Artistic and Experiential Approaches

—Students' Attitudes on a Course Inspired by the New Historical Center of the City of Rhodes

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Abstract

This paper attempts to describe the design axes and methodology of an experiental educational program focusing on Art and Culture starting from the study of the Historical center of the city of Rhodes. The goal of the study is to show that with the appropriate experiential approach of Cultural Heritage, Academic students are able to investigate, study and form a training manual designed forbprimary school children and referring to the history and environment of the new Historical center of Rhodes. The project concerns a course of academic year 2012-13 in the Department of Primary Education of the University of the Aegean in the context of the lesson, "Artistic Education and Creations of Artistic forms".

Keywords: artistic education, experiential approaches, teaching manual on new Historical center of Rhodes

1. Artistic Education and Culture

The modern global concept of culture as a human value system is a set of cultural action and intellectual cultivation that on one hand "shapes" the way of life, education, aesthetics, sophistication behavior but on the other hand—and is generally acceptable—ensures citizens' positive attitude through awareness campaigns keeping the timeless and the need for renewal. Culture in education is "a multifaceted lever" forming the child's personality (Wycherley, 1962). It is also a set of activities using rare, unique, semantic codes of communication and awareness in every generation. All these characteristics of cultural education, to the extent that express the cultural heritage must be preserved indefinitely and still emerge, without lowing or changing the meaning of their identities. Based on the above, culture in education should be integrated into the axes of all courses and accompany with a variety of actions matters concerning the community and they require the students to develop skills of creative thinking and artistic skills to express their ideas (Murno, 1957).

2. The Interdisciplinary of the Training Program

An interdisciplinary program focusing on the art and culture is expected to be effective in the context of the objectives of education if is accompanied by a corresponding educational program which will sensitize the citizens and help him to shape a dynamic consciousness in relation to quality assurance of life (Gallagher, 1964). The basic axes of this educational program focus on the art aiming both to raise awareness among Academic students on culture and guide them in order to think creatively, aesthetically, developmentally by redefining the cultural heritage in a framework of modern social perception and development. (Manousou-Della, 2003). Broader reference space program is the Dodecanese the Historical Medieval center of Rhodes and in particular the Palace of the Grand Master. For the University of the Aegean, where interdisciplinary and openness to the society and culture are pillars of his philosophy developed in the context of art education with a focus on architectural heritage, parameters linking vital knowledge to art and development (Kampouropoulou, 2002).

3. Method

Students were given instructions and relevant literature for study and research on Italian architecture of Rhodes in terms of:

a) Technical, aesthetic, artistic, maintenance, functionality and development.

b) Creation of interdisciplinary models of approaching local history focusing on art and economy.

c) Learning to organize as future teachers in Primary Education projects including active participation of young children helping them in finding creative and integrated solutions in problems concerning their place (architectural heritage, maintenance, upgrading), through activities of tan educational guide (Burt, 1970).

3.1 Experimental Approach-First phase

The experiential approach involved walks repeatedly in the New Historic Centre of Rhodes and study of buildings and monuments (Filipidis, 2003). In their very first visit students were asked to mark on the topographic they were given their allocated Monuments to be studied and to imagine what different uses they would give to those buildings nowadays. Also to make proposals for the modern reconstruction of the place as awhole (Fokiali & Kampouropoulou, 2002).

3.2 Experimental Approach-Second Phase

Students were asked to make sketches of buildings and routes, to take few photos of the buildings and their details, to paint separately buildings and then make a painting synthesis completing the outside look of the New Historical Center they would like it to have. They could also use pictures of old prints found on the internet or in literature, cardboard, crayons, pencils, tempera etc., in order to show the «old" and "the new" elements of the buildings/Monuments by placing them in an intelligent and pedagogical - artistic way (Dewey, 1938/1998).

3.3 Students' Proposals with Models

In this phase of the educational program, students designed three-dimensional representations of the area of the New Historical center according to their proposals. In specific they built maquettes for each monument using environmental elements reconstructing with their imagination the characteristics they had visualize experientially. And at the end they joined their models in order to "reconstruct" a comprehensive picture with three-dimensional view of the route of the New Historical Centre of the city of Rhodes, even using recyclable materials (Fox & Gardner, 1997).

