

The role of Creativity and Talent in art education of School Students

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Abstract

Previous studies have shown that learning arts have a significant positive effect on student creativity through using a suitable curriculum. It has been found that arts have become an important and essential part of developing the creativity of students, as it helps the the students to build their confidence and knowledge and to engage with other children. Moreover, it provides them with the necessary skills to develop their creativity through using curricula that were made specifically for teaching arts. This paper reviews the role of creativity in art education, and the role of art on the development of students' talents. Also, this paper reviews the role of teaching techniques in enhancing and developing the art creativity of students. In addition, the students' experiences and their exposure to different teaching concepts is how they can achieve full potential creativity and talent.

Keywords: Arts, Craft, Innovation, Education, Creativity, and Handcrafts.

Art, Creativity and Talent in School Students

In today's dynamic environment, and with the advancement of technology, economies rely heavily on creative, talents and extraordinary individual to thrive and stay ahead. Moreover, it has been suggested that a society's economic and cultural strength can no longer be measured only by the production of goods, but also by the production of information and creative ideas, which is often called the creative economy. Therefore, education must prepare students for their future life to be thinkers, skilled people, problem-solvers and creative (Jensen, 2001).

Nowadays, arts have gained increasing interests not only in the educational systems but also in other public and private arenas due to its roles in improving students intelligent. Educationalists recognized the importance of liberal arts and manual training as essential parts of general education in creating harmony between the physical and mental talents of the students (Ólafsson, & Thorsteinsson, 2009). In addition, many studies

have confirmed the effect of using handcraft on the enhancing learners' creativity at early stages of education. In 2011, Rezaei has found that handcraft is a vital instrument in early stages education and was significantly effective in enhancing students' score at the elementary grades in originality, flexibility and elaboration (Rezaei, 2011).

On the contrast, the focusing on arts in some educational institutes has not been a priority to other domains such as mathematics and other natural sciences (Robinson 2006; Walling 2001). As much as those two matters, art is equally important in expanding students creativity, improves their ability to think out of the box and helps them find their individuality. In fact, art education, unlike mathematics and other sciences subjects is more about expressing students' emotions through various projects and giving them the space to make mistakes and learn from them (Cohen, 2006). This method of teaching is not only beneficial for their talents development but also increases their ability to always find unique different solutions to problems. Apart from that, it has been found that allowing students to make mistakes and considering several answers help in providing substantial steps in developing their creativity, while the regular educational practices normally apply the principle of convergent thinking which include the 'one correct answer'. However, this approach might be limiting the process of creativity development, which in return will affect the performances of these students (Robinson 2006; Runco 2004). In other word, the materials associated with expressive aspects of children's intelligence, imagination and creativity can provide a valuable way to support their creativity, self-confidents and their growing identifications. However, in many classrooms these materials have been often considered as a part of goal oriented art projects, and thus, materials that support the creative arts have become limited in many early childhood classrooms. This was justified by many teachers as more to offering standards based learning possibilities (DiBello & Ashelman, 2011). Although this method might be practical, yet, it is not the best way to increase students' creativity and talents, as such restrictive material hinders children ability to express their emotions freely.

The previous belief surrounding creativity and talent is something that children are born with. Although, in a specific domain, some people are more creative by nature than their peers, however, teaching and improving creative skills can be done in classroom or other settings environment (Prummel 2006). Therefore, children's school experience should have a big focus on creativity as it is a vital part of their development, aiding their learning ability and improves students' standard all over the school (Steers 2009). For instance, students who were considered to be more creative in

their art classes were known to have a higher IQ in mathematics and vocabulary and scored higher in their mathematics and science classes. The present change of craftsmanship in art education is more than only an expanding of educational programs substance and changes in showing techniques in light of the promptness and mass appropriation of symbolism. It incorporates another level of estimating about craftsmanship in training that is attached to new postmodern methods of insight taking into account this developing environment of intercultural, intercultural, and transcultural perceptions (Freedman & Stuhr 2004).

The effect of craft engagement with creativity

In 2008, Eisner distinguished the ways craftsmanship engagements could improve the all-encompassing background of learning, elevate consideration regarding subtlety and nuance, encourage the measurements of astonishment, development, and understanding, upgrade the deliberate and subjective experience of things, advance expansion and assorted qualities of knowing, measurements of sensibility and instinct, and perceive the fundamental activity of creative energy as a standout amongst the most critical of human aptitudes (Eisner, 2008).

