The Impact of Visual Arts in Students' Academic Performance

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Abstract

Arts have long been considered part of the human affective experience and needed by our young people as a medium for safe expression, communication, exploration, imagination, cultural and historical understanding. Thus, the challenge for Visual Arts integration should not focus only on a particular art discipline alone like Humanities (Art Appreciation) somewhat it should extend across the curriculum. The major problem of this study was to assess the impact of visual art on the performance of the students from the College of Education, Bulacan State University. The study made use of experimental research design. Results of the study revealed that significant difference exists in the posttest performances of the experimental and control groups, in other words, the group who utilized the visual arts in studying art appreciation recorded significantly helps performance than those who used the traditional lecture-discussion method. Moreover, further analysis of data suggested that using visual arts in different learning areas encourages students to participate and this will develop their confidence and advantage in the learning process. Some pedagogical implications were drawn based on the findings of the study.

Introduction:

Globalization necessitates people from different continents to form connections despite having different norms and culture. It is imperative for the people of every country to understand one another along with their standards, and traditions. A way to achieve this understanding is through arts education.

Through the arts education, people may learn to address and embrace diversity, present emotions and differentiate values in the world. Arts education allows schools to provide the students with knowledge of ethics, see social realities and understand their rights and responsibilities.

Jolley (2016) in his article "The Importance of Arts Education" recapped that arts education promotes some benefits in a variety of ways. Some of the advantages of arts education are: developing the students' imagination and creativity; allowing them to understand and express their feelings and ideas; aiding them to understand and visualize other core subjects; helping them to observe the world around them; supporting them in the decisions- making and in solving problems; and in developing values such as concentration and persistence.

Ochshorn (2016) asserted that Arts Education is important because it improves performance. She claimed that it improved learning skills, school attendance, critical thinking skills and creativity. A good arts education is built on and reflects recognition of the specific and unique way that the arts shape people's thinking and their lives. Eisner, (2013).

The noteworthiness of art is immeasurable and innumerable. Booth, D. (2016) asserted that the techniques are ways of learning, of exploring, of responding, of revealing and demonstrating, of imagining, and of depicting and making meaning. They belong to the school curriculum as they belong in the minds and hearts of lifelong learners.

For this matter, it is essential to conduct a study on how the Filipino students perceive the arts about their academic performance. This study aims to look into the respondents' perceptions and attitudes about visual arts as predictors in the students' academic success. Many teachers integrate visual arts into other content areas. Its inception in the elementary curriculum, arts education positively benefits students' learning. Based on analysis of some relevant research literature, findings revealed that visuals positively impact students' behavior, engagement creativity, and academic performance.

Education has been conceived as a continuing process of adjustment and experience. In the 21st century, one of the goals of education is to open new windows that would make the skills and standards relevant to the Digital Age learners. It means developing students' knowledge and higher-order skills; creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. In line with this goal, the Commission of Higher Education (CHED) sets an aim to upgrade the quality of Higher Education continuously; its programs and system to be at par with international standards. Higher educational institutions' faculties are advised to research in line with the goals of the Commission on Higher Education Research. Investigating the effective utilization of visual arts in teaching Humanities (Art Appreciation) in the tertiary education is a reasonable undertaking, hence, this study.

The primary focus of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of integrating or using visual arts in the teaching and learning Humanities (Art Appreciation).

The study restricted its coverage to the 1st year Bachelor of Elementary Education Students major in General Education of College of Education – Bulacan State University School Year 2017 - 2018 only. From the total population of 100 First Year students enrolled in the Humanities (Art Appreciation) course, 44 will constitute the sampling. The primary purpose was to identify the impact of visual arts or art integration in the students' academic performance.

This procedure guarantees that all subjects have the same chance of being in the experimental or control group. The pretest-posttest control group design included pre and post-testing the subjects to measure the effectiveness of visual arts or art integration in the students'

academic achievement. The analysis of the effectiveness was done through comparison of pre-oral and post oral communication skills results. The significance of differences was tested using the t – the test of correlated mean procedures.

