts a and c)	I
2	Pupils initiate ideas	✓		✓		✓					
3	Teachers foster pupils' thinking skills for developing and organizing their work	✓	✓	✓	✓		ii				
4	Teachers base learning theme on the work of an expert artist	✓		⊙	✓						
5	Teachers relate the lesson topic to the development of social skills	✓	✓	✓	✓		iii				
6	Teachers share the learning objectives with pupils	✓	✓								
7	Teachers focus pupils' attentions on issues for reflection on their ideas	✓	✓	✓	✓						
8	Teachers encourage cross curricular connections	✓	✓				iv				
9	Pupils understand and are challenged by the objectives	✓	✓	✓		⊙					
10	Pupils' imagination is developed	✓	✓				v				
11	Ideas about art are discussed	✓	✓	✓		✓					
12	Communication skills for communicating through art are developed	✓	✓	✓	✓		vi				
13	Drawing skills are enhanced	⊙	✓		✓						
14	Teachers set a learning plan	✓	✓		✓	✓					
15	Pupils are open to new ideas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	vii				
16	Teachers intervene in the process	✓	✓		✓						
17	Teachers base the frame for exploring the learning theme on pupils' enquiry	✓				✓	viii				
18	Teachers model the thinking process for the pupils	✓	✓								
19	Teachers use metaphors to help pupils understand the learning objectives	✓						c	Base learning on a net of high capabilities (concept b)	II	

TABLE 7.11: DATA ANALYSIS: SECOND STAGE MAIN STUDY SHOWING STAGES AND OUTCOMES OF ANALYSIS

Obs: observation; FGP: focus group interview with pupils; IntP: Interview with pupils, IntT: Interview with teacher; FGT: focus group interview with teachers: ⊙: not strongly evidenced, or indirectly evidenced idea.



## **7.14 Relationship between the findings of the pilot study and the first and second stage of the main study**

As indicated in chapters four, five and six, the research was conducted in three stages: the pilot study was carried out in March 2008 and lasted one week, the first stage of the main study was conducted over two weeks in November 2008, and the second stage of the main study was carried out over two weeks in February 2009. All three phases have provided insights into the pupils' and their teachers' perceptions of learning in art in this particular specialist arts school in Greece.

As the groups formed from the analysis of the data of each stage of the research have been separately recorded in chapters five, six and seven, it will be necessary to relate all the concepts from these three stages, so as to provide an overview of my study: **“How do 14-15 year old pupils and their teachers in a new Greek arts specialist secondary school, perceive art learning in relation to the aims of the curriculum and teaching methods”**

### Pilot Study Findings

The concepts that emerged from the analysis of the pilot study regarded a variety of thinking and social skills which the pupils and teachers perceived to be central to the learning experience in art even though they were not all successfully practiced according to the observational evidence collected. These were:

#### *Thinking skills:*

- the ability to express ideas (see Table 5.3, groups i and viii)
- the ability to communicate ideas (see Table 5.3, group v)
- the ability to represent visually the real and the imaginative world (see Table 5.3, groups ii and iii).

*Social skills:*

- the ability to co-operate (see Table 5.3, groups iv and vii)
- the ability to realize the importance of self respect (see Table 5.3, group vi)
- the ability to follow rules of behaviour (see Table 5.3, group iv) and to work in an organized class as a stimulated group (see Table 5.3, group ix).

Emerging findings from the first stage of the main study

A picture of the learning experience somewhat different to that obtained during the pilot study was found during both stages of the main study, though again the kinds of learning identified by teachers and pupils could be grouped into the two areas of thinking skills and social skills. The data analysis of the first stage of the main study showed a variety of thinking and social skills that pupils and their teachers perceived to be central to art learning:

The thinking skills relate to a process that enhances and develops the area of pupils thinking dimensions, and choices, for approaching meanings. In particular, this process searches for the understanding of values and ideas concerning the nature of human existence and involves the following skills:

- the ability to communicate, express ideas and transfer analogies from different subjects (see Table 6.12, groups i, ii and iii)
- the ability to interpret meanings by understanding the context of the subject which forms the identity of this learning subject (see Table 6.12, group ii).

As regards the social skills that were developed, these refer to an attitude of responsibility (personal and group) that participants adopt in order to develop the learning process and include the following:

- keen participation is seen in the process which is developed in a well structured lesson plan. The teachers intervene in the process to foster pupils' thinking; the pupils are open to discussing ideas, and control with their ideas the learning process (see Table 6.12, groups iv and v)
- actions of reflection (see Table 6.12, groups vi and vii).

## Emerging findings from second stage of the main study

The concepts which were developed from the data analysis of the second stage of the main study again represented both thinking and social skills and confirmed learning experiences similar to those of the first stage. In particular, art learning experience in the second stage is based on:

- the attitude of keen responsibility (previously mentioned) of the pupils in the learning process and the significance of control, with learning objectives understood by the pupils, the discussion of ideas, the achievement of lesson targets and the introduction of an organized lesson plan (see Table 7.11, groups i, ii, iii, v, vi, vii and viii)
- the teachers' leading role, which is justified when pupils are inspired to progress their thinking. This includes teachers' interventions in the learning process, an increase in the pupils' communication skills, using and relating ideas and knowledge from many domains (see Table 7.11, groups ii, iv, v, viii and ideas 18, 8 and 19).

### 7.14.1 Differences between the three stages of the study

It has already mentioned that the data gathered during the pilot study, does not provide evidence of successful practice of the concepts underlined as significant by the pupils and the teachers. In contrast, during the main study, what was underlined as significant by the pupils and the teachers was successfully practiced.

The difference as regards the content of the experience between the data of the pilot study and both stages of the main study is undoubtedly significant. During the main study evidences highlight resourceful learning process and responsible engagement to the learning process from the part of both pupils and the teachers. The participants' expectations were far away from what was observed and practiced during the pilot study.

This is strange, since the class was the same in both the pilot and the main study (during March 2008 the class which participated in the study was in the second year of high school. During October 2008 and February 2009, the class had moved to their third year of high school). There are, however, four factors

that may have played a significant role in the differing data found during the pilot and the main study:

#### *The teacher*

Even though the group of pupils was the same, the teachers were different in the pilot and in the main study, in that they held different professional status teachers. During the pilot, the teachers were appointed to the school on temporary annual contracts. As I have already mentioned in chapter six, the art teachers who participated in the main study were permanent employees (Permanent positions were established in the academic year 2008-2009 after a proclamation was issued to make teachers permanent in all disciplines of arts schools). This difference may have impacted on the findings.

#### *The role of the researcher*

I believe that the level of preparedness of the researcher can be crucial for the progress of a research study. With regard to this particular study, I believe that I was not as well prepared in the pilot as in the main study (both stages), when I had a clearer view of what exactly I wanted to observe and to discuss with participants, and also how to approach and interpret the data. So this difference may have resulted in more insightful data collection and analysis in the main study than in the pilot.

#### *The familiarity of the researcher with the research participants*

It was very clear to me that during the main study I was a familiar person; the class welcomed me equally in the pilot and the main study, but I have a feeling that during the main study the class was looking forward to my visit. I believe that this level of familiarity could have led to differences in the findings.

#### *The school's organization*

As I have already mentioned, the arts school is a new institution in the Greek education system. The school year 2008-2009 was the sixth year of operation.

During this year significant changes can be recognized: the position of art teachers was made permanent; the school, had a new head teacher; the organization of the schools also received more support from the Ministry of Education. These improvements in the running of the school may have impacted on the findings during the pilot and the main study.

To summarize the concepts of the three stages, I visualize them in the following schema (see Figure 7.2), which reveals two core findings about the art learning experience according to pupils' and teachers' perceptions. The two core findings are outlined below and include a number of concepts, are described straight below.

### **7.15 The two core findings of the study**

Synthesizing the data analysis from the pilot, and stages one and two of the main study, led to a conceptualizing two core findings in response to the research question. In particular, the ability of participants to express and discuss ideas and to visually represent real and the imaginative worlds were some goals that both pupils and teachers mentioned during the pilot and main study. This evidence is included in the content of core finding I (see sources a, b, c, of the Figure 7.2).

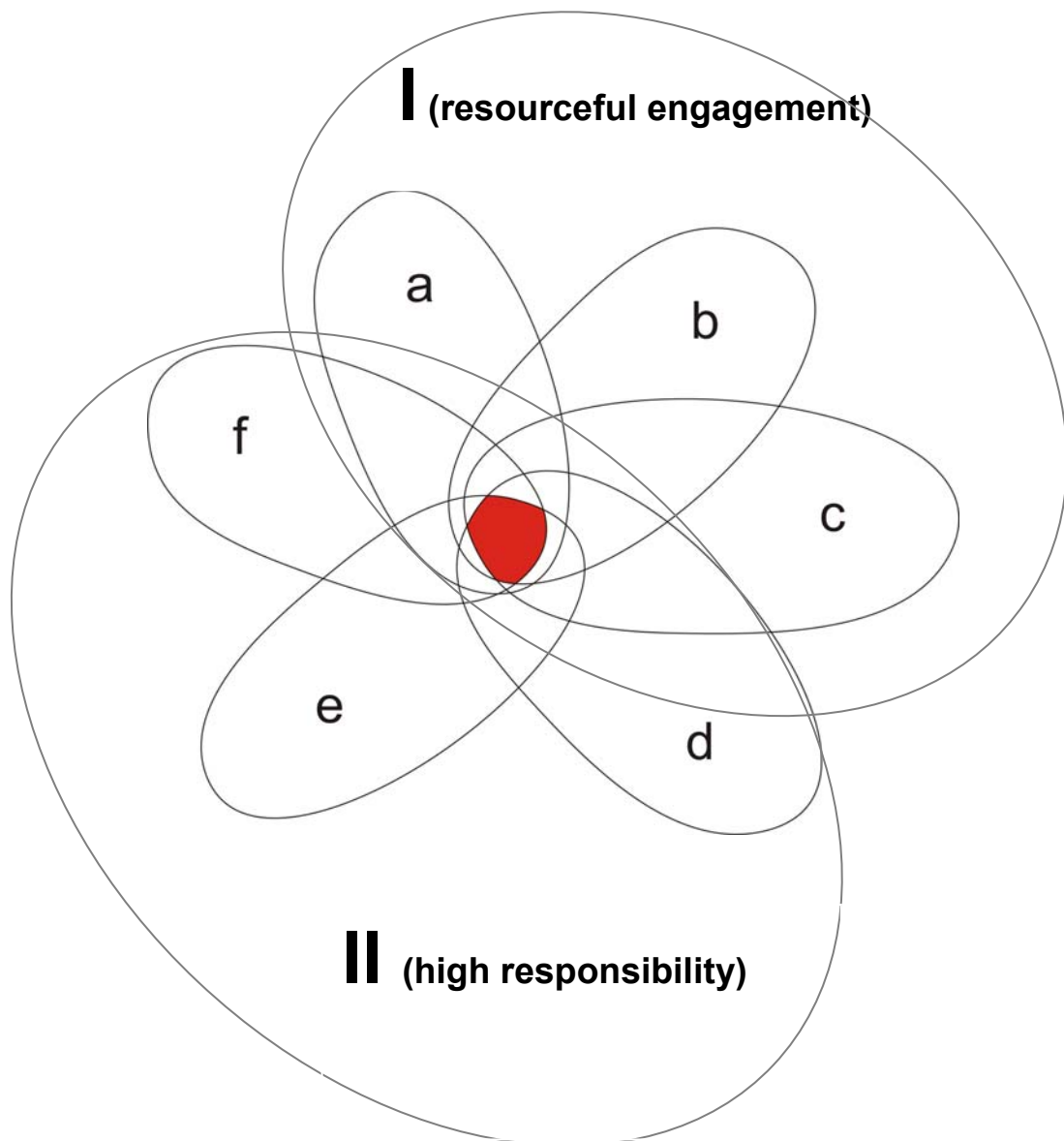
Furthermore, the ability to co-operate, to set and follow classroom rules and to organize the teaching process were mentioned both during the pilot and the main study. These evidences are included in the content of core finding II (see sources d, e, and f of the Figure 7.2). These two core findings of the study are as follows.

**Core Finding I: Resourceful Engagement** (see Table 5.3, concept a; Table 6.12, groups i, ii, and iii; Table 7.11, concept b)

- Pupils' and teachers' resourceful engagement in the learning process.

**Core Finding II: High Responsibility** (see Table 5.3, concept b; Table 6.12, groups iv, v, vi and vii; Table 7.11, concepts a and c and ideas 8 and 19)

- Pupils' and teachers' high level of responsibility for the learning process.



**Figure 7.2: The two core findings of the research question**

**I, II:** Core Findings  
**a, b, c, d, e, f:** Sources

Each of the two core findings includes a group of their sources, presented as follows:

#### 7.15.1 Core Finding I: Resourceful Engagement

Pupils' and teachers' participation in the learning process is considered resourceful engagement because the following set of resources is utilized during the learning process:

- Source a — the use of different domains of thinking to make and understand ideas and values concerning art (see Table 5.3, concept a; Table 6.12, groups i, iii and idea 16; Table 7.11, group vii, and, with regard to ideas 10 and 19, group viii, group v and group ii)
- Source b — the use of analogies from different subjects for the better understanding and make art (see Table 5.3 ideas 6b and 22 of group v; Table 6.12, group ii; Table 7.11 idea 8 of group vii)
- Source c — the interpretation of meaning with regards to idea and values in art and issues of human nature (see Table 5.3 ideas 6a, 7, 8, 20 and 24 of group v; Table 6.12 group ii; Table 7.11 idea 11 of group ii).

#### 7.15.2 Core Finding II: High Responsibility

Pupils' and teachers' high level of responsibility for learning can be considered as experienced in the particular art class. The high level of responsibility is seen in the following:

- Source d — a well-structured lesson plan (see Table 5.3, concept b; Table 6.12, groups vii and iv and ideas 2, 3& 16; Table 7.11, group iii and ideas 1, 2, 3, 7, 11 and 12)
- Source e — the leading role of the teacher in the process (see Table 5.3, group ix and idea 23; Table 6.12, groups v and vi; Table 7.11, concept c and ideas 18, 8 and 19)

Source f — the controlling role of the pupils in the process (see Table 5.3, concept b as regard groups vi in relation to group iv and idea 21 of group vii; Table 6.12, groups iv, vi; Table 7.11, concept a).

### **7.16 Sources of Core Finding I: resourceful engagement**

The three sources of Core Finding I, in particular source a, “the use of different domains of thinking to make and understand art,” refer to the following:

- i. Rule-governed forms of thinking were utilized in the class for achieving the representation of the world as it is seen. Pupils and teachers, in all the three stages of the study, provide evidence for this claim (see Table 5.3, group iii; Table 6.12 ideas 3 & 16; Table 7.11, group viii).
- ii. Imaginative forms of thinking were developed during learning in this particular class. During the main study (see Table 6.12, ideas 2 & 11 and Table 7.11 ideas 10 & 19) there was evidence of features of imaginative thinking such as categorization, metaphor, narrative, and possibility thinking to develop the learning process (see Dialogues 1, 2, 3, 4). Furthermore, attempts to develop imaginative thinking were made during the pilot study by the pupils and the teacher, although they were not effective or strong. Anastasia characteristically stated that she would like to achieve the representation of something that does not exist as if it could exist, referring to imaginary images (see Table 5.3, ideas 11 and 16).
- iii. Communicative and expressive forms of thinking related to material consciousness

The communication and expression of ideas is achieved through the use of language in both stages of the main study (see Table 6.12, idea 7; Table 7.11, groups ii and v). In particular, two learning practices facilitated the communication and expression of ideas: the development of dialogues - monologues and the practice of communicative skills. Dialogue and monologue that generated reflection on ideas are proposed in both stages. The dialogues and monologues that developed during the main study (see Dialogues 1-6) provide evidence of the process of intellectual communication, since culture symbols and sights are under interpretation mood for the better understanding of issues regarding the learning themes. The development of communication skills facilitated expressive thinking



(see Table 6.12, group i; Table 7.11, group v). During the pilot study the “communication of ideas” was of concern to the research participants as an important thinking ability to be developed in the frame of the art learning experience (see Table 5.3, concept a), although it was viewed differently from in the main study. Expressive thinking and communication was not practiced the same way during the pilot study. Dialogues, monologues and communication skills, were not developed, so to support pupils disposition to express and develop their ideas (see Table 5.3, groups i, viii).

Source b refers to the analogies used from different subjects for understanding and make art. Both stages of the main study provide evidence of this claim (see Table 6.12, group ii and Table 7.11, idea 8). As regards the pilot study, even though there is no data referring to such use approach, one pupil said that knowledge from other disciplines is important for understanding art, thereby expressing an opinion related to the connections across school subjects (see Table 5.3, ideas 6b and 22 & File B, g).

Source c refers to the interpretive thinking ability that is developed in the particular art class. Acts of contextual and conceptual understanding were noted during the learning process for the better understanding of ideas and values (see Tables 6.12, group ii and Table 7.11, idea 11). The communication of issues that developed from the learning themes (the national flag – the collective intelligence/responsibility) occurred during both stages of the main study, not in a void, but in relation to meanings of historical context. The interpretive thinking ability of pupils was developed with the effort of the teachers, who encouraged the pupils to look beyond the fixed meanings of ideas and symbols.

