

The Role Played by Art in the Education and Creativity of the Iranian Students

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ABSTRACT An ability to see things from a new perspective, crossing borders of ignorance and artificial conventions, giving shape and forms to inappropriate things, becoming familiar with the persisting problems dominating the modern world, and finally understanding the meaning of life, requires particular attention to art, in general. Art plays a major role in the life of man. It is a means of effecting and promoting education. This paper intends to elaborate on the importance of art and creativity, and their role in the education of the Iranian students. By using an analytical – quantitative method, it has traced the impact of art on the lives of individuals. An attempt is made to establish a bond between art and creativity through the medium of education. Such artistic endeavors like painting, music, handicraft, and dramatic arts like literature, cinema, and theatre are important in promoting students' life and creativity. The primary objective of the paper is to throw light on the treatment of art and creativity in the educational system in Iran and to promote students' approach to life.

INTRODUCTION

Life without art is meaningless and void of any creativity. Art provides man with hope and happiness. It gives meaning to life. It is an important phenomenon that has been useful in the life of man since old days, and it has been used by great thinkers and even cultures as means of promoting thoughts and appropriate behavior, particularly among the young generations. However, there are differences of opinions among the different scholars as to the degree of the importance of art in general. Art can fulfill the needs of young people in achieving their goals. In particular, dramatic art "not only heals their disillusionments but also make them familiar with the artistic world. Art enables man to understand cause and effect to make him expose his emotions" (Hosseini 2004).

An important means of establishing the relationship between arts and education is students' concern or, according to Nelson (2015), voice. There is an inevitable conflict between students and teachers; students' voice has rarely been part of educational discussions. Student's voice is sometimes promoted as a vehicle to increase student learning and improve schools, but the opportunity for teachers to learn from students

has typically received less attention. It seems that many educators are engaged in taking action from "hearing the student voice in the play" (Nelson 2015).

Here, the authors intend to establish the relationship between art, and growth of students' creativity in their education in the modern world. Representational arts like painting and designing, literature that includes poetry and story, music, handicrafts, and finally dramatic arts including cinema and theater are of great importance in promoting students' artistic creativities. Creating interactions and familiarity with customs and traditional values of one's past and culture is also another practical aspect of art. Since art can develop man's insight into his world and life, therefore it is necessary that the authorities have it used as an inseparable part of education at schools.

METHODOLOGY

The data collected in this paper is both libraries based on a practical approach to the education of young students in the Iranian classrooms. It is concluded that a practical approach to art is useful in the promotion of education and creativity of the youth in Iran.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The Relationship between Art Education and Creativity

Arts education is a means of developing creative thinking; it is not only limited to the field of humanity, but also to the development of performance in non-arts academic subjects such as mathematics, reading, writing, and science. It also strengthens students' academic motivation, self-confidence, and ability to communicate. Art has a positive effect on thinking and creativity and behavioral and social aspects of man. Art education at school usually includes music classes, visual arts, theater, and dance.

Art has been present since the existence of the earliest humans; it has been a part of all cultures, and a major domain of human experience, just like humanities, science, technology, and mathematics. Art is important in its rights to education. Students who gain mastery in an art form may discover their life's work or goal. For them, it allows a different way of understanding than the way they understand sciences. Art frees students to explore the unknown and meaning of life in the modern world.

On the other hand, creativity refers to an ability to see things in the new ways, crossing borders and frameworks of tradition, and create new things. Some thinkers consider creativity as a way of producing, a process, and a set of skills and personality characteristics. Based on this definition, creativity is a process that attracts individuals, even if it does not lead to production. Everyone can be creative. Creativity is a new way of thinking, speaking, writing, dancing, singing, playing music, experimenting, and renovating ideas and objects. Thus, every artistic activity of the young boys and girls could be creative. Before attending school, children cannot complete what they have begun, but once they attend schools, the authorities drag them into a competition with their classmates, to the extent that they need be creative. Before attending school, children intend to use their creative powers to establish a link between reality and imaginative. This power of imagination changes as he or she grows elder. With the development of creative power, the child's artistic talent emerges at school; and this, in turn, leads to the appearance of creativity (Mirzabeigi 1996).

However, social and cultural context is a complicated matter. The more people are included in social activities, the more they are prone to creativity and innovation through arts. Social inclusion promotes creativity.