3.4 Creation of Educational Material

In this phase the students took to create educational materials, namely a training manual in order to convey the inspiration that had to do with the issue at elementary school students namely Thursday Elementary. Their work included the construction of an illustrated guide of teaching—tour of New Historic Centre of Rhodes using artistically crafted personal work to promote cultural heritage (Perkins, 1993). The guide should:

1) Have quality Aesthetically;

2) Be suitable for children;

3) Simply crafted;

4) Be attractive for children;

5) Contain information scientifically valid;

6) Be in total Pedagogically accepted.

The training manual should be specially designed to contain activities for students with originality aiming to help them to develop creative thinking such as, brain storming, metaphorical thinking, proportions etc. Also at the end of the Training Manual Academic students were given the instruction to create a "Glossary" with keywords accompanied by taciturn explanations mentioned in the texts, so as to encourage students to understand the history described by the educational manual.

3.5 Implementation

Academic students applied the training manual in a primary school based on the flexible interdisciplinary model of teaching. At the end a research took place using quassonaires to investigate the views, attitudes of students in relation to the use of the training manual specifically developed for the courses of Artistic and variety of lessons such as Mathematics, Grammar, History, etc., in purpose to promote the Cultural Heritage (Jewett, 1996).

4. The Results of the Research

Academic students before and after applying the training manual making teaching interventions over a month, distributed questionnaires to 125 students who participated, so to record any differences in students' views. The questionnaire contained general questions but also questions concerning the training manual in order to study the effects of knowledge by using it, its attractiveness, exercises and activities included and their attitudes in artistic education in combination with local history (Mazzotta, 1990). To extract the research results, we used statistical

software SPSS v.17 offered by the School of Humanities of the University of the Aegean and we present here the results only of some questions.

4.1 General Questions

In the research in total of 125 students 53 of them were boys and 72 students were girls. (Tab. 1, Fig. 1).

Table 1. Gender of the students

	Frequency	Percentage
Boys	53	42.40%
Girls	72	57.60%
Ensemble	125	100.00%

As shown in Table 1, in total of 125 students that took place in the research, a 42.40% were boys and a 57.60% were girls.
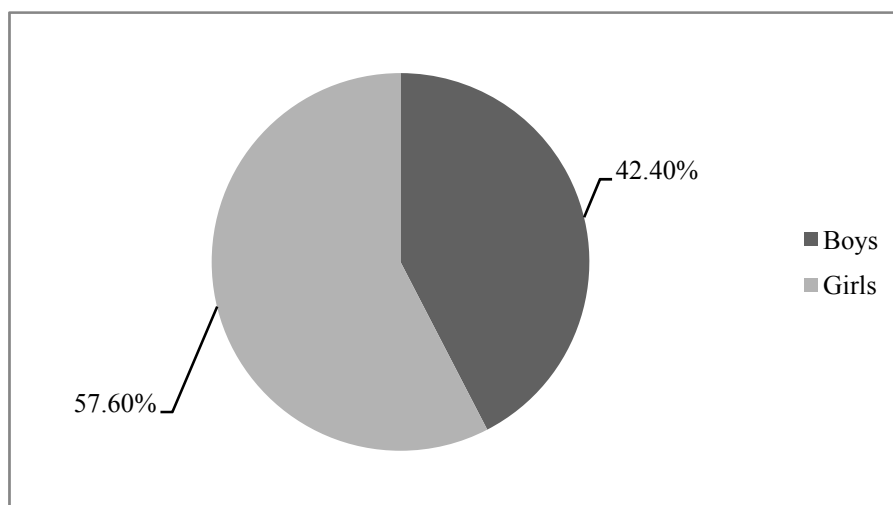

Figure 1. Gender of the students

In the question if they have you previously worked on a training manual related to the course of Arts and Culture in total of 125 students 38 of them answered "Yes"and 72 students answered "No".(Tab. 2, Fig. 2).