Discussion:

Eisner, E (2017) coined the term "cognitive pluralism" as among the orientations to the curriculum. This perspective highlights the idea that students should be afforded opportunities to learn and communicate their understandings through various forms of representation. Lowenfeld (2005) published the book "Creative and Mental Growth" that describes the characteristics of child art at each stage of development and prescribes appropriate types of art media and activities for each age. His views of child art were grounded in constructs drawn from two sources. One was the psychoanalytic school of psychology in which evidence of aesthetic, social, physical, intellectual, and emotional growth is reflected in the art of children. The second was the concept of stages of growth in art, which originated in German and Austrian sources.

Art Integration. According to Efland (2002), arts have long been considered part of the human affective experience. One reason proponents cite for integrating the skills with academic curricula is the perception that works of art can engage the students emotionally with the curricula (Greene, 2001; Eisner, 2002; Kindler, 1997). Elkins (2001) agreed that by merely looking at paintings humans one might be overwhelmed by emotions. In one of the arguments from the Platonic tradition, art objects were thought of as models, imitations of nature, used to help humans understand abstract concepts. More significantly, in the study of Gardner's (2006, 2007), on the Theory of Multiple Intelligence, Golemanm's (2006) work and Eisner's (2002) perspective on aesthetics will guide the philosophy of arts integration across the curriculum. The teachers serve as the model and will initiate the teaching process of art integration using Multiple Intelligences, Emotional Intelligences, and aesthetic understanding of the artistic process.

Art as a Learning Process. In the study of Lampert (2006), there have been a few studies focusing on creativity and critical thinking at the university level that provide a foundation for further research. An assessment of the techniques in public universities establishes that learning in the arts exerts its most significant effect on truth-seeking, critical thinking maturity, and open-mindedness. In a landmark study by Simon & Hicks (2006), they concluded that hearts have the ability to enrich individuals of different ages and varying achievement levels because "the creative arts do not discriminate" They also revealed that the skills broaden the constructs of a formal education and boost the imagination and discover new ways of understanding especially for those students who are economically disadvantaged and academically struggling.

Arts Education and Brain Function. Findings in the study of Goleman (2006) showed that there are two kinds of intelligence: intellectual (left brained) and emotional (right brained) which comprise the learning process of the individual. Emotional intelligence skills are synergistic with those of cognition, and top performers possess both. Emotional Intelligence is the ability to "monitor and regulate one's own and others' feelings, and to use emotions to guide thought and action." Emotional Intelligence encompasses five characteristics and abilities: (1) **Self-Awareness.** Knowing feelings and using them to guide decision making. (2) **Self-Regulation.** Handling

feelings, so they enhance rather than interfere with the task at hand. **(3) Motivation.** Using preferences to move and guide one towards goals. **(4) Empathy.** Recognizing feelings in others and tuning into their verbal and nonverbal cues. **(5) Social Skills.** Handling emotions in relationship interaction, conflict resolution, and negotiations.

Social, Physical and Cognitive Development

According to Wooten (2008) passion for education emanates from the motivation of students through art education. The role of art played a significant role for the students for the sustenance of that passion. Gazziniga (2008) cited the result of Dana Arts and Cognition Consortium in 2008 from the reported findings from neuro-scientific regarding the possible causal relationship between art exposure and the capacity of the brain in learning other cognitive domain.

Purposes of Art in Education

According to Galvez (2018) learners respond to information differently. Thus, it is often to the advantage of the teachers to use many different formats and modes to teach the subject matter of a lesson. Numerous authors like Caldwell and Vaughan (2012), Dwyer (2011), Hartle (2015), Melnick, Whitmer and Strickland (2011) and Reeves (2007) noted that art education deserve an extraordinary part in the heart of education curriculum because of its numerous counts regarding its benefits mainly in reasoning and critical thinking. He likewise said that art education as one of the main component of greater heights for academic instruction. Besides Melnick (2011) revealed many cognitive advantages from art education like higher academic achievement, creativity, imagination, self-expression, rouses the mind of students and stimulates the brain. He suggested that art education as a future model for useful educational hopes and practices. Expert researcher Eisner (2000) assumed four listed four effects or findings from art education experience.

Students learn the process of putting ideas and expressions into a form or creation.

Students gain greater perceptual abilities and become more analytical.

Students see interconnectedness between arts, culture, and history.

