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EDUCATION WITH AESTHETICS: LEARNING THROUGH ART

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ABSTRACT

As we all know that teaching is an art; an art which avails students with knowledge. Trainings, seminars, and workshops have been organizing for the betterment of education. This paper presents Aesthetics as a sublime medium of education as it can easily be apply in all spheres of life. Students with aesthetic lens can easily sense the beauty of words, story, plot, pictures, and circumstances. The paper will explore how this aesthetic lens enriches students with lifelong skills. Reviews, suggestions, and examples have also been taken to make findings apparent.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Education, Art, Mental health.

Introduction

Whenever we talk about a classroom the images of room, students, teacher, board, and furniture emerge in front of our eyes. A classroom embellish with art, music, dance and dramatics much more alluring than an ordinary one. Art and Music enhances creativity. If we take a glance at today's school, we find that they are totally concerned with teaching literacy. Although, literacy must not be confined to the written words, it should be vast enough to make children creative. Lowenfeld and Brittain (1970) explains good education "...the cultivation of expression in an organized manner. That is, it is the organization of words to make verbal communication, the organization of numbers or symbols to develop mathematical thinking, and the organization of images to make the arts" (32).

Employment is the ultimate objective of one's education. Learning also implies and understanding of how this knowledge can be used. The ability to use one's senses (touching, seeing, hearing, smelling and testing) freely and creatively can help our learning to be effective, and this can be achieved through art education. (Lowenfeld and Brittain (1970). Potter in 2007 noted that arts work as a tool for developmental learning for children of all ages and also tries to give opportunity for creative expression or thinking. However, in 1970 Lowenfeld and Brittain had already suggested that art is the only way to educate the senses.

Aestheticism in all spheres

Aestheticism talks about art, science, and creativity. It was originated in the late 19th century in England with a group of artists including Morris and D.G.Rossetti. However, the term aesthetics was coined earlier in 1735 by Alexander Baumgarten. Crawford (1987) succinctly draws our attention to the broadness of the word aesthetics and the need to move away from only thinking of aesthetics in relation to beauty. According to a government gazette released by the Ministry of Education in New Zealand (2009), aesthetics is the 'critical

evaluation of a piece of art' and 'an appreciation of pleasant and special sensory experiences (usually, visual, aural and tactical' implying that to critically evaluate an experience as pleasant or unpleasant judgment is necessary. Zangwill (2014) also brings in the notion of aesthetic judgment that uses the term aesthetics not only in relation to beauty but to that which also lacks beauty. Thus, the word aesthetics has the ability to recapture its foundation 'pertaining to sensory contemplation and its objects' (Sparshott. 1982).

Learning through aesthetics

Wade and Yarbrough (1996:64) have given the theory of reflection in which he says that the teachers should think about their strategies and make all the necessary adjustments. He says:

As we reflect we discover the links between different aspects of our life experience. Past experiences are reconsidered in light of new information. Reflection allows us to draw conclusions about our past experience and develop new insights that we can apply to our future activities.

Ron Swartz (The Head of Education in Western Cape) also supported quality education. However, thinking about quality education with a large class size is quite implausible. Bates (2000) in support of art education adds: Art education has the power to develop multiple forms of literacy, encourage multiple solutions to problems and promote multiple forms of intelligence.

Earlier in 2005, De Cueller tried to augment art's confined area:

The century has transformed the entire planet from a finite world of certainties to an infinite world of questioning and doubt. So if ever there was a need to stimulate creative imagination and initiative on the part of individuals, communities and whole societies that time is now. The notion of creativity can no longer be restricted to the arts; it must be applied across the full spectrum of human problem solving.

Margaret Naumberg defines art as a means of good mental health as it relieves students of stress. She says:

To the child experiencing stress under the rigors of growing up and in the confines of the school, the visual arts could serve as a form of release. Art could, if use intelligently, contribute to the mental health of the child by giving him an opportunity to alleviate those tensions and communicate those meanings that he could not articulate in discursive language. Art in the schools could be a type of therapy, a preventive medicine that contributes to the psychological comfort of the child. (Pappas, 1970, p 21)

Ramdhani, J. & Ramsaroop, S. (2015) conducted research on 'Aesthetics in education'. In their findings, 45% of students fascinated towards group discussion or group study or group work, 35% of students preferred the whole class discussion method at lectures, 13 % of students found art, drama-dramatics, demonstrations, experiments and games to be the most alluring of teaching strategies. Only 7% of students were in favor of questioning as a teaching strategy.

They (Ramdhani, J. & Ramsaroop, S.) further add:

The students indicated that they learnt better from other students as it was sometimes difficult to understand certain difficult concepts when taught by the lecturer. Concepts which are sometimes taught by the lecturer in abstract language are explained by students in everyday language.

Moreover, they also suggested that media can also help as an aid to make students focused on their learning outcomes through augmentation, discussion, and questioning.

Conclusion

Thus, in a nutshell it can be said that students enriched with aesthetic sense will be more focused on lectures or discussions. Many steps have also been taken by state and central government to make children creative in every sphere of life. For instance, smart classes embellish with smart T.V and modern equipments have been started; trainings, seminars, and workshops have also been organizing by government authorities to train teachers to educate children through smart classes.

A few days back, a video on social media was viral, where a teacher at a government school in Delhi showed her dance moves on a Haryanvi song to connect with her students. The video starts with Ms. Gulati (English language teacher) encouraging a student to dance on a song. Meanwhile, one of the students heard asking the teacher to teach them the steps. Hearing this, Ms. Gulati starts dancing. This effort was appreciated by society and government authorities.

Hence, the pivotal role of a teacher in making students creative can't be denied. J.Adu-Agyem & M.Enti (2009-165) says:

The teacher must also create an atmosphere that encourages creativity as well as aesthetic development in the classroom. That is, the teacher must prepare conditions or settings that enhance creative and aesthetic development. A child must be allowed to deviate from group activity if the need arises.

Although aesthetic knowledge enables students with efficiency and skills, but it cannot be imposed; it must be from the inner side of the students. If students take interest, they easily are able to understand the value of aesthetic lens. Reinforcement from teacher's side makes them easy to accept the concept of aestheticism. The role of parents cannot be denied in this respect as they can do well efforts to encourage their children to pursue creative learning through creative thinking.

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