

Development of Arts Teacher Research Competence in Master Studies

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Abstract. The problem of teachers' research competence is one of the main aspects of concern in teacher education on master's level. Arts teacher education is interdisciplinary studies which combine two areas – arts (music, dance, theatre, visual arts) and education, therefore research becomes a complex process requiring competence to use artistic expression forms and methods of social sciences research. In this article the point of view of arts education master's students on research competence development is revealed.

Keywords: *teacher education, research competence, master studies.*

Introduction

Over the last decade worldwide documents on education emphasize the importance of high quality teacher education which ensures appropriate teacher competences acquisition (European Commission, 2005; Commission of the European Communities, 2007; Description of Professional Competences of Teachers, 2007). Complexity of teacher competences and diversity of their structure and definitions have always been an issue of discussions and investigations (Aramavičiūtė Martišauskienė, 2006; Matonis, 2007; Subotkevičienė, 2008; Martišauskienė, 2009; Banevičiūtė, 2012). One of the important teacher competences in challenging education practice is a research competence (Edwards, 2001; Pečiuliauskienė, 2008; Petty, 2009; Rosenshine, 2012; Banevičiūtė Kudinovienė, 2015; Mizimbajeva et al., 2015). It is not easy to define skills which constitute teacher research competence as it is complex and multi-tasked. Some researchers see it as a participation in the national and international research projects (Pečiuliauskienė, 2008),

other underline skills of educational practice reflection seeking to improve it (Arends, 2011; Pollard, 2005).

Most of the international education documents underline teacher education on master's level which requires even higher research competence acquisition (Commission of the European Communities, 2007; European Trade Union Committee for Education, 2008). To define skills consisting research competence of future arts teachers studying on master's level we refer to European and Lithuanian documents describing competences of graduates of master's programs (Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, 2005; Shared 'Dublin' descriptors for short cycle, first cycle, second cycle and third cycle awards, 2004; Descriptor of Lithuanian Qualification Framework, 2010; Description of Study Cycles, 2016). Our scientific interest in arts teacher research competence development on master's level is induced by our academic position (we are educators of future arts teachers) and concern to maintain high quality of study programs which provide relevant competences of our graduates. We face a number of challenges in our mission, one of which is relevance of research competence in teacher work.

The problem of arts teacher research competence development is challenged by the interdisciplinarity of studies which combine two areas – arts (music, dance, theatre, visual arts) and education, therefore research becomes more complex process requiring competence to use artistic expression forms and methods of social sciences research.

The purpose of this research is to reveal the point of view of arts education master's students on research competence development.

Research methodology

Seeking to disclose arts teacher research competence development in postgraduate studies methods of literature review and interview of arts education master's students were applied. To reveal point of view of arts education master's students on research competence development we chose interview method which allows get close to person's understanding of the phenomenon, construction of values and the reality (Silverman, 2013; Bitinas et al., 2008). We used interview guide approach as a way to get more comprehensive and systematic data when researcher presupposes topics or issues that will be discussed during the interview, but does not attach to the question order or foreseen words (Patton, 2002; Gillham, 2005).

Interview questions were constituted upon theoretical and practical assumptions of postgraduate researcher competence development. Theoretical background was based on European (Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, 2005) and Lithuanian (Descriptor of Lithuanian Qualification Framework, 2010; Description of Study Cycles, 2016; Description of Professional Competences of Teachers, 2007) requirements on research competence which is disclosed as skills: 1) to analyze,

synthesize and evaluate research data needed for studies, scientific (artistic) professional development and innovation, 2) to integrate knowledge and manage complex situations, make decisions in the absence of detailed and defined information, assess alternative solutions and possible effects on the environment.

Practical background of postgraduate research competence development was based on learning outcomes of the Master's programs of dance education, music education, theatre education and visual arts education. These include skills to: 1) collect, synthesize and evaluate data necessary for studies, research and efficient solving of problems of formal and non-formal arts education, 2) to discover new facts, to make decisions evaluating alternative variants of coping with problems and positive impact of such solutions on sustainable development of society, 3) on the basis of the conducted research on arts education to make innovative decisions in improvement of arts education, to make correct conclusions considering comprehensiveness and reliability of information, 4) to organize and carry out dissemination of innovations and research findings in arts education.

Interview included two groups of questions on: 1) demographic data (year of study, study program, obtained qualification); 2) acquired arts education research competences and their development challenges.

