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**Artfulness as the way of art integration in school education**

Over 30 years of research in arts in connection to the arts benefits to students has proved that – when the art is part of school education, students’ achievement improves, engagement levels are higher, behavior problems are fewer, and students attitudes about school and about themselves improve. When the arts are integrated into the school life, teachers can present complex lesson that bridge multiple subject areas and encourage critical thinking skills, the incorporation of the visual arts, drama, music, ballet can add relevance and context to lesson to any subject area. For teachers arts integration can breathe innovation and assessment to think together with children creatively, explore ideas to use children’s strength to express their learning and knowledge on a variety of ways. Our project is focused on many ways of fun to expose students to the art and lead them a little bit away from obsession with gadgets. The integration of arts in the school life helps to become critical thinkers in future and well-rounded human beings. This is preamble of our conversation today.

Now I am going to the: statement of the problem.

Many teachers hesitate to integrate any form of art into the breaks due to a perception that it distracts from the time. They say that they don’t have time to prepare for the next lesson and therefore the lack the utilization of arts deprives students from the cultural development and deeper connection about the real world. We agree with a researcher Donald Fischer (2002): “When one shapes the culture, and schooling is precisely that – an intentionally shaped culture – one provides direction to the invention of the mind”. Teachers need training to recognize how the use art integration can improve:

1. Efficiency,
2. Engagement,
3. Disconnection from gadgets,
4. Student’s learning and achievements improving.

Brief review of literature.

The purpose of our project is to develop training module using Handbook for use for teachers to encourage children participation in the arts during break-time. Many teachers view art as a form of recreation or recess, instead of resource for an integral part of instruction to build skills and concepts in all disciplines. Arts produce a genuine synergy between content areas by engaging multiple models of enquiry. Integration is about engaging rich array of skills and learning strategies so that understanding of each content area is enriched and illuminated by the presence of beauty in other content areas. The beneficiaries are both teachers and students. This is overwhelming opinion of art integration in schools. Why?

By proving the given opinion art researchers and pedagogues use following arguments: art is part of human experience, art exists in all societies and has been created by human beings since the historic times (Coster, 2005). Art surrounds people everywhere and art is also unconditionally necessary in the IT era. Art is a system of symbolization used in every culture of schooling around the globe and therefore ongoing discussions about the value of art involvement in public school systems in Europe should not be promoted.

Many theoretists agree (Appel, 2006) that the arts in all forms stimulate the brain, they ignite creativity and provide children with opportunities to look critically and to interpret critically the world around them, because the art integration connects learning with the real world. In an idea idea-driven world and economy, the ability to generate ideas that are imaginative and flexible bring those ideas to life and to communicate them to others. And this is the key factor to career success. In line with this arts integration emphasizes in-depth knowledge, meaning and relevant concepts and, as I said before, connections that are linked between numerous subjects and elements of life outside the school. Such theorists Fiske (1999) concluded that school staff need to seek systemic ways to make the art a meaning part of every child’s life. He described children engagement as follows: “The arts reach children who are not otherwise reached. The art reach children in ways producing insight into different styles of life. Art shows good examples for young people who were considered classroom failures and they can become the high achievers in art learning settings, therefore bridging, learning to the success of life”.

Many analysts emphasize the connection between art and self-esteem. Appel (2006) and Brown (2007) have concluded that even small part of our time we permit children to stay away from gadgets is of special importance to those children who struggle in traditional learning environment and achievement. Researchers stated that students participating in art and not using gadgets for a while “make notable gains in social competencies such as cooperative learning and adult and peer relations development”. Side effects on children personalities is positive risk taking, as well increased self-confidence, perseverance and motivation. Such art integration researcher as Discinson (1997) stress that taking away children from gadgets and turning them to use of art helps in development of the 1) mind, 2) body, 3) emotions, 4) spirit. It facilitates growth in 1) judgement, 2) purpose, 3) persistence, 4) patience.

