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Integrative Approach in Education – Determinant of the Understanding of an Artistic Text

Abstract
The target of the scientific study is a theoretical-empirical analysis and interpretation of pedagogical experiences against the background of the world of values and in the context of the integrative approach and the complex system of educational processes. We seek to grasp the issue of the interpretation and integration in its complexity, concerning a close interconnection of both phenomena and with a focus on so far non-reflected deeper connections and perspectives. In this way, our reflection follows a line of the confrontation and connection of individual phenomena of arts and their application in the interpretation of an artistic text by pupils.

Keywords: *integrative approach, creativity, syncretism, understanding of a text*

Introduction

The 21st century brings numerous changes in each area of social discussions. Therefore, it is natural that such a fact can also be reflected in the system of upbringing and education. After the era of various alternative procedures in teaching, as well as alternative contents and forms, emerging more and more are strongly in particular questions connected to the issue of integrated teaching and

integrative procedures in teaching, with the understanding that the term "integration" should be perceived in this process as a "modern" phenomenon. At the same time, it can also be stated that individual types of arts are mutually interconnected analogically also at a level of percipients, in respect of which the perception of an artistic work may stimulate various conceptions in the intentions of not only one type of art but also within the framework of other artistic types (Day, 2005; Robertson & Sagiv, 2005).

Theoretical Analysis of the Research on Integrative Approach in Education

In such a postulated context, we may say about the syncretism of individual types of art, specifically in the area of specific artistic creation, upbringing, and education.

That is to say that the integration of musical, visual, creative, literary and dramatic arts, as well as architecture, history and other areas of social discussions, without any doubt contributes to the improvement, recognition and understanding of individual types of arts in their mutual connection and interactions, and it optimally affects also a process of the forming and development of an individual from the perspective of perception, thinking, creative shaping and aesthetical palate; however, in particular from the perspective of a constructive approach towards the art and beauty on the whole (Rodger, 2003). Naturally, poly-aesthetical upbringing does not correspond in such a postulated context to any exemption because it is inevitable to understand the same in the complementary coordinates of the overall fulfilment of a curriculum frame of the educational process, which corresponds to legitimate requirements of interdisciplinary relationships, resp. implementation of the targets and contents of poly-aesthetical upbringing into coordinates of the fulfilment of the targets and contents. Also, in the case of other vocational courses, it is understood that in the conditions of a postmodern era, this relates to a logical process, which is, even though it sometimes alludes in practice to misunderstanding, consisting of traditionally ongoing stereotype and conservative visions, from the perspective of its justification unarrestable. The information technologies standardly used today by publicists, but also authors of imaginative texts were from the beginning exclusively the subject matter of research interests and application in the sector of exact sciences. It seems that in the sector of interdisciplinary relationships, there is a re-birth of the intersection of

technical and humanitarian sciences, and the inspiration is in particular theories of American provenience (Andreyeva et al., 2020).

We can characterise syncretism from another perspective as an overlapping of the interconnection of individual musical activities as part of music teaching (Mahmoodi-Shahrebabaki, 2017). Syncretism of a child's thinking is seen in ***creativeness*** (for example, a folk tale may be transposed for pupils into a dance, and a poem may be illustrated as a picture, advertisement or song). Determining are also the results of psychological research, according to which, among significant thought structures of man are, in addition to fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration, sensitivity, restructuring, redefinition, the ability of a transfer and further creative abilities, also the ability of a holistic perception – grasping of the essence of a problem, a top view over details, connections between facts etc., which would allow to creatively and meaningfully treat with the obtained knowledge (Sláviková, 2013).

Integrative tendencies in art are not a modern phenomenon. We can see its reflection in the scientific papers of several authors. However, the same is solved in the most complex way by S. Day (2005), R. Novák (2021), M. Huzjak (2016), and W. Roscher (1983) – a musicologist and the author of a poly-aesthetical concept, who understands the term "integration", based on the Latin "integration", and the verbs "tego" and "intego" – to cover, connect externally separated elements and reveal their internal unity, anew discover the whole. W. Rosher (1983) specifies a classification of the integration as follows:

- Medial – connection and mutual influence of arts – multimediality;
- Anthropological – critical thinking, asking questions, interdisciplinarity;
- Historical – the making of successive, diachronic history problematic – hence searching for "timeless" problems, integration of the tradition as a live process, in which both vertical and synchronous connections are reviving, all relate to everything and so forth;
- Geographical – getting to know various cultures – interculturality;
- Social – the social tasks of music and art, on the whole, its task in social communication, in an individual's socialisation.

