

Art Integrated Learning for Mental Wellbeing

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Abstract: It is quite evident that learning is strengthened through art integration that certifies learning 'through the art' and 'with the art'. Here, the teaching-learning process becomes a medium for a joyful experience for the teacher and the taught because it makes the subjects very interesting, understandable, and engaging. It further leads to creativity, which is the top level, L-6 of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. In this way, it becomes an inventive, innovative, constructive, and inclusive component of education to meet the requirements of the New Education Policy 2020. The learners get ample opportunities to explore, experiment, illustrate, and demonstrate concepts through various art forms in all the educational disciplines and derive pleasure from them. Besides, it makes cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains quite supple. Thus, it is today's latest pedagogical tool for teaching and learning where the learners move, connect, collaborate, analyze, synthesize, apply, and get the concept. It takes the learners to 360-degree holistic learning and develops their aesthetic sensibilities. This comes to full shape when the mental health of the individual is sound enough to perform art-integrated learning as both things go hand in hand.

Key Words: Inclusive, Mental Health, aesthetic, holistic

INTRODUCTION

It is quite evident that the background makes a big difference in understanding and relating things. We know that art is an expression of imagination that comes out naturally owing to our innate feelings and creativity. It has existed since time immemorial and ancient civilization of the Neolithic, the Palaeolithic, and the Bronze Age in the form of cave paintings, pottery, human forms, architecture, sculptures, decorative, religious pieces, fine arts, animals, etc. Ancient Mesopotamia, Greece, Egypt, Rome, America, Early Chinese Dynasties, and various civilizations are known for it, even today. Based on human needs, cultural preferences, and resources, it continued from civilization to civilization. It is only because of its innate essence, beauty, creativity, variations, and attractions.

Since the written languages were very less in ancient periods, oral traditions were recorded in the form of arts for the coming generations to reap their dividends and carry them forward too. It is true to say that arts can promote creative skills, which is essential for innovations. Slowly, things started changing, owing to developments in educational scenarios such as technological aspects, quick growth in educational domains, etc. Sequential research has justified the rapid growth and changes in art forms and their blending with other subjects. Thus, we have started calling it art- integration.

An attempt was made to review the available relevant research work, some of the books, published works, journals, research papers, a few literary works of the established authors of light and leading, and dissertations. They gave a deep insight as they were found very close to the present study, and thus, this testifies to the authenticity of the research.

The Nobel Laureate, Rabindranath Tagore was in favour of the holistic development of learners through education and thus supported an art-based teaching-learning process to improve competencies namely, problem-solving, imagery, proxemics, etc. (Prasad, 1998)

The Department of Arts and Aesthetics (DEAA), NCERT developed Art Integration Learning (AIL) keeping in view the suggestions of NCF-2005 as the basis by following the constructivist theory of learning. Here, each learner is exposed to age-appropriate experiential learning through art. (NCF, 2005)

Art Integration has a prominent position in NEP-2020. It says that there should be room for holistic development of the children so that they may go for inquiry-based critical thinking. They must feel confident while doing analysis and discussions. So, learning be made more interactive through fun-filled classes in a collaborative way where children may ask questions freely and get their answers too. This experiential and exploratory learning will be a boon to

them in their growth. Art Integrated Learning is more focussed on Indian Arts and Culture because it is making the education vibrant, informative, effective, and lively. Art Integration can be a baseline in classrooms by making the Indian Ethos richer through various art forms as it helps strengthen Indian Art and Culture. (NEP, 2020)

There should be creative projects on various disciplines to promote positive mental health as children understand feelings, ideas, concepts, behaviour, etc to develop a sense of belongingness and compatibility with others. It also promotes inclusion through self-reflection and collaboration. (Morgan, 2011)

The performance of students declines when they are not able to concentrate. It may be due to stress, anxiety, worries, less focus, distractions, etc. They find problems in retaining things, and thus it becomes difficult for them to accomplish their goals. Thus, good mental health has a pivotal role in making their lives successful. (Lyneham, 2009).

The World Health Organization started a Mental Health Global Action Programme (MHGAP) to improve the mental health of populations, for which different steps have been initiated such as a Global Campaign against Epilepsy, Neurological Disorders, Schizophrenia, Suicide Prevention, Checking the Consumption of Alcohol by making a Policy for protecting people. (The World Health Report, 2001)

It is quite evident that integration takes place in myriad ways. It is cross-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, blended, and infused approaches. Thus, art flow activities can raise the level of engagement in teaching. Thus, arts can't be taught as a standalone subject. There were discussions on a few challenges of art integration for teachers associated with self-sufficiency and the traditional school system. (Russell and Zembylas, 2007).

