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Authentic and meaningful learning through integration of arts

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ABSTRACT

Art Education has taken the centre-stage with the introduction of New Educational Policy where the understanding of concepts will be made easy for the students. Visual impact is so high in the learning ability of children as they see, feel and believe. Cultural representation in the artistic form will imprint and bring certain social changes as students from different cultures, tradition and religious background are attending. Oneness and nationalism can be instilled by art education. Art education can help the students to think critically and innovatively in comprehending the concepts of subjects in a better way. Democratic principles like participation, freedom, rights and justice can be taught in conducive way through art education without hindering personalities.

Key words: Art education, social change, visual culture, democratic principles

INTRODUCTION

The National Educational Policy (2020) has given importance to learning by integrating arts into the subject for clarity in explaining the scientific theories, mathematical concepts, historical depiction of places and events in the art form and also explanation of languages in artistic format. Art through authentic instruction can become a learning mode for students to discover and navigate issues and concerns of the larger world. It may even help them to take active roles in their education and work collaboratively with their classmates to improve and develop their skills which are essential in the complexities of social life. Integration of art in the conventional curriculum will help the students to understand the social and cultural worlds in which they hail from. "Tomorrow's children need the arts to enable them to understand their social world so they might have a future in it!" (Efland, Freedman, & Stuhr, 1996)

ART EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Art integration is an approach to effective teaching in which students construct and demonstrate their understanding through an art form. Art education can become a powerful, effective tool in actualizing this outcome. Structuring a classroom around democratic principles and including visual culture as part of the inquiry will promote reflective and engaged members of society. In contrast, the current trend towards standardization and the omission of arts programs from schools can work against these values.

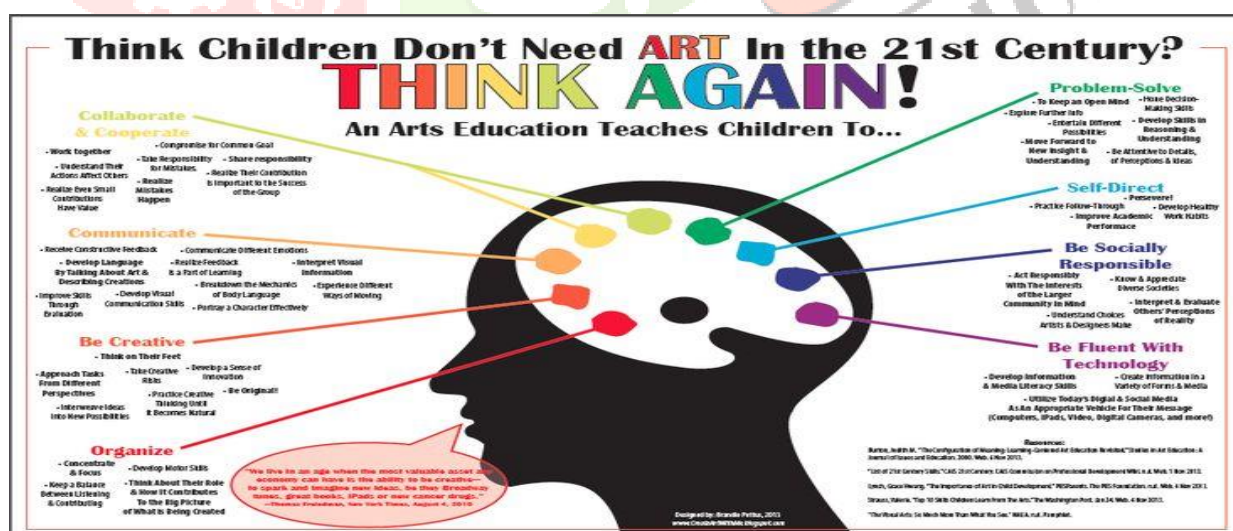
Figure 1. Describes Art + Education helps in social change to wipe out racism



ART IN THE SCHOOLS: TRENDS TOWARD STANDARDIZATION

The Covid19 situation has transformed the art of learning into technology driven with artistic outlook. The National Educational Policy (NEP - 2020) has given much emphasize in order to push higher achievement in Math, Science and language arts to make these core subjects their primary focus. Traditional learning appeals for desire to learn, to collect information through dialects and symbols from teacher to student but not to create, produce and use of artistic talent. The present day schooling has become task oriented with much expectations to survive in the competitive world; comprehension of subject concepts well assisted by arts. Students learn what is valued most by schools by the amount of time and emphasis given to different subjects. Till now art is often considered a break from the challenging aspects of intellectual thinking of core subjects and less importance attached to arts, which lead null of thinking and interpreting, interaction with arts less developed.

Figure 2. Describes how art can help children to think critically and logically



Without a strong arts program, students will lack the interpretive skills needed to think creatively, communicate effectively and solve problems. Through art education, students are encouraged to decipher visual and symbolic metaphors. They learn that there is not always one standard or correct answer and engage in developing their own personal interpretations. Presenting students with opportunities to focus their individual lens on the world will build high level interpretive proficiency. This reflects the ability to

discover underlying assumptions and meanings, personalize situations by forming multiple associations, and perform critical self-reflection (Freedman, 2003).