The author's holistic approach consists of the creative discovery of music through individual types of arts, in the perspective of wider historical, cultural and anthropological connections and according to the ontogenesis of children with the phylogenesis of *culture* and art. The child learns through its eyesight, hearing, voice, motion, and touch, based on experiences, skills, and educational knowledge, in various connections (Rodger, 2003; Massó, 2021). Through the application of *integrative procedures,* we support not only the real experiences of pupils but also

their ability to feel, perceive, and actively reproduce music in a complex manner as a type of art. Hence, music teaching through utilising intra-course relationships as one of the integrative processes applies the integration of aesthetical – educational courses. We can integrate into music teaching not only creative and literary teaching but also the integration of other courses. Simultaneously, music teaching also becomes a course which may be, under certain circumstances, integrated into other courses. For example, under the integrity of music teaching, we understand the effort of each teacher of music teaching, who applies in music education, integrative methods and procedures, which lead to the preservation of the entirety, non-impairness of music teaching, hence its integrity. This phenomenon is irreplaceable (Blanco-Novoa et al., 2021). Integrative music teaching is focused on the interconnection of music with other arts, such as dramatic art, literature, and creative art, through an individual's specific experience. It creates for him/her in this manner an extraordinary way towards the unique, original knowledge of music.

According to Sláviková (2013), "integrative creative philosophy allows the development of abilities of the selection, choice, decision-making – it is a way towards understanding and knowledge, which completely changes the educational process. Integration in music teaching may be in the framework of music alone, but also in the framework of individual arts – intermedia (poly-aesthetical) and *interdisciplin*ary (which integrates aesthetical phenomena with various areas of natural and social sciences). It is possible to interdisciplinary review also the poetical, gnoseological, semiotic, theoretical, communicational, gestic issue of individual artistic types".

Very valuable for the current practice of integrative pedagogy are certain generalisations, which were proposed and implemented by the composer, J. Hatrík (in Sláviková, 2013) within the framework of its pedagogical-educational work. These indicate the way which could prevent from cursory interconnection and narrative:

1. Development of the fairly-tale subject – linear, as part of the given or complied algorithm. The openness and variability of such projects allow individuals to deem individual numbers as manuals for improvisation and developing a primary idea. A pedagogical effect also occurs by applying a certain principle penetrating the existing relationships and structures or by its inclusion into the overall dramatic subject, either on a compiled, prepared material or a compact original author's music.
2. Network development of a story, fairy tale, or folk tale – from the centre, from the core (problem, figure, song, musical composition). The methodology may follow from the perception and its gradual activation, as part of

which it is possible to proceed from pieces of music to create a fairly-tale story or a project. Further options are offered by analysing artificial and folk songs or utilising the children's music being composed.

Primary and crucial levels should always be significance, bearing and explicitness of connections. The idea is to preserve the whole upbringing, which corresponds to the integrity of a cognizant individual. In this way, integrative sense perception becomes an inevitable part of the pedagogical process (Lewittes & Laurette, 2021; Dyrda & Przybylska, 2005). The integrated educational approach in education is at the same time also a presumption for us to demolish those barriers which very often operate in the development of the personality of a pupil in contradiction to their interests (Zielińska et al., 2022; Králik et al., 2022).

Research Methodology

Teachers' views on applying the integrative approach in educational practice through a questionnaire were investigated in Slovakia between 2020 and 2022 (Project No. 016KU-4/2022). The research analysed the possibilities of using the integrative approach in preschool and primary education, especially drama education, from educators' perspectives. Secondarily, we are also extending the research to primary school level 2. The school must ensure any motivation to learn. Therefore, the motivation input of a teacher in relation to pupils is dominant. Hence, we can formulate the research issue in the form of a question: Will we increase the understanding of a text by applying *an integrated approach in teaching*?