As mentioned earlier, creativity is not limited to a particular art; creative drama plays a major role in the education of students. Pinciotti (1993) points out that through creative drama, "children move from personal experience to a group image and that this group nature of original drama immense participants in a cognitive, social and emotional experience" (Pinciotti 1993: 27). Teachers need to integrate creative drama and other forms of arts in the classrooms; this way of teaching prepares the young students to deal with their problems. It also enhances students' psychological well-being, allowing them to express feelings and ideas during the activities. Therefore, students' participation in performing arts is one of the many strategies that can be employed to develop their social skills. The education-orientated teachers are expected to make their art accessible to vulnerable adults and young children. Using their experiences, these teachers use verbal and visual languages to reflect on their practice, sharing their social justice philosophies to a broader audience (Heaton 2016).

The ethical practice in art education generates one model of pedagogical sustainability. Art experiences fuel artist teacher cognition; it refers to the way learners understand how they think, create art and generate knowledge (Marshall 2016).

Ansari (1988) refers to Aristotle's attitude towards arts; the latter believes that art, a dramatic one, in particular, is a means of getting rid of mental complexities, and listening to music, or looking at a painting, or even being present at a theater, leads to catharsis. Ernest Jones believes that art increases the power of spiritual and physical creativity. Arts education makes the young student move from playing aimlessly to creative and fundamental education (Ansari 1988).

Arts, in general, brings about cooperation and develops social skills; students learn to work in groups and develop the ability to give and take; it creates a kind of self-awareness. In the modern societies, an attempt is made to incorporate arts and culture in the education systems.

Creativity as a Skill

As skill needs practice, creativity also requires continuous practice. Without practice, one cannot maintain creativity in such arts like writing, singing, playing music, and painting. There are different characteristics ascribed to creative people; these features include audacity, curiosity, flexibility, independence, introversion, and so on.

Creativity demands a good experience and a proper adaptation to the surroundings. The more students are exposed to the relevant surroundings and fields by their teachers, the more they are likely creative. House is an essential factor in the development of creativity. Young boys and girls should feel free to display their creativities and talents through particular arts. Parents should believe in the potentials and capabilities of their children; the former should let the latter to explore new things.

Students meet different challenges in their treatment of the arts. One of these challenges is “how to deliver engaging units that have authentic Creative Arts experiences at the core of students who range from accomplished and experienced to those who fear or dislike the Creative Arts, often due to poor school-based experiences” (Morris and Lummis 2014).

Although there are different factors essential for an increase in creativity, there are certain conditions and factors that limit it; these limitations include parents, school authorities, and finally gender. Parents might be over expectant, and it might create a problem for children. Some of the creative students are authoritative; they might as well question the unreasonable expectations of their parents. These kids act different, and they might make their mother feel offended. The children’s behavior might seem bold and even strange. Therefore, it is recommended that the parents be familiar with the concept of creativity and its requirements.

School authorities might also be responsible for the suppression of the students’ creativities. The teacher might not understand the creativity of his or her student; if the latter performs other than what expected, the authorities at school might be punished for the so-called offense. A severe limitation is that most of the schools in provide little opportunities for students to display their creativities; the authorities at some schools might not pay attention to

creativities of their students and their abilities in promoting arts.

Gender difference also plays a significant role in the emergence of creativity. There are some limitations about the sex of students. Girls and boys do not stand at their actual status. The school authorities should explore the potentials of the students and disregard the gender situation of the students.

How can we increase the creativity of the youth? In response to this question, it is necessary to add that we should provide the students with the facilities and commodities required to explore creativity; we need to create appropriate surrounding for the students and take the student out to the fields more often so that they are exposed to the practical perspective of things. We need to provide them with different instruments concerning the relevant skill in the art, pay attention the educational methods at home, respect the creativity of others, let the children express themselves and display their art skills freely, and finally, the parents and school authorities should encourage the creative students.

In the past, people believed that creativity has been intuitive and hereditary, but the modern societies consider it something more than hereditary, something more practical and educative.

Creativity is the outcome of the intelligent and imaginative forces that affect the minds of individuals and introduces new ideas in it. Therefore, to promote creativity, we should do things that, on the one hand, increase our knowledge as the essential basis of creativity, and on the contrary, improves our way of thinking and power of imagination. Creativity is a means of achieving new ideas and thoughts, and it makes mind active.

The Role Played by Different Kinds of Arts in Education

Different kinds of skills have different effects on education. These types include painting, music, literature, performing arts, cinema, theater, and handicrafts.

The painting has been one of the most important factors in expressing one’s thought, reflecting his mind and personal needs. Painting helps the students become creative; it also develops their artistic approach to life and education acceptable. It “helps the students to over-

come their mental conflicts caused by the modern mechanical world” (Mirzabeigi 1996).