To sum up, learning is considered as “resourceful” based on the fact that a wide range of thinking abilities (rule-governed, imaginative, expressive, interpretive and cross-discipline) is developed.

## 7.17 Sources of Core Finding II: high responsibility

The pupils' and teachers' high level of responsibility for learning can be claimed that was practiced in the particular art class.

A high level of responsibility is noted as follows:

Source d. A well-structured lesson plan was seen in both stages of the main study (see Table 6.12, group vii, ideas 2, 3, 4, 5, 15 and 16 and Table 7.11, group iii, ideas 1, 2, 3, 7, 11 and 12), as noted by the way the lesson flowed. The learning objectives were clearly understood by the pupils, with a clear description of the concepts and the skills that were planned to be developed. As regards the pilot study, even though there was no evidence that a well-structured lesson plan was developed, the need for a well-structured lesson was strongly expressed by the pupils and the teacher (see Table 5.3, concept b).

Source e. The role of the teachers, according to the findings, is also significant in the learning process. This includes the following features:

- i. teacher being inspiring, as this helps to capture the pupils' interest
- ii. teachers facilitating communication and further thinking
- iii. teachers initiating inquiry and being ready to solve problems and provide feedback with enthusiasm to their pupils (see Table 6.12, groups v and vi and Table 7.11, concept c and ideas 18 and 19).

As regards the pilot study, on several occasions pupils referred to aspects of teaching that indicate the significance of the teacher for learning, which Katina underlined when she saw her role as that of an advisor or facilitator of learning in art (see Table 5.3, idea 23 and group ix).

Source f. The controlling role of the pupils

The pupils' role can be considered as "responsible" because they (the pupils) are those who control the learning process. Basically this can be seen when pupils build learning on their prior knowledge, on their perceptions and personal views (see Tables 6.12, groups iv and vi and Table 7.11, concept a).

To sum up pupils' and teachers' high level of responsibility for the learning process is claimed to be based on the fact that a well-structured lesson plan was developed and the leading role of the teachers and the controlling role of the pupil was evidenced.

### **7.18 Chapter summary**

This chapter has analyzed the data gathered from the second stage of the main study. The concepts that emerged from the analysis of the pilot and the main study were compared, with the differences were underlined and explained. In the next chapter the relationship between these findings and the literature on the topic will be given.

# M.C. ESCHER

"From Drawing  
to Masterpiece"

Phase IV

UNTIL NOVEMBER 13, 2009

"Escher in Color"



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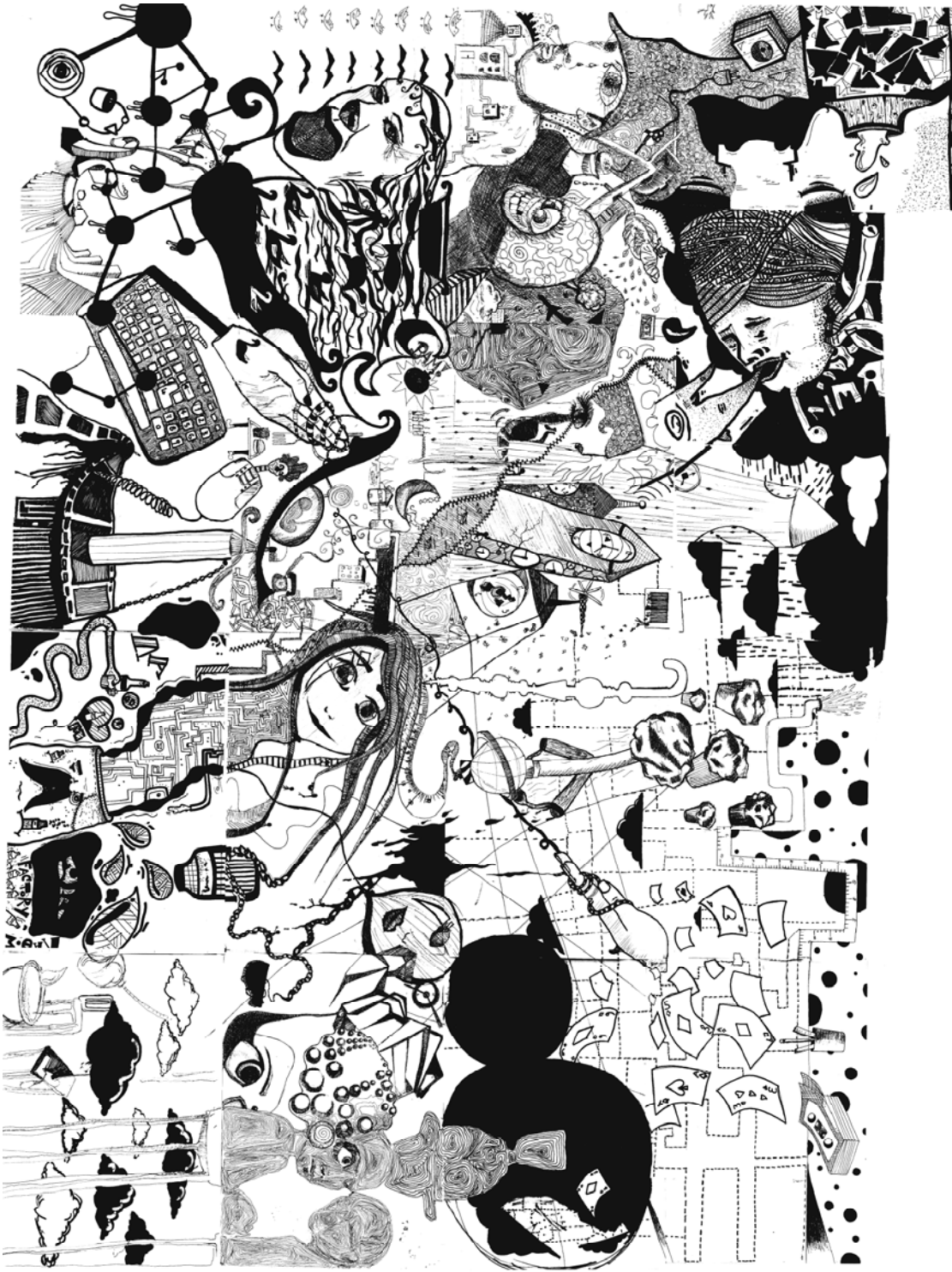
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Table 7.12: The poster of Escher's exhibition



**Table 7.13: Pupils' poster (I) about Escher's view of composition**



**Table 7.14: Pupils' poster (II) about Escher's view of composition**

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE PILOT, MAIN STUDY AND THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

## CHAPTER EIGHT – A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE PILOT, MAIN STUDY AND THE LITERATURE REVIEW

### 8.1 Introduction

The analysis of the data that was presented in chapter seven, provides two complementary core findings about how art is learned in the school where the research was carried out. The core findings belong to two distinct categories: firstly, one made up from subject and pedagogical subject knowledge; and secondly, one linked to dispositions, notably the disposition to act responsibly in the way the educational process unfolds. In this chapter I discuss the core findings in relationship to the role of subject knowledge, pedagogical subject knowledge, and dispositions that are thought to be important for learning in art as identified in the recent literature on art education.

The two core findings are summarized as follows:

Core finding I	Core finding II
Evidence of resourceful engagement with learning to include:	Evidence of high levels of responsibility for learning shown by the participants to include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Use of different domains of thinking to make and understand art               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Rule-governed forms of thinking</li> <li>ii. Imaginative thinking</li> <li>iii. Communicative and expressive forms of thinking related to material consciousness</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Use of analogies from different subjects for understanding and making art</li> <li>c. The interpretation of meaning with regard to ideas and values in art and issues of human nature               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Conceptual understanding</li> <li>ii. Contextual understanding</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Well-structured lesson plans</li> <li>e. Leading role of the teacher</li> <li>f. Self-monitoring role of pupils – a willingness to take responsibility for own learning</li> </ul>

**Table 8.1: Possible core findings for the research question**



## 8.2 Core finding I and the literature review

The evidence gathered to support **core finding I** highlights that class' learning in art was built on a network of thinking skills to include rule-governed thinking for achieving certain forms of representation, expressive and communicative thinking, imaginative thinking, interpretive thinking, and the capacity to integrate knowledge from alternative school subjects. All these forms of thinking enabled the class to generate meaning.

Core finding I is mirrored by phrases Ermis used when interviewed during stage one of the main study (see File H), in which he spoke about his aims for learning in art. Ermis said that he aimed to combine learning objectives for acquiring technical skills and using media, what Sennett (2008) describes as material consciousness, with a more philosophical approach to learning in art:

*"I have one goal and it is for pupils to learn about material and to gain a deeper understanding of the theoretical background." ..... "To uncover and understand a platform of ideas and values that can serve as a guide for the learning experience in art." He continued: "When pupils manage to capture what they see, they enlarge their potential for thinking and understanding new things."*

Ermis's comment encapsulates the first core finding in response to the research question, as it highlights the significance of the importance of what above I have described as resourceful engagement for learning in art as developed through the acquisition of procedural knowledge, a non-verbal form of understanding and declarative knowledge, and as expressed in words.

### 8.2.1 The use of different domains of thinking (source a of core finding I)

#### *i Rule-governed forms of thinking*

Practices focusing on procedural knowledge (Ryle, 1949) that deal with the selection of materials, the use of a medium, and acquiring certain skills were evident in the teachers' instructions and pupils' interest in learning such skills (see Table 5.3, ideas 9, 13 & 15; Table 6.12, ideas 3 & 16; Table 7.11, idea 13). According to Spiro et al (1987), well-structured curriculum subjects are

based around rules or heuristics, which determine the way progress can be achieved in knowledge domain. Such an approach is also found in art education. For example, during the pilot study the pupils considered the acquisition of technical skills to be important (see Table 5.3, ideas 9, 13, 15). Furthermore, in both stages of the main study, strategies were shared for the selection and use of materials that were more fitting for the lesson topic. Ermis gave pupils options for developing their work, one of which was a choice of different materials and methods. Pupils also explored the use of materials in preparatory drawings (see Table 6.12, ideas 3 and 16). Sharing meta-cognitive insights, which requires declarative knowledge, was used to give verbal feedback to this process, so that pupils could understand how to choose, organize and use formal properties like line, colour, materials and techniques (see Table 7.11, idea 13). This evidence reflects the participants' interests in focusing on the "logic of image making" (Gombrich, 2002, p. 126), and the importance of acquiring particular skills and knowledge about certain media when making art.

Cunliffe (2007b, pp. 35-36), maps the logic of art education in the form of heuristics based on procedural and declarative forms of knowledge. With reference to developing procedural knowledge, Cunliffe refers to the "ability to understand the principles of formal arrangements of works of art," "matching media and techniques to ideas," the "relationship of exemplars and traditions to their own art," the "significance of experimentation and exploration," the "importance of process for realizing quality in final work." The use of such heuristics was evidenced in ideas 9 and 15 of table 5.3, ideas 3 and 16 of table 6.12, and ideas 4 and 13 of table 7.11.

Learning with this class was not restricted to only developing principles of design, but involved promoting the representation of imaginative rather than phenomenal reality as would be the case when recording the "seen" world. In other words, their experience in art involved selective representation using reflective thinking in order to articulate an understanding of life. According to comments made by the pupils, the value of art should go beyond capturing appearances, a view that reveals the importance of understanding art as

operating with a variety of functions made possible by the use of choices to realize a purpose supported by reason.

*ii. Acts of imaginative thinking*

During all phases of the study both the pupils and their teachers rated imaginative thinking as significant for learning in art. For example, pupils understood the significance of the imagination for creating and visualizing ideas, as recorded in the interview with Anastasia, who said she wanted to develop her imagination so that she could draw something that seems like it exists even though it does not. She expressed her desire to use her imagination and metaphors in order to represent the visual world (see Chapter 5, File B). Furthermore, Ioannis stated that he wanted to learn how to draw things that are not physically present in reality, but which can also be meaningful. He said: "*What I would like to learn is how to combine what I imagine with what exists in reality*" (see Chapter 5, File B).

The pupils' attempt to represent the visual world relies on forms of imagery that evoke a compelling response. This is often best achieved by the power of "incomplete" pictures, which "stimulate the mind and arouse the beholder's imagination" (Gombrich, 2002, p. 174).

When describing the process of evoking reality through selective emphasis, Gombrich (2002, p. 175) refers to a treatise on Chinese art that discusses representing a pagoda: "it is not necessary (for painters) to show the main part of (a pagoda's) structure; it should seem as if it is there, and yet is not there." In this respect, Graham (2005, p. 115) makes a similar point when he describes the process of art education for pupils as the "broadening of their horizons, when imagining possibilities and giving form to things is in doubt."

During the pilot study, one of the teachers, Katina, noted that the main goal was to cultivate the imagination. Katina thinks this is best achieved by encouraging pupils to have interests inside and outside school: "*My aim is to make my pupils compose art based on their imagination and personal life experience, as well as their emotions*" (see Table 5.3, idea 11). In this respect, developing imaginative

thinking was tackled differently in the main study, where instead of using phrases like: "*I want pupils to develop their imagination*" (see Chapter 5, File C), there was evidence of more concrete strategies and methods being used to facilitate the development of imagination. These strategies made use of the declarative forms of knowledge.

Efland (2002) emphasizes the key role of imaginative thinking for learning in art. Egan (2002) identifies the use of imagination as an intellectual process that involves reasoning, concrete and abstract thinking, memory, and emotions. The use of forms associated with imaginative thinking like metaphor and mythic narratives not only facilitates the process of categorization, but also develops possibility thinking (Craft, 2005). When used in art, such thinking enables pupils to develop a meaningful understanding of the world and to solve problems (Johnson, 1987; Efland, 2002; Egan, 2002). This study has provided evidence that pupils can improve their capacity to think in an imaginative way. In what follows I will further discuss imaginative thinking in relationship to the research literature.

a. Categorization accounts for the capacity to think imaginatively (Johnson, 1987) as it involves searching for attributes to discern common or diverse cases in order to achieve understanding. Efland (2002, p. 138) states that categorization deals with the "conditions of membership or non-membership of objects and events." Solving problems is related to the ability to match or link categories rather than dealing with them in isolation. It would be an oversimplification, however, to think of categorization as only operating by analogy. The ability to categorize is more eclectic and uses metaphor to create unforeseen connections and meaning. Furthermore, such alternative ways to categorize exhibit levels of membership within categories (Brown, 1958, 1965). It is this role of categorization, a prototypical form described as a basic level category (Brown, 1958, 1965; Rosch et al., 1976; Lakoff, 1987) which provides the fertile ground of which imaginative thinking can grow.

Learning in art as evidenced in the main study involved the use of such prototypical categorization of ideas. The approach created meaning by criss-crossing the core concept with examples from different subject disciplines. By

using this method the class extended its ability to categorize. Such a process not only created more meaning but also led to identifying better solutions to given problems. This was evident in the second stage of the main study when the class worked around the topic of “interactions” to include references to the social relations of birds, military forms of organization, the relationship between atoms and electrons in the physical world, and the branches of trees (see Chapter 7, Dialogues 4, part b and 6, part a). By drawing on a variety of examples (see Dialogues 4, part b and 6, part a) diversity can be emphasized, which in turn establishes a platform for more complex associations.

Learning topic	Specifying the problem	The methodology followed for solving the problem		Prototypical categorization of ideas Explanation of the relationship between parts and whole...	
Understanding the issue of composition in Escher's art-works	The relationship of parts and whole in visual art works	Categorizing around the concept of interaction on the grounds of:		...can be found in:	
		social relations		natural relations	
		social relations	natural relations	The role of an individual bird - individuality (part) in the formation of figures made by the flock (whole).	The obedience of soldiers (part) in the orders to serve the group (whole).

**Table 8.2: The process that enabled richer forms of categorization as recorded during the second stage of the main study (based on Dialogues 4 part b and 6 part a)**

b. Metaphorical thinking is another function of the imagination. Using metaphors maximized pupils' imaginative response to the given problem. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 193) claim a basic role for metaphor for imaginative rationality, stating that metaphor "is one of our most important tools for trying to understand what cannot be fully comprehended: our feelings, aesthetic experiences, moral practices and spiritual awareness." Metaphor functions by connecting previously unrelated concepts (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Ricoeur (2003, p. 125) states that "the aim of aesthetic metaphor is to create illusion, principally by presenting the world in a new light," which is done by putting "into play an entire operation of unusual relationships, of connections between objects governed by a personal point of view – in brief, a creation of relationships."

The ability to engage in imaginative thinking by transferring attributes from one domain to another and the capacity to engage in abstract thinking results from our embodied state (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Lakoff (1987) argues that using metaphor requires an area on which the problem stands, what he describes as the source domain, from where a solution emerges that links to what he describes as the target domain. This linkage Lakoff describes as the mapping function.

The way metaphors operate overlaps with narrative forms. According to Bruner (1996) narratives, like metaphors, start with a problem, which he describes as the trouble, and include a target point from where the resolution is provided. This process as Efland describes it (2002, p. 152) requires establishing "pathways that map the intervening connections."