The target of the research was to ascertain the impact of ***an integrated approach*** **on pupils' understanding of a text.**

From it, the following tasks have arisen:

- Interpretation of artwork, specifically, in two manners: in an experimental classroom with the utilisation of an integrated approach and a control classroom by a traditional way of teaching, i.e., without the use of artistic means of other kinds of art;
- Upon the interpretation of an artwork to assign the same test to pupils as at the beginning of the experiment, evaluate the same and compare the results in both groups being reviewed;
- Based on such a comparison to ascertain whether the interpretation with the utilisation of an *integrated approach* contributes, at an increased level, to a better understanding of a text.

A select group of our experiment based on the available selection (training primary schools of the Catholic University in Ružomberok) consisted of 165 pupils in ten classrooms of the 8th grades of five primary schools in eastern Slovakia.

Table 1. Number and allocation of respondents of the experiment

School	Control group	Experimental group	Jointly
School 1	14	16	30
School 2	13	16	29
School 3	21	20	41
School 4	17	19	36
School 5	15	14	29
Jointly	**80**	**85**	**165**

Given the mentioned target and tasks of the experimental research, we have determined the following hypothesis, which we intended to verify:

We first formulated the null and alternative hypotheses to begin the hypothesis verification. The null hypothesis H0 is a statement that usually declares "no difference". Opposite to the null hypothesis, the alternative hypothesis H1 is stated, which expresses a situation where the null hypothesis does not hold. It is usually expressed as "the existence of a difference" between the groups.

Consequently, we chose an acceptable decision error (as set by the standard in educational sciences at α=0.05, i.e., 5%). H1: We presume that the educational results of pupils in understanding a text will improve by utilising an integrated approach.

1.1 Null hypothesis: There will be no statistically significant difference between the results of baseline testing between the experimental and control groups.

Alternative Hypothesis: There will be a statistically significant difference between the results of baseline testing between the experimental and control groups.

1.2 Null Hypothesis: There will be no statistically significant difference between the results of exit testing between the experimental and control groups.

Alternative hypothesis: There will be a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups' results of the exit testing. The rationale for the hypothesis: We have chosen the integrative approach method because it is a method that promotes the perception of intercon-

nections and relationships between information in a text from the aspect of interdisciplinary connections and the specification of the student's personality and aesthetic experience. As a research method, we have chosen a classical **pedagogical experiment**. The experimental validation was carried out by literature teachers instructed by the researchers, especially in using the integrated approach method and recording the experiment results. The experimental group's pupils were taught with the integrated approach in the literature classes. We applied a didactical test to ascertain pupils' current input knowledge level in both groups.

Because of the need to compare the results of the knowledge acquisition level from a given thematic unit, we used this test both as an input and output test (pre-test and post-test). The didactic test consisted of five open-ended and five closed-ended questions, which were age-appropriate in terms of difficulty for the participants in the experiment. They were formulated clearly, distinctly, and unambiguously. For each correct answer, the pupil could obtain one point. The maximum number of points obtained was 10. The pupils solved the problems in one lesson, and both experimental and control groups were provided with the same conditions for the duration of the experiment.

In the creation of a didactical test, we have:

- paid attention to the fact that the selected questions helped us to verify hypothesis H1 so that we can measure with the help of it the targets we have determined;
- sought to formulate individual questions in such a manner so that these force a pupil to connect the information in the text with the up-to-now knowledge and experiences in the form of a deduction, transfer, synthesis of explicit contents and information from the text, or the form of a synthesis – integration (whether explicit or implicit) contents and information from the text with its own knowledge and experience. For example: *Which musical motives can be found in the artwork of V. Šikula? What is the function of the fragment of a folk song in the text? What is the function of a musical instrument in the text? What is the function of the blue colour in the text? Find in the* text *rhythmical sequences, etc.*

Results

Applied to a quantitative description of the obtained results of the experiment and verification of the hypothesis have been statistical methods of processing results of the research (average numbers of received credits, a percentage success of individual tasks and groups, the total success of input and output tests). To verify knowledge from literature immediately upon accepting a topical unit, the pupils described the mentioned didactical test related to understanding a text.