**Artfulness**: new way how to integrate new models of thinking in school

What is Artfulness? When I started some years ago to reflect about my students aesthetic learning processes and the scope of art influence on learning I quickly encountered a conceptual issue: the lack of a concept or right language that can communicate to other colleagues the diversity within the field. I came to research into artful thinking that focuses on how the individual think when they are stimulated by the work of art or by art effects. In my focus area, I included both: the thinking and the making.



*Artfulness triangle.*

As figure shows Artfulness in my definition is a term describing a cognitive and emotional response which school children experience within art-based experience in breaks. Breaks become: aesthetic; art-based; artistic; Artful.

1. **Aesthetic**: anything to do with enjoyment of beauty – it is a sensory awareness. For example, to turn the corridor into a beautiful forest walk, or to turn the corridor into a an iconography experience by use of the Orthodox Church icons, or tur the corridor into a possibility to dance where group after group of children, boys and girls listening music and trying to follow steps shown by choreography school children, or to make a corridor into a culinary experience, etc.
2. **Art-based**: anything based on practical experience of art and its processes, but not necessarily created by professional artists. This is to do with “the making”. The creation of artworks or art effects by one classroom children, e.g., one classroom children are creating the forest in the corridor, and other classroom children are explaining why, for example this particular tree is “Christmas tree” (with green branch cross on the top), or explaining why the oak is a symbol of man, whereas linden is a symbol of girl. The personal engagement is the artistic process do not necessarily takes place in the professional art context. Art is to be made. It looks like a small performance, and it can be done in different emotional modes, joyful, dreamful or analytic – everything depends on the background music and teacher’s creativity and inspiration.
3. **Artistic**: anything related to art, when art is executed and perceived either as professional (in the case of professional artists) or art-specific (in the case of schools).
4. **Artful**: when art and its processes are used as metaphor for something else. It is important in this perspective to emphasize that a given phenomenon can, for example, be seen or interpreted as if it were an artistic endeavor or activity. For example, the metaphor of pine tree or Christmas tree is used to describe the human being holistically as unity of the spirit, soul and body.

According to Webster (1989, p. 84), Artful characterizes something that is “done with or characterized by art or skill”. But the English word can have also a negative meaning, as in “artificial”, “cheat” or “cunning”. This is why I prefer the term “artfulness” rather than “artful”, because it is a reminiscent to the term “mindfulness”, which is a heart-felt state that, I believe, should be a fundamental element of good learning environment in every school, and Majori Gymnasium could become the first positive example of artfulness school.

**Artfulness is a term** that, based on the aesthetic focused breaks between lessons means for children to think and act as an artist. For example, artfulness is used when children are creative and innovative. An Artful approach to learning and teaching can also be seen as expression of a specific type of creativity: the holistic creativity which merges logic and feelings, rationality and body. This term has been dear to Dewey (2005) when he studied and pointed an interest for learning as experiment. He uses works of art to shape ordinary experience in an artistic manner.” For instance, to use linden tree as metaphor of nice girl. Or oak as a metaphor of a strong man. Theoretically you can see Artfulness as an intersection of the children perspective and metaphorical of social perspective, when the children’s experience it as a flow-like state of cognitive challenge and positive emotions. At a metaphorical or societal level Artfulness can be productive to create and to communicate about different strategies for the purpose: provoking, loving, creating etc. This is kind of “cultural glue” that makes possible for potential outputs to influence children in consequences needed for teacher.

**What is special in Artfulness** – that experiences are not just seen as passive entertainment, but as an excellent opportunity to think deeply, both in terms of reflecting and analyzing. Every school child can be actively involved in ballet, drama, drawing, iconography etc. It can develop special competence to work for others school mates to be involved. Everything depends on teacher’s creativity. If this happens, then behavior changes, which in this case is characterized as “Artfulness”, and artistic metaphorical quality. I am sure and my premise is that school children can be trained in Artfulness, and by training they will stimulate a special disposition for deep thought. During my research I have paid attention to all three pillars within Artfulness and have chosen to focus on the so-called Artfulness flower model: the individual level for children where positive emotions and cognitive intensity are in balance. Artfulness study as the wider cultural approach to school education process as creative learning and development we will present at the Conference.

