

Abstract

The main focus of my thesis will be to explore how high school students experience, make sense of, and reflect on their practices in the art therapy process. Using guided art therapy classes with interview elements, we will approach individuals to better navigate their lives and personal issues. The aim is to offer a way out of the very demanding school hours and to relieve their stress.

In the theoretical part, I will describe the methods and procedures in art therapy classes and its related fields, as well as what realities can be discovered from this method of therapy, how it is carried out and how it helps. I will lay out the basics of art therapy, which will be used to plan the content of each lesson and navigate through it, and describe the areas I will focus on in my lessons with students. In particular, I will lay out drawing analysis, the importance of color, and the benefits of art therapy and other activities.

In the practical part, I will interpret the development of the lessons and their participants. I intend to focus with students on discussing their personal milestones with an emphasis on assertiveness in dealing with other people in such a way that they will not be afraid to address whatever is currently troubling them. I will try to guide them towards coming to terms with the situation and accepting the reality – to shift. In particular, I will map the differences between the primary feelings of the participating students and their verbal expression, and how they evaluate their emotions and accept the opinions of others after producing the assigned work. Together we will try to better understand all participants in art therapy classes and ourselves. I will focus on capturing the changes after individuals have created and become relaxed in doing so – expressing themselves wordlessly through painting, which they will then clarify with the help of targeted questions. Within the shared stories, we can build on the explicit insights to work with the tacit knowledge of the students, making each participant a unique case and example.

From the students' feedback, I can find out how the short-term encounters are imprinted in their lives and whether any area is even slightly changed, improved or strengthened during the encounters. It will be important to note the difference between the early self-description compared to the group final reflection where we look back on the time spent together, evaluate the benefits of the sessions, communicate the changes that have taken place in individuals and encourage their need to express themselves. We will share intended actions for the future, or just discuss current perspectives on certain dilemmas.