Applied to verification of the hypothesis H1 have been the results of a didactical test, in respect of which we have foreseen an average success of pupils, *u:*

$$u = \frac{\sum x_i}{x_m \cdot n} \cdot 100\ \%$$

where

x_i – means the number of the achieved credits of a pupil in each classroom,

x_m - means a maximum number of possible obtained credits in a short-written paper,

n – expresses the number of pupils in a classroom.

Differences in the Results Obtained in the Pre-Test and Post-Test

Table 2. Overview of the results of a pre- and post- test of control and experimental groups

School	Group	Pre-test [%]	Post-test [%]
School 1	Control group	42.51	57.32
	Experimental group	46.31	77.38
School 2	Control group	37.36	54.47
	Experimental group	38.50	63.24
School 3	Control group	36.71	64.56
	Experimental group	36.96	68.87
School 4	Control group	36.82	70.03
	Experimental group	37.20	75.61
School 5	Control group	48.15	67.42
	Experimental group	53.08	71.71

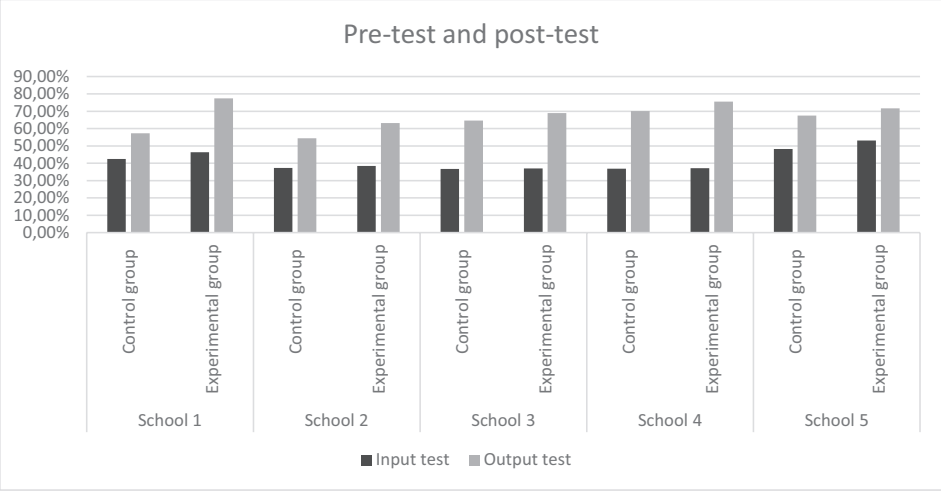


Illustration 1. An overview of the results of pre- and post-tests of the control and experimental groups

Table 3. An overview of the results of the post-tests between the control and experimental groups

School	Control group [%]	Experimental group [%]
School 1	57.32	77.38
School 2	54.47	63.24
School 3	64.56	68.87
School 4	70.03	75.61
School 5	67.42	71.71
Jointly	**62.76**	**71.36**

When comparing the results of pre- and post-tests of the control and experimental groups, it was confirmed that the experimental group, in which an integrated approach was applied in the interpretation of an artistic text in the classes of literature, achieves a much higher percentage value, as can be seen in the tables and graphs. It has also been our intention to verify the experiment, whereby this has been confirmed to us. The control group achieved success results of 62.76% and the experimental group 71.36%, almost a 9% difference, more specifically 8.6%. However, the mentioned integrative aspects should also be perceived in their mutual interconnection in the acceptance of the individual specifics of a pupil.