It is very essential to consider creativity as an attitude to life within the educational system (Kaufman & Sternberg 2007). In fact, working with art was found to be an excellent and useful method to develop pupils' thinking and creativity in a positive way. However, artists perceive the reality in many alternate perspectives (Prummel 2006). Thus, creative challenges, in terms of practical teaching strategies presented opportunities for the students to develop their creative responses, portray the essentialness of art and artistic crafts which lead to establish a crucial and successful learning environment (Parker 2005). Moreover, school can play a huge role in creating this kind of environment, however, the impact of the right curriculum and correct application by teachers is immense on the students when it comes to their thinking for themselves and generating creative solutions.

Therefore, introducing new art styles in school can help to develop the students' abilities skillfully and their creativity. It can also apply creatively the available materials, tools, technologies, theories and environments to the students and expose them into a new wide-range of developmentally appropriate aesthetic practices tools of art making. This will be done using specific procedures of practices, constructing, making, and meaning interpreting (Gude, 2008). This kind of education can help the students to apply various aesthetic receptivity and practices to structure and re-frame

their experiences as for now and in the future. In addition, it can develop their own unique expressions of investigating and to create designs of perception that can enable them to see the world with different perspectives (Gude, 2009).

Furthermore, according to Herz, (2010), learning art through visual artistic and craft engagements has the potential for elevating learning in different inclusive ways. This in turn, allowing students to explore potential artwork and discussing aesthetic values and description has been shown not to improve their understanding of the world around them but to also increase their artistic and vocabulary knowledge and help them better their artistic expressions. On the other hand, this artistic engagements indicates complex considering, selecting, separating, picturing, speculating, accepting, adjusting, refining and intuiting, investigating, scrutinizing, reflecting, looking, breaking down, contextualizing, evaluating and assessing the appraising of art experiences (Wilks, 2003).

Furthermore, these engagements can enhance children's personal responses and increase the understandings of their worlds culture (Smith, 2010). However, Renzulli in (1992), proposed a developmental theory of creativity which suggests that students should be provided with all the opportunities to engage in ideal acts of learning. These ideal acts don't involve art curriculum only, but also it is a general term for all education curriculum. Thus, the students, teachers, and curriculums must all be involved so that these ideal acts of learning to occur. Moreover, art doesn't necessarily have to be applied only in the classroom, but it can be taken in different environments. However, the major concern of Renzulli's was in how educators can support the creative productivity. Moreover, in real life, schools main focus still revolves around grades and exam scores, and comparing students' ability based on old IQ theories instead, while completely ignoring creativity and talent enhancement. This kind of school act will affect and hinder the students' creativity and lower their interest.

Artistic education effect on students' creativity

In artistic education, teachers should assign students with projects that will highlight their self-expression and allow seeing things from their perspective. This can help to encourage the students to produce their own artistic work rather than using an example which everyone has to duplicate. This means, allowing student to express their feeling and their impressions of experiences in a more special way. This is considered as an essential part of creativity. Therefore, the artistic education can be considered as a productive rich environment for the development of creativity, and is

started to be a general learning goal within the current primary education curriculum (Prummel 2006; Van Ransbeeck 1996).

It is essential to realize that artistic education is still lacking when it comes to improving and building creativity. In artistic education, it is very important to stimulate creativity continuously. In fact, artistically active individual does not necessarily make them creative, such as signing along with a song, or repeating it are important aspects of learning, but can hardly be considered as a creative act (Prummel 2006; Van Ransbeeck 1996). Hence, school curriculum and teachers training should always include new methods to make ensure that students are given a lot of opportunity to express their thoughts and emotions and have work on new projects which they see fit instead of having them follow a specific guideline. Thus, steps must be taken forward in order to ensure that there are sufficient training and resources are provided for all teachers and at all levels of teaching preparation and practice, so that creative and regular students alike will have their creative talents actualized. It is not only the teachers whom take the full blame, but curriculum and education systems are the core of the problem as teacher are not given the chance to explore and create their own styles as well.

Role of Educators and Curriculum

One of the most important aspects of developing creativity in school children is materials and teaching methods. However, many researches have indicated that the majority of teachers of primary school do not implement the suitable teaching strategies that foster pupils' creativity (Schacter et al. 2006). Teachers have a tendency to approach artistic achievement objectives in a more traditional way (Elias & Duquenne 2002). Old teaching methods still relies on the belief that some students are creative and some others aren't. On the other hand though, and while this is a very small percentage, it has been found an increase of teachers' artistic work creativity in primary schools during the past few years, which was reported by members of arts education organizations. However, a strong variation between schools and individual teachers was observed. Also, a survey results indicated that teachers has a great effect in stimulating artistic creativity but on an irregular basis. However, according to Backer et al (2012) teachers were found to stimulate the students' artistic skills rather than artistic creative outcomes. For instance, a lot of the projects assigned to students by art teachers are pulled off old art magazines and traditional curriculum, and while some teachers do try to instigate a creative setting in their classroom many still don't. The reason behind this is that teachers are not prepared to meet the needs of students in terms of creativity, and the

teachers do not act to know how to start, conduct or evaluate creativity. In addition, it is not just teachers' equipment and materials, but also the teacher training which doesn't provide a great insight on how to define creativity or use it in classroom. Aljughaiman & Reynolds (2005) argued that the definitions of creativity modify responsibility, includes unique ideas, imagination, self-expression, novel ideas, aesthetic products, and linguistic products. Based on this definition, many teachers feel that improving or foster creativity is not their responsibilities, when they do not know how to define, recognize, and appreciate creative behaviors. Creativity isn't fostered and improved through testing, as every student own creativity is unique in a sense and differs from other students' way of seeing things.