Metaphor and narrative were the principal means of enhancing understanding to given problems when in art the pupils were required to develop personal responses (see Chapter 6, Dialogue 1, part a: the importance of autographic work; Chapter 7, Dialogues 4, part b and 6, part a: collective intelligence). When Ermis used a metaphor to connect the design of the Greek national flag with the invention of photography, pupils were able to grasp the significance of autographic processes for art. At first the relationship seemed inappropriate but the teacher's use of metaphor opened up new possibilities for his pupils, who

were then more able to appreciate the significance of autographic processes in art (see Table 8.3). Ermis connected the experience of designing the Greek national flag, which according to him is an experience with cognitive significance (see File G), with the experience of drawing in the period after the invention of photography. He remarked that pupils' metaphorical thinking abilities, which enabled them to transfer the attributes and the rationale of the drawing experience in the period after the invention of photography to the experience of autographically designing the national flag in the age of advanced technology. At the beginning of the discussion, the pupils' perceptions of the role of autographic processes in art can be justifiably described as naive. This naive understanding was subverted by the use of metaphor, which allowed the pupils more readily to appreciate the merits of autographic processes in art. Metaphor allowed the pupils to progress beyond the reductive bias (Spiro et al., 1988) which describes the stereotyped strategies that learners typically adopt that are based on the accretion of compartmentalized knowledge.

On another occasion, pupils obtained a better insight into the idea of collective responsibility with the help of a narrative about the way birds interact (see Chapter 7, Dialogues 6, part a and 4, part b). Egan (1989) names this process mythic understanding, when learning is developed through storytelling. Ermis made use of what Gombrich describes (2002, p. 310) as the operation "synaesthetic metaphor," which is the process of transferring the qualities of one sensory mode into another.

Learning topic	Starting-point of the issue (the unresolved problem)	Target point (the moral of the story)	The methodology for problem-solving	Mapping functions
	Source domain	Target domain		Linkages
Representing the Greek national flag	The role of art in human experience	The value of autographic work in human experience	The use of metaphors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The merit of visual art in the period after the invention of photography.</li> <li>• The merit of autographic art works.</li> </ul>

**Table 8.3: How problem-solving was enhanced by metaphoric elaboration (recorded in the first stage of the main study based on Dialogue 1, part a)**

c. The research literature has identified the role of possibility thinking for facilitating imaginative thinking (Egan, 2002, 1992; Craft, 2005). In the main study, an understanding of art was developed by using possibility thinking to arrive at multiple interpretations (see Dialogues 1, 2 and 4, part a). This open-ended approach meant that the class was not limited to a “right” interpretation. Such an approach has the potential to develop what Perkins (1994) describes as reflective intelligence that enables the conjecture of interpretative possibilities.

For developing, what Perkins called, reflective intelligence learners required to be adventurous, broad, clear and deep (Perkins, 1994 as cited in Hickman, 2010). Such thinking was evidenced in the art class of the main study. The discussions enabled pupils to combine and recombine ideas in both stages of the main study (see Dialogues 1, 2 and 4 part a). For example, by having the class recollect and then modify old ideas, Ermis was able to build new knowledge. This process of constructing the future by drawing on past experience requires the role of imaginative thinking to circumvent conventional responses. This was achieved by using open-ended questions (see Dialogues 1, 2, and 4, part a), in which pupils used the technique of imaginative projection



as described by Thomson & Jones (2005) that was supported by a narrative style of teaching (Craft, 2005) that engaged empathetic understanding, and an awareness of others (Hickman, 2010).

<b>Strategies used to develop possibility thinking</b>	<b>Examples (questions made by teachers to pupils)</b>	<b>N° of Dialogue</b>
Reconstruction of prior ideas	Can you think of a reason why you should not pay for flags?	Dialogue 1, part a
Prompts for eliciting multiple interpretations	What do you think the nine blue and white stripes are all about?	Dialogue 2, part a
Open-ended questions	Can you imagine something all drawings have in common?	Dialogue 4, part a
	Isn't there something special about autographic art?	Dialogue 1, part a

**Table 8.4: How possibility thinking improved pupils' capacity to create meaning (based on Dialogues 1, 2, 4, part a)**

The next part of 8.2.1, ii, was developed in the light of comments made by Dr. Sigalas on the topic of imaginative thinking (see Appendix 12b).

It is significant to note that the use of narrative, metaphor, prototypical categorization and possibility thinking as described above was not for superficial purposes. On the contrary, such thinking mattered because it was concerned with questions of value (Tallack, 2000) and was used to illuminate serious issues, which is in keeping with Barrow's (1988) and Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) claim that the imagination is central to acts of cognition. Egan (1992) thinks imaginative activity humanizes knowledge. Johnson (1993), Murdoch (1992), Mc Clearly (1993), Greene (1995) and Niebuhr (2001) argue that moral thinking requires imagination as does practicing ethics Kearney (1996). Therefore the imagination is not a decorative or disposable aspect of human cognition but central to its workings: it is a way of thinking that enables value judgments to be made.

An example of such thinking was the way pupils engaged with existential and ethical issues (see Table 6.12, group iii and Table 7.11, group ii) which was serviced by the use of flexible thinking, the appreciation of human potential, cooperativeness, self-confidence (see Dialogues 1, 2, 4, part a), openness, curiosity and philomathy (enthusiasm for learning) (see Dialogue 2). Pupils also embraced spiritual forms of thinking (see Dialogue 6). Through this process, the participants dealt with what it means to be active and creative, which is something that the curriculum recommends (see Appendix 8b, M.1). In addition such thinking can also be reflective and virtuous, and thus embraces an ethical dimension. Hickman (2010), when discussing Gardner's (1983, 1999) theory of multiple intelligences suggests that spiritual intelligence should be added to the existing list of the seven intelligences already identified by Gardner. Spiritual intelligence deals with the existential concerns of learners. These concerns were kept in the foreground of the class on which this research was carried out. From the data referred to above that shows a preoccupation with the development of imagination, and the cultivation of philosophical inquiry to be consistent with the research literature.

<b>The development of imaginative thinking in relationship to serious issues of human existence</b>										
Existential query						Ethical query				
that answers the question: "What kind of being is the pupil?"										
The pupil is										
active and creative						reflective and virtuous				
Qualities that recognize:						Qualities that recognize:				
ability	flexibility	appreciation	potential	cooperativeness	self-confidence	curiosity	openness	philomathy	enthusiasm	spirituality
evidenced in						evidenced in				
Dialogues 1, 2, 4 part a						Dialogue 2		Dialogue 6		

**Table 8.5: Classes' approach to the development of imagination in strong relationship with the cultivation of philosophical query**

*iii. Communicative and expressive forms of thinking related to material consciousness*

The participants used communication skills (see Dialogues 4, part a, 5, part a, 6, part b, and 7, Table 6.12 group i and Table 7.11 group v) in the form of both monologues and dialogical thinking (see Dialogues 1, 2, 3, 4, part b, and 6, part a) that facilitated listening to others (see Dialogue 4, part a), negotiating (see Table 7.11, idea 12), justifying views (see Dialogue 6, part b), initiating ideas (see Dialogue 5, part a and Table 7.11, ideas 2, 9, and 1), and generally participating in a committed way (see Table 6.12, ideas 3, and 10) to discuss meaning, understand symbols, reconstruct perceptions, and justify reasons (see Dialogues 1, 2, 4, part b and 6, part a). This approach, in which pupils practise reflective conversation by making use of skilful knowledge enables creativity, as argued in the sociocultural research paradigm (Perkins, 1988; Cunliffe, 1998; Csikszentmihalyi, 1999).

Classroom interactions that emphasized communication skills, as Ermis described in dialogue 3, were aimed at helping pupils to overcome the fear of expressing their views and to escape from what he described as the *“autistic artist who creates masterpieces that cannot be deciphered.”* It is important to stress that for the participants communicative and expressive forms of thinking are not innate attributes isolated from the influence of other people, as understood by the pupils when they stated that they enjoyed sharing their thoughts on art. Graham (2005, p. 37) makes an analogous argument when he argues that the value of artworks *“lies in the way this is done, not in the mere fact of its being done.”*

Closely related to the ability to communicate with others is the pupils' desire to communicate with informed adults. In this respect, Panagiotis (see Chapter 5.3 – File B) states: *“By asking questions (of the teachers) we can process our thinking in the visual arts, like: What is this? What do you think about that? How do you think that is made? Why is it made like this?”*

Therefore expressive thinking is not built in a void. According to Efland (2002, p. 38) teachers have a Vygotskian task to "provide a critical support structure, or scaffolding in the forms of prompts or suggestions." This process of mediation was evident during the main study when the teachers got pupils to understand the contextual meaning of symbols so as to develop alternative forms of thinking. By doing so, the teachers were reaffirming the view that "neither communication or expression can function in a void" (Gombrich, 1971, p. 68).

In this respect, Gombrich (1971) distinguishes symptomatic from symbolic expression in art. Symptomatic expression is meant to communicate the artist's emotional state of mind; symbolic expression mediates or evokes expression mediated by through symbols as condensed in common or shared cultural forms. In modernist art theory and subsequently in modernist art education, there was a tendency to conflate these two forms of expression, which presupposes a resonance theory of symptomatic or self-expression to be true (Cunliffe, 1998).

The assumption underpinning the resonance theory of expression led to a disproportionate emphasis on the artist being able to directly communicate symptoms at the expense of orchestrating signals and use symbols to arouse feelings and communicate meaning. Gombrich (1996), argued that unlike yawning behaviour, which involuntarily resonates between people, symptomatic potency in art can only operate in conjunction with cultural forms. Following I.A. Richards, Gombrich (1996) exposes the fallacy at the centre of the symptomatic theory of expression in art by drawing attention to the way self-expression is predicated on cultural forms, in which the "feeling and the form" (Gombrich, 1996, pp. 141-155) operate in a mutual way.

To develop this argument, Gombrich (1996) contrasted the "*centrifugal*" theory of self-expression with his "*centripetal*" model of expression, which accounts for artists being able to canalize their symptoms through orchestrating signals and using symbols, all of which get their compound meaning from the background sociocultural context.

In the main study, there was evidence (see Dialogue 2, parts a and b) of Ermis confusing these two forms of expression when the meaning of colours in visual communication was discussed. In his effort to make the expressive potency of colours comprehensible to the pupils, the teacher fell for the fallacy of the resonance theory of expression by giving colours a permanent symbolic meaning, which is not the case (Gombrich, 1971). A closer look at dialogue 2, part a, clarifies this issue. Ermis explored the expressive potency of colour in terms of biology (see Dialogue 2, part b) and the communication of cultural meanings. Pupils as a result were engaged in discussions that enabled them to interpret not exclusively in biological terms but also in terms of cultural conventions. Discussing the biological and cultural potency of colours made pupils realize that they live in both biological and social world.

What was evidenced in the main study was the development of choices that facilitated in pupils' thinking and expression which drew on social, cultural and historical background knowledge for understanding of art.

#### 8.2.2 The use of analogies from different school subjects (source b of core finding I)

The process for meaning-making was facilitated by drawing analogies with other subjects (see Table 5.3, ideas 6 part b and 22 of group v, Table 6.12, idea 12 and Table 7.11, idea 8), which stimulated pupils' potential by making rich connections across disciplines and thus avoiding the tendency to compartmentalize domains of knowledge. By following such a practice, pupils achieved a fuller understanding of the topics (see Dialogues 1, 2, 6, part a), in which reductive bias (see Chapter 8.2.1.ii) was minimized. Research carried out by Bamford (2006), Sharp and Le Metais (2000) and Taggart and colleagues (2004) highlights the importance of combining arts with non-arts subjects when engaging in cross-curricular learning.

#### 8.2.3 The interpretation of meaning in relationship to art, values, and human nature (source c of core finding I)

The third piece of evidence that justified the class's engagement in the learning process is linked to their use of communication and expressive skills (see

Chapter 8.2.1.iii) and the use of analogies from different school subjects (see Chapter 8.2.2).

The two topics for both stages of the main study, the “Greek national flag” (see Chapter 6.3) and “parts and whole” (see Chapter 7.2), were understood by pupils to require acts of interpretation (see Table 6.12, group ii and Table 7.11, idea 11). Such interpretations enabled pupils to construct meaning about the topics in relation to their life world (see Dialogue 2). This proved to be a fruitful procedure for the class since it generated conflicting views about significant aesthetic issues and the role of autographic processes in art (see Dialogue 1, Chapter 6). Kreitler & Kreitler (1972), describe “cognitive orientation” as a type of exploratory thinking that aims to make sense of an artwork. In this respect, pupils interpretations utilized exploratory thinking when they combined their background social and cultural lifework experience with the issues of the lesson (see Dialogue 1).

### **8.3 Core finding II and the literature review**

**Core finding II** is based on a cluster of pedagogical features that were used during the main study and the pilot study as revealed by the teachers and pupils sharing a responsible attitude to learning, which will be given further analysis below.

#### **8.3.1 The significance of a well-structured lesson plans (source d of core finding II)**

In both stages of the main study, well-structured lesson plans (source d of core finding II) and clearly articulated lesson objectives were used to promote learning. Such lesson plans were clearly understood by the pupils (see Table 6.12, group vii, ideas 2, 3, 4, 5, 15 and 16 and Table 7.11, group iii and ideas 1, 2, 3, 7, 11 and 12). The learning plan (see Table 7.11, idea 14) that involved using discussion to clarify the learning objectives (see Table 7.11, ideas 6 and 9) as part of a well-organized classroom (see Table 6.12, idea 14). It is important to note that even though a well-structured lesson plan was not evident

during the pilot study, both teachers and pupils declared their strong preference for a well-structured lesson plan (see Table 5.3, ideas 2, 13, 25).

The evidence of the planning of the teaching and learning of the main study, and the monitoring and assessment strategies used during the pilot study are consistent with the broader literature on the management of learning and the fostering of creativity (Blagg et al., 1988; Cropley, 2001).

Following Feuerstein (1980), Cunliffe (2007b) explains that planning for and managing learning requires teachers to be clear about tasks and to ensure that pupils understand them. Cunliffe thinks teachers must explain the purpose of each task and assist pupils to plan and implement learning strategies like setting goals (see Table 6.12, idea 14; Table 7.11 ideas 6, 9, 14). The teacher’s responsibility to clearly describe the purpose of the tasks clearly is also promoted in the research (Craft 2005; Bamford, 2006) as a feature that fosters creative learning.

Referring to Wood’s (1990) description of the pedagogical features of creative teaching, Craft (2005) highlights the significance of providing pupils with a clear structure and instructions. The significance of clear instructions for learning and of offering a “clear curriculum” (Craft, 2005, p. 60) is in broad agreement with the participants of this study, as can be seen by the evidence listed below.

<b>Cunliffe, 2007b</b>	<b>Main study codes</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
“Be clear about what they want pupils to experience” (p. 39).	Table 6.12, idea 14	Clear description of lesson tasks and objectives
“Enable pupils to develop planning strategies to include goal seeking, setting and achieving (ability to be strategic)” (p. 39).	Table 7.11, idea 6	Teachers and pupils discuss learning objectives with pupils
“Ensure that pupils understand their task” (p. 39).	Table 6.12, idea 14 Table 7.11, idea 9	Lesson objectives understood by pupils

**Table 8.6: Planning strategies**

(Source: Cunliffe, 2007b)

The problem of assessment in art was raised by pupils and teachers. Evidence of using the assessment process as described by Cunliffe (2007b, p. 54) was evident during both stages of the main study. When describing these procedures, Cunliffe (2007b, p. 45) emphasizes the “need to enable students to learn how to learn.” Some practices that nurture learning how to learn were observed during the main study.

<b>Cunliffe, 2007b</b>	<b>Main study codes</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
“Create a range of alternative ideas in response to the brief, showing how you have tried to improve and develop your thinking” (p. 54).	Table 6.12, idea 3 Table 7.11, idea 2	Purposeful discussions
“Draw ideas from a variety of self-identified sources, then explore and refine them” (p. 54).	Table 6.12, idea 2 Table 7.11, ideas 2 & 11 (in relation)	Relating experience to values and ideas
“Use selected materials, techniques and technology with skill and control” (p. 54).	Table 6.12, idea 16 Table 7.11, idea 7	Processes for acquiring skilfulness
“Make well thought out comments on your work, in terms of fitness for purpose” (p. 54).	Table 6.12, idea 3 Table 7.11, ideas 3, 12	Skill in organizing knowledge acquisition

**Table 8.7: Assessment strategies**

(Source: Cunliffe, 2007b)

Additional practices were evident during the main study that were a corollary of a well-structured lesson plan, notably the fact that pupils were attentive (see Table 7.11, idea 1; Table 6.12, ideas 4, 5), which meant that they spent most of the time on their task (Cunliffe, 2007b, p. 57).

In order to improve learning Cunliffe (2007b, p. 57) states that: “Rather than distracting the students, the time they spend on their task should be maximized” and also: “Setting challenging work with an emphasis on the cognitive content is helpful” (see Table 6.12, idea 3; Table 7.11, idea 9).