Artfulness is NOT:

1. A method, but it is innovative research field that invites school teachers to cooperate and explore together with purpose to eliminate children involvement in gadgets,
2. A medicine, but it is an approach that reintegrates all of the elements of teaching in the development of the wholeness of children personality.
3. A recipe that everyone has to follow, but it is one of the possible ways of integrating arts in teaching.
4. Artfulness is not teacher training, but it is rather an opportunity to implement good innovative practice in school work and it shows the way how educators can be constantly involved in changing the world.

Artfulness in schools

My work at the Latvian Christian Academy shows that the link between the practical creative activity and reflection which is inherent in the artistic processes was in effect absent from the observed art projects because the students encounter with art and the artists has basically been more about an approach to craftsmanship. The special time frame in different projects students were involved, were flexible and spacious enough to give the students different learning experience. Furthermore, all of the development project have been particularly characterized by collaboration between students and professional artists / teachers. Because of this students were experienced as amateurs. This encounter gave the students many positive experiences and surprising learning outputs. But it is a far cry of what the teachers qualified as typical for forms of learning arts: joint learning, joint doing, joint making, which opens up diverse point of view, appreciation and ability to be attentive and open. Teachers define what is typical for aesthetic learning processes: “What lies in aesthetic processes is the reflection, together with pupils – you offer views, opinions within by recognizing them” (Schemy, 2011). Something I have not heard from the students from the art project, is an understanding of the aesthetic elements in works of arts (e.g., form, color, function, material) or a broader approach to art (art effects and processes) **from a historical or theoretical art perspective**, for instance, why Christmas tree is a symbol of Christian Church historically. Why ballet art is a symbol of beauty of woman and man historically and theoretically, etc.? Neither are the many opinions and approaches named apart from Latvian Christian Academy, who believe that art relativity is one of the biggest learning elements which they take home from our project. As well as an art can express absolute values of truth, beauty and harmony, and then it is not relative but absolute expression of the possibility of every human being to go beyond mere social activity. Our students have actually learned to decode the dynamic relationship between Truth and event, between formal and expressive quality. They specifically know that artistic quality requires ways of understanding other personality and whole life as positive quality.

Of course, children know that they need to make and effort and should not paint just outside pictures, but some kind of pictures that are good enough to involve school-mates in understanding something else – the context in which we live, the spiritual beauty of personality, the shapes and impressive sizes to understand what is, for instance, leadership, patience, what it is to value every person created in God’s image and likeness. Art integration is not looking at the picture only and not whispering “fine”, “beautiful”, “yeah”, but it is invitation of pupils to demonstrate fairly good understanding of the artistic mindset despite the fact that connection between the practical work, e.g., making corridor into symbol of wood and coloring these tree have more deep thoughtful theoretical dimension.

For what concerns me about creativity and innovation, I also noticed that often students in the arts projects are **not introduced to works of art or artistic processes as a way of thinking about new thinking or as training in innovation**. For this reason we have to introduce pupils to brainstorming technique and challenge and motivate them to think “absolutely creatively”. Though artistic processes rest on creativity and new thinking, it is not enough to establish in our project to form creative children by using art. Their encounter with art should be clarified, facilitated, put into perspective and guided, by including professionally prepared ballet choreography school students, professionally prepared art school students etc., for inspiration and role models. As I stated earlier, creativity or art integration learning don’t happen magically or automatically. The pupils may be unsure about what they have learned and experienced if do not get opportunity to reflect, meta-reflect and verbalize their emotional, sensory and intuitive learning.

To apply the concept of Artfulness in schools will to a greater degree, mean that the link theory and practice should be implemented beforehand via structured reflection – documented in our handbook and research notes.

Why Artfulness in schools?

Art or art teaching is a kind of “fancy cream topping” in contrast to real “bread and butter” education. This fancy cream topping that is art, makes school tasty, attractive and more pleasant. This metaphor has its drawback. Fancy cream topping tastes great but all those calories can be harmful and should be omitted from the healthy diet. If art in school is a fancy cream topping, can we avoid it when the school doesn’t require it to function efficiently?