Table 2. Answers to the question if they have previously worked on a training manual related to the course of Arts and Culture

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	38	30.40%
No	87	69.60%
Ensemble	125	100.00%

As shown in Table 2, in total of 125 students that answered the question, a 30.40% answered "Yes" and a 69.60% answered "No".
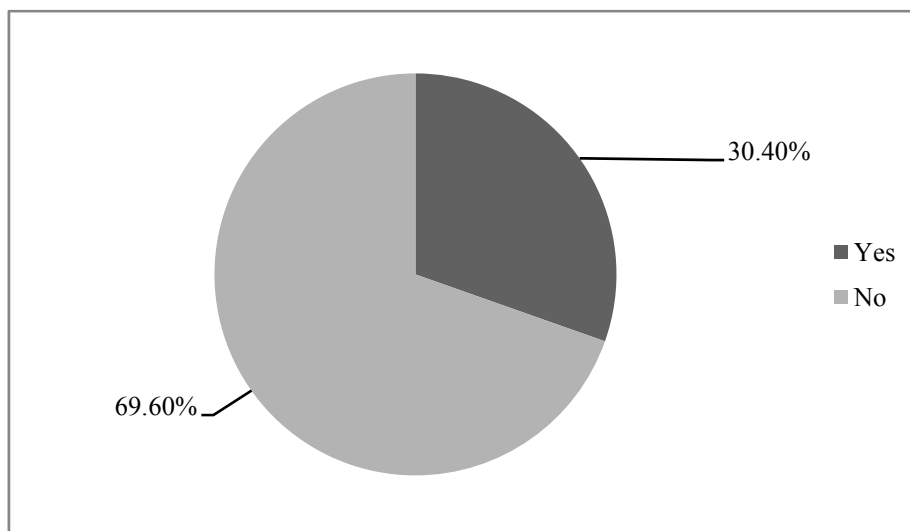
Figure 2. Have you previously worked on a training manual related to the course of Arts and Culture?

When students asked, "do you think that the lesson of Artistic can be combined with Culture?" before the teaching intervention, an 18.40% answered "strongly disagree", 38.40% "disagree", 23.20% "neither agree nor disagree" the 13.60% "agree" and 6.40% "strongly agree". After the teaching intervention a 3.42% of the participants replied in the same question "strongly disagree", 10.26% "disagree", 33.33% "neither agree nor disagree" a 35.90% "agree" and 17.09% "strongly agree" (Tab. 3, Fig. 3).

Table 3. Answers to the question if they think that the lesson of Artistic can be combined with Culture

| | Pre | | Post | |
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	23	18.40%	4	3.42%
Disagree	48	38.40%	12	10.26%
Neither agree or disagree	29	23.20%	39	33.33%
Agree	17	13.60%	42	35.90%
Strongly agree	8	6.40%	20	17.09%
Ensemble	125	100.00%	125	100.00%

As shown in table 3 there is a great differentiation in students' answers on question if they think that the lesson of Artistic can be combined with Culture after the teaching intervention.
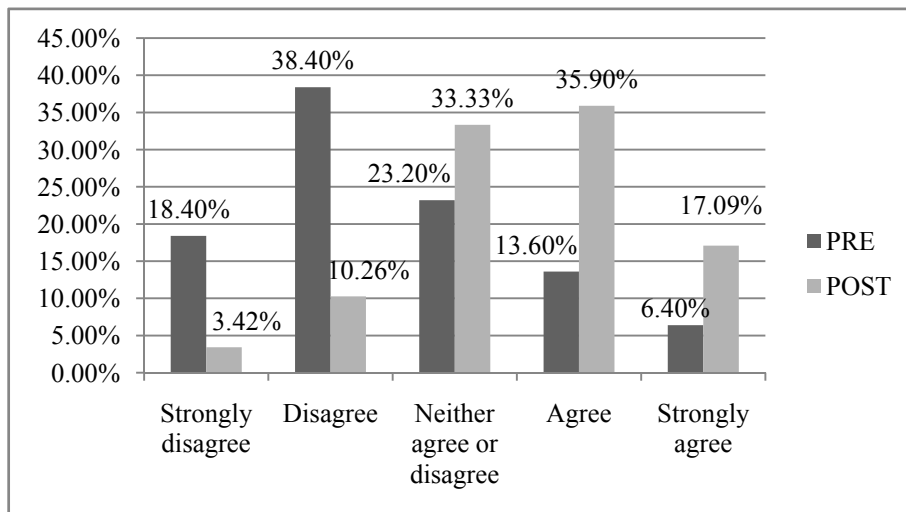
Figure 3. Do you think that the lesson of Artistic can be combined with Culture?

