

Developing Creativity and Critical Thinking Skills Through Art Education

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 8 December 2020

Revised 11 January 2021

Accepted 21 January 2021

Key words:

Arts education,
Creativity,
Critical thinking,
Problem solving,
Collaboration,
Curriculum,
Experimentation.

ABSTRACT

The integration of arts education in the school curriculum has great potential in developing creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking skills among students. Arts education is often considered an additional subject, however, it facilitates more effective learning by engaging various cognitive and emotional aspects of students. Art can encourage students to experiment, explore new ideas, and find creative solutions to problems. Arts learning also encourages students to think reflectively and critically, evaluate their creative process and cope with failure in a constructive way. Students can develop analytical, collaborative and innovative thinking skills, which are highly relevant in an increasingly complex world through proper arts teaching. This article aims to explain how integrating the arts in formal education can significantly contribute to the development of essential skills needed in 21st century education. These findings suggest that art facilitates the development of artistic skills, and optimizes the development of students' critical and creative thinking abilities.

INTRODUCTION

Art education plays an important role in developing various aspects of students' intelligence, including creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking skills. Art learning is often considered an underrated part of the curriculum, but in fact art activities can stimulate students' brains to think more imaginatively and innovatively. Various studies have shown that art teaching can shape a more open and flexible mindset, which is beneficial in everyday life as well as in the future professional world (Hargreaves & Galton, 2014). The arts, which encompass a wide range of disciplines such as music, dance, drama and visual arts, also provide opportunities for students to express themselves and hone their social skills, which can further support the development of deeper creativity (Birgili, 2015).

The integration of art in formal education still receives little attention in many schools despite its enormous benefits for children's development. Several studies have shown that students involved in arts activities tend to show improvements in critical thinking skills and the ability to solve problems creatively (Winner, Goldstein, & Vincent-Lancrin, 2013). Art also serves as a bridge to introduce students to different perspectives, which is important to foster a sense of tolerance and

appreciation for differences. The integration of arts in education is expected to shape technical skills, and enrich students' experiences and insights in facing more complex challenges.

Many studies have shown the positive potential of arts education, however, effective implementation in the education curriculum is often compromised by a lack of understanding of the importance of the arts in developing a range of critical and creative thinking skills (Davies et al., 2013). Arts subjects in schools are often perceived as side subjects and the time and resources allocated to arts education are limited. As a result, many students do not get the opportunity to develop their abilities in the arts to their full potential. This is also exacerbated by the lack of adequate training for art teachers so the quality of art teaching is often not optimal. Despite the awareness of the benefits of the arts, sometimes the overly focused curriculum on academic subjects makes arts education not enough of a priority (Graham, 2016).

Assessment systems that are more likely to prioritize measurable academic results often overlook the importance of developing students' creative aspects that can be developed through the arts. This leads to a lack of appreciation for students' artistic works and is detrimental to the development of their

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critical thinking skills. Sometimes, the learning process in the arts, which relies heavily on experimentation and personal expression, is incompatible with rigid, outcome-based evaluation systems that can be objectively measured. As a result, students who show great artistic potential may not get the opportunity to better explore or develop their talents.

Observing the importance of arts integration in education is particularly relevant to 21st century learning, which demands skills such as creativity and problem-solving as basic competencies. The current education system often focuses on teaching measurable academic skills, while creativity, which is in high demand across various industry sectors, is given less attention. Arts education offers an excellent platform to develop these skills, but achieving this requires a change in the way we approach arts education, in terms of teaching, evaluation and resource allocation.

This study aims to analyze how integrating arts education in the curriculum can improve students' creativity, problem solving and critical thinking skills. Through a better understanding of the benefits of arts education, it is hoped that more effective ways can be found to integrate arts in education so as to support the development of students' critical and creative abilities in schools.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a literature study approach to analyze the role of integrating art education in developing students' creativity, problem solving and critical thinking skills. The literature study was chosen because it allows researchers to gather relevant information from a variety of previously published sources, including journal articles, books, research reports and policy documents. This approach provides an opportunity to explore existing concepts and theories, as well as how the implementation of art education can influence the development of creative and critical skills in students. This method also allows researchers to explore previous research results that can be used as a basis for drawing conclusions and recommendations related to this topic (Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 2008).

The researcher in this study will explore the literature related to the integration of arts education in the education curriculum with a focus on its impact on students' creative thinking and problem-solving skills. The analysis process will involve selecting relevant articles from leading academic journals, books, and reports from reputable educational institutions. The research will explore

different approaches to arts education that have been implemented in different countries and evaluate how arts teaching can enhance students' critical thinking and creativity. This literature selection process will refer to criteria such as relevance, methodological quality, and contribution to a deeper understanding of the topic (Hart, 1998).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Art education has a very important relevance in the development of individual creativity, especially among children and adolescents. Through arts education, students are taught to express themselves creatively through various mediums, such as painting, music, dance and theater. This process helps them develop technical skills, and encourages them to think critically and innovatively. Research shows that involvement in the arts can improve problem-solving and out-of-the-box thinking, which are key components in creativity. By providing space for students to experiment and innovate, arts education contributes to the formation of an open and flexible mindset.

Arts education also plays a role in the development of social and emotional skills that support creativity. Arts activities often involve collaboration and interaction with others, which helps students learn to work in teams and appreciate different perspectives. Through this collaboration, they can share ideas, receive feedback, and learn to appreciate others' creative processes. These skills are essential in an increasingly complex and interconnected world, where the ability to collaborate and communicate well is becoming increasingly valuable. It also fosters the ability to form creative individuals, and individuals who are able to adapt and contribute positively to society through arts education (Birgili, 2015).