Research sample and procedure

Research sample was formed on a basis of non-probabilistic, purposive sampling (Patton, 2002; Bitinas et al., 2008) as the most appropriate in our case. Research sample included 12 students of the first study year and 15 of the second year of arts education master's programs which are implemented by Dance and Theatre Department of the Faculty of Education in Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (Table 1). First year students represented two programs while second year students were from four arts education programs. This situation appeared after the reconstruction of the Faculty of Education in 2014 when previously functioned Arts Education Department with four arts education master's programs was reorganized into Dance and Theatre Department with two arts (dance and theatre) education programs on first and second cycle.

Research sample included 7 of the first year and 3 of the second year students who did not have teacher qualification. This was as a result of the admission rules to the arts (dance, music, theatre, visual arts) education master's programs: entrants are accepted with bachelor diploma either in arts pedagogy or in arts. During the studies students without teacher qualification are provided with a possibility to gain teacher qualification alongside of their main studies.

Table 1. Research sample presentation

Study programme	Year of study	Number of students	Teacher qualification	Artist qualification
Dance education	I	8	4	4
Theatre education	I	4	1	3
Dance education	II	5	5	0
Theatre education	II	3	1	2
Music education	II	3	3	0
Visual arts education	II	4	3	1
In total		27	17	10

Students' interviews were held in 2015 at the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences. Appointments for the interviews were made in advance ensuring respondent privacy and confidentiality by not mentioning names and other personal information which might identify them. The study complied with the ethical research principles of autonomy, benevolence, justice and confidentiality (APA, 2001; Smith, 2003). Interviews were recorded and later transcribed saving respondent's associated with the topic vocabulary, syntactic structure of the text and other peculiarities of the speech.

Analysis of interview materials maintained main stages of the qualitative data analysis (Miles, Huberman, 1994; Bitinas et al., 2008; Lichtman, 2013): 1) multiple readings of the text, 2) grouping answers into primary subcategories on a common issues and problematic aspects, 3) linking subcategories to categories, 4) interpretation of categories and subcategories.

Research results

Analysis of students' interviews first of all revealed their attitude towards significance of research competence in their professional activities. Students with both teacher and artist qualification mentioned that they understand value of research competence as a means of professional knowledge acquisition "*<...> it helps to structure my professional knowledge*", pedagogical and artistic problem solving "*<...> helps to find problem solutions in my work more objectively*", evaluation of pedagogical situations "*<...> when I do pedagogical work I am always a researcher, because situations always change, I need to evaluate it professionally and to search for ways of solution*" as well as improvement "*<...> helps to seek better quality of my pedagogical work*" and effective implementation of arts education "*<...> working with people, especially with children always I get into situations, problems, so research competence helps me to achieve my goals and work effectively*".

Other aspect which featured out in the interviews is students' opinion about the improvement of their research competence. They stated that "*<...> my skills to analyze*

and evaluate research data improved, I learned how to systematize my work, better select information and analyze it”, “<...> now I can appreciate myself as a better analyst of pedagogical work”. Students mentioned that they “<...> gained more theoretical knowledge” and “<...> more information about me as a teacher and artist”. Nevertheless some respondents indicated that they still cannot see much improvement “<...> until now my skills did not change, but I think they might as I start doing my research”, this answer was given by the first year student. Also second year student with artist qualification was not sure saying that “<...> it is hard to compare, definitely did not go worse, but did it improve, I cannot tell”.

The analysis of interview materials showed two dimensions of arts education students’ research competence development: 1) improved research skills and 2) problematic research skills. In every dimension we constructed two main categories of research skills, first of which is related to the theoretical part of the research and second related to the empirical part of the research. While deliberating over improved theoretical research skills students underlined their skills to: search for literature sources in databases, to analyze literature, to systematize literature and skills to formulate research problem. Mentioned four groups of theoretical research skills we allocated to corresponding subcategories (Table 2).

Table 2. Improved arts education research skills

Category	Subcategory	Statement
Theoretical research skills	skills to search for literature sources in databases	“<...> I am able to find needed information in various databases such as Lituanistika, Ebsco”, “<...> I know how and where to search for literature”
	skills to analyze literature	“<...> I am able to pick out important, needed information”, “<...> to analyze text I am able to do that on chosen aspect”
	skills to systematize literature	“<...> I group articles according themes and underline or mark important ideas”, “<...> I distinguish similar aspects in different literature”
	skills to formulate research problem	“<...> I formulate problem as a question “how?”, “<...> you just need to grasp something relevant and not investigated”
Empirical research skills	skills to choose research methods and strategy	“<...> I can understand difference between qualitative and quantitative research methods and to choose”
	skills to collect data	“<...> I am able to collect data using various methods”, “<...> to collect data is easy where environment is familiar”
	skills to analyze research data	“<...> I group data in categories and subcategories”, “<...> I am able to analyze data and interpret them”
	skills to present research findings	“<...> I am able perfectly to formulate and present research findings”, “<...> it is easy to formulate conclusions and present them when I am deeply into data and problem”