A gap area in research is an area where there is insufficient information. It hinders the reviewers from concluding. Since research is an ongoing process, it may be there for some time, but in due course of time, it may take its shape. The stakeholders play a pivotal role in it. We also find gaps in all the outdated research because there are always new additions in information, and thus there is always a scope for improvement.

The gaps are of different types. They may be methodological, empirical, theoretical, practical,

knowledge, evidence, data disparity, data misinterpretation, fluctuating population, etc. Sometimes, there are limitations in sample size, analysis, tools, techniques, time constraints, resources, etc. So, the need is always to go for updates.

There is always a need for the present research to move on to new concepts, new challenges, and new avenues in tune with the fast-changing scenario. Besides, it is an unending field where things will be added mainly because of research and the technological boom. This endeavour will make the teaching-learning process better and enriched. Besides, it will provide a base for the new researchers to refer to and go beyond because learning is a life-long process. Thus, it will strengthen the educational system and make it better.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology is a set of methods used in a particular area of activity and the method is a way of doing something systematically with approaching strategy of the procedures. It is concerned with data collection for records and analysis to conclude accurate results. It consists of a network of traced data along with details of approaches to reach the required goal.

Under the methodological approach, the first and foremost task is mental preparedness for the selection of the sample. The sample size for this topic was around 500 students to bring accuracy, authenticity, and reliability to the research. A Google Form was generated to get information and prepare a questionnaire to elicit information. Since the sub-theme is Art Integrated Learning for Mental Well-being, it was essential to get connected with the students of classes 9th and 10th, studying the CBSE Syllabus to know them from close- quarters. It was found from the medical reports of the schools that the students were hale and hearty to study the prescribed syllabus.

The methodology and tools used for this action research were visits, surveys in CBSE schools, collection of data, interaction with the students, teachers, student's medical reports, the recorded activities done in various schools on Art Integration, how the activities helped them, gender details, socio-economic conditions of their families, etc.

The collection of data became easier owing to the frequent visits to various CBSE schools as a Resource Person. So, there were ample opportunities to get connected with the students, know their total numbers,

strengths and weaknesses, interests, activities on Art Integrated Learning on Mental Health, participation, types of activities performed, and the learning outcomes, etc.

The techniques used were related to all the best practices in the school (s) on Learning through Art Integration, keeping in view the Art Integrated Learning for Mental well-being as per the directions of the CBSE.

The main objectives were to foster creativity and innovation, enhance student's engagement and motivation, improve academic performance, and promote cultural awareness and sensitivity by engaging them in interdisciplinary projects such as:

✓ In a project for combining history, visual, performing, and culinary arts, the students created historical timelines, using artistic representations of key events.

✓ Mindful Mandala Drawing: Students are encouraged to create their mandalas to promote mindfulness and relaxation. This activity supports focus, reduces anxiety, and encourages a meditative state.

✓ Visual Journaling: Students maintain an art journal, where they can draw or collage how they feel while they attend an event or journal each day, along with any thoughts they wish to express visually rather than through words. This provides a healthy outlet for emotions and fosters self-reflection.

✓ Under collaborative learning, group art projects taught students valuable teamwork Skills.

✓ Gratitude Art Project: Students create artwork that represents something or someone they are grateful for. This promotes a positive outlook and mental resilience.

✓ In technology and art, they used digital art tools, such as animation software, that integrated technology with artistic creation. They also used video editing tools to create videos to promote mental health.

✓ During cultural celebrations/festivals, they created art that reflected the traditions and history of various cultures, deepening their understanding and appreciation.

✓ Gratitude Tree: Students draw a big tree with branches. On each branch, they write or draw on a post-it one thing they are thankful for, like their family, friends, or a favourite activity. This encourages gratitude and positive thinking.

✓ Music and dance performances also integrated history or social studies lessons, showcasing cultural heritage, which was laudable. (Kargil Vijay Divas, Hiroshima Nagasaki Day)

✓ Under success stories of art integration, Grade 2 - students learned about the plant life cycles. Grade 5 students explored ancient civilizations by crafting clay models of historical artifacts and presenting their significance.

✓ Students were encouraged to create a PPT and present the topic 'Karnataka – Uttarakhand: A Comparative Study'.

✓ In the science-art project, students designed posters on environmental conservation, using mixed media art.

✓ Guest artists and educators are invited periodically to share their expertise and inspire both the students and the teachers.

✓ Students submitted their feedback on art integration. They found the lessons more enjoyable and memorable. They felt more connected to the material when they expressed their understanding through art.