The relevance of arts education in the development of creativity is also seen in its impact on students' academic achievement and mental well-being. Various studies have shown that students involved in arts activities tend to have better academic performance compared to those who are not involved. This may be due to increased motivation and engagement resulting from creative experiences. Arts education can serve as a channel for expressing emotions and coping with stress, which contributes to better mental health. Arts education serves as a tool to develop creativity, and as a means to improve students' overall quality of life. Through arts education, individuals learn to create, and to understand themselves and the world around them in a more profound and meaningful way.

Developing creativity, integrating arts education in the education curriculum has an important role in developing problem-solving and critical thinking skills among students. Arts education focuses on developing technical skills or artistic abilities, and on strengthening broader cognitive abilities, such as critical and creative thinking. Art as a means of expression allows students to think non-linearly, hone analytical skills, and enrich the way they view the world (Eisner, 2002). By focusing on the creation of art, students learn to make creative and innovative decisions, which can be applied in various areas of their lives.

Creativity in art learning is essential in shaping individuals who are able to generate new ideas and unconventional solutions. One of the main characteristics of art education is the freedom to experiment and explore possibilities. Students are encouraged to master techniques, and to develop an open way of thinking, able to see multiple perspectives, and find different solutions to existing problems (Robinson, 2011). This is very relevant to the needs of the future world of work which requires individuals to be more creative and adaptive to change.

Integrating art education also plays a role in practicing students' problem-solving skills. The process of making art often involves challenges that require critical thinking, careful decisions and evaluation of the results achieved. For example, in creating a painting or sculpture, students must solve various problems related to composition, use of color, texture and shape. They also have to overcome technical problems that may arise during the process. All of this requires the ability to think in a structured way and find solutions to existing problems. Through these art activities, students are trained to follow rules, and to create their own solutions (Hetland et al., 2007).

The arts provide a space for students to develop critical thinking skills, which is the ability to evaluate and assess information, and consider multiple points of view before making decisions. Arts education teaches students to think deeply about their creative process and assess their own work as well as that of others (Davies et al., 2013). In the arts, there are no absolute right or wrong answers so students must learn to evaluate and question the choices they make, as well as think about the reasons behind those decisions. This trains students to think reflectively, which is an important skill in both academic and professional life (Gardner, 2006).

For example, in music learning, students learn to play musical instruments, and to listen to and critically analyze musical compositions. They are

asked to think about musical structure, rhythm and harmony and how these elements interact with each other to create a complete musical experience. This hones critical thinking skills, where students have to break down the musical parts and understand how each element functions within the whole piece. This approach is highly relevant in developing analytical and critical thinking skills in a variety of areas (Bamford, 2006).

Experiences in the arts also help students to develop collaboration and communication skills. In many arts activities, such as drama or collective fine arts, students have to work together with their peers to achieve a common goal. This teamwork teaches them to listen, share ideas and communicate effectively. This collaboration enriches their understanding of different perspectives and strengthens their ability to think collectively and solve problems together (Sawyer, 2017). It can develop individual skills, and social skills that are essential in the modern, increasingly connected world.

Arts education also plays an important role in helping students overcome failures and difficulties, and learn from their experiences. In the arts, failure is often considered part of the learning process. Students can try, fail, and then try again with a different approach. This teaches them not to be afraid of failure and to always look for new ways of solving problems. This persistence is invaluable in developing critical thinking and effective problem solving skills (Duffy & Jonassen, 1992).

Integrating the arts can help students develop more effective thinking skills in formal education. The arts involve deep emotional and intellectual engagement that stimulates their cognitive abilities, and allows them to connect with their personal experiences more deeply. This leads to the development of more creative thinking and more innovative problem solving, as students learn to connect different aspects of their experiences on a broader scope (Baxter Magolda, 2004). This immersive arts experience provides opportunities for students to develop a range of skills that are useful in the arts, and in their daily lives and future work.

Art learning also plays a role in the development of adaptation skills. Students are often faced with situations where they have to adapt their approach based on changing conditions. For example, a student creating a sculpture may face challenges related to unsuitable materials or elusive techniques, and they must adapt to overcome these challenges. This ability to adapt is especially important in real life, where problems often cannot be solved with one fixed solution (Dweck, 2006).

It is important to note that the integration of arts education must be done in a planned and structured way, in order to provide maximum benefits for students. A well-designed curriculum can ensure that students get the opportunity to develop their art skills in a profound way, while enriching their critical thinking and creativity. The role of the teacher is crucial in directing students to utilize the arts as a means to develop broader and more complex skills (Girod, 2007). Through the right approach, arts education can be a powerful catalyst for improving the overall quality of education.

CONCLUSION

The integration of arts education in the education curriculum has a significant impact on the development of creativity, problem solving and critical thinking skills among students. Art as a medium of expression gives students the opportunity to explore new ideas, develop creative solutions to problems, and enrich their critical thinking. Art teaching facilitates the mastery of technical skills, and stimulates students' cognitive ability to think openly and innovatively. The process in art, which involves experimentation and self-evaluation, trains students to think more reflectively and collaboratively, and to cope with failure in a constructive way. The arts are important for artistic development, and have a major contribution in shaping individuals who are capable of critical and creative thinking.

Suggestions that can be given are the importance of structuring a more integrated curriculum, by providing sufficient space for art education related to broader learning. Art education should not be considered as a side subject, but as an important part of developing students' thinking skills and creativity. Adequate training for art educators is also needed so that they can manage and direct students in an effective way to maximize their potential. Arts education can be a key driver in creating a young generation that is creative, innovative and ready to face global challenges.

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