The reality is more complex than the cream topping. The basic view is coming from belief in culture which still influence our society and role of teaching to prevent separation between art and science and to exclude conviction that school is a factory whose objective is to create standardized workers who know a lot about very little. According to Robinson (2009), “public schools were not only created in the interests of industrialism and labor market – they were created in the image of the industrialism. Even our culture has moved towards globalization, technologies and information society, we built the majority of school education not to damage both creativity and optimal learning that is based on an understanding of the subject and well-being”. Talented young people are not only genetically predisposed, they are also stimulated and encouraged by the environment and practical activities. The school do not necessarily generate learning or development if the teachers do not ensure that. This means that the transfer of learning to a cognitive understanding does just not “happen by itself” as a natural consequence of a hands-on activity. To expect the natural transfer of learning to arts integration expect a child to understand the meaning of it, teaching children how to understand visual imagery, for example, is not just good thing, because children think it is fun, it is a necessity because they live in a world that it dominated and saturated with IT visuality. To integrate different art forms is not just fun, because it allows self-expression, but also because the pupils become aligned with the way the world expresses itself.

When schools have clarified the necessity of teaching art in a complex and rapidly changing world for the purpose of simulating the whole person (holistically-oriented teaching), they should also as practitioners in the art integration find the correct argument for supporting the case.

Benefits

The focus on the pupil’s perspective has emphasized that the experienced emotions within the art integration in schools have been assessed as strong and among the emotions that were experienced, several are recurring: joy; engagement; flow.

*Joy*

Pupils report that there is an intensity that “grows from comfort to excitement”. They report about different types of joy, as:

**Cognitive joy** as and instrument to want to learn, because cognitive joy is a kind of discovery and makes emotionally positive state.

**Joy of recognition**. Recognition is the possibility of making personal connections between a work of art and personal life experiences. When I see or recognize myself in life-story, it creates a unique emotional and existential bond between a child and work of art.

**Joy of comprehension**, **joy of expression.** Arts forms are often linked to freedom of expression and feelings. It is a specific state of satisfaction when the pupils are able to freely express themselves.

**Interpersonal joy**. The art integration process includes both the individuals and group contribution. “The public dimension” of their involvement in their art works (all works to be exhibited, stated or presented within the school environment) also made them happy and proud.

*Engagement*

Usually school children recognize that the fun was difficult: “We had fun, but the work was still hard.” The good balance between having fun and feeling comfortable or experiencing positive emotions is because of challenge to become fruitful. Teachers say that fruitfulness is great motivation for pupils to contribute to the idea.

*Flow*

Flow is a positive state of concentration and falling away of self-awareness, which is a result of experience of reaching a balance between the challenges, individual faces an ability to meet those challenges. The pupils report a positive balance between challenges and their ability to deal with challenges. Artfulness indicate that they value their positive flow experience.

From the teachers perspective pupils enthusiasm for the art integration reflects following answers:

1. Art is greatly valuable to direct pupils away from gadgets,
2. Art is meaningful,
3. Great solidarity with pupils,
4. You learn that you can learn without a teacher.

The teachers emphasize here the positive emotions that individuals feel when they are engaged in valuable and meaningful initiatives which the artworks represent. They name the feelings of pride for the works that they create and e feeling of positive solidarity.

Teachers two cognitive approaches: a positive experience and an educational co-ownership and independence. Pupils become happy because they could both learn and have fun and because they experienced “something else” at school. Teachers become happy because pupils were happy, they considered that in itself a success criterion and because they knew and could experience that the pupils were getting better at learning. This supports the theory and studies that interpret art integration as a cognitive phenomenon: the enjoyment we feel when we experienced art comes from awareness that we have actually learned something new, have grasped a rule, have become cleverer.



*Synergy of cognition and emotions in arts experiences.*

This is just the beginning. Further we should work on possible metaphorical presentation of every teaching subject content (math, biology, physics etc.) during the breaks. E.g. in Denmark they create special to-be painted books for better teaching the meaning of numbers; in history hours they prepare creative performances in breaks to explain what is Communism, Fascism, what is war etc. Artfulness meaning in school curricula is unlimited and of extremely high value for teaching and upbringing goals.

the people

 who are crazy

 enough to think

 they can change

 the world

 are the ones

 who do