Students demonstrate perseverance through ambiguity.

Art as Teaching Method. Children do learn well through play and experimentation, and technique can be used to encourage this learning across all curriculum areas. Using visual arts in different learning areas helps students to participate, and this will develop their confidence. As they enjoy doing artwork, their knowledge and abilities also escalate. Each student may respond well to the individualization of learning. Arts can be used in other learning areas such as in drawing activities; learning science concepts through art (light, colors and color mixing, etc); learning mathematical concepts through art (space, perspective, angles, shapes, etc); learning society and environment concepts through art and crafts (dress, lifestyles, housing, etc); and some assessment through technique rather than other methods such as tests. Virtually any subject can be enhanced.

Kinds of Visual Arts Drawing

Painting. It is often called the most important form of visual art. It is about putting colors on a canvas or a wall. Paintings became important in ancient Egypt, where tombs of pharaohs were covered with scenes of everyday Egyptian life.

Printmaking. Printmaking is art that is made by covering a plate with ink and pressing it on the surface of another object. Today prints are mostly produced on paper today, but initially, they were pushed onto the cloth or other purposes.

Photography. Photography is making pictures by letting light through the lenses of a camera onto a film. In analog photography, the fire was recorded onto a movie, which had to be chemically developed. Images could then be printed on special paper. Today most photography is digital. Cameras have no documentary; the images are recorded onto silicon chips.

Computer Art. Today, art is no longer limited to brushes, paint, and pencils. In the last few decades, artists have been working with computers to capture images and change them.

Sculpture. Sculptures are three-dimensional pieces of art that are created by shaping various kinds of material. Among the most popular are stone, steel, plastic, ceramics, and wood. The sculpture is often referred to as plastic arts.

The researcher utilized the experimental approach, the pretest-posttest correct – control group design in determining the effectiveness of using visual arts on the students' academic performance. The researcher formulated a teacher–made test based on the following topics; Introduction to Humanities (which includes Humanities, Art, Art Appreciation, Imagination, Creativity, Expression, Assumption of Art, Art and Experience, Art and Nature, Subject of Art, Sources of Art, Importance of Art, Forms of Art and Classification of Art). Functions of Art, Philosophical Importance of Art and Artist and Artisan and Elements and Principles of Art.

The result were obtained through Mean and Standard deviation procedures from the performances of the members of the experimental and control groups using the following sampling distributions. The t – test for correlated means was used in testing the significance of the differences in the performance of the experimental and control groups using the mean of the experimental and control groups, standard error of the mean, and standard deviation.

Conclusions:

In the light of the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. It was concluded that no significant IQ and age differences exists between the experimental and control groups in terms of IQ and age.
2. Generally, no significant difference exists in the pretest scores of the experimental and control groups.
3. It may be concluded that the use of visual arts or art integration was effective. An active participation from the experimental group regarding various activities was outstanding. The overall findings revealed the advantage of art integration and the use of visual arts in learning process of the students. The traditional lecture-Discussion method used in the control group revealed a less active participation and difficulty in the learning process.
4. It may be safely stated that significant difference exist in the posttest performances of the experimental and control groups, in other words, the group who utilized the visual arts in studying art appreciation recorded significantly helps performance than those who used the traditional lecture discussion method.

The null hypothesis that there was no significant difference exist in the posttest scores of the experimental and control group has been rejected.

5. Using visual arts in different learning areas encourages students to participate and this will develop their confidence and advantage in learning process.

Recommendations:

The conclusions recommended the following:

1. The teachers are challenged to use visual arts or arts integration and creative teaching strategies in conducting visual arts related activities.
2. The Philosophy and Humanities department must ensure the continuous programs related to visual art integration and use of visual arts in teaching Humanities (Art Appreciation)
3. That the future researchers conduct experimental investigations on the impact of visual arts or art integration in the academic performance of the students.

Teachers in the field of other disciplines like Math and Geometry, Science, English the like may implement or use art integration based from the findings that arts allow creation from understanding and deepened engagement with a topic.

4. Teachers can help students having difficulty to learn via traditional methods through the introduction of visual arts. Visual arts can be an interesting tool for learning that can give students a point of reference for future learning.

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