✓ Enhanced Engagements and interaction with students revealed an increase in engagement and interest in subjects where art was integrated.

✓ For cultural awareness, Art integration significantly contributed to the student's cultural awareness. During the 'Dussehra Doll Festival', students were encouraged to create dolls based on the theme: 'RRR -BEST OUT OF WASTE'

✓ Projects like our Independence Day allowed students to explore and share diverse cultural practices through art.

✓ For art integrated project: Karnataka – Ladakh, the school organized a virtual interaction, through video conferencing, between students of Endeavour Academy and students of JNV Kargil, Ladakh

✓ School participated in the National Adolescent Summit – 2023 organized by CBSE in Delhi.

✓ All the Art Integrated Learning leads to strengthening the Mental Health of the students.

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Art integration at Endeavour Academy has proven to be a powerful tool in enhancing education. By fostering creativity, improving academic outcomes, and promoting cultural understanding, it enriched learning experiences among the students. It is true

to say that art remains an integral part of our curriculum and school culture, and it strengthens mental health too.

✓ Under Professional Development, we aim to empower teachers to undergo Capacity Building Programmes in art integration strategies, including workshops on using art to teach core subjects.

All the Art Integrated Learning leads to strengthening the Mental Health of the students. It made them interested, sound, and more confident to face newer challenges. Thus, Art integration at Endeavour Academy has proven to be a powerful tool in enhancing education. By fostering creativity, improving academic outcomes, and promoting cultural understanding, it enriched learning experiences among the students. It is true to say that art remains an integral part of our curriculum and school culture, and it strengthens mental health too.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

It is quite evident that results are the findings of the study on a particular topic, based on gathered information, analysis, and methodology. In one way, it is the outcome of the systematic analysis, based on collected data from various sources.

Here, the method used was a 'Survey Method' done at various neighbouring schools based on the 'Hub and Spoke Model', where one's school 'Endeavour Academy, Bangalore', known for its swift action in all the scholastic and co-scholastic activities, acted as a hub for other schools. The survey locations, other than Endeavour Academy, Bangalore were PSBB LLA, Happy Valley Public School, Wisdom Montfort, Euro School, Martin Luther Public School, and Oxford School where activities were viewed, records were seen, and interactions were done. Similarities were observed because all the schools work as per the directions of the CBSE. Besides, dissimilarities were also noticed because each school has its way of implementing things on the same instructions, which is quite natural.

Besides these, skill education, Mental Health and Wellness, and Learning through Art Integration are executed with great precision, embellishment, zeal, enthusiasm, and gusto to accomplish the target set by the CBSE.

It was found that with the implementation of various art forms such as visual, performing, and culinary, it became very easy to enhance the 21st Century Skills

among the learners. It was so because the learners found new connections owing to Art Integration/Blended Learning that resulted in encouraging results. It is true to say that things become better if the teacher and taught put synchronized efforts on strong points or targets. According to (Maltese and Tai, 2009), children develop their STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) career at this stage.

The meticulous study found a very positive impact on learners and their academic growth as activities under best practices were done religiously and meticulously in the school(s), especially at Endeavour Academy, Bangalore. The blended work clubbed with pleasure ignited a spirit of inquiry, and active participation that made the learning outcome very SMART. It stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Reliable, and Time-Bound.

It was so because the efforts had the essence of myriad options, cross-cultural connections, care of learner's needs, radical ideas, collaborative pursuits, imaginative ideas, communicative opportunities, brainstorming, deep survey for newness, which resulted in better learning, satisfaction, and better performances in academic subjects in terms of CGPA (Cumulative Grade Point Average).

Besides, the concept of Inclusive Education brought colour to it that conveys being there, participating, enjoying, and achieving. Other than these, the vibrance was also seen on campus(s) with great satisfaction and gratification. The learning also became a joyful experience for the learners because of better retention. The sensory, cognitive, affective, and psychomotor organs also became supple and led them to all ethical practices.

The art integration truly became a linking device in all the subjects. Above all, the students became vocal by honing their skills of reflection in all situations. It was truly a shift from rote learning to a more holistic and inquiry-based approach which is the essence of New Education Policy-2020. Universität Jambi, Indonesia et al, 2021 also supported it beyond measure. The entire effort revolved around the Mental Health and Wellness of the students as it was of prime importance.

Thus, in all justice and fairness, this research was given a good shape which will be an important document for the research in the years to come. The limitation of the research was that a sample of 500

students was taken. There may be slight a variation if a bigger sample size is taken, which is quite natural.

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