When students asked, "do you think that a training manual adapted to the course of Artistic can be combined with other courses?" before the teaching intervention, a 17.60% answered "strongly disagree", 36.40% "disagree", 24.80% "neither agree nor disagree" the 21.60% "agree" and 9.50% "strongly agree". After the teaching intervention a 0.80% of the participants replied in the same question "strongly disagree", 3.40% "disagree", 33.60% "neither agree nor disagree" a 44.00% "agree" and 19.20% "strongly agree" (Tab. 4, Fig. 4).

Table 4. Answers to the question if they think that a training manual adapted to the course of Artistic can be combined with other courses

	Pre		Post	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	22	17.60%	1	0.80%
Disagree	33	26.40%	3	3.40%
Neither agree or disagree	31	24.80%	42	33.60%
Agree	27	21.60%	55	44.00%
Strongly agree	12	9.50%	24	19.20%
Ensemble	125	100.00%	125	100.00%

As shown in table 4 there is a great differentiation in students' answers on question if they think that a training manual adapted to the course of Artistic can be combined with other courses.
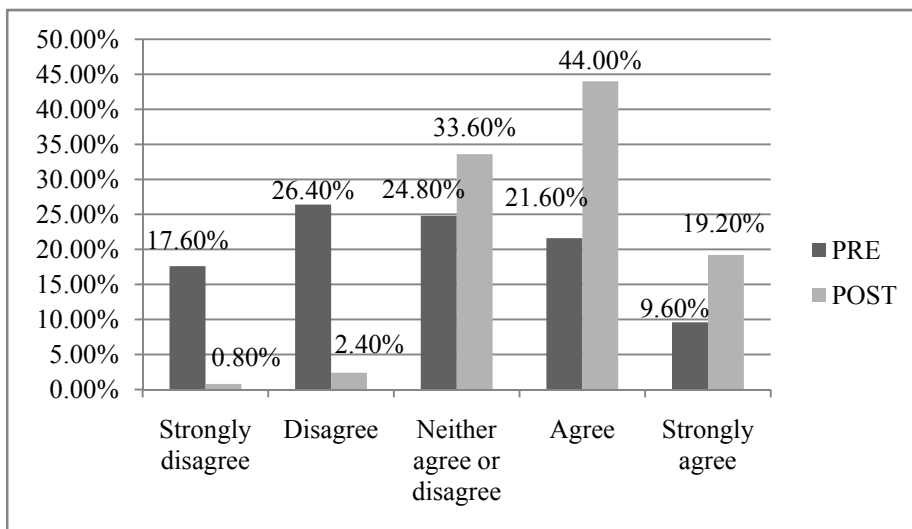
Figure 4. Do you think that a training manual adapted to the course of Artistic can be combined with other courses?

4.2 Variations on Questions Concerning the Training Manual

When students asked, "do you think that the knowledge you have acquired from the training manual will help you to better understand the new Historical center of Rhodes Town?" before the teaching intervention, a 8.28% answered "strongly disagree", 15.17% "disagree", 32.41% "neither agree nor disagree" the 22.76% "agree", a 6.21% "strongly agree" and a 15.17% "No answer". After the teaching intervention a 0.0% of the participants replied in the same question "strongly disagree", 1.60% "disagree", 18.80% "neither agree nor disagree" a 43.20% "agree" and 26.40% "strongly agree" and a 0.00% "No answer"(Tab. 5, Fig. 5).