Lastly, Craft (2005), referring to Wood’s (1990) description of the pedagogical features of creative teaching, mentions the significance of the teacher not raising his/her voice in the classroom. The findings recorded as ideas 5 and 15 of Table 6.12 and idea 1, of Table 7.11), reveal pedagogical features that exemplify Wood’s approach (1990).

<b>Cunliffe, 2007b</b>	<b>Main study codes</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
“Maximizing the time students spend on task” (p. 57).	Table 6.12, ideas 4, 5 Table 7.11, idea 1	Pupils attentive to the process
<b>Craft, 2005</b>	Table 6.12, ideas 5, 15 Table 7.11, idea 1	Conditions of creative teaching, not raising the voice in the classroom
“No raised voices; control was often gained by lowering the voice” (p. 48).		
<b>Cunliffe, 2007b</b>	Table 6.12, idea 3 Table 7.11, idea 9	Setting challenging work
“Setting challenging work with an emphasis on cognitive content” (p. 57).		

**Table 8.8: Supportive strategies for a well-structured lesson plan**

(Source: Craft, 2005; Cunliffe, 2007b)

In summary, during the main study both pupils and teachers attached great importance to sharing their understanding of the tasks which, along with the use of planning monitoring and evaluation strategies, allowed them to achieve strong learning outcomes.

### 8.3.2 Teachers’ role (source e of core finding II)

The teachers’ role in the learning process showed they had the ability to (see Table 6.12, groups v, vi; Table 7.11, concept c and ideas 8, 18 and 19):

- inspire pupils’ interest (see Table 6.12, ideas 8, 9; Table 7.11, idea 7);
- facilitate pupils’ discussion of ideas and further their thinking (see Table 6.12, ideas 6, 13, 16, 17, 18; Table 7.11, ideas 8, 11, 15, 3, 16, 15);
- initiate pupils’ inquiries and enthusiastically support them in solving problems by providing appropriate feedback (see Table 6.12, ideas 20, 19, 17; Table 7.11, ideas 19, 18, 3, 16, 11, 12, 5);
- additionally, during the pilot study pupils referred to important attributes that teachers must possess in order to exercise their leadership role (see

Table 5.3 group ix). For example Katina indicated that her role is that of an advisor and facilitator (see Table 5.3, idea 23).

Craft (2005) describes one such attribute as the process of passing control of the learning process from the teacher to the pupils. This includes pupils initiating questions, and, more generally, cooperating with each other in the learning process. In this respect, the teachers who participated in the main study, Ermis and Aphrodite, acted in a Vygotskian way by providing support in the form of prompts and guidance.

From a critical perspective, it can be claimed that Ermis sometimes made provocative remarks on learning issues. What really happened was that Ermis sometimes played “devil's advocate,” aiming to make the core idea fully understood by pupils. For example, in dialogue 1, part b which records the discussion of the value of autographic work in relationship to photography, Ermis had to defend the value of autographic processes in art and chose to do this by referring to the invention of photography. Ermis argued that photography did not diminish the value of autographic processes, as one might expect. Instead, he argued that artists saw a new role for art, one not based on truth of appearances but truth of relationships as condensed in the form of expressive relationships (Gombrich, 2002): Ermis said: *“The invention of photography liberates artists from the task of simply copying and turns their interest to search for other qualities of visual experience.”*

### 8.3.3 Pupils' role (source f of core finding II)

The pupils' role can be described as that of acting responsibly to control their own learning (see Table 5.3, concept b as regards group vi in relation to iv and idea 21 of group vii; Table 6.12 groups iv, vi; Table 7.11, concept a). They showed personal interest and when interviewed referred to their enjoyment, exploration, and acting co-operatively with each other.

The description above of the teachers' and pupils' roles is consistent with what Craft (2005, p. 47) describes as a “creative learning process,” in which pupils take ownership of the learning through active participation in order to meet the

learning targets. In this respect, the relationship between Ermis and the pupils was reciprocal (Freire, 1985; Giroux, 1992), even though it was always “asymmetrical” (Reid, 1986), given their unequal status.

<b>Craft, 2005</b>	<b>Main study codes</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
“Creative learning occurs in environments which foster [among other features] control and ownership” (p. 47).	Table 6.12, groups v, vi Table 7.11, concept c	Teachers passing control to learners
	Table 6.12, groups iv, vi Table 7.11, concept a	Pupils owning the learning process

**Table 8.9: High level of responsibility taken by teachers and pupils**

(Source: Craft, 2005)

In summary, the main study showed evidence of methods of teaching that promoted experiential learning and the co-construction of meaning.

#### **8.4 The research findings, models of art education, and theories of learning**

As already discussed, the analysis of the findings (see Figure 7.2) revealed two alternative but complementary core findings in terms of the research question. I will now compare these core findings with the models of art education and related theories of learning as previously discussed in chapter three (see Chapter 3.4), with a view to situating the participants’ perceptions about learning in art in the wider framework of twentieth-century art education.

##### **8.4.1 The research findings and models of art education**

The findings suggest that pupils’ ability to construct meaning was owed to the deployment of a wide range of thinking skills, summarized in core finding I as imaginative, interpretive, expressive, and rule-governed forms of thinking, combined with certain dispositions as described in core finding II, such as teachers responsibly mediating well-structured lesson plans, and pupils being responsible in the way they claimed ownership of their own learning (see Chapter 7.15). These two core findings illuminate how learning in art involved the class creating works (art production), raising questions about values and articulating ideas about human nature in relationship to art (aesthetics),

interpreting art (art criticism), and making enquiries into the cultural and social context of art works (art history). In other words, the analysis of the data revealed that this particular class's learning was determined by three forms of knowledge: knowing how to make art (procedural), knowing that, for understanding art (declarative), and knowing what to do by acting responsibly (insightful, ethical knowledge for monitoring the procedural and declarative content) (Cunliffe, 2007a, 2008).

Such an approach shares many features with discipline-based art education (DBAE) as discussed previously (see Chapter 3.4.4), which was the first model to combine activities for making art with strategies for understanding art. Other aspects of DBAE that were incorporated into the class's experience of art included active learning (see sources c, b, aii & aiii), and the ambition to enable pupils to systematically understand and value adult practices of art (see Chapter 7.2d).

The research findings also show, however, that some of the class's experience went beyond the DBAE model of art education to include the use of analogies from alternative school subjects (see Chapter 8.2.2), which is a more recent initiative in education, and a preference for a pedagogy that gives greater emphasis to the pupils' life world (see core finding I, sources a and c) and their artworks. Such practices are consistent with the post-modern model of art education as discussed in chapter three (see Chapter 3.4.5).

In contrast, the emphasis on autographic processes distinguishes the class's work from a post-modern art curriculum (see Table 6.12, group iii and Dialogue 1, parts a and b and Table 7.11, group viii), which puts greater emphasis on new technology. In this respect, the class's experience of art was more in keeping with the reconstructivist model of art, which distinguishes the role of autographic processes from technologically produced works of art. Another feature that was more consistent with the reconstructivist model of art education was the aim of developing pupils' meta-level forms of thinking by using heuristics, a well-structured approach that, if pursued in a deliberate way over time, can lead to learning how to learn (see core finding II). Such cognitive routines are better nurtured by coherent lesson plans with clear and challenging

learning objectives. An understanding of the teacher as an expert who needs rich subject knowledge, sophisticated pedagogical subject knowledge, and very good communication skills also distinguished this research from the emphasis given in post-modern art education, which promotes the role of the teacher as equal to that of the pupils, so as to balance power relationships (see core finding II).

In summary, the class and teachers who participated in this research used practices derived from a range of models of art education that have emerged in the last forty years.

#### 8.4.2 The research findings in comparison with theories of learning

During both stages of the main study, the teaching and learning strategies used to support the learning were consistent with social constructivism (Bruner, 1971; Vygotsky, 1978; Feuerstein, 1980). Social constructivism (see Chapter 3.4.1.d and 3.4.5.c & d) involves teachers using forms of mediation (see core finding II, sources d, e and f and Dialogues 1-4) to expand pupils' thinking abilities by building on their prior knowledge (see core finding I, sources a, b and c and Dialogues 1-4) to develop perception, experiences, and feelings about the content to be learned, as was the case in both stages of the main study.

The adopted methods of teaching and learning used during the main study enabled the pupils to construct meaning in an active, participative way. Such learning procedures promote experiential teaching and critical learning.

##### *Experiential learning*

Experiential learning values pupils' lifeworld, which is then used to support the development of new learning (Kelly, 1955; Rogers, 1969). This was evidenced during the main study when pupils' prior understanding was used to contribute to the construction of meaning. The strategies applied by the teachers offered pupils opportunities to ask questions and to justify and generate new ideas (see core finding I, sources aii, aiii, b & c).

The class's learning resulted from the interactions stimulated by pupils' initial perceptions of art works. Building from these initial reactions, the teachers used interventions in the form of prompts and open-ended questions to develop the process of mediation which, in line with Vygotsky's thinking (1978), assisted the pupils to reach a more informed understanding of the issues (see core finding II, sources d, e & f). With mediated forms of learning the teachers in this study supported pupils to reformulate their understanding (see Dialogues 1–4) about ideas when reflecting on background knowledge. This collaborative approach enabled the pupils to extend their ability to think in a more informed and critical way.

### *Critical study*

The learning process involved pupils engaging in critical thinking, a form of discourse that balanced making art with understanding it (see core finding I). This form of critical thinking is in line with recent approaches in art education (Field, 1970; Dyson, 1989; Efland, 2002; Freedman, 2003). Such critical insights supported the acquisition of procedural and declarative forms of knowledge, as recorded in dialogues 1, 2, 3 and 4. Pupils built learning on a synthesis that includes the search for background knowledge, the account of the cultural process of the field they study (see Dialogues 1–4), and the practice of autographic skills. In other words pupils engaged with the process of “formula and experience” (Gombrich, 2002, p. 126–152), so as to balance the medium with the message, as described by Cunliffe (1998).

### *Cognitive flexibility theory*

An analysis of the data showed that a flexible approach was used to develop learning (see Chapter 8, Table 8.1). Spiro et al. (1988), have described such an approach as cognitive flexibility, which incorporates many strategies for achieving a better understanding of a domain. Efland (2002, p. 160) states that cognitive flexibility is “the ability to change strategies ... to activate the appropriate means to secure meaning and understanding,” and, “to be flexible one needs a repertoire of strategies from which choices can be made.” Spiro et al. (1987), give an explicit description of such a “repertoire of strategies.” With

respect to propositional forms of knowledge acquisition they list the use of verbal and numerical symbols, principles, laws, concepts, and generalizations associated with well-structured knowledge domains. Non-propositional forms of thinking draw on metaphors and narratives, feelings, the emotions, or that which can be shown rather than said, for acquiring insights into ill-structured but complex knowledge domains. In the light of cognitive flexibility theory, strategies used in the classroom are derived from methods that are found in well- and ill-structured knowledge domains.

The use of strategies associated with cognitive flexibility enhances the potential for problem-solving, as evidenced in the classroom interactions which were analysed as part of this research (see core finding I).

In summary, it can be argued that learning during the main study resulted from a sociocultural approach to art education and the related classroom interactions. When the pupils communicated ideas and constructed and reconstructed meaning they did so by using declarative knowledge, (see sources aii, aiii, sources b & c of core finding I) to complement procedural knowledge and the associated development material consciousness in order to produce visual symbols (see source a, i, of core finding I). In this environment pupils and teachers acted responsibly. The teachers created the appropriate social environment in which the pupils were able to productively engage in dialogue. Pupils were enabled to realize the aim of producing symbols to visually communicate their ideas (see sources d, e and f of core finding II). These symbols are the intermediary tools (Buhler, 1990), what Vygotsky (1978), describes as instruments and Gombrich (2002), as schemata, that pupils acquired as a result of sociocultural interaction (see Dialogues 1, 2, 3 and 4).

To conclude this chapter has linked and discussed the research findings back to the models of art education and theories of learning that have emerged in the later part of the twentieth century, with more overlapping features being found between the research findings and the reconstructivist model of art education and its related sociocultural approach for knowledge acquisition.

<b>Study codes</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Teaching strategy</b>
Source c, b, aii and aiii	Building on pupils' prior knowledge	Experiential learning
Source f	Pupils' role as "contributors" to the acquisition of knowledge and the construction of meaning	
Source d, e	Teachers as facilitators and experts	
Core finding I Source b	Procedural and declarative knowledge Analogies with many subjects	Critical study
Source a	Propositional and non-propositional forms of thought	Cognitive flexibility theory

**Table 8.10: Findings and teaching strategies**

## **8.5 Learning in art**

Thus far I have discussed knowledge acquisition in art as promoted by sociocultural interactions using three forms of knowledge: knowing that, knowing how and knowing what to do, an ethical approach that responsibly monitors the other two forms of knowledge. This, however, only represents a fraction of the learning that is possible through art education. For example, one aspect of learning that contributed to the class's acquisition of knowledge that has so far not been discussed is the topic of the learner as a free ranging thinker. A review of the content of the two core findings for the research question (see Chapters 8.2 and 8.3) supports this point. For example, the pupils engaged in a philosophical discussion about human nature, existence, and values, as found in both stages of the main study (see Table 6.12, group iii; Table 7.11, group ii, Dialogues 4, 5 and Chapter 8.2.1, ii). In particular, the pupils strove to overcome their insecurity and inadequate expression by adopting a positive state of mind. This ontological outlook has an ethical dimension, which links to human potential and the ability to engage productively with serious issues like sustainability and the need to adopt outlooks in keeping



with future flourishing. Knowing what to do, an executive, an ethically responsible and insightful type of knowledge that monitors forms of knowing that and knowing how (Cunliffe 2007a, 2008) is a form of knowledge that frames the learner as a thinker in the humanist tradition.

Below is an attempt to represent such learning as engaging with philosophical enquiry as revealed through this case study. The top row refers to epistemological matters of learning in art including the content of the curriculum, the bottom row to ontological matters. It can be argued that the numerator is concerned with the question “how is knowledge acquired?” whereas the denominator is more in keeping with the question “who is the learner?”

Learning in art	$= \frac{\text{socio – cultural forms of mediation + procedural + declarative knowledge}}{\text{learner as humanist thinker}}$
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**Table 8.11: Conceptualizing learning in art**

### **8.6 The relationship between the findings and the art curriculum designed for Greek arts schools**

The art curriculum for Greece’s specialist arts schools is primarily aimed at developing pupils’ cognitive processes. As already mentioned (see Chapters 3.9.1 & 3.9.3c), one way of achieving this aim is to have pupils deal in both procedural and declarative knowledge. In this respect the curriculum document makes references to the importance of developing a critical and contextual understanding of art (see Tables 3.3, 3.4, 3.5), which requires both declarative and procedural knowledge. In addition, operating with experiential learning is implied since the curriculum promotes the idea that pupils and teachers should actively collaborate in the learning process (see Table 3.6).

The curriculum strongly promotes such varied aspects of cognition, including the significance of procedural and declarative knowledge and the related socio-cultural conception of learning, which work in unison to enable pupils to make meaning.

In comparing the content of the two core findings that can answer the research question with the art curriculum for Greece’s specialist arts schools (see Appendix 8b), one can argue that the research findings are related and consistent with the content specified in the curriculum document (see Table 8.12).

		Research findings	Points related to the visual art curriculum for the arts schools of Greece	What was practiced?		
Core finding I	Source a	i	Rule-governed thinking	C.O.2, S.O.1, S.O.2, S.O.3, S.O.4, S.O.5, A.4, M.2, C.O.1, M.4, T.A.1, AS.3, T.A.2.	Critical pedagogy	Cognitive flexibility theory
		ii	Imaginative thinking	S.O.1, T.A.2, S.O.4.		
		iii	Communicative and expressive thinking	C.O.1, A.3, S.O.2, S.O.3, S.O.5, S.O.8, S.O.9, S.O.10.		
	Source b	Analogies drawn from different subjects	M.7, C.C.S.W.1, M.11.			
	Source c	Acts of interpretation	C.O.3, C.O.4, S.O.7, S.O.12, M.10, M.11, S.O.10, AS.5, T.A.3-6, C.C.S.W.1.			
Core finding II	Source d	Well-structured lesson plan	M.8, AS.1, M.16, M.12, AS.6, AS.7.	Experiential learning		
	Source e	Leading role of teacher	M.6, M.3, M.4, M.5, AS.2, AS.3, M.1, M.8, M.12, M.13, M.11.			
	Source f	Controlling role of pupils	M.6, M.3, A.3, AS.2, AS.3, M.1, M.8, M.12, M.13, M.9, M.14, S.O.5.			

**Table 8.12: Findings in relation to the visual art curriculum**

### 8.7 The research findings and current literature on art education

The two core findings for answering the research question of this study, and the related parts of the art curriculum for Greece's specialist arts schools (see Table 8.12), will now be discussed in relationship to the recent international research in learning in art education, notably Hickman's (2010) publication that highlights issues for U.K. art education, the international survey that Bamford (2006) carried out on the impact of the arts in education and Harland et al's (2000) U.K. based project, which was aimed at illuminating good practice in art education (see Table 8.13). Comparing these three research projects to this study gives extra significance and validity to the research.