Finally, because students obtain, store and retrieve information in a variety of ways, they should be given opportunities to express what they know and understand through diverse methods using visual, auditory, metaphoric, synthetic ways and use forms of conception and expression that far exceed the limits of logical prescribed criteria or discursive or mathematical forms of thinking. Art education can show students what is unique and distinctive about their work and themselves. It encourages students to value all ways in which meaning is discovered, examined or expressed equally.

While standardization emphasizes uniformity, art education can help students become aware of and develop their own individuality. The stronger the push towards the standardization of curricula, the pre specification of outcomes for performance, and the use of isolated test items to measure achievement, the greater the need for the arts, if for no other reason than to help students understand that there is another way to live, another way to think, another way to be in the world. Art education has the potential to engage students in discovering possibilities of learning and expressing that are just as useful in life outside of school. Allowing students to explore issues and concerns that are significant in their lives through the arts program can instil an effective tool for future achievement that is not currently emphasized in the educational system. Facilitating authentic learning experiences in art can counterbalance the push toward uniform standardization.

DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES IN ART EDUCATION

Implementation of basic democratic principles in ontology of teaching with art education can simply enhances the efficacy of instructional learning. Many aspects of what art education promotes coincide with the nature of a democracy. Fostering opportunities to implement such learning will prepare students with the skills necessary for public life and success.

Figure 3. Describes how they way in which artistic sequel of democratic principles be understood by the students.

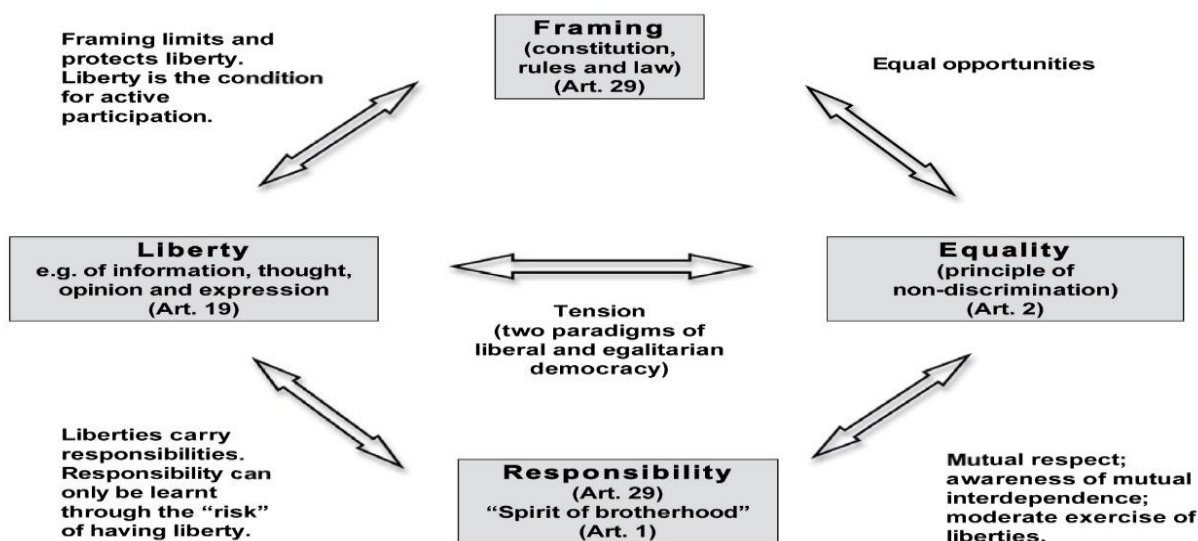


Figure 4. Describes the principles of Democracy through art



Engaging students in collective decision making and collaborative discovery is a pedagogical method emphasized in both authentic instruction and democratic teaching. Establishing a community of learners in which group work flourishes can assist children in learning from one another through discussion, deliberation and consensus. The teacher is seen as the facilitator, as opposed to an authority, and works collectively with the students to develop a curriculum and body of knowledge valued by each child (Dewey, 1916). Giving students a voice in the decisions of the classroom allows them to take ownership of their learning and teaches social cooperation needed for community life (Dewey, 1900). In classrooms where students are taught to be compliant and strategies of “hierarchical organization, one-way communication, routine”, and the use of extrinsic rewards are implemented, students are not personally

invested in their learning goals and do not make connections to the significance of the learning (Eisner, 2002b, p.91). “In this way schools encourage in students a dependency on authority and in general provide a distorted view of American history that in turn undermines the kind of social consciousness needed to bring about change” (Eisner, 2002b, p.74).