Table 5. Answers to the question if they think that the knowledge you have acquired from the teaching manual will help students to better understand the new Historical center of Rhodes Town

| | Pre | | Post | |
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	12	8.28%	0	0.00%
Disagree	22	15.17%	2	1.60%
Neither agree or disagree	47	32.41%	36	18.80%
Agree	33	22.76%	54	43.20%
Strongly agree	9	6.21%	33	26.40%
No answer	22	15.17%	0	0.00%
Ensemble	125	100.00%	125	100.00%

As shown in table 5 there is a great differentiation in students' answers on question if they think that the knowledge you have acquired from the course will help you to better understand the new Historical center of Rhodes Town.
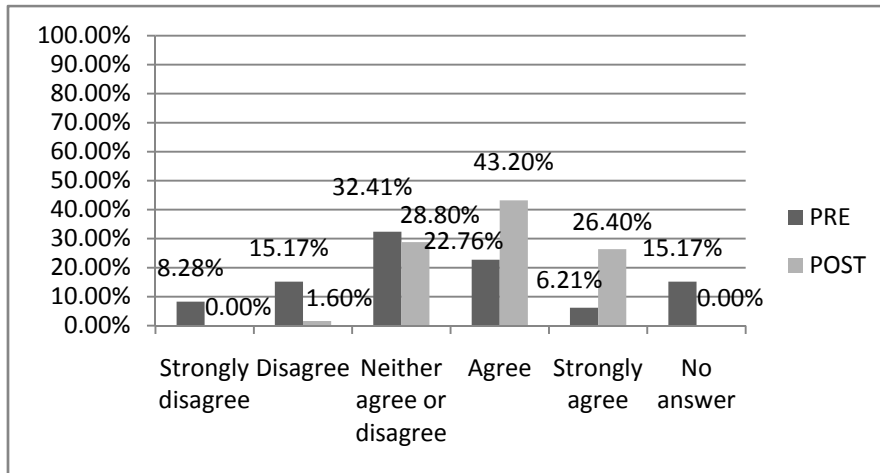
Figure 5. Do you think that the knowledge you have acquired from course will help you to better understand the new Historical center of Rhodes Town?

When students asked, "did you find the training manual attractive?" after the teaching intervention, a 0.00% answered "strongly disagree", 4.00% "disagree", 62.40% "neither agree nor disagree" the 22.40% "agree", a 11.20% "strongly agree". Tab. 6, Fig. 6).

Table 6. Answers to the question if they found the teaching manual attractive

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
Disagree	5	4.00%
Neither agree or disagree	78	62.40%
Agree	28	22.40%
Strongly agree	14	11.20%
Ensemble	125	100.00%

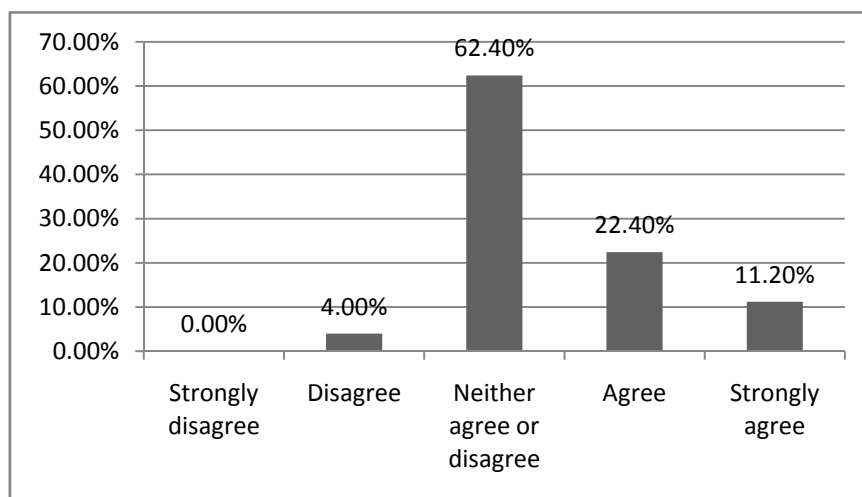As shown in table 6 students found the teaching manual very attractive.