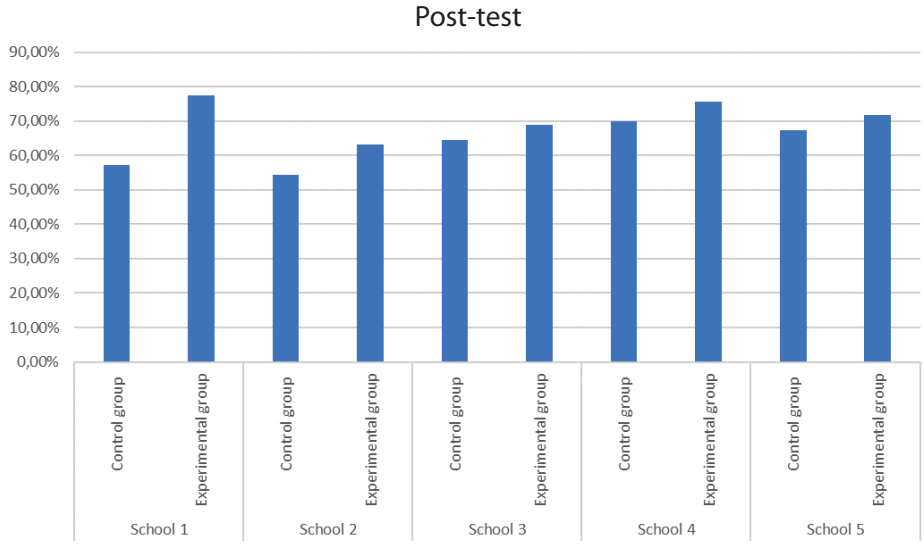


Illustration 2. An overview of the results of the post-test between the control and experimental groups

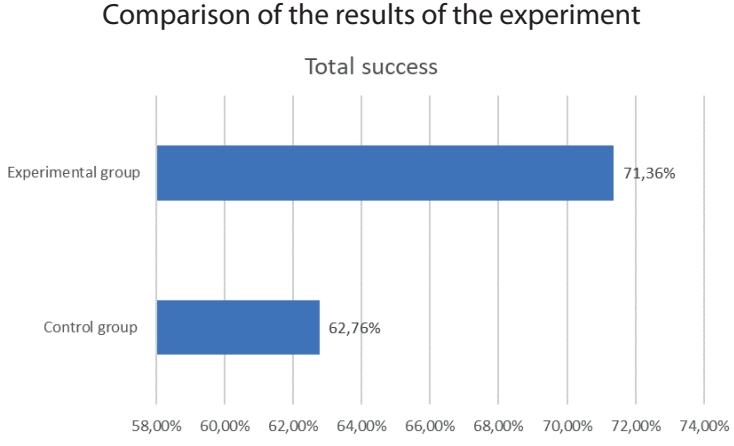


Illustration 3. Comparison of the results of the experiment between the control and experimental groups

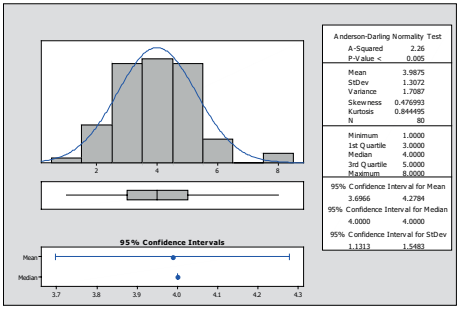
Statistical Processing of the Results of the Experiment

In the further part, we evaluate the normality of analysed data and determine the primary descriptive characteristics of the sets being reviewed so that we can decide which type of test to confirm or refute a null hypothesis we apply. To test the normality of sets, we have used the Anderson-Darling test, in which the following involved:

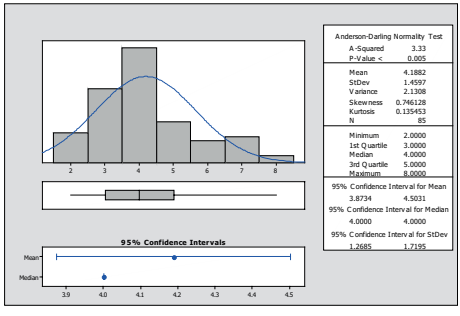
- if a difference among the results calculated by this test was significant (hence the computed p-value was lesser than the value 0.05), we have rejected the null hypothesis, which expresses the normality of division;
- if the given statistics were not significant, we have accepted the null hypothesis and designated the distribution of analysed data to be distributed normally.

We have calculated through the statistical software ©Minitab Statistical Software; the results are depicted in the following graphs and tables.