In the category of improved empirical research skills also four subcategories were exposed indicating skills to choose research methods and strategies, skills to collect data, skills to analyze research data and skills to present research findings (Table 2). Students stated that these skills they acquired and/or improved during master's studies and preparing master's thesis. It is important to mention that interview results show what students think and how they assess their skills. To prove that these skills were improved indeed master's papers of these students should be investigated. But this was not the goal of our current research, but it influenced our interest to continue the investigation in future.

Dimension of the problematic arts education research competence development unfolded in the same two categories of theoretical and empirical research skills development, though subcategories differed (Table 3).

Table 3. Problematic arts education research skills

Category	Subcategory	Statement
Theoretical research skills	skills to search for foreign literature sources	"<...> it is more difficult to find literature in foreign language, when you don't use it, you keep forgetting it"
	skills to analyze literature	"<...> it takes more time to analyze literature in foreign language, I need more time", "<...> it is hard because it needs time to read everything, understand, analyze and present gathered information", "<...> I am afraid that I don't know how to reveal and present what I have read", "<...> it seems that I only describe what I have read, but not analyze"
	skills to systematize literature	"<...> it is quite complicated as you need to read everything attentively", "<...> I don't think I am able to systemize literature as sometimes I have problems with understanding what information is useful for my research, too many disconnected words"
	skills to notice research problem	"<...> it is complicated as usually I am unable to notice the problem", "<...> I understand research problem, but sometimes it is difficult to write it down in a proper way"
Empirical research skills	skills to construct research instrument	"<...> in huge variety of methods sometimes I find difficult to combine relevant for my research", "<...> I had difficulties to construct it, I didn't know how to form my research sample"
	skills to analyze and interpret research data	"<...> it is going very hard, I don't know where to start and how to do", "<...> analysis of data causes many problems as it is hard to choose what is important, not to put my early opinion", "<...> it is difficult to code data and summarize it, but most of all it is hard to construct categories and subcategories"
	skills to formulate research conclusions	"<...> to tell what I found it is not difficult, but to formulate conclusions it is hard", "<...> to show results I can, but how to formulate conclusions"

Interviews showed that students even in the second year of studies still experience difficulties in searching and analyzing literature in foreign language, as well as noticing research problem. In the empirical part of the research students mentioned that they have problems in constructing research instrument, analysis and interpretation of research data as well as conclusion formulation.

Results of the interviews of future arts teachers concerned us, as being members of academic and administrative staff of arts education programs we put much effort into assuring the quality of the research competence development. Research competence development in all arts education master's programs implemented by our department is research-based and grounded by our long-term study plan monitoring and logic of scientific research knowledge. Study subjects related to the research competence development are arranged throughout the first three semesters in the following sequence: in the first semester the foundations of methodological prerequisites for scientific cognition of social phenomena and arts education, problems of educational research on arts, perception of peculiarities of the object variety, peculiarities and methodology as well as understanding of possibilities, advantages and limitations of application methodology of qualitative and quantitative research, conducting research on problems of education and arts education are acquired learning the study subject of Methodology of Arts Education Research. In the second semester the knowledge of educational research is supplemented and specified learning the study subject Organisation of Research, which aims to clarify prerequisites for the identification of the research problem, appropriate methods of research data collection are analysed as well as ethical and methodological problems of their application. Students learn to develop empiric research instruments as well. In the third semester students study subject of Research Data Analysis, which supplements the study subjects studied in previous semesters and finalises the course of educational research, building up the knowledge of strategies, procedures and application conditions of qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

At the end of the studies, in the fourth semester the main attention is directed towards the preparation of the Master paper and penetration into methodological and organisational issues of the research work. During the Education Scientific Research Seminar students clarify questions that occur while writing their own works or analysing their colleagues' works or which are identified while presenting separate parts of the paper. Students also disseminate data of the researched problem (writing a scientific paper/poster presentation on the theme of their Master paper) and improve their organisational skills (organise a public presentation of own work in the conference of young researchers). The preparation of Master paper is consistently arranged throughout three semesters starting with the second semester, where Master paper I is introduced (joint to the study subject of Organisation of Research Data), Master paper II is introduced in the third semester (joint to the study programme of Analysis of Research Data), in the fourth semester the final stage of Master paper writing is conducted. While studying the Organisation of Research, the theoretical part of the paper is simultaneously prepared: the research

problem is established, students learn how to formulate it and to substantiate its relevance, to structure the research choosing appropriate methods, foreseeing and justifying the sample of the research. Master paper II focuses on theoretical substantiation of the research gathering and analysing scientific, methodological and any other literature related to the research problem, the empiric part of the research is also organised. In the fourth semester data of the empiric research are analysed and interpreted highlighting a discourse perspective of the research.