Figure 6. Did you find the training manual attractive?

When students asked, "were the exercises and questions of the training manual easy and enjoyable for you?" after the teaching intervention, a 2.40% answered "strongly disagree", 4.00% "disagree", 26.40% "neither agree nor disagree" the 32.00% "agree", a 35.20% "strongly agree". Tab. 7, Fig. 7).

Table 7. Answers to the question if the exercises and questions easy and enjoyable for the students

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	3	2.40%
Disagree	5	4.00%
Neither agree or disagree	33	26.40%
Agree	40	32.00%
Strongly agree	44	35.20%
Ensemble	125	100.00%

As shown in table 7 students think that the exercises and questions of the training manual wereε easy and enjoyable.
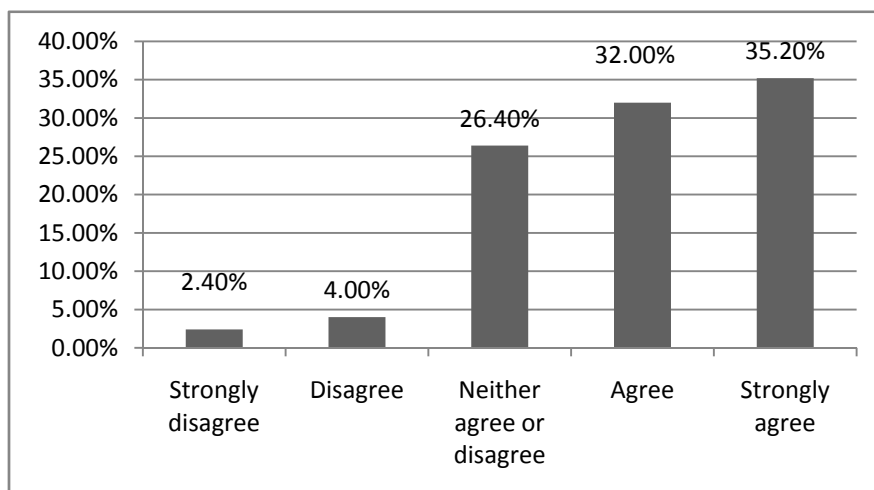

Figure 7. Were the exercises and questions of the training manual easy and enjoyable for you?

4.3 Artistic and Learning Activities

When students asked, "did you enjoy the artistic activities of the teaching manual inspired from The New Historical center of Rhodes?" after the teaching intervention, a 1.60% answered "strongly disagree", 3.20% "disagree", 39.20% "neither agree nor disagree" the 24.80% "agree", a 31.20% "strongly agree". Tab. 7, Fig. 8)

Table 8. Answers to the question if students enjoyed the artistic activities of the teaching manual inspired from The New Historical center of Rhodes

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	2	1.60%
Disagree	4	3.20%
Neither agree or disagree	49	39.20%
Agree	31	24.80%
Strongly agree	39	31.20%
Ensemble	125	100.00%

As shown in table 8 students enjoyed the artistic activities inspired from The New Historical center of Rhodes a lot.
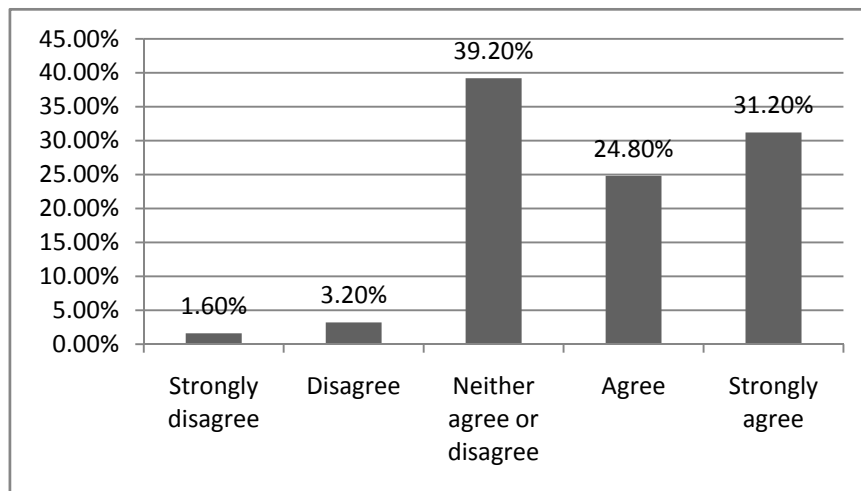

Figure 8. Did you enjoy the artistic activities of the teaching manual inspired from The New Historical center of Rhodes?