Hickman (2010) undertook a series of mini case studies to identify what teachers and learners consider to be important in learning in art. Because case study cannot be generalized, Hickman's findings have a restricted application in art education, given that they can only provide some transfer value to other contexts. Hickman understands the role of imagination, expression, identity and motivation as the participants' most significant concerns. These key themes identified by Hickman's case study parallel some of the findings of this study (see Table 8.13), but with one exception.

For Hickman the urge to make art, "to create aesthetic significance" as he describes it (2010, p. 103), is a "natural human characteristic" (2010, p.129) and a "naturally occurring behaviour" (2010, p. 131). A connected idea, for Hickman, is the concept of expression, or "authentic self-expression" as he prefers to name it (2010, p. 106), which he uses to describe students who aim for a "genuine individualized response to learning" (2010, p. 120). For Hickman, who does not deny the Vygotskian view of the role of social and cultural factors in cognitive development, the key role in developing aesthetic understanding is the part played by what he describes as the "para-linguistic" and "para-cultural" (2010, p. 129), which he thinks lies beyond social and cultural processes, as it involves the act of visualizing images and making use of the creator's feelings (2010, p.127).

In this respect Hickman's foundational role to biology for art making, as summarised in the importance he gives to the view of art making as authentic self expression, has the same meaning and genealogical source of what Gombrich (1971) describes as symptomatic expression, a romantic idea in which the locus of art lies within an individual (see Chapter 8.2.1.iii). Hickman's privileging the biological in art over other factors contrasts with what my study has revealed, in which human biology plays an equal part to the wider social and cultural aspects that determine how art gets made in any one context (see Chapter 8.4.2).

Hickman highlights the importance of the supportive environment, "the right conditions" (2010, p. 132), for the learning process. He further argues that teachers should instruct pupils in studio skills (2010, p. 125) and that art making "should be prioritized" as it improves the quality of pupils' thinking (2010, p.137).

On these points Hickman's ideas are consistent with the findings of my research (see Table 8.12, source ai of core finding I).

Furthermore, Hickman links his notion of authentic self-expression to the role of the teacher in praising and encouraging pupils when learning in art (2010, p. 106). However, if authentic self-expression is biological and individual in its foundations, given that its aboriginal source is para-linguistic and para-cultural, the teacher's praise would seem to distort the integrity of the so-called authentic expression, given that the pupils might be responding more to the teacher's prompts and rewards than their self-motivated, authentic forms of expression. My study also revealed evidence of teachers praising their pupils' work and behavior (see Table 8.12, source e in relation to source d and f). However, the teachers also gave explicit instructions based on Vygotskian principles of mediation (see Chapter 8.4.2) to promote learning and develop knowledge (see Chapter 8.3.1 and Tables 8.6, 8.7 & 8.8). Such forms of mediation do not make distinctions between the biological and cultural, as in the Vygotskian tradition the operation of mind is convergent with what Wittgenstein (2001, #415) described as "the natural history of human beings." Wittgenstein uses the phrase natural history of human beings to overcome false dualisms that have emerged between nature and culture. The natural history of human beings gets played out when a person acquires a culture's picture of the world and its related set of judgments, as: "Commanding, questioning, storytelling, chatting, are as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing" (Wittgenstein, 2001, #25).

My study chimes closely with Hickman's argument for the importance of imagination. In Hickman's study imagination and related areas like possibility thinking and empathetic understanding are being identified by the participants as integral for promoting art education. Hickman's idea about imagination is consistent with the findings of my research (see Table 8.12, source aii of core finding I). Finally, Hickman highlighted the importance of identity in art education, which parallels the concept of identity that is found in core finding II, source f. Identity includes features like a sense of achievement, self-esteem, and self-confidence that can be raised through engagement in arts activities.

Bamford's (2006) international research on art education has some parallel features with the research findings of my study. Bamford argued that practices

of risk taking, possibility thinking, interpretive skills and developing cultural and self awareness, encourage learners to operate at their full potential. Such practices were evident in my study as made apparent in the content of core finding I, source aii and source c (see Table 8.12). The concept of identity, which Hickman's case study highlighted as a significant theme for art educators, is also promoted by Bamford as an important component of art education. Bamford sees identity as central for promoting self-esteem, which enables pupils to become more confident, as their learning is grounded in an identity. The importance of identity was also evident in my case study, which was made apparent in the content of core finding II (see Table 8.12, source f).

Bamford's study also identified that quality in art education is of great benefit to pupils' social and cultural well being, in which the promotion of the sense of community and shared sense of spirit was evident, which was also the case in my study. For example, practices that promote creative activity, considered by Bamford as rich learning practices in art education like performance and exhibitions, the development of verbal communication as informed conversation, presentations, collaboration, and the ability to contest each others' ideas about art, were also evident in this study (see Table 8.12, source ai, aii & aiii).

Finally, Bamford identified the significance of certain strategies used to monitor and assess work as a characteristic of quality in arts programmes, as these also facilitated pupils' powers of meta-cognition and critical understanding. Such strategies can be linked to aspects of this study as recorded in source d of core finding II of table 8.12 (see also Table 8.7).

Harland et al's (2000) research into the effects and effectiveness of art education in secondary schools in the UK was aimed at illuminating learning outcomes associated with art education. Harland et al. revealed a series of learning outcomes associated with art education that are consistent with my study. One such learning outcome involves the development of expressive skills used in communication, for social interactions, the development of language, critical and active listening, and the formulation and articulation of statements. The learning outcome about the development of communication and expressive skills in Harland et al's research is in parallel with my case study, which is apparent in the content of core finding I (see Table 8.12, source aiii).

Another finding of Harland et al's research was the importance of empathy and awareness of others for improving learners' knowledge of social and cultural issues. This finding echoes aspects of the learning process as identified by my study as source aii, of core finding I (see Table 8.12). In Harland et al's study pupils understood creativity as an intended outcome of art education, which engages a cluster of processes and meanings to include experimentation, technical skillfulness, imagination, interpretation, critical thinking, and cultural and social awareness. A similar use of cognitive processes and meaning making were evidenced in my study, as identified as sources ai, aii and source c of core finding I (see Table 8.12).

Core finding II (see sources d, e, f of Table 8.12 and Table 8.8), which identifies the significance of developing a well-structured lesson plan that includes strategies for monitoring and assessing learning, as well as encouraging the active role of pupils in the learning process parallels the evidence in Harland et al's research about the development of learners' personal and social skills. Harland et al's study identified the practice of "praise culture" as a very important component that provides high support for underpinning high attainment, which they describe as the "high challenge and high support model of interaction" (Harland et al., 2000, p. 511). Finally, Harland et al's study also evidenced practices that raise pupils' self-worth, self-esteem, pride and sense of achievement. These positive outcomes are replicated in my research, as located in source f of core finding II (see Table 8.12) in my study.

To conclude, the review of recent research into art education above reveals a lot of convergence between what is valued in current international research in art education, the findings of this study, and the emphasis found in the art curriculum for Greece's specialist arts schools. In this respect, my study and the international research provides a challenge for Greece's arts education policy, given that both acknowledge a significant role for developing imaginative thinking and nurturing responsibility when engaging in the learning process (see Table 8.13). The next chapter will expand on this last point by justifying the need to give a much stronger emphasis to imaginative thinking and responsible learning when aiming to revise the art curriculum for Greece's specialist arts schools.

		Research findings	Points related to the visual art curriculum for the arts schools of Greece	Research findings of Hickman (2010)	Research findings of Bamford (2006)	Research findings of Harland et al. (2000)
Core finding I	Source a	i Rule-governed thinking	C.O.2, S.O.1, S.O.2, S.O.3, S.O.4, S.O.5, A.4, M.2, C.O.1, M.4, T.A.1, AS.3, T.A.2.	Technical instructions	Practices of active creation, performance, exhibition	Technical skills
		ii Imaginative thinking	S.O.1, T.A.2, S.O.4.	Imaginative thinking Possibility thinking Empathetic understanding	Risk taking Possibility thinking Self awareness Awareness of others	Empathy, Awareness of others Imaginative thinking
		iii Communicative and expressive thinking	C.O.1, A.3, S.O.2, S.O.3, S.O.5, S.O.8, S.O.9, S.O.10.	Authentic expression	Sence of community Verbal communication collaboration Conversation Shared responsibility Test of ideas	Interactive communication Expressive skills
	Source c	Acts of interpretation	C.O.3, C.O.4, S.O.7, S.O.12, M.10, M.11, S.O.10, AS.5, T.A.3-6, C.C.S.W.1.	Creating aesthetic significance, is innate, naturally occurring behaviour, para-cultural activity.	Cultural awareness Interpretive models of inquiry	Awareness of cultural and social issues Interpretive and critical skills
Core finding II	Source d	Well-structured lesson plan	M.8, AS.1, M.16, M.12, AS.6, AS.7.	Praise and encouragement	Monitoring Assessment	“Praise culture” High challenge High support model of interaction
	Source f	Controlling role of pupils	M.6, M.3, A.3, AS.2, AS.3, M.1, M.8, M.12, M.13, M.9, M.14, S.O.5.	Identity Sense of achievement Self esteem	Identity Sense of confidence	Self esteem Self confidence

**Table 8.13: Findings in relation to international research**

### 8.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the research findings in relationship to the recent literature on thinking skills, creativity and art education. The comparative analysis has implications for the development of the art curriculum for Greece’s specialist arts schools, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**



## **CHAPTER NINE – IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **9.1 Introduction**

This final chapter of the study is divided into three parts. The first part of the chapter summarizes the findings and presents their implications for revising aspects of the Greek national curriculum that currently prescribes what should be taught and learned in specialist arts schools. The second part gives an overview of the study by restating the research question, identifying the original aims, and justifying the interpretive methodology that was used to collect data. The third part deals with the limitations of the study and identifies directions for future research.

### **9.2 Summary of the findings**

The research was based on a case study using participant observation, individual semi-structured interviews, and focus groups to interpret pupils' and teachers' perceptions about learning in relationship to the prescribed aims of the art curriculum and teaching methods in the context of one of Greece's specialist arts schools.

The two core findings go some way in answering the research question. Each core finding is drawn from a body of evidence. The first core finding concerns the way pupils and teachers were resourcefully engaged in the process of teaching and learning (see Chapter 8.2). The engagement is considered to be resourceful because it was supported by insightful knowledge, which was used to responsibly monitor the reliability of procedural and declarative knowledge. The evidence also highlighted the significance of cognitive flexibility and imaginative thinking for underpinning pedagogy in the particular school where the research was carried out (see Chapter 8.4.2). The wider contribution that cognitive flexibility and imaginative thinking can make to the art curriculum for Greece's specialist arts schools will be discussed later in this chapter.

The second core finding highlights the significance of the responsible attitude adopted by both pupils and teachers for making progress in learning in art (see

Chapter 8.3). Such a responsible approach was supported by particular conditions, notably the development and use of well-structured lesson plans, where the teacher's role was to inspire and lead pupils, and the pupils' role was to show initiative in the way they developed their learning.

### **9.3 Relating the findings to the art curriculum for Greece's specialist arts schools**

Although the two core findings are consistent with the existing content of the art curriculum as prescribed for specialist arts schools (see Chapter 8.6 and Table 8.12), it can be argued the research opened up areas for further possible development.

### **9.4 Implications of the research for Greece's current art curriculum for specialist arts schools**

The art curriculum for Greece's specialist arts schools makes reference to the importance of synthesizing different aspects of cognition when learning in art (see Table 8.12 and Chapter 8.6). In this respect, one of the sources of the first core finding of the study, that of the significance of imaginative thinking, suggests a further need to explicitly incorporate such an approach into the art curriculum. The curriculum already provides some opportunities that can help the development of imaginative thinking. For example, the emphasis on cross-curricular learning can facilitate thinking in categories, which is a basic component of imaginative thinking as described in chapter eight (see Chapter 8.2.1,ii,a). However, the imagination can also be understood as needing to run on a repertoire of traits and knowledge (see Chapter 8.2.1,ii), which this study sees as central to the further fostering of such thinking in Greece's specialist arts schools.

#### 9.4.1 The significance of imaginative thinking in the research findings

The significance of imaginative thinking for enhancing the learning process has already been described (Efland, 2002; Egan, 2002; see Chapter 8.2.1). In this regard, the literature identifies the importance of two notions: firstly, that metaphors and narratives are essential features for driving imaginative thinking (Johnson, 1987); and secondly, imaginative thinking, in that it enables progression towards “the creation of personal meaning and in the transmission of culture” (Efland, 2002, p. 153), maximizes a learner’s cognitive potential (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Hickman (2010) also promotes the importance that the imagination can play in school curricula. Such research findings support the view that when metaphors, possibility thinking, and narrative structures are used in an educational setting, they enable a better understanding of human nature and meaning making when condensed in art (Efland, 2002). As this study is aimed at identifying possible new insights that could contribute to the provision of art education in Greece (see Chapter 2.8), it is appropriate to identify how the issue of “imaginative thinking” is currently covered in the art curriculum of specialist arts schools, with the purpose of further promoting this feature in the curriculum.

#### 9.4.2 Flexible and imaginative thinking and the art curriculum for Greece’s specialist arts schools

As already stated (see Appendix 8b and Table 8.12), different parts of the art curriculum for the specialist arts schools emphasize the importance of developing imaginative thinking.

##### *a. Imaginative thinking in relation to the aims of the curriculum*

In the first part of the curriculum, the art experience is defined as a cognitive activity made up from four strands: *familiarization* (A.1), *researching* (A.2), *enjoying* (A.3), and *appreciation and creation* (A.4). These key words describe the cognitive processes that are used when learning in art.

Although such a framework for learning in art does not explicitly make reference to the role of imagination, it could be argued that it does provide the necessary structure to make any reference to the development of the imagination more responsive to recent research findings. Enabling pupils to familiarize themselves with certain topics, that is, learning to research in a deep way by engaging in a range of activities, teachers will need to explicitly draw on imaginative thinking. In this respect, I want to highlight previous references to the way the research literature identifies the importance of the imagination in the development of human cognition (see Chapter 8.2.1), and the part played by the imagination in promoting insight and sustaining learners' cognitive development as revealed in this study.

As the imagination seems critical for orchestrating a range of cognitive processes, it could be argued that the curriculum needs to explicitly sign post and incorporate the development of such flexible and imaginative thinking in order to sustain pupils' journeys into learning by using roads that maximize their cognitive potential.

With this idea of cognitive flexibility and imaginative thinking in mind (see Chapter 8.4.2), it might be appropriate to supplement Aim 4 of the current curriculum with this key phrase (changes to the curriculum recorded in bold).

In order to achieve this aim, pupils engage in <b>forms of thinking that incorporate flexibility</b> to research activities and the creation of artworks so as to develop their skills in creating and appreciating art
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**Table 9.1: Proposal for modifying Aim four (A.4) of the curriculum**

This suggestion can be counted as significant if, in the rest of the curriculum for the art subject (core objectives, methodology, etc.), the use of complex qualities of mind are deemed to be important when seeking for and applying knowledge. In this respect, it is important to realize that from the outset the art curriculum should be identified as a complex, ill-structured knowledge-domain that requires a variety of instructional approaches and nurturing a range of thinking skills. In the light of cognitive flexibility theory, the use of such cognitive tools and pedagogy for developing imaginative thinking (as previously discussed in Chapter 8.4.2) can only enrich the learning process in art.

To continue with the importance of explicitly incorporating imaginative thinking in the art curriculum, I will now place the focus on the part of the curriculum identified as “core objectives.”

*b. Imaginative thinking and the core objectives of the art curriculum*

The core objectives give further explanation to the aims of the curriculum. The “core objectives” section explains that familiarization, researching, appreciation, and creation can be achieved through producing art, participating in art related activities, and understanding art. In this varied description of learning in art, opportunities for explicitly developing imaginative thinking can be woven through the stated processes as all four core objectives occupy territory where imaginative thinking can be fruitfully developed.

This is especially the case with C.O.3, “cultivate pupils’ perceptive response and understanding, as well as their critical approach and analysis of art and of the arts in general”; and C.O.4, “deepen pupils’ understanding of the cultural dimension of the arts and its contribution to society over time”; not to mention the topic of creativity presented in C.O.1, “develop pupils’ creativity, as well as their ability to produce works of art and to promote their participation in art,” all of which map onto to imaginative thinking, particularly C.O.3, which highlights the significance of nurturing a “perceptive response.” Such a response is further described as a feature of understanding that incorporate critical and analytical processes that involve categorization based on metaphors and other vehicles for thought. As for C.O.4, this has already been mentioned (see Chapter 8.2.1) in relationship to exercising powers of imagination for transmitting the cultural dimensions of an artwork.

The way the four objectives above are implicitly phrased can easily limit their interpretation. I will justify this view by referring to an example of learning that was captured in dialogue 1, part a and b, in chapter six.