Art teachers tend to be more rigid in their classroom as they have to follow a certain curricula and meet a certain quota in terms of teaching material. On the other hand, teachers who are fostering creativity, they often put emphasis on flexibility and accepting other alternative ideas as well as encouraging the expression of the students feeling and ideas. Despite that, number of this kind of teachers are not that high, due to the firm controlled educational system with stiff rules and conditions such as general curricula, assessment and examination systems as this will hinder the creativity and prevent it from flourish. Most teachers have been trained and shaped in such way and given no room to play around materials and help students achieve their creative potential. Moreover, creativity isn't only limited to students, but to teachers as well, as it is should be a part of their job to change teaching materials and learn from different techniques through trial and error. Thus, creative students need creative teachers and creative materials as well, but unfortunately the situations of some of the educational system is limiting the opportunity of the teachers of being creative and preventing them from taking the risks in teaching in a creative way the students (Steers 2009).

Apart from that, the teacher's role in an art classroom shouldn't be taught, but to guide and facilitate different activities in the classroom. Tarr, (2008) argued that the first challenge to teachers as facilitators of play, is to prepare the environment, find and select suitable materials and spaces for the activity. Moreover, it has been suggested that in art classes, students should be given more freedom to find their own creative plans and project without a specific agendas or projects (Douglas & Jaquith, 2009). This method of teaching allows more freedom to students to make expressive projects, and makes room for open ended materials for the teachers to use. In the schools of Reggio Emilia, teaching through opened ended materials

is rule an adhered to by most teachers. Gandini, (2008) suggested that using open ended unstructured materials will be useful in developing a model of cooperative analysis to investigate the project work, which will provide more opportunity for producing much thoughtful choices. It also helps the students to engage and develop a sense of responsibility towards the community. Moreover, in the schools of Reggio Emilia, time is not set by the clock, as this will provide more space in addition to choices. Generally, school clocks restrict students to come up with the most expressive piece of art and hinder the quality of their work. Therefore, students' intelligence has to be trusted as well as the integrity of the teachers in order to allow them to act as a partner instead of a gatekeeper in the classroom and to provide more information (Gardner, 1991). Partnering up with students will help them open up to their teachers and make them more comfortable to express themselves in a more natural way.

Adequate teacher training in art and creativity isn't only beneficial to the teachers overall quality. In fact, skillful teachers who have the understanding of how to support creative processes are more capable to adapt to any sudden incidents or discoveries that the children make. For instance, how the sunlight may reflect on a window shade, the forming shadows of tree branches, how the lakes look in the school yard, or the holes under the trees (Cadwell, 2003). All of these are examples that are available in the children surrounding and can be used for the advantage of the betterment of teaching.

The reason why having an open ended material instead of relying predefined curricula goals and rigid teaching methods is that it opens up the students to think outside of the box and initiate a deeper level of thinking. Moreover, playing with materials is well-thought-out around preset curriculum goals and can help in defining the outcomes. Thus, less will be given to the student's own competency and capacities in order to create more meaningful skills with his/her peers or develop new forms with materials. These self-initiated practices many opportunities will be developed for long term projects and for combined learning practices. This will help students of all levels of development to deepen their understanding of concepts (Kolbe, 2001). These experiences they form and their higher understanding of different concepts is how children can achieve full potential when it comes to their creativity and talent.

On the other hand, the teachers who guide students must understand the properties and fundamental nature of materials, the potentials for changing and expression, and the satisfaction of being genuinely involved. So if adults cannot understand the aesthetic values of materials and how to apply

those values in classroom setting, students also will not be able to unlock their full potential. It is also very important for them to have interest in approaching this type of learning and to enjoy doing it, because the emotions are very critical elements of any authentic cognitive in the educational process (Rinaldi 2006). However, in 2011, DiBello & Ashelman suggested that the curriculum should be creative partnerships among the teachers and the children in art classes, as the materials are considered vital to the process of investigation and representation. Moreover, small groups are more preferred for the in-depth examination. For example, teachers who partner up with students and work on free open ended art projects have a greater chance to provoke students to a better understanding of their emotions, deepening their experience and aiding them find their individuality. Materials are vital to the process of art teaching, however using the same material for each student doesn't necessarily mean results will be better.