We assume that such arrangement and distribution of the study subjects related to research competence development enable students to construct their research work consistently planning research stages and allocating sufficient amount of time for their implementation. Teaching all mentioned study subjects student-oriented methods such as group and pair work, modelling of educational situations, analysis of scientific literature and databases, discussions and projects, reflections and case analysis as well as others are employed. But still future arts teachers interviews show that all these measures are not sufficient enough to help students to achieve research competence improvement in all its structural areas. To understand the reasons and to find means which would assure full improvement of research competence we need to deepen our investigation by interviewing graduates and examining Master papers of future arts teachers.

Conclusions

In conclusion it can be stated that arts education master's students regardless of their previous qualification (teacher or artist) and study year (first or second) understand value and meaning of research competence in their professional activities. Especially those of second year see improvement of their research skills and gained confidence in implementing arts education research.

The results of this research indicated that arts education postgraduates see improved theoretical research skills (to search for literature sources in databases, to analyze literature, to systematize literature and to formulate research problem) and empirical research skills (to choose research methods and strategies, skills to collect data, skills to analyze research data and skills to present research findings). Interview showed that problematic theoretical research skills include skills to search and analyze literature in foreign language and skills to notice research problem while problematic empirical research skills involve skills to construct research instrument, to analyze and interpret research data as well as to formulate conclusions.

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Būsimųjų meno dalykų mokytojų tyrėjo kompetencijos ugdymas magistrantūros studijų metu

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Santrauka

Nagrinėjamos būsimųjų meno dalykų (dailės, muzikos, šokio ir teatro) mokytojų tyrėjo kompetencijos problemos aktualumą pagrindžia pastaruoju metu išaugęs dėmesys mokytojų kompetencijų ugdymo kokybei, kuri yra akcentuojama Lietuvos ir Europos Sąjungos švietimo dokumentuose bei mokslininkų tyrimuose. Meno dalykų mokytojų tyrėjo kompetencijos ugdymą komplikuoja šių studijų tarpdalykinis ryšys, kuris glūdi dviejų ugdymosi sričių – meno ir ugdymo – sluoksniuose. Todėl meno dalykų mokytojų tyrėjo veikla reikalauja ne tik socialinių mokslų tyrimo teorijų ir metodologijų išmanymo, bet ir meninės raiškos formų bei priemonių suvokimo ir gebėjimų jas taikyti, siekiant tyrimo tikslų.

Tyrimo rezultatai parodė, kad būsimieji meno dalykų pedagogai išvelgia akivaizdžią tyrėjo kompetencijos naudą ne tik savo pedagoginėje, bet ir meninėje veikloje. Jų teigimu, ši kompetencija jiems padeda pagilinti profesines žinias, spręsti pedagogines ir menines problemas, vertinti edukacines situacijas, tobulinti meninio ugdymo kokybę mokykloje. Magistro studijų metu ugdytas tyrėjo kompetencijas apklaustieji vertina dvejopai: vienas jiems pavyko įgyti ar patobulinti, kitos dar kelia problemų. Abi šios tyrėjo kompetencijų ugdymosi dimensijos išsiskiria į dvi kategorijas – teorinės analizės ir empirinio tyrimo gebėjimus. Studentų teigimu, jie puikiai geba ieškoti ir analizuoti literatūrą, tačiau sunkumų sudaro užsienio literatūros skaitymas ir suvokimas. Studentai geba formuluoti tyrimo problemą, tačiau jiems sunku ją išvelgti analizuojant ugdymo kontekstus. Pasirinkti tyrimo metodus ir numatyti tyrimo strategijas, studentų požiūriu, jiems sekasi, tačiau kurti tyrimo instrumentus ir interpretuoti tyrimo duomenis vis dar sunku, net ir studijuojant antrame kurse. Nors formuluoti tyrimo išvadas užtrunka, tačiau studentai teigia, kad pristatyti tyrimo rezultatus jiems nėra sudėtinga.

Esminiai žodžiai: *mokytojų rengimas, tyrėjo kompetencija, magistro studijos.*

Gauta 2016 07 07 / Received 07 07 2016
Priimta 2017 01 12 / Accepted 12 01 2017