As has already been discussed (see Chapter 8.2.1) pupils expressed a stereotyped, naive view of the merit of autographic works of art, resulting in the

phenomenon called “reductive bias.” This raises two questions: how did their teachers fight against this stereotyped view, and what are the strategies they used to do this? The answers to these questions provide good reasons why imaginative thinking should be explicitly included in the “core objectives” of the curriculum. Going back to the text (see Chapter 8.2.1.ii.c.) Ermis, adopted the strategic approach as described in C.O.4. In part b, of dialogue 1 (see Chapter 6) by fostering pupils’ understanding through introducing them to the cultural dimension of the problem they were dealing with. In this respect, C.O.4 proved very significant for developing pupils’ understanding. However, the content of part b, of dialogue 1, which is consistent with instructional practice as prescribed by C.O.4, might not always be adequate for overcoming the pupils’ stereotyped view.

The way Ermis’ intervention (as recorded in part a, dialogue 1, see Chapter 6), subverts the pupils’ stereotyped view can be linked to some of the content of C.O.3, especially phrases like “perceptive response,” “understanding,” and “analysis.” However, such phrases do not fully describe the process by which pupils’ stereotyped view was subverted. The phrase “critical approach” comes closer to describing the nature of the intervention and what followed when the class reflected on their previous stereotyped knowledge to develop a new understanding (see Chapter 8.4.2) by adopting a more critical approach to the problem.

Furthermore, engaging with a critical approach allows pupils to reflect and extend their thinking potential when they respond to questions that prompt further explanations. Such a strategy required pupils to use their imagination by engaging with possibility thinking (see Chapter 8.2.1), (Craft, 2002; Egan, 2000). It was engaging with possibility thinking that allowed pupils to escape from their stereotyped thinking (see Table 8.4).

Therefore, with the aim of including all the features of thinking that will maximize pupils’ cognitive potential in relationship to the C.O. section of the curriculum and the content of C.O.3, I believe that C.O.1 could be further developed to include the following statement (highlighted in bold):

Develop pupils' creativity, <b>imagination, possibility thinking, and reflective intelligence for enabling novel and authentic ideas</b> when producing works and promoting participation in art
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**Table 9.2: Proposal for modifying Core Objective one (C.O.1) of the curriculum**

The next part of the curriculum document deals with “specific objectives” (S.O.). There are thirteen of them, of which five (S.O.1, 4, 6, 7, 13) touch on the use of imagination.

*c. Imaginative thinking and the specific objectives of the curriculum*

How the imagination is represented in the five specific objectives will now be discussed.

The first time imagination is used in a specific way in the curriculum document is in objective one (S.O.1), where it is stated that pupils can generate ideas from the pool of imagination along with experience and memory. That using the imagination includes experience and memory, as already mentioned, can leave room for a dualistic understanding of thinking. On the one hand, when pupils generate ideas from experience and memory this can be strongly associated with rational thinking as located in the mind, while on the other hand when working from imagination is often equated with something affective, and more associated with the body, hence reinforcing a mind/body dualism. Even worse, imagination is often used synonymously with “fantasy,” which can easily be reduced to nihilism, which reduces the power of imagination to a non-cognitive feature. Also, the word experience can have a restricted connotation that equates with a meaningless and aimless process, which is most unlike reflective thinking. The word memory may be simplistically understood, as only referring to memories of facts and events that can be consciously recalled, which tends to exclude reference to unconscious, dispositional memories such as perceptions and skills which need not need be consciously retrieved. Therefore, the content of S.O.1 would be a more comprehensive and accurate description if imaginative thinking was clearly described as an aspect of cognition from which pupils generate ideas.

Specific objective four (S.O.4) specifies how learners organize and produce artworks to include the significance of observation, recording, selecting, and analysing different sources of inspiration. As already discussed in chapter eight (see Chapter 8.2.1), the process of categorization is based on the ability to link concepts. With this in mind, the actions that are described in S.O.4 are important for supporting of the process of categorization, which, as already mentioned, is a fundamental operation of imaginative thinking. However, as described in chapter eight, the process of categorization also requires alternative thinking processes.

Finally, specific objectives six (S.O.6), seven (S.O.7), and thirteen (S.O.13) describe operations that enable imaginative thinking, as each of these objectives emphasizes the ability to connect knowledge with experience (S.O.6, S.O.13) and ideas (S.O.7) as a way to achieve meaning making.

As already described, the ability to interconnect concepts is fundamental to the operation of metaphorical thinking, which services imaginative thinking. In this respect, there is a problem in the way S.O.6,7 and 13 explain the role of the imagination. For example, the description in S.O.6, about how pupils successfully convey and adjust their experience when creating art, does not give sufficient weight to how this process actually operates. The ground from where pupils have the capacity to work in different ways with ideas is also vague (see S.O.7), as is how they pursue the relationship between visual art and the other arts (see S.O.13).

Although the objectives above are meant to be interpreted in a complementary way to provide directions for teaching the curriculum, my research indicates that this would be better facilitated by providing a clearer interpretation of their content. For example, the emphasis of S.O.6, when combined with the content of S.O.1, provides a solution to how pupils convey and adjust their knowledge: by drawing on their imagination.

The research findings reveal how developing imaginative thinking can clarify the part of the curriculum that specific objectives one, four, six, seven and thirteen



are meant to deal with. The study identified how pupils' the ability to transfer and intrepret, which enable them to achieve better understanding and to construct meaning, are particular aspects of imaginative thinking.

In this respect, S.O.1 could be made more comprehensive by providing reference to the ground from which pupils' intellectual growth and development can emerge. This would result in S.O.1 more incisively influencing an understanding of S.O.4, S.O.6, S.O.7, and S.O.13, which would also have the effect of eliminating present obscurities in their content. Therefore, the study proposes that S.O.1 read as follows:

<p>Generate ideas by using <b>propositional and non-propositional forms of knowledge. Employ imagination, feelings, emotions, perceptions, memory, interpretations, transfer learning, respond to alternative possibilities, rules, reasoning, logical thinking, symbols, and principles that enable better understanding, the solving of problems, and securing meaning making</b></p>
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**Table 9.3: Proposal for modifying Specific Objective one (S.O.1)**

By incorporating interpretation, expression, and the transfer of knowledge in the pool of imagination, pupils are more likely to be able to understand the source from which they generate ideas.

The modified version of S.O.1 above also relates better to one of the general goals of the cross-thematic curriculum for art (see Appendix 7a). Particularly, for year classes a' and b' of the gymnasio (high school), one of the general goals states that: "Pupils should think of alternative solutions to an artistic problem" (see Appendix 7a / Cross-Thematic Curriculum Framework for Visual Arts / Junior High School / General Goals / year classes a' and b'). Furthermore, this aim of thinking of alternative solutions is also part of the art curriculum for year class a' (12–13 year-old pupils) in the specialist arts schools.

An example of formulating alternative solutions to problems in art happened when I was undertaking my research. As already established (see Chapter 7.16, sources a and b, of core finding I), combining knowledge with the use of imagination, metaphor, and interpretation facilitated finding such alternative solutions, which is unsurprising given that the literature (Lakoff & Johnson,

1987) supports the notion that non-propositional forms of thought based on metaphors and the use of the imagination incorporate higher order thinking. For this reason, developing such abilities seems to be a very important feature to be integrated into art education. Given that this is the case it is very surprising that the prescription to find alternative solutions found in the cross-thematic curriculum and the first year syllabus for arts schools is omitted from the arts curriculum for the third year class of specialist arts schools. Therefore it becomes important to integrate experiential learning with specific objective one (S.O.1) of the art curriculum for specialist arts schools.

*d. Imaginative thinking and the thematic axes of the curriculum*

Axis three, which deals with subject content and meaning, has a learning objective concerned with the sources of knowledge where pupils can generate ideas. To maximizing the potential of axis three, as revealed by this study, requires the integration of imaginative thinking and cognitive flexibility as informed by metaphors, narratives, and myth (Egan, 1989, 1997, 2002) in order to promote “what if” questions that further enable pupils to understand art.

Therefore it is proposed that one more goal be added to axis three, that of pupils’ ability to:

**Combine heterogeneous and convergent sources of knowledge in order to make arbitrary combinations for furthering understanding, solving art problems, and meaning making.** (This goal can be further supported by the following two activities that can be added to the third column of the third axis)

- **Generate ideas from imagination**
- **Utilize tools of imaginative thinking such as: metaphor, transfer, induction, narrative, mythic storytelling, cohesion, “what if” questions, and reasoning through the combination and reorganization from previous experience**

**Table 9.4: Proposal for modifying Thematic Axis three (T.A.3)**

It is important to mention that the idea of transfer is already present in axis two, third column. What is further proposed is that transfer be integrated with axis three, as axis two does not support the relevant goal of developing imaginative thinking.

A similar argument can be made in respect of axis six, where it states that pupils: “Interpret their work and that of school peers, using justified arguments. Participate in positive discussion about each others’ art, and exchange opinions and offer other support.” To further such an ability to form justified interpretations also requires imaginative thinking.

*e. Imaginative thinking and the methodology part of the curriculum*

The methodology section of the curriculum (M) makes a strong argument in favour of a cross-curricular approach to learning, which combines and develops thinking using propositional and non-propositional forms of knowledge. Such an approach to learning is appropriate given that it can embody a host of cognitive processes linked to imaginative thinking, perceptual experience, the significance of following rules, as well as engaging in more abstract thought. This study reveals that the methodology part of the curriculum needs to be further developed through integrating imaginative thinking, as this works in harmony with an interdisciplinary approach to knowledge acquisition.

What will follow is a discussion of two points found in the methodology part of the curriculum that deal with imaginative thinking, with the aim of proposing further development of these two points.

- i. The phrase in the methodology section coded M.3 presents an ancient idea about the role of imagination: “Teachers are required to cultivate pupils’ hard work, the search for inspiration and curiosity and desire for research and creation.” The term *inspiration* has its roots in the Platonic view of creativity as resulting from divine powers, the muses, and not the artist’s cognitive powers. For this reason inspiration has to be replaced by *imagination*, for three reasons. First, this change is consistent with the philosophy of the curriculum which is based on the idea of the active pupil who is the agent of the process (M.1). Second, the term *imagination* is best understood from a cognitive perspective and its correspondence to the “whole gamut of human cognition” (Efland, 2002, p. 152). Third, the addition of *imagination* better serves the development of *curiosity* which is one part of the statement given above.

Teachers are required to cultivate pupils' hard work, **which will involve using the imagination, developing curiosity** and an urge to engage in research and creativity

**Table 9.5.a: Proposal for modifying the M.3 section of the methodology**

- ii. The methodology section coded M.7 gives an example of cross-curricular work between art and religious studies, which, as stated, is divided (see Appendix 8b, M.7, example) into two areas of interest: practice and theory. From these instructions, it is the case that pupils will focus on areas of relevance linked to the domains of knowledge of the two subjects.

To avoid using a superficial approach to learning that focuses only on the stylistic characteristics of religious art rather than engaging with higher-order cognitive processes (Spiro et al., 1987), the findings of this study show that teachers should utilize imaginative thinking by focusing on metaphor, reflective intelligence, and possibility thinking. If this is done, pupils are more readily able to deal with complexity, which a cross-curricular approach is meant to facilitate.

For this reason the current version of M.7 should be modified in the following way:

- **Topic: Byzantine art and allegory. Extension: symbolism in religious art.**
- **Topic: Ecclesiastical art and the metaphor of gold. Extension: the use of visual metaphor in religious art.**
- **Topic: Hagiography and space. Extension: the meaning of particular elements of design in religious art.**
- **Topic: Covers of gospels, icon screens, woodcarving, and patronage. Extension: the social factors in religious art**

**Table 9.5.b: Proposal for modifying the M.7 section of the methodology**

#### 9.4.3 Imaginative thinking and this enquiry

The study's argument for promoting imaginative thinking in the curriculum has philosophical ramifications. For example, imaginative thinking has an important role in epistemology as it enables knowledge to be established on richer ground. If knowledge acquisition is an ethical as well as an epistemological

process, then imaginative thinking is an important virtue for attaining not just reliable forms of knowledge but responsible ways of using such knowledge.

In the present curriculum a claim is made that epistemology is the outcome of negotiated and shared procedures. This study's findings about the significance of imaginative thinking for making meaning in art needs to be extended to parts of the art curriculum that deal with existential and ethical considerations. For example, the present curriculum encourages teachers and pupils to be active and creative (see Appendix 8b, M.1), appreciative of art (see Appendix 8b, A.4), and joyful (see Appendix 8b, A.3) when learning in art. Furthermore, the curriculum also promotes dispositions associated with sustaining progress (see Appendix 8b, S.O.4, T.A.4), critique (see Appendix 8b, C.O.3, S.O.8), and participation (see Appendix 8b, S.O.10, T.A.3 and 6).

The above emphasis on traits that aim to produce active, creative, progressive citizens provokes an ontological query: "In this regard, what kind of human beings are the pupils and teachers who made up the art class that was studied as part of this research?" Asking such a question goes beyond the curriculum's promotion of traits of being creative, appreciative, joyful, and progressive. The ethical ramifications of the question stated above can be answered with further exploration of the findings of this study.

As well as the traits above that the curriculum emphasizes when representing what it means to be a human being, this study has identified several more, so that being human also involves exercising reflective powers with the view to putting such reflections into practice (see Dialogues 1 and 2), and being open to new possibilities (see Dialogues 1 and 2) through adopting a flexible approach while retaining a serious, studious, and philomathic or enthusiastic attitude to learning (see Chapter 8.2.1.ii). In summary, it was such an exercise of reflection, revision, and openness that prevented the learning process of this enquiry from being simplistic, nihilistic, ornamental, and vain (see Chapter 8.2.1.ii).

While reflection, revision, critique, and citizenship are the key characteristics of participating in a democratic society, openness, philomathy, and self-confidence

(see Chapter 8.2.1, ii) can be described as humanistic characteristics. Two “suitcase” words, which have many meanings, *democratic* and *humanistic*, inform changes proposed in the M.1 section of the curriculum (see Appendix 8b, M.1). For example, the paragraph from the curriculum coded as M.1 states that teachers and pupils should be active and creative. The study puts forward this revised version of M.1:

Art is a multifaceted and multidimensional discipline which requires active, creative teachers with <b>democratic and humanistic values</b> who aspire to the same characteristics in their pupils
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**Table 9.5.c: Proposal for modifying the M.1 section of the methodology**

The values that are embedded in words like democratic and humanistic act as checks and balances by giving ethical direction to the promotion of traits like being “active” and “creative” as found in the current curriculum. The study’s proposal for M.1 is consistent with Read’s (1943) vision of art education that stressed the the civilizing effects of art in society by fostering “the organic unit of society, the citizen” (Read, 1943, p. 221, as cited in Hickman, 2010). Therefore, the curriculum document coded as M.3 (see Appendix 8b, M.3) should be amended in the following way:

Teachers are required to cultivate pupils’ hard work, which will involve using the imagination, developing curiosity, an urge to engage in search and creativity, and <b>to participate as responsible citizens through being open to criticism and change</b>
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**Table 9.5.d: Proposal for modifying the M.3 section of the methodology**

In addition, I wish to propose a further amendment to the assessment section of the curriculum, which affects the wording coded AS.3 (see Appendix 8b, AS.3), so that it reads like this:

Assessment should be based on the degree to which pupils acquire knowledge and skills linked to general employability, and, in particular, to the <b>development of a reflective disposition</b>
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**Table 9.5.e: Proposal for modifying section AS.3 of the assessment**

The findings that has emerged from this study suggest that particular parts of the present curriculum can be improved by addressing important existential

issue and the related values through art, which will be illustrated in my revised version of the art curriculum for the c' gymnasio year class (pupils aged 14–15 years) in Greece's specialist arts schools. This is principally achieved by employing the development of imaginative thinking to deal with existential and philosophical issues.

### **9.5 The proposed revisions to the art curriculum as applied to the c' gymnasio year class in Greece's arts schools**

(The envisioned changes to the curriculum are recorded in bold).

#### Aims

The aim is for pupils to familiarize themselves with art by researching deep into the inner workings of the discipline, and, by so doing, to enjoy themselves in developing their understanding of the subject. In order to achieve this aim, pupils engage in **forms of thinking that incorporate flexibility** to research activities and the creation of artworks so as to develop their skills in creating and appreciating art. A further aim is to prepare pupils for a future career in art, if they so desire.

#### Core objectives

- Develop pupils' creativity, **imagination, possibility thinking, and reflective intelligence for enabling novel and authentic ideas** when producing works and promoting participation in art.
- Enrich pupils' knowledge and their ability to utilize materials, methods, tools, and resources in a variety of different art forms.
- Cultivate pupils' perceptive response and understanding, as well as their critical approach and analysis of art and of the arts in general.
- Deepen pupils' understanding of the cultural dimension of the arts and its contribution to society over time.