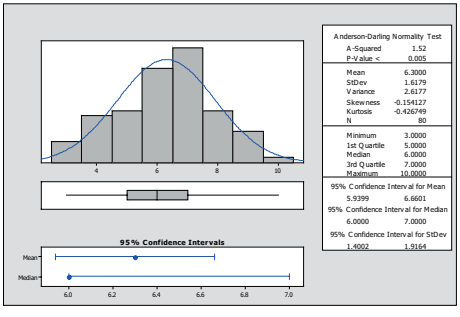
Pre-test control group



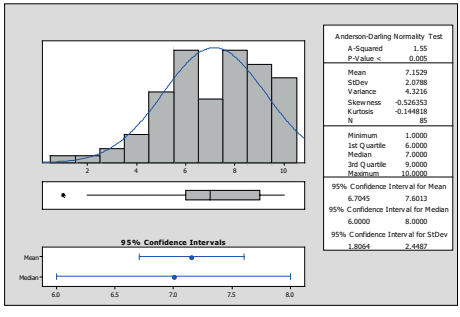
Post-test experimental group



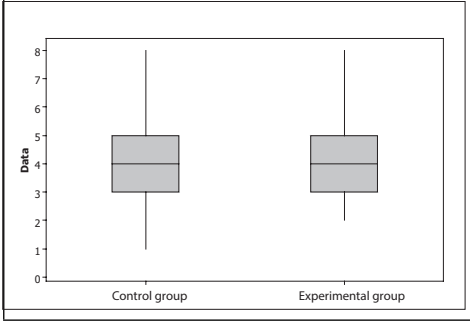
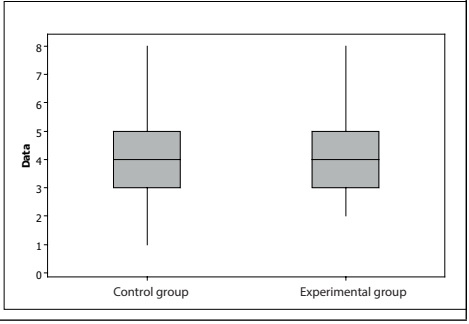
Post-test control group



Post-test experimental group



Because none of the groups has shown normal distribution, we have chosen for verification of the determined hypotheses the non-parametrical Mann Whitney U-test, the calculated coefficients of which are specified in the following table. The testing of the hypotheses is also supplemented with box-like graphs.

Mann-Whitney Test and CI: Input – CG; Input – EG N Median Input - KS 80 4.0000 Input - ES 85 4.0000 Point estimate for ETA1-ETA2 is -0.0000 95.0 Percent CI for ETA1-ETA2 is (-1.0001;-0.0002) W = 6494.5 Test of ETA1 = ETA2 vs ETA1 not = ETA2 is significant at 0.6364 The test is significant at **0.6264** (adjusted for ties)	**Mann-Whitney Test and CI: Output – CG; Output – EG** N Median Output - KS 80 6.000 Output - ES 85 7.000 Point estimate for ETA1-ETA2 is -1.000 95.0 Percent CI for ETA1-ETA2 is (-2.000;0.000) W = 5736.0 Test of ETA1 = ETA2 vs ETA1 not = ETA2 is significant at 0.0032 The test is significant at **0.0029** (adjusted for ties)
Comparison of pre-test results control group	Comparison of pre-test results control group
	

The value *p* is an achieved level computed by the Mann-Whitney U-test. It represents the probability of an error induced by accepting a hypothesis of a difference between the reviewed variables. If $p \geq \alpha$, we accept a null hypothesis; if $p < \alpha$, we reject a null hypothesis and accept an alternative hypothesis. When comparing the results of input testing through the Mann-Whitney U-test, we calculated the p-value p=0.6264 and the output p-value p=0.0029. Hence, the testing of an input measurement confirmed to us was a null hypothesis determined by us, which says that between the groups at the input, there was not a statistically significant difference, and they were statistically equal. The testing of an output measurement confirmed to us was an alternative hypothesis declaring a statistically significant difference between the analysed groups. Based on other statistical indicators and

the box-like graph, we can state that pupils of the experimental group were more successful than pupils of the control group. All calculations of this part of the statistics have been made in the program © Minitab Statistical Software.

