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The Role of Arts in Education: Enhancing Creativity and Critical Thinking

Khadija Samira M.

Faculty of Education Kampala International University Uganda

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the significant role that arts play in enhancing creativity and critical thinking among students, arguing for the inclusion of arts as a crucial part of the school curriculum. It examines various innovative arts education methods employed in European countries, illustrating their effectiveness in fostering young citizens' development and aiding teachers in achieving better educational outcomes. The influence of family encouragement and the strategic inclusion of arts over other activities are discussed as key factors in shaping students' cognitive abilities. The paper also delves into the theoretical frameworks supporting arts education, the benefits of integrating arts into the curriculum, and the historical evolution of arts in education. Finally, it addresses current practices and challenges, proposing a more systematic inclusion of arts in education to cultivate future generations equipped with the creativity and critical thinking skills necessary for personal and societal advancement.

Keywords: Arts Education, Creativity, Critical Thinking, Curriculum Development, Educational Innovation, Theoretical Frameworks.

INTRODUCTION

The main idea that I want to explore and argue in this paper is the importance for the government, society, and parents of including and making art a significant part of the school curriculum. The arts education methods can influence children's creativity and critical thinking. This paper elaborates on some innovative arts education methods and proven ideas which allow European countries to improve their young citizens' development and achieve more successful teachers [1, 2]. The huge influence of parental (family) encouragement and ideas is illustrated in the choice of art class instead of the second sport class because it positively influences their children and allows the opportunity for their wards to become smarter. To solve conflicts in Moldova, we want to show and argue why the combination of dark chocolate with caramel filling and some fairytale is an investment of 1.5 leu protected a model of methodological strategy for insecurity felt decently in primary school. For centuries, educational researchers have been worried about the hidden challenges in adapting a method for teaching/learning handwork art education compulsory in primary and general secondary schools. These same educational researchers and pedagogues proposed and tried various innovative methods in art education to test the impact on pupils' development in order for the government to reconsider the possibility of including at least certain innovations in the school curriculum to shape the attitudes of versatility for the development of a broad range of skills needed for the incubators of this generation to build the future of young citizens [3, 4].

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter discusses the role of arts in education. Drawing from the relevant literature, it systematically weaves a comprehensive narrative on the principles, key concepts, and models of arts teaching. Specifically, it delineates the conceptual and theoretical foundations related to several art-integrated or art-based teaching, including: Multiliteracies, Dialogic Pedagogy, Aesthetic Perspectives,

Creative and Experiential Learning [5, 6]. This chapter begins by offering a rationale for why we must pay attention to arts in education. It then provides a theoretical foundation for the role of arts in fostering young people's creativity and critical thinking. Creativity and critical thinking are seen as increasingly important qualities to be fostered in children because they are the future requirements of personal, social, educational, and employment outcomes. However, how these qualities are conceptualized and practiced in schooling varies. In this chapter, we argue that creativity and critical thinking are social and shared processes that are diverse and dynamic. We posit that the arts are a 'natural home' for creativity and critical thinking, and in this way the role of arts in education should be considered alongside the role of creativity and critical thinking [7]. In the first section of the chapter we detail our conceptualization of both creativity and critical thinking, which draws on theories that posit these qualities as 'plural'. In the second section, we present a rationale outlining the reasons for focusing on the role of arts in this conversation, enumerating the ways in which the arts can support and extend practices of creativity and critical thinking [8, 9].

ARTS EDUCATION THEORIES

There are specific educational theories underpinning arts education, which form the basis to incorporate arts into education. According to Ryan and Siegel, authentic practice and current research in the arts education context often locate the theories within the experiential practice. However, the authors identify some educational theories that advocate integrating artistic activities and artistic thinking within learning and teaching practices. Some of these theories previously reviewed and endorsed from this project include: tool-for-intelligence theories, constructivism, self-efficacy, zones of proximal development, behaviorism, teacher-as-researcher, and inquiry learning. John Dewey and Elliot Eisner are influential theorists within the arts who have been esteemed reference points in this research. Hence, four different approaches associated or being infused into these two educational theorists are discussed below [10, 11]. John Dewey's theory could be interpreted as arts learning enhances individuals' problem-solving and critical thinking abilities. According to Dewey, "true learning requires that a concept be utilized in solving an immediate problem to a situation at hand". Through sensual learning, Dewey also believes that this is the essence of art learning. "Sensitivity" to problems and to ideas also represents the "creative intelligence" in Dewey's term. Eisner has furthered the concept of "fun" and highlighted that in art education, students "experience 'mastery' over themselves" (p. 4). Hence, Dewey articulates arts learning as a method to integrate one's senses, feelings, and intellects, and "people increase the capacity for humane and intelligent thinking... calling on feelings and emotions". This cited suggestion from Bruner also iterates Dewey's proposal. Dewey classified the different modes of thought and cognitive which included scanning (perception of information), perception (recognizing the information received), analysis/synthesis (breakdown) of the information received, reasoning, suggestion, and intelligence. Dewey believed integrating modes of thought is crucial for creative thinking and creative problem-solving. Dewey and more contemporary creative thinking and creative teachers advocate integrative thinking [12, 13].