#### Specific objectives

Pupils should:

- Generate ideas by using **propositional and non-propositional forms of knowledge. Employ imagination, feelings, emotions, perceptions, memory, interpretation, transfer learning, respond to alternative**

**possibilities, rules, reasoning, logical thinking, symbols, and principles that enable better understanding, the solving of problems, and securing meaning making.**

- Realize the power of expression, which can arise from experimenting with many different types of materials, techniques and in all dimensions (level, volume, space, and time).
- Experiment and express themselves using different types of visual aids (books, photographs, transparencies, photocopies, posters, etc.) so as to generate ideas that will encourage the creation of individual works of art.
- Improve, through observation, their skills and abilities to record, select and analyze **different sources of knowledge**. This will further assist them in better organization, the extension of ideas, and production of artwork.
- Understand the importance of creating art and developing it under the prism of modifying the initial idea, either by themselves or after consultation with others' criticism and external influence.
- Convey and adjust their experiences and knowledge of art works in the creation of their own artwork.
- Understand the different ways of approaching and working with ideas drawn from different artists and relating them to the meaning behind a particular work of art, and understand that views, which vary over time, can influence the form, content, and expressive style of each work of art.
- Recognise the aesthetic value of the natural and the constructed environment, to develop the ability to take a critical stance on the activities that influence them and to define the relationship between them.
- Communicate through visual artworks, but also through any alternative visual medium, so as to sense and evaluate the impression and the influence that these have on their own personality.
- Express themselves and communicate verbally using the correct art terminology.
- Understand that the arts and their applications are related to many different professions.
- Approach the complex phenomenon of the arts in a well-rounded way and understand the mutual relationship and interplay between theory and practice.



- Perceive the relationship between artworks and the arts in general, works of science, and the wider issues and problems that relate to mankind, society, and nature.

#### Thematic axes

The objectives are approached within the following six different thematic axes (which can be adjusted by teachers to suit the needs of their pupils):

<i>Learning objectives</i>	<i>Learning themes</i>	<i>Indicative activities – directives</i>
<i>Axis 1: Complex materials, Means, Techniques</i>		
<p>The pupils seek to: Draw and paint with increasing facility and sensitivity.</p> <p>Use at least three different techniques and match simple chromatic qualities with tones and nuances.</p> <p>Occasionally use all the essential geometrical patterns and use paper as a chromatic surface and a means for construction.</p> <p>Use modern means of producing works of art.</p> <p>Experiment with new materials and methods.</p> <p>Organize their course of work.</p> <p>Select suitable materials and, on occasion, appropriate tools to articulate their ideas.</p> <p>Search various sources and select and experiment with techniques in their work.</p>	<p><i>Drawing and painting materials</i></p> <p><i>Geometrical patterns</i></p> <p><i>Cardboard, various papers</i></p> <p><i>Photographic equipment</i></p> <p><i>Video</i></p> <p><i>Computers</i></p> <p><i>Experimentations</i></p> <p><i>Organization and method</i></p> <p><i>Various materials and tools</i></p> <p><i>Sources of information</i></p>	<p>Choice and learning of materials, means and techniques as proposed to be used for the fourth axis: forms of figurative and applied arts.</p> <p>Organization of laboratory. Apart from materials like drawing and painting that are used by all pupils, various other materials should also be available that can be selected by those who are interested.</p> <p>Use of geometrical patterns suitable for the proposed subject.</p> <p>Cardboard and paper for drawings, models, and installations.</p> <p>Learning to use modern technology to produce varieties of images and the related use of software for drawing and painting, provided that they are available for pupils to use.</p> <p>Use of various original materials and methods such as: wire, timber, plaster, copper leaf, aluminum foil, beads, glue, plastic, recycled materials.</p>

		Do exercises with various techniques.
<i>Axis 2: Formal elements</i>		
<p>Use formal elements in work.</p> <p>Attempt to represent light and shade by using a range of tones.</p> <p>Distinguish the structure and composition in works of art. Carefully compose their work.</p> <p>Use formal elements to evoke movement and dynamism.</p> <p>Add the element of real movement in figurative work. Clearly represent volume, space, and depth in various ways.</p> <p>Comprehend certain characteristics of formal elements as used in the language of photography and film.</p>	<p><i>Light</i></p> <p><i>Shading</i></p> <p><i>Composition – structure</i></p> <p><i>Movement</i></p> <p><i>Intensity</i></p> <p><i>Volume</i></p> <p><i>Space</i></p> <p><i>Foreground – background</i></p> <p><i>Formal elements of photographs, video, cinema</i></p>	<p>The teaching of formal elements as exemplified in works of art that pupils apply to their own work.</p> <p>Creation of works with different degrees of light and shade.</p> <p>Utilization of warm and cold colours.</p> <p>Organization of the picture plane.</p> <p>Teaching and application of elements of composition: balancing colour, form, light, texture.</p> <p>Real movement as captured in a made mobile or on video.</p> <p>Exercises that focus on the nuance of volume, space, and depth (Geometry).</p> <p>First contact with formal elements: plan, time (duration), montage, sound, optical corner, movement of machinery, movement of picture.</p>
<i>Axis 3 Subject – Content – Meaning</i>		
<p>Draw ideas from various stimuli.</p> <p>Give their work content and meaning.</p> <p>Communicate meaning in their work.</p> <p>Realize their creative ideas in an aesthetic way.</p> <p>Comment on and design alternative forms of clothing.</p>	<p><i>Subjects from:</i></p> <p><i>Compositions with objects, landscapes, photographs, events, sport, cars</i></p> <p><i>Subjects from graphic design</i></p> <p><i>Subjects from fashion</i></p>	<p>Creative course designed for school work to include:</p> <p>a) generating ideas,</p> <p>b) researching the work of artists who deal with the same subject,</p> <p>c) choosing materials and methods,</p> <p>d) realizing intentions.</p>

<p>Are inspired by the expressive potency and possibilities for communication opened up by modern technology and matching these with suitable subjects.</p> <p>Draw ideas from modern art to create their own concrete style of work.</p> <p>Select subjects for works of art.</p> <p><b>Combine heterogeneous and convergent sources of knowledge in order to make arbitrary combinations for furthering understanding, solving art problems, and meaning making.</b></p>	<p><i>Subjects suitable for photographs, video or PC</i></p> <p><i>Subjects:</i>  <i>Romanticism</i>  <i>Impressionism</i>  <i>Surrealism</i>  <i>Abstract art</i>  <i>Free subjects</i></p>	<p>Creating a series of works based on the same object.</p> <p>Graphic design: letters and numbers, layout, covers, commercial or cultural posters, etc.</p> <p>Sketch of prototype: clothing or footwear.</p> <p>Subjects such as: reportage, snapshots, narratives, simple scripts, etc.</p> <p>Study modern works of art to comprehend particular elements that determine their style, which pupils apply to their work.</p> <p><b>Generate ideas from imagination. Utilize tools of imaginative thinking such as: metaphor, transfer, induction, narrative, mythic storytelling, cohesion, “what if” questions and reasoning through the combination and reorganization from previous experience.</b></p>
<p><i>Axis 4: Forms of figurative and applied arts</i></p>		
<p>Create pictures that show increasing competence.</p> <p>Accurately draw from natural objects.</p> <p>Plan and develop their work as it materializes, and improve it after discussions.</p> <p>From techniques select one that is most suitable for their idea.</p> <p>Through visual images communicate a concrete message.</p>	<p><i>Drawing</i></p> <p><i>Painting</i></p> <p><i>Graphic design</i></p> <p><i>Posters</i></p> <p><i>Industrial design</i></p> <p><i>Fashion</i></p> <p><i>Jewellery</i></p> <p><i>Photography</i></p> <p><i>Video</i></p>	<p>Create work in two and three dimensions, and other work that involves movement in time.</p> <p>Create work using various forms and techniques.</p> <p>Use of preliminary drafts and notes.</p> <p>Report on work.</p> <p>Set up publications.</p> <p>Create a book with pictures through group work.</p>

<p>Comprehend the differences and resemblances across Fine Art and Applied Arts.</p> <p>Propose ideas and design new clothing.</p> <p>Create manufactured works from various materials that can be used as jewellery.</p> <p>Create art using modern pictorial styles of production.</p> <p>Create aesthetic forms in space by combining and assembling recycled materials.</p> <p>Aesthetically intervene in the school or neighbourhood environment.</p>	<p><i>Digital pictures</i></p> <p><i>Multimedia</i></p> <p><i>Assemblage</i></p> <p><i>Interventions in space</i></p> <p><i>Form</i></p> <p><i>Planning of clothes</i></p>	<p>Create a poster with a cultural or commercial message.</p> <p>Combine pictures with letters in an aesthetic way.</p> <p>Make proposals for aesthetic improvements of simple commercial products (for example, interventions that modify a photocopied chair).</p> <p>Sketch prototype clothing or footwear (for example, carnival uniform).</p> <p>Draw or manufacture traditional or modern jewellery.</p> <p>Combine photographs, photocopies, digital pictures, projections, etc., in a single aesthetic outcome.</p> <p>Create murals and bas-reliefs on a large scale and plant trees to modify environments.</p>
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*Axis 5: History of art and culture, Styles – Artists*

<p>Determine the historical period and the place of the created work, as well as the elements of style characteristic of such work based on what is known and recognize similar features in less known work.</p> <p>Distinguish religious, social, political, and other cultural influences, including that of climate, in works of art.</p> <p>Compare works that depict different seasons and identify resemblances and differences.</p> <p>Comprehend continuity in figurative art.</p>	<p><i>18th–19th century</i></p> <p><i>The Baroque</i></p> <p><i>Neoclassicism</i></p> <p><i>Romanticism</i></p> <p><i>Impressionism</i></p> <p><i>20th century (until 1930)</i></p> <p><i>Cubism</i></p> <p><i>Surrealism</i></p> <p><i>Expressionism</i></p> <p><i>Reports about Modern Art</i></p>	<p>Prominence given to the morphological elements of works of art.</p> <p>Use of history of art books, articles, other sources, and notes.</p> <p>Connect works of art to important historical events, provided that these are decisive in determining their style.</p> <p>Prominence given to 20th century art and certain leading artists.</p> <p>Make short reports on paintings, sculpture, and architecture.</p>
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<p>Explain how the same subject is represented in different ways in the arts.</p> <p>Explain the characteristics of works of art as analogies for different types of persons and their characters.</p>	<p><i>Relation of art to ideology</i></p>	<p>aesthetics that deal with the characteristics of art its relations with other events and persons in either.</p> <p>Formally or freely organized discussions.</p> <p>Simple definitions of aesthetic values, for example, beautiful and high, using examples from works of art and nature. The way the artist communicates with the public through a work of art and aesthetic experience.</p> <p>Choose the role of art in life as illustrated through song, dance, and cinema.</p>
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It is recommended that each axis be taught in relation to the others and not treated separately.

#### Timeframe

The two teachers in each lesson and related scheme of work collaborate in selecting and combining the content and objectives from various axes. In the annual distribution of time this should be achieved in a balanced way.

It is recommended that approximately two hundred and fifty (250) hours in each school year [ten (10) hours a week for twenty-five weeks] should be allocated to art. Two hundred (200) hours should be dedicated to making art [of which seventy (70) hours are dedicated to design and painting, sixty (60) hours to sculpture, seventy (70) hours to etching and applied arts]. Thirty-five (35) hours should be given to learning about the history of art and aesthetics (including all the activities of the fifth and sixth axes). Another forty (40) hours should be dedicated to learning about the morphological elements and principles of art, with twenty five (25) other hours used for interdisciplinary instruction, conferences, preparation of portfolios, and workshops.

Examples of cross-curricular schemes of work for the c' year class (pupils aged 14–15 years)

*Learning Theme:* Machines – synthetic work for a type of machine or mechanism, for groups of machines, or generally speaking for machines (comparisons, advantages, relationships with persons and nature, ergonomics, social effects, repercussions, etc.) with activities relative to the “laws” by which machines operate, including simple planning and the study of manufacturing, simple mathematical analysis of applications, the historical dimension and development, social changes, decoration, process, works of art with machines, information, treatment, translations, and foreign terms. Fundamental cross-curricular significance: culture, change, society, organization.

Extension work in physics, mathematics, history, social and political education, computer science, foreign languages.

*Learning Theme:* Art professions – synthetic work done by professionals like graphic designers, sculptors, icon painters, photographers, etc. and its relationship to socioeconomic, historical, and other dimensions. The work can include interviews, visits, photography, investigations, production of texts, presentations, reports, etc. Fundamental cross-curricular significance: Individual/social, culture, tradition, organization, dependence.

Extension work in career school guidance, computer science, social and political education.

*Learning Theme:* Models and modelling – planning and manufacturing models and instructional materials for various subjects. Fundamental cross-curricular significance: interaction, dependence, system, law, etc.

Extension work in physics, biology (teaching about how art is facilitated by modelling), art, and the arts in general (for planning and manufacturing).

*Learning Theme:* Relationship of the arts – synthetic work with a multifaceted treatment involving two or more art forms with a common subject and content (for example, traditional marriage, love, ideals, war for realizing freedom, a school feast, etc.); forms of art from alternative sources or from activities drawn from literature, music, dance, theatre, songs, and cinema. Fundamental cross-curricular significance: culture, interaction, etc.

Extension work in literature, music, theatre.

Examples of further cross-curricular approaches:

*History:* Baroque, Classicism, Romanticism, Modernism.

*Mathematics:* symmetry, rotation, proportion.

*Biology:* health, smoking, alcohol, water.

*Physics:* machines, movement, forces, weight.

*Career school guidance:* graphic designer, photographer, sculptor.

*Foreign languages:* working on a foreign language, text for art (visiting a museum, city, etc.), using foreign terms (for example, Impressionism).

*Religion:* church, beauty.

*Modern Greek language:* comprehension of a text, description and analysis of a play, oral expression, production of written texts.

*Computer science:* software for drawing and painting.

*Music:* Romanticism, Impressionism, rhythm, echo, colour.

*Social and political education:* environment, culture and sub-cultures, social changes, social problems, Green Movement.

*Gymnastics:* rhythmic, somatic aesthetics.

## Methodology

Art is a multifaceted and multidimensional discipline which requires active, creative teachers with **democratic** and **humanistic** values who aspire to the same characteristics in their pupils. Art teachers are required to schedule activities for the entire school year, including homework and off-site visits. They



are also obliged to be well prepared ahead of each class and to plan the curriculum so that learning themes are carefully coordinated.

Art has many forms, which is emphasized by the fourth axis, which also prescribes time given over for drawing, painting, and sculpture. Teachers are responsible for organizing schemes of work, part of which is the extent of the depth of the investigations, which are determined by the age of the pupils. In sculpture, for example, it would be inspiring to deal with work that involves the additive and ablative methods, the development of sculpture from wire or string (line only), the low bas-reliefs (limited use of light and shade), and three-dimensional work using soft and suitable materials like clay, plaster, cardboard, timber, and so on.

Teachers select techniques that allow pupils to make the necessary progress. In year classes a' (12–13 years old) and b' (13–14 years old) of secondary arts school, a variety of various forms and techniques is preferable, while in the c' year class (14–15 years old) it is advisable to be occupied with a smaller variety of forms and techniques in favour of depth.

In the art subject particular attention should be given to pupils' creative practice and production of work. Teachers are required to cultivate pupils' hard work, which will involve using the **imagination**, developing curiosity an urge to engage in search, creativity, and **to participate as responsible citizens through being open to criticism and change**.

The use of books and various other instructive and supervisory materials should not transform the art subject into a book-centred one. Any theoretical work done in school should not be conducted with a scientific character but should strengthen pupils' insights into the subject of art and support progress in the creative process.

The organization of the studio, along with the necessary tools for instruction and the planning of parallel activities, contributes to the quality of the course. Teachers are responsible for maintaining studio equipment, enriching the

studio's library with the deposit of relevant books, and renewing any instructional and supervisory material.

Teachers should make connections between art studio activities and the work done by professionals in fine art, ceramics, textile, jewellery and silversmithing, woodcarving, fashion, furniture, and three-dimensional design. They are also responsible for organizing visits, lectures, work, and research, all of which should be integrated into the art syllabus, combining all of the above with their course.

Teachers are responsible for planning and monitoring pupils' development and for writing school reports, which should give positive feedback and include extra points for effort. Teachers should make sure that the local community is informed about exhibitions and other activities going on in school and participate with pupils in any local or international events, festivals, and competitions.

The cross-curricular approach used in the study programme is meant to map relationships carefully across different subjects. In such a framework, each school subject which needs to use visual communication for achieving meaning making can collaborate with the art course. In turn, the art subject can draw on ideas and content from all school subjects.

In general education, learning should be achieved using different strategies like common enquiry, events, and collaborations between the faculties of theatre, art, and dance.

*An example of a cross-curricular approach between art and religion:*

- **Topic: Byzantine art and allegory. Extension: symbolism in religious art**
- **Topic: Ecclesiastical art and the metaphor of gold. Extension: the use of visual metaphor in religious art**
- **Topic: Hagiography and space. Extension: the meaning of particular elements of design in religious art**
- **Topic: Covers of gospels, icon screens, woodcarving, and patronage. Extension: the social factors of religious art**

The pupils are prompted to discuss and select issues of enquiry appropriate for making a synthetic work of art. After an issue has been selected, pupils are separated into teams to formulate their ideas and make some general drawings. They seek, collect, and develop background information and material, so as to enhance their work, which is discussed and adapted as it is carried out. On completion, the pupils evaluate the final outcome. During the whole process, the teachers advise the pupils whenever necessary.

Pupils organize their cross-curricular work with the help of their art teachers or teachers of general subjects with whom they are involved. The cross-curricular approach can include two or more school subjects. The teachers who teach these school subjects collaborate to overcome any problems they encounter when working in such a way.