On the other hand, talking about different art pieces and engaging students creates an art savvy environment. In fact, the conversational modes enhance the communal learning and understanding, and help to develop the meaningful contributions of children and teachers. In addition, teachers can acknowledge student's responses to artworks or craftwork help them engage in conversations, guiding them, encouraging them, developing and using their own powers of observation, analysis, or explanation to improve their engagements with art (Bell, 2012). This type of environment makes the students feel valued and appreciated, and gives them the chance to develop their own opinions and values of what constitutes a good piece of artwork evoking deep emotions and feelings. Exchanging differing perspectives and ideas during group work is valuable in the student's creative partnerships of concepts, occurrence of socio-centric thought, and the improvement of higher thinking skills (Fosnot, 1996).

Other than that, there are many great ways to teach art to children and include materials that could be advantageous to initiating an artistic creative ambiance in the classroom. Moreover, fine art is still very valuable in education and considered as an important element of historical and modern visual culture. Teachers in kindergarten know the dimensions of practical practices in visual arts as a way in enhancing these kinds of value learning (Herz, 2010). In the 21st century, the increasing number of visual art objects and images shapes art education significantly. This was also expanding to include the inter-graphical and inter-textual connections between different visual forms (Freedman & Stuhr 2004).

Teaching creative art and creating artwork are two separate things. Nowadays, many artists carry their work in post-studio, as it is difficult to invent pedagogical practices that reflect the aesthetic experiences of modern art. However, this put some challenges and more combined task of art educators, that force them to take seriously the responsibility of creating new projects and activities that motivate the students and provide them with tools to understand and participate in modern art conversations (Gude, 2013). Getting students involved in these projects and testing their limits to express and create new artworks, pushes their talents and provokes their emotions, guiding them to develop more creativity in their classrooms.

Design and Handcrafts in classrooms

Craft activities were found to have great role in helping students to discover, arrange, invent and control things. Pestalozzi, who is known as the father of educational craft, emphasized the importance of craft in general education and that the handwork lay at the center of all learning and that children are inherently creative and express themselves best through action (Ólafsson, & Thorsteinsson, 2009). Therefore, recently curricula focusing mainly on crafts were established in many countries such as New Zealand, Canada and England, where Design and Craft is considered as a new technological subject for Innovational Education based on a rationale for technological literacy, innovation and design. In this subject, design and craft education is compulsory for all grades 1-8 (ages 6-13), where students have to make their idea and design their art pieces (Ólafsson, & Thorsteinsson, 2009). However, in the beginning the established craft subject was called “school industry” in order to distinguish it from other different types of arts. In this craft subject, many materials can be used and most of these materials are byproducts that will be recycled in a way to producing a new items by the students, on the same time, it will help to eliminate and reduce the produced wastes.

In fact, in some of these schools, art teachers are making a whole project using environmentally friendly supplies and recycled materials.

In these classes, the students use materials that we use every day to create an amazing art pieces or project. Including; water bottles, chip bags, used cardboard and plastic plates, plastic forks, cups, aluminum foil, string, rope, toilet paper, paper towel and much more. Students will be using their imagination with the teacher encouragement and some helpful tips. The final product will be artistic pieces from the best-recycled materials. Their creations were not only works of art, but also expression of their feeling, souls and imaginations, as each created piece can tell a story (Ericha, 2013). Also, at Bard High School Early College in Queens, an art teacher

and professor named Jennifer Renée Caden Merdjan, is guiding her students to create a new artistic pieces using unconventional materials Jonesmarch, K. (2013). In her class, the students are studying contemporary artists who use a humble or recycled material to make an environmentally friendly project. The students usually use one recycled item over and over to make or create something unique or outrageous design that functions as opposed to fine art such as. For example, a hand bag sewn together with bicycle tire tubes, a dress fashioned from soda cans, a dress using plastic straws and jewelry holder using empty toilet roles. This kind of art project allowed the students to design something of their choice, using a material of their choice to create a unique piece of art and to raise the environmental awareness at the same time.

Conclusion

Creativity is one of the most interesting and important part in the field of art education. Anyone can be an artist but being a creative is something different. It can be concluded that art classes can improve the mental activities and creativities of the students. However, the process of students' creativity development is a hard task that includes the teacher effort, right curriculum, the right materials and tools. Moreover, in order to improve the students' artistic interest, more freedom should be offered to them, this freedom should include their time, their choices in the work that they want to make, which express their feeling and creativities. In addition, their choices of the used materials is also one of the most importantly part, as this will show their creativity in making a unique piece of art out of nothing.

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