BENEFITS OF ARTS IN EDUCATION

Benefits of arts in education. Literature in general has provided abundant empirical evidence showing the positive impact of integrating arts into the educational system. Indeed, a variety of literature shared the same stance consistently, demonstrating that arts have the potential to improve students' creativity, encourage cognitive and emotional skills, reasoning, and conceptualizing, which later lead to the development of critical thinking and an inquisitive mindset. Arts engagement and endeavors are supportive in mitigating educational failure and dropout rates, especially improving the skills linked to problem-solving and the fear of failure. These outcomes provide evidence that the arts can be used effectively to support learning in vital areas of education, including literacy and math [14, 15]. Arts education commonly enables students to forthwith commit to memory but enhance self-expression. Through creative activity, arts often provide a new channel to improve students' interpersonal and social skills. Efforts and innovation of the arts may enhance students' self-efficacy and open a liberal way that is completely related to beliefs, motivation, academic grit, and mathematics. 'Careers' research conducted by Americans for Art (2015) suggests that innovative instincts are the most important skill when an individual calls in the workplace. In today's technologically advanced world, regardless of the industry or domain, business practices and processes are resolved by assessment and logic, thus enabling the hiring of leaders with an artistic place and contributions to problem-solving. In the world of otherwise pessimistic fact-fearing narcissism, arts and innovations add courage and a new voice; in turn, the artist will bring new insights to his reputation and visibility [16].

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF ARTS IN EDUCATION

The historical overview of arts in education section provides a chronological account of the role of arts in education over time. It delves into how arts education has evolved, its significance in different time periods, and the societal attitudes towards integrating arts into education. Readers will gain insights into the historical context of arts in education [17, 18]. Arts in education has had various meanings dependent on time period and location. Most of the creation and implementation of arts in education developed into official curricula and institutions in Europe and North America. Art education in ancient Egypt and its religious and symbolic significance is well-documented. In both China and ancient Greece, youth were often artists or musicians before being diverted into other careers in adulthood. In the Renaissance, art skills numbered among the variety of apprenticeship skills provided by trade guilds. Just as geometry was included, arts were significant subjects that rounded out the knowledge of individual gentlemen in western Europe from the Renaissance through to the Enlightenment in the 18th century and often were part and parcel of a religious curriculum in Jesuit missions [19, 20]. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, arts' curricula shifted from teaching drawing, music, and visual arts to make more explicit the ways thinking in the arts could be used to interpret and define cultural artifacts, such as literature. Such teaching occurred in part because of societies at the time seeking culturally refined children of professional families. In the U.S. during the 20th century, the expansions of art curricula again responded to the pressures and values of the society. This pattern has repeated in the U.S. with greater discrimination seen between the 20th and 21st century [21].

CURRENT PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES

Several efforts are underway, especially in the private sector, to bring arts into education. Art schools and creative schools are identifying their students as potential change-makers of the future and are trying to shape their education to equip students with artistic acumen so that they become creative citizens as well. We have noticed the establishment of institutions of performing and visual arts and, as a corollary, increasing the relevance of the arts in universities and colleges. The present government has already launched the integrated curriculum for primary students. With a lack of subject expertise in arts at the primary level, teachers desist from teaching it. The policy document implies that the arts be taught creatively. There is a gap between theory and practice when we talk about pedagogy. Teachers are not trained in applying theoretical knowledge concerning developing a conducive learning environment in classroom practice. It is natural that the delivery of an arts program will be erratic across the country due to differences in the socio-cultural milieu, class composition of pupils, family, and the exposure the child receives early in life. The interest of school managements thrusts the workshop approach to ensure social balance rather than integrate it into their master plan for teaching and learning [22, 23]. For a teacher to deliver SAO, she requires skilled artists to demonstrate the art form and intensively trained teachers. A progressive belief in the importance of arts for education prevails among the young. Social initiatives such as Moosic Night in Delhi, an attempt to draw school children from various Delhi Government schools to learn classical music as a hobby, are appreciated. However, if these initiatives are to be part of the mainstream of education, major systemic shifts will be required. It was observed in the working groups held for the preparation of this document that there was an immense openness on the part of the young towards integrating arts but an equally profound sense of frustration at the risk that there might not be jobs for them at the end of their training. There is a strong interest in and awareness of arts as components of culture but a lack of an overarching vision. The application of the arts to education is seen as little else than an employment opportunity or a social justice issue, not as a central aspect of schooling or an economic resource. However, this tension can be resolved. It can be resolved through a bold initiative on the part of the education system that brings the arts directly into all aspects of schooling [24, 25].

CONCLUSION

The integration of arts into the educational curriculum is not merely an enhancement of the learning experience but a fundamental approach to developing essential skills in creativity and critical thinking. As demonstrated by various successful models in European countries, arts education fosters a holistic development that prepares students to navigate complex personal, social, and professional challenges. The historical significance of arts in education and the current challenges highlight the need for a more systematic and widespread inclusion of arts in schooling. By adopting innovative teaching methods and addressing the gaps between theory and practice, educators can better equip students to become creative and critical thinkers, essential qualities for the future workforce and society at large. The role of government, society, and families is crucial in advocating for and supporting the integration of arts into

the curriculum, ensuring that future generations are not only academically proficient but also creatively empowered.

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