When planning cross-curricular work the art teachers should liaise with the two other faculties of the arts school, theatre and dance, as well as be involved in the creation of and attendance at common cultural events inside or outside the school, so that synergy can be achieved in the pupils' artistic interests.

In each scheme of work, but not necessarily in every lesson that makes up the scheme, teachers should cover historical, aesthetic, theoretical and practical, so as to achieve a rounded and balanced understanding of the subject. These five strands of the content of art education should be carefully adjusted and matched to the teachers' interests and insights. The axes of the curriculum are categorized indicatively from general to concrete and from concrete to abstract. The domains of understanding that make up the art curriculum are not taught independently but integrated from the content and objectives of the axes, which should be taught in the order that the teachers see as most appropriate.

*An example of the organization of a learning theme that combines different axes:*

Learning Theme: Rhythm.

[Reference from the art curriculum for a' year class at the specialist arts schools]

This theme is taught to 12–13 year olds and primarily deals with the second axis (formal elements) in the middle column (content) and the third column (recommended activities). The stated learning objectives are described as “pupils should learn to distinguish the repetition of elements in a work of art” and pupils should be able to represent “the repetition of morphological elements associated with musical rhythms and movement.”

It is expected that the process by which pupils understand rhythm will be multi-dimensional to include practical work and recognizing the aesthetic property of rhythm in works of art and nature. They also study rhythm in ancient Egyptian art as part of meeting the requirement to deal with the fifth axis (History of art and culture, Styles – Artists). The content of the fourth axis (Forms of figurative and applied arts) is achieved by pupils creating geometric, linear, and various rhythmic elements using tools and materials as listed in the first axis (Complex materials, Means, Techniques).

The work is completed by holding discussions about the aesthetics of rhythm as required by the sixth axis (Aesthetic criticism, Theory of art – Analysis of work). Thus in one learning theme, six routes of learning about art are combined, thereby ensuring that the phenomenon of art is addressed in a holistic way through pupils making, understanding, and appreciating art and the related web of ideas.

Similar learning themes like “still life,” “animation,” “space,” “classical Greek art,” “social effects,” and “decoration” are also taught by combining the axes that make up the art curriculum.

The many hours spent in the art studio provide the time to deepen pupils’ understanding of the elements that make up each axis. The high level of contact time also makes it possible for the teachers to plan and implement the curriculum for the whole school year. Such planning should include dealing with the history of art, forms of art, aesthetics, and art criticism as determined by the creative process of teaching. They should be integrated into weekly lessons so that knowledge is built from this continuity of experience. The content of this

approach needs to be “demanding,” as prescribed by the national curriculum, and should make up thirty-five (35) hours of curriculum time.

The curriculum of the year class c’ of the secondary arts school is based on the Cross-Thematic Curriculum Framework (see Appendix 7a) that applies to the normal secondary schools, as well as the Analytical Curriculum for Art for the c’ year class (see Appendix 7b). Due to the special circumstances of the specialist arts school where extra teaching time, motivated pupils, and better equipment and facilities are the norm, this results in a more meaningful and deeper curriculum being taught and experienced. The current curriculum provides a picture of the material already covered, thus avoiding any unnecessary repetition of content with other classes.

Each lesson hour should set aside enough time for the pupils to engage in activities, discussions, feedback, and instruction. There should also be enough time for teachers to observe the pupils’ work and to prepare for the next lesson. Teaching can focus on groups or individuals in order to guide pupils. In this respect, the existence of a library of art and other creative corners inside the classroom allows groups or individual pupils to work along with the rest of the class.

A scheme of work should be based on previous knowledge gained by the pupils and on the possible misconceptions they may have about the arts. It should also be inspired by learning themes used by other school subjects and by the pupils’ own interests, relationships, current affairs, conflicts, and other events, as well as by art in general and life both inside and outside school. Particular emphasis should be placed on the pupils’ engagement with original artwork through visits to exhibitions, museums, events, artists’ studios, educational travel, exchanges, and participation in international pupils exhibitions, which should be planned from the beginning of the year and integrated into the school curriculum. Celebrations in school should serve as incentives for cross-curricular collaborations. Original events should be organized with diligence and artistic flair. Despite the fact that a scheme of work should be flexible and allow for spontaneity, lessons must be organized on sound pedagogical principles that take account of appropriate teaching and learning methods in order to have the

best possible results with the least amount of effort. There should be two art teachers present in each studio, who work together to prepare lessons. Their working arrangements will be influenced by their chosen method of teaching and specialist knowledge. Each art teacher, whatever his or her specialist area, must be able to thoroughly teach all the different types of visual arts outlined in the curriculum.

### Assessment

The evaluation of a pupil's performance is an integral part of the teaching process and should serve as a starting point and a form of encouragement for the pupil. Such evaluation takes into consideration all the characteristics of the pupil and his or her actions. Specifically, the following should be assessed:

- The pupil's work (drafts, notes, two- and three-dimensional works) on a daily basis and as a whole
- The pupil's participation, interest, effort made, and initiative shown
- The degree to which pupils acquire knowledge and skills linked to general employability, **and in particular to the development of a reflective disposition**
- Feedback on the pupil's written examinations or tests

As the art subject is autonomous but also connects in a practical and theoretical way with other art forms, pupils' work should be evaluated based on all these requirements. Evaluations are conducted by selecting several methods including discussion, comment, critique, questionnaires, short written or oral tests, and the creation and analysis of artworks so as to gain an objective and valid assessment. The teachers must also encourage the pupils' self-assessment as part of their creative development.

The teachers should also evaluate the effectiveness of his or her teaching methods, the realization of his or her goals, and the suitability of the teaching method and teaching aids, as well as the application of the curriculum.

## The art studio

Teaching art takes place in a specially designed classroom that is equipped with suitable resources for the use of a variety of materials. It should also have storage space, a library, and blackout equipment, as well as computers. It is up to the teachers and pupils to ensure the harmonious operation of the art studio.

### **9.6 The significance of the new revised version of the art curriculum**

The study has argued that art education in Greece's specialist arts schools promotes cognitive processes (see Chapters 3.9.1–3.9.4). The research has discovered that the use of a combination of aspects of cognition, including sociocultural features, the significance of material consciousness, imaginative thinking, and the mediated conception of learning (see Chapters 8.2 and 8.3) enhanced pupils' abilities for meaning making. As these findings were firstly related and checked as consistent with the content specified in the curriculum document (see Table 8.12), the study secondly found that imaginative thinking (see Chapter 8.2.1.ii) that enabled pupils understanding can be further incorporated and supported in the art curriculum. The study finally proposed a revised version of the art curriculum for Greece's arts schools that fosters further imaginative thinking (see Chapter 9.5).

The study's proposal underlines the significance of fostering the imagination as a cognitive tool used in art education that can become a potential source of wisdom for all pupils. In doing so, the study also addresses the problem of epistemology, as the revised version of the curriculum raises the question of how knowledge is acquired. The answer to this question, which is indirectly given in the content of the proposed version of the curriculum, is through engaging with higher forms of cognition as coordinated by the faculty of imagination, as revealed in this study. This research finding, as already discussed, is in keeping with the key role that imagination plays in the learning process (Egan, 1992; see also Chapter 8.2.1.ii).

Such knowledge acquisition via the imagination that is envisaged by a revised version of the curriculum is considered to be negotiated between pupils and teachers. Such a constructive and cooperative process will require teachers to

be given particular training in the use of metaphorical elaborations, narratives, and “what if” possibility thinking so that learners’ higher order thinking can be stimulated and maintained.

The study’s proposal also addresses ontological and ethical issues. One implication, significant for the evolution of pupils’ cognition, emerges from the topics and the issues involved during the development of imaginative thinking processes. Imaginative thinking was employed so pupils were able to understand and solve problems concerning the principal issues of human existence (see Dialogues 1–5). The study’s proposals address issues of ethical and ontological interest, searching for what kinds of people the pupil and teacher are (in this case), and how the pupil and teacher ought to act. What was proposed underlines respect for humanity (see Chapter 8.2.1.ii and Chapter 9.4.3). It speaks for *democratic* and *humanistic* participants in the class as both pupil and teacher and it is proposed that these two words be added next to what already exists in the curriculum concerning pupils’ and teachers’ profiles, which, as mentioned, is the word *active*. *Democratic* and *humanistic* add an ethical stance to the word *active*.

## **9.7 Overview of the study – the relation of the research findings to the research question, research aims, and selected methodology**

This section provides an overview of the study, re-states the research question, checks the aims of the research, and justifies the interpretive methodology that was used.

This study was carried out against the wider context of a significant document recently published by the Greek government (see Appendix 8b) that dealt with the art curriculum for the c’ year class (14–15 year-old pupils) at specialist secondary arts schools. The findings offer further insight into how the policy outlined in the government document can be put into practice.

The study had two aims. The first aim was to clarify the learning process in the subject of art at one of the three arts schools operating today (2010) in Greece and to interpret pupils’ and teacher’s perceptions of the learning in relation to



the curriculum and teaching methods in the same school subject and the particular school context (see Chapter 2.7). The research question was formulated as: How do fourteen (14) – fifteen (15) year-old pupils and their teachers in a new arts specialist secondary school perceive art learning in relation to the aims of the curriculum and the teaching methods?

In order to achieve the two aims, the study was divided into nine chapters. Chapter one introduced the goal of the study and pointed out the study's significance in relationship to international educational research.

Chapter two reviewed the way initiatives in Greek art education made over the last twenty years have impacted positively on pupils (see Chapter 2.3). The last of these initiatives was the establishment of specialist arts schools. This thesis was inspired by this initiative as the formation of such arts schools represented not only a new departure for Greek education but the possibility of advancing the full potential of pupils' cognitive processes and dispositions through art education. In chapter two, the research question and the research aims were presented.

Chapter three reviewed the literature in relation to the research topic on models of curriculum and the related theories of learning that have influenced art education in Europe, the USA, and Greece over the last hundred years.

Chapter four discussed the methodology of the research. It presented how a case study was planned to be carried out in one of Greece's new specialist arts schools, which was aimed at identifying pupils' and teachers' perceptions of the role of visual art education. Chapters five, six and seven presented the data analysis.

Chapter eight presented the relationship between the findings and the literature. The comparison of this relationship had implications for the development of the art curriculum for Greece's specialist arts schools. These implications were discussed and presented in the closing chapter of the study, chapter nine.

Both aims of the study were achieved.

Particularly, aim one was fulfilled as the learning process in visual art in relation to the curriculum and the teaching methods was clarified and decoded in the content of chapter eight (see Chapter 8.4.1, 8.4.2, 8.5).

Aim two was also fulfilled. Participants' perceptions were recorded in three different periods. The findings of all three periods were interpreted and then the two core findings of the research question were synthesized (see Chapter 7.15).

The research question required an interpretive approach, which determined the content and the procedures of the whole study.

The methodology that was followed was appropriate to the research question and the aims. The case study method was used to give detailed and illuminating understanding of the particular class. A combination of three instruments for collecting data was used and offered a comprehensive approach to understanding the actions of participants.

The choice of combining three instruments allowed for triangulation and empowered the validity of the findings (see Chapter 4.6.3, Tables 5.3, 6.12, and 7.11). Semi-structured interviews and observations offered a rich variety of data. The research findings also addressed a rich variety of topics regarding learning in visual art which are relevant in the context of the questions that were designed for the interviews and the focus group questions (see Appendix 11).

Particularly, the questions regarding the topic "identifying the learning process" of Appendix 11 were answered correspondingly: Question one by source d of core finding II (see Chapter 7.15.2), question two by sources f and e of core finding II (see Chapter 7.15.2), question three by source e of core finding II (see Chapter 7.15.2), and question four by core findings I and II (see Chapters 7.15.1 and 7.15.2).

To continue, the questions regarding the topic "identifying the learning objectives" (see Appendix 11) were answered by a combination of findings filed in the sources of core finding I (see Chapter 7.15.1) and core finding II (see Chapter 7.15.2). It was shown that the design of the questions was workable and their content achieved apposite answers.

The two core findings were then used to interrogate the content of the current art curriculum for specialist arts schools which seemed to lack the necessary emphasis on the development of imaginative thinking (see Table 8.12 and

Chapter 9.4). In this respect, my research has identified an important shortcoming in the current art curriculum of the arts schools and so proposed a new revised version of the art curriculum for the specialist secondary arts schools of Greece (see Chapter 9.5).

## **9.8 Limitations of the study and directions for further research**

Due to time constraints, two issues were not explored in this study and as such represent possible limitations about any transfer value and validity issues that can be derived from this case study.

### **Limitation 1**

The first limitation resulted from the research question itself. The scope of the research was to understand the learning process as found in a particular specialist secondary arts school in Greece, which involved exploring participants' perceptions of learning as found in a third year high school art class. The third year of high school is the last of the lower stage of secondary education, which is the mandatory stage of secondary education (see Note 1, Chapter 1.2). As the full attendance period in specialist arts schools lasts for six years (the same as in regular secondary schools), it could be argued that it might have been more representative to choose participants who were in their final year of the upper stage of secondary education.

The reasons for choosing participants from the lower stage of secondary school were that as a sample their experience of art education was more limited and therefore more typical of secondary pupils as a whole. This is an important point because the study aimed to focus on forms of cognition that could be developed through art education but which could have some transfer value to other spheres of education and life.

### **Limitation 2**

The second limitation resulted from having only two art teachers participate in the research, the two who were responsible for jointly teaching the class that

made up this case study. As presented in chapter six (see Table 6.2), the specialist arts school where the research was carried out had eight art teachers. To engage all these teachers in the research would have made the project too complex to carry out, as this would have involved collecting additional data from all teachers and pupil participants, doing significantly more classroom observations, and extra interviews with focus groups. Producing and processing such data would have been impossible within the constraints of this case study.

The study supports the idea that a better understanding of the learning process in this particular school will stem from future research that will take account of (a) the graduates' perceptions and (b) all visual art teachers' views on visual art learning. It is hoped that this will bring development and refinement to the study's ideas, and add validity to the study's findings.

#### Future possibilities

Having summarized the findings and their implications for the art curriculum and the limitations of the study, I will now reflect on the evolution of my own thinking as it emerged during this study, with the aim of proposing future alternative possibilities in regard to Greek secondary art education.

As the study was based on an interpretive research paradigm, its findings cannot be generalized; however, qualitative research methodology and case study do allow for transfer value to other contexts.

In chapter eight I explored the research literature on the role of imaginative thinking in the learning process, which illuminated the findings of the research that identified the significance of imaginative thinking in supporting a range of complex cognitive processes in education, notably in this case as used in art education. The significance of imaginative thinking for mutually supporting other forms of cognition in art education is missing from Greece's national curriculum for specialist arts schools (see Chapter 9.5). The keywords of the proposal can be considered to be the following: *flexible thinking, imaginative, possibility thinking, reflective thinking, democratic forms of thinking, and humanistic thinking that is engaged by pupils and teachers.*

From the perspective of my research, an interesting future direction for Greek education could arise from designing and operating with curricula that emphasize the following cognitive processes that have emerged from my research as key concepts: *flexible thinking, imaginative, possibility thinking, reflective thinking, democratic forms of thinking, and humanistic thinking that is engaged by pupils and their teachers*. Such a proposal would not be limited to specialist arts schools but would extend to secondary pupils from difficult socioeconomic circumstances. The framework of minority schools (see Chapter 2.10) could be one such case. International research on arts education (Bamford, 2006) has argued for the power of art to constitute social and cultural capital in the community.

Furthermore, in accordance with Article 16 of the Greek constitution that concerns the right of access and equity in education for all the young people of the country, it would be a challenge to apply the proposed art curriculum to the secondary curriculum offered to young offenders. Such a proposal might contribute to fighting social exclusion. Moreover, an interesting case might emerge from the establishment of a specialist secondary arts school in the framework of education for young prisoners.

To conclude, this study's proposal for a revised curriculum is in accordance with the five basic aims of Greek education as described in chapter one (see Chapter 1.2), which have their origins in a law going back to 1985 (see Appendix 1) which states that education should: "... broaden pupils' value system (moral, national, humanitarian, and other values) so that they can regulate their behaviour to conform to these ethical concepts; direct their emotional world towards creative goals and humanitarian actions."

In claiming that the curriculum should present ethical and ontological dilemmas to pupils, this study's findings are consistent with law No 1566, which was passed in 1985 that underpins Greek education. Giving such a democratic and humanistic emphasis to education goes hand in hand with solving epistemological dilemmas that require an interdisciplinary approach for knowledge acquisition, and, as such, would go some way toward supporting

young people today who are being called on to face difficult situations in everyday life such as poverty and social exclusion. In this respect, education has an opportunity to broaden their humanitarian and ethical values.

## **9.9 Conclusions**

The study set out to explore the learning experience in art as perceived by a particular class of pupils and their two teachers in one of Greece's specialist arts schools. The scope of this study was to better understand such a learning process. The study met its first aim by clarifying the learning process in relationship to the curriculum and its related teaching methods. It achieved its second aim by interpreting the participants' perceptions of art education. At the same time it highlighted important findings as regards the aims of the curriculum and its teaching methods, and underlined the significance of points already specified by the curriculum. Finally, the study proposed revisions to the existing art curriculum based on its findings.