For a more detailed analysis, given that the comparison groups had binominal results (i.e., two possibilities – either 1 – the pupil solved the problem correctly, or 0 – the pupil solved the problem incorrectly, or the pupil did not solve the problem), we chose the Chi-square test, which is the sum of the amplified differences between the observed and expected values divided by the expected frequency. Pearson's Chi-square test of goodness-of-fit is based on a frequency table. It tests the null statistical hypothesis, which states that the frequencies in each category equal the expected (theoretical) frequencies. We interpreted the results of the Chi-square test as follows: The null hypothesis is rejected if the p-value is less than the chosen significance level (traditionally 5% = 0.05). It means that the difference between the frequencies found in the sample and the expected frequencies is too large to be due to chance selection alone, i.e., it is statistically significant. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected if the p-value equals or exceeds the chosen significance level. It means that the difference between the frequencies found in the sample and the expected frequencies may be due to random selection, hence not statistically significant. If the p-value calculated by the Chi-square test is less than the chosen significance level (the standard in educational sciences is chosen to be 5% = 0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that the difference between the frequencies found in the sample and the expected frequencies is too large to be due to chance selection alone, i.e., it is statistically significant. If the p-value calculated by the Chi-squared test is equal to or greater than the chosen significance level, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. It means that the difference between the frequencies observed in the sample and the expected frequencies may be due to random selection, i.e., it is not statistically significant. The calculation of the table of expected frequencies and Chi-square test was carried out using © Minitab Statistical Software:

Q1
yes noTotal 1 65 20 85 59.76 25.24 0.460 1.089
2 51 29 80 56.24 23.76 0.489 1.157
Total 116 49 165
Chi-Sq = 3.194; DF = 1; P-Value = 0.074

The p-value (p=0.074) of item 1 calculated by the Chi-square test is higher than the chosen significance level; the null hypothesis cannot be rejected; the difference between the frequencies found in the sample and the expected frequencies may be due to random selection and is therefore not statistically significant.

Q 10
yes no Total 1 52 33 85 47.91 37.09 0.349 0.451
2 41 39 80 45.09 34.91 0.371 0.479
Total 93 72 165
Chi-Sq = 1.651; DF = 1; P-Value = 0.199

The p-value (p=0.199) of the last item (10) calculated by the Chi-square test, is higher than the chosen significance level; the null hypothesis cannot be rejected; the difference between the frequencies found in the sample and the expected frequencies may be due to random selection and is therefore not statistically significant. Through the data in the tables and in the accompanying graphs, we were able to confirm the appropriateness of the selected set of schools, as these data support the fact that the different samples studied were relatively equivalent and our research experiment was conducted on a sample of pupils that met the objective of our experiment.

Discussion

Based on data in the tables and the pertaining graphs, it is obvious that pupils in modified classes have mastered the study material being taught more efficiently; this also means that they were more creative than in classically led – non-modified. It is obvious from the measurement results that success in the experimental group was 71.36% and in the control group 62.76%. Such results have also been confirmed by the statistical processing of results, which confirmed a statistically significant difference in results of the experimental and control groups in favour of the experimental group in the overall comparison of the tests because an integrative approach underlines the *personal and social competence of a pupil,*

develops analytical-critical thinking, enriches the teaching process by emphasising the global context about the mutual interconnection of artistic-scientific disciplines, phenomena and events, and thereby it develops in pupils the ability to understand the text. Khan et al. (2018) extend integrative aspects by another dimension, specifically, digital technologies. It mentions in implemented research the findings that computer-assisted classes were first implemented in science courses, hence in mathematics, physics and chemistry. It was later applied in linguistic courses, in domestic or foreign languages. However, the integration into aesthetical-educational courses is still, after twenty years, somewhere at the beginning. In concord with Babiaková and Kasáčová (2021), we can state the fact that teachers should provide some space and time for discussions about leisure reading and out-of-school selection of books, which is important to know the reader's interests of pupils and the pedagogical, literary and esthetical impact on it, which to a significant extent affects the understanding itself of a text (Renuga & Kanchana, 2015; Babiaková & Kasáčová, 2021; Karwowski et al., 2007).

Conclusions

From the discussed insights, it follows the requirement that the primary task of pedagogues is currently to ensure a requirement of the complexity of the development and forming of the pupil's personality, who should be gradually led to acting under the fulfilment of cognitive abilities, to the evaluation and creativity in particular through strategies of the development of psychical features, by the motivation leading to an affective survival right through integration. However, which should not happen only logically, but the knowledge being acquired should be integrated with the intentions of the pupil's personality, according to its "spiritual core" and by the activated system of creativity.

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