When students asked, "what did you like most in the training manual?" after the teaching intervention, a 14.40% answered "constructions with clay", 16.80% "constructions of maquettes", 12.00% "collages", 23,60% "puzzles", 13.60% "painting on cardboard", and a 17.60% "exercises on Grammar and Mathematics" (Tab. 9, Fig. 9).

Table 9. Answers to the question what students liked most in the teaching manual inspired from The New Historical center of Rhodes

	Frequency	Percentage
Constructions with clay	28	14.40%
Constructions of maquettes	21	16.80%
Collages	15	12.00%
Puzzles	32	25.60%
Painting on cardboard	17	13.60%
Exercises on Grammar/Mathematics	12	17.60%
Ensemble	125	100.00%

As shown in table 9 students enjoyed most puzzles, exercises on Grammar & Mathematics and constructions of maquettes.
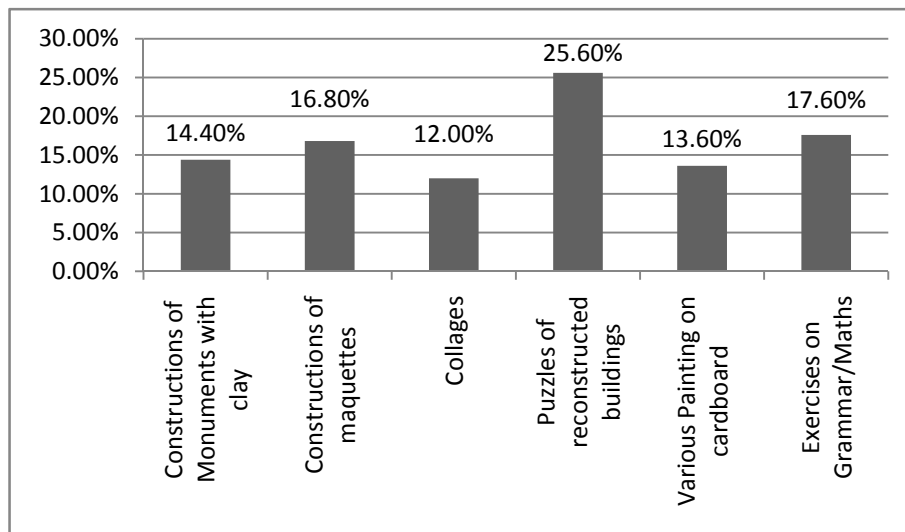
Figure 9. What did you like most in the training manual?

5. Conclusions

The majority of Academic students developed skills and implemented ideas in integrated artistic representations of the new Historical center of Rhodes. With a variety of visual techniques studied worked buildings / monuments and decorative items and enriched them in personal impressions in paintings, maquettes etc., proceeded to a comprehensive representation of the Historical center through experiential teachings, creations made through composition, analysis and transformation to original artworks. The construction and implementation of the training manual specially designed for primary school children and the results of the research led to the conclusion that art teaches children, creates concerns for the exploration and discovery of the origin of the data, teaches them in observation and offers experiences and sensations, in a way that all impressions incubate and lead to personal creations (Jewett, 1996). Also, students realized that courses taught can promote the cultural heritage of their place through interdisciplinary with basic axes a course of Arts through an attractive and entertaining way. Therefore it was proved that traditional teaching methods can adopt parallel activation of alternative methods to the course of Visual be a cross-thematic tool and help to promote the Cultural Heritage in Primary school students (Kampouropoulou- Savvaidou, 2007).

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