Becoming a professional in the domain of sculpting
Linda Puppe, Helen Jossberger, Christiane Settele, Birgit Eigelbperger, & Hans Gruber
University of Regensburg, Germany

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

• Expertise is the result of a longstanding endeavour to achieve high or outstanding performance (Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-Römer, 1993)
• Expertise research shows that great performance is ascribed to years of rigorous training, called deliberate practice
• Macro perspective of deliberate practice is the quantitative aspect and micro perspective of deliberate practice is the qualitative aspect (Lehmann, Sloboda, & Woody, 2007)
• Artists need an average of 13 years to develop their own artistic vision (Okada, Yokochi, Ishibashi, & Ueda, 2009)

AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aim of the present study is to analyse skill acquisition in the domain of sculpting and to which extent the expertise groups differ.
The following research questions are addressed:
I. Which processes and activities are relevant for professional development of sculptors?
II. Which of these processes and activities can be identified as deliberate practice?
III. How does skill acquisition differ between semi-experts and experts?

METHOD

Sample
10 Semi-experts (university students in art or art education study programmes, master level)
10 Experts (academy or college graduation, more than ten years experience, regular public exhibitions)

Instrument
Semi-structured interview: to gain information about professional development

Analysis
Interview data analysed by means of content analysis

PRELIMINARY RESULTS PART I

Which processes and activities are relevant for professional development?
• Deliberate practice of different techniques
• Trying out different materials or tools
• Repetition and development of formal and content aspects (change surface design)
• Investing a serious amount of time working intensively on a subject (for example socio-critical themes like treatment of refugees)
• Advice from experts regarding techniques, formal or content aspects
• Exchange with classmates
• Preoccupation with art-historical themes (knowledge acquisition)
• Resumption of learnt techniques and themes (for example poliment gold painting)
• Motivation to continue working despite of crises (physical, psychological and social)

PRELIMINARY RESULTS PART II

Which of these processes and activities can be identified as deliberate practice?

Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill acquisition in wood sculpting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge acquisition (material characteristics like hardwood or softwood, art-historical themes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition and development of formal and content aspects (change of surface design)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliberate practice of different techniques (Carving or filing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to continue working despite of crises (physical, psychological and social)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investing a serious amount of time working intensively on a subject</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PRELIMINARY RESULTS PART III

How does skill acquisition differ between semi-experts and experts?

Differences in
Semi-experts
Experts

Learning structures
Learning during study
Autodidactic learning after academy

Asking advice
Seek help for problems during design process
Solve problems regarding content autonomously

Handling of art-historical topics
Needed as support to solve content problems during design process
Consulted as source for new impulse

Role of studio
• Exchange with classmates
• Free artistic work outside studies
Working alone in studio

Similarities semi-experts and experts

Family background regarding
• Parents’ profession
• Artists in family (no professional artists)
• Support from family
• Educational background
Support from teacher

REFERENCE


CONTACT linda.puppe@ur.de