The arts can teach about other cultures, histories, and ways of thinking and living. They can assist students in examining realities of the past and applying them to current situations in society. Educators can empower students to expand not only their understanding of the social life but also become a member of the society to refine the society by constructing self-life and to become selfless person. “Understanding of the influence of social life on the generation of knowledge and construction of self. An understanding of the influence of context in one’s self-creation can be a step towards understanding and accepting difference in others” (Efland, Freedman, & Stuhr, 1996, p.44)

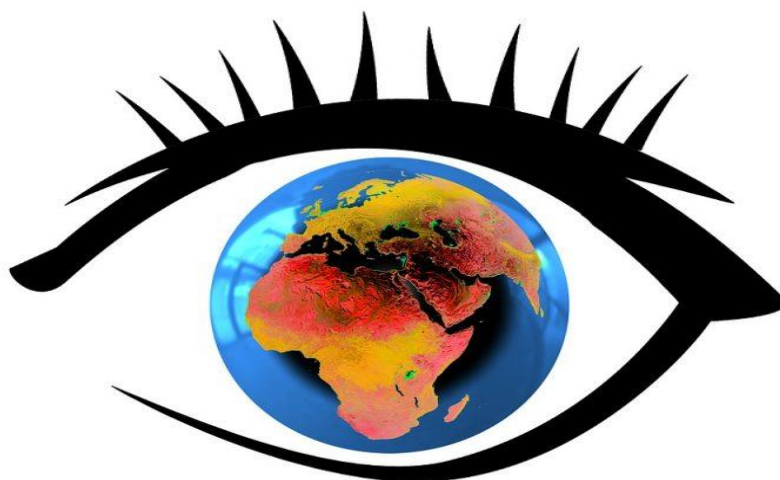
In the process of collaboration, characteristics of tolerance, trust, respect and equality are developed. We teachers must make an intensified effort to break through the frames of custom and touch the consciousness of those we teach. Art can illuminate dilemmas of moral and social value and offer students a safe and supportive environment to explore possible meaningful solutions.

Creating a democratic climate within the classroom while employing reliable instruction can create reflective students equipped with the skills needed to voice their opinions and concerns, challenge existing inequities, take risks and courageously map their own destinies. “The primary task of art education lies not in preparing consumers of culture but in developing and enabling creators of culture” (Marshall, 2002, p.280). Implementing democratic principles of allowing students to form their own rules for social living, involving individual and collective concerns in the creation of activities, and enhancing problem-solving skills through collaborative group work can enhance the possibilities for social change (Eisner, 2002b). Furthermore, applying this ideology in conjunction with authentic instruction will impact how students will view the role of the arts in future experiences of their lives.

TEACHING VISUAL CULTURE

Another important feature of art education that can be used positively to change and increase the connections among students between art and their lives outside of school by including visual culture in the curriculum. Visual culture includes not only the fine arts, but also images from television, advertising, photography, mass media, computer technology and Nintendo. All of these elements affect the identity of the culture; students must know and experience it. In a world where visual images saturate methods of communication, art education can make a difference in the way students understand and interact within that culture. The new conditions of visual culture illustrate that personal freedoms no longer only involve matters of free speech. They concern freedom of information in a range of visual art forms integral to the creation of individual and group knowledge. It is essential that students are taught to understand the power of imagery and the responsibilities.

Figure 5. Represents how visual art has brought the world into the eye



Exploring what students see outside of school every day should be just as important as learning about art work and artefacts in museums. Bringing familiar images into the discussions and activities of the classroom can be a catalyst for bridging what students desire and perceive with the discipline of the arts. Embracing the images of popular culture can erase the lines between high and low art and allow students to develop their own contributions of communicating meaning through art. Incorporating the study of visual culture in the art curriculum can inform students' abilities to consciously navigate through the images they experience.

Learning how to critically interpret the wealth of images, students spot every day; will allow students to meaningfully engage with the world around them. When they learn to read messages imbedded in visual culture from an educated perspective they can effectively analyse its influence on them. They can evade the persuasion techniques of the mass media and learn to examine the underlying messages being presented by fostering the analytical skills needed to interpret these images, students' awareness of the uses of visual culture to perpetuate societal values and cultural attitudes can break down traditional inequities and misconceptions.

CONCLUSION

Art's contributions to a child's development are seen in many aspects of their lives. Interactions with the arts have the potential to enhance a child's personal, academic and social growth. The arts provide an arena for new experiences to merge with prior understanding to improve opportunities for advancement in these capacities. Intelligence is a continuous active process of adaptation and application of experience. Involving the emotional and social aspects of learning along with the intellectual knowledge through art will assist students in forming their identities as well as understanding, contributing and interacting with the larger world.

Employing credible instruction strategies in art education can further the optimistic development of the child. Through collaboration, students initiate and take ownership of the learning process. By relating their interests and concerns to the exploration of art, students will come to grasp art as a tool for fostering discovery and communication. Through the investigation of significant themes, students will connect what they learn about art in school with how it can be implemented in future experiences of real life.

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