Music is also another prominent art affecting the education of young students. It helps them gain peace of mind and makes them more creative. Music helps the young people establish a closer interaction with aestheticism. At school, it possesses its educational value, and at home, it is further encouraged by either of the parents. Besides music, songs also create new spirit among the students.

Literature, stories, and poems, in particular, is also another important kind of art that has influenced the education of the students at the Iranian schools and universities. It is a custom in Iran that families at home would read literary pieces, like poetry and stories, loudly. The younger children would memorize poems and songs, singing them along with the elders; although some of these poems might seem meaningless. According to Strauskaia (2000), the sounds and the musical rhymes used in the poems appear so attractive to the children that their emotions are elevated, and they tend to be more creative. If the children get acquainted with stories during his early education at school, he will turn into a benevolent and broad-minded fellow in future.

Performing arts refers to such skills as dance, music, and drama that are performed live in front of an audience. Performing includes the physical or bodily competence and interpretation providing a foundation for children’s learning; it uses a range of movement techniques. During the performing arts, the participant is observed by peers and teachers. The performing arts create a powerful positive impact on the youth in various ways. Drama can stimulate creativity in educational processes; it can be effective in increasing creativity. There is a recurring tension between scripted teaching and creative teaching. The more the students are exposed to arts, the more they intend to stay away from the scripted teaching. Education and creative passion, which can be taught through drama, role playing, and physical movement, are interconnected. The drama also promotes our interaction skills.

Cinema and theater also play an important role in the education of students in the modern world; it is also an inevitable method used for the upbringing of children at schools and col-

leges in Iran. The child follows movies seriously and learns through them how to interact with other cultures and customs, and “he learns values, social, and moral conventions” (Ghaemi 1990). Most of the movies deal with social and real problems faced by the ordinary people. In Iran, these movies help the young students to know their surroundings and their social status in the society. These movies both at the theaters and on the TV screens, help students use their creativities in their lives as adults. While today artists and researchers have been active within the domains of the literary arts, visual arts, dance and drama, music seems to be the least used medium in the researches, that is based on arts; music seems to be “underutilized in social studies.” It is because the kind of training that requires music in a research context may be prohibitive (Leavy 2015: 132).

Handicrafts also play important roles in the education of the Iranian students at the school. It is an art that needs the creativity of the artist. Such skills like embroidery, knitting, needlework, and painting are considered dominating arts and used as means of educating students and awakening their creativities.

Creativity does not necessarily require an extraordinary genius, but it is an attempt by an individual to make his brain work harder and turn more creative. Besides physical endeavor, creativity demands sufficient knowledge; indeed, knowledge is the essential requirement for a creative imagination. Art and creativity can promote the structure of the educational system. The process of creativity is a fragile one. The emergence of creativity requires places where different ways of thinking and propositions matter. The organizations should provide young students and education system with motivation for creativity and artistic endeavors.

CONCLUSION

Different kinds of arts can be effective in bringing about creativity. Art makes children express their feelings and inner thoughts to the world. It is through art that the young people, especially in the early age at school, gain self-confidence and independence. The artistic work should not be supervised by the elders, lest it cannot lead to the emergence of the creative spirits. Children are artists by themselves. Thus, we should not force them to create something

that we prefer. Art as an effective means can be in the service of education in Iran. Therefore, recognition of different talents in the students at the schools and even colleges by the teachers and controlling these talents are the responsibilities of teachers and authorities who, with the use of art, can regenerate in the students.

We need to make children first familiar with different kinds of arts, and then encourage them to use their creativities. The school teachers and authorities need to take the students to visit fields, fairs, museums, art galleries, and other visual and dramatic art centers, to make the latter's creativities appear. We should let the children analyze the works of arts so that it could encourage them to use their skills shortly.

An important issue in creating creativity is role-playing. While playing with other children, individual children like to serve as leaders and play the roles of supervisors; this produces self-confidence and independence. Eventually, the teachers should acquaint the students with the importance of art and artistic plans, and take them out to the fields to be more practically involved with creativity and art.

RECOMMENDATIONS

So far research in the area of the impact of arts on education effects has had its limitations. A few medium quality studies are found. As high

performing schools in the Iran are encouraged to do arts, general studies cannot determine the effects of arts on academic outcomes. More rigorous evaluations of the impact of arts activities are needed. It is further recommended that the researchers should turn to specific art activities; the study should focus on one or two art forms so that effect of the particular art activity can be isolated.

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