

## **The Importance of the Development of Art Education Curriculum in the Sudanese Educational Institutions**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper studies the importance of the development of art education curricula in the Sudanese educational institutions. The researcher is expecting from the development of art education curriculum in the Sudanese educational institutions, the arts make a valuable contribution to the total education of students especially in relation to academic performance, attitudes to school, and perceptions of learning. According to research on the impact of arts within education, the benefits of arts education fall into three main areas; the child, the teaching and learning environment, and the community. The study sample consists of Students totaling (24) students of the third level, batch (2014 – 2015) from faculty of Education of the University of Khartoum - Republic of the Sudan. The results showed there is a significant difference between the experimental group and control group before and after the test. This confirms that importance of the development of art education curriculum in the Sudanese educational institutions. The researcher recommended the government of the Sudan should be urged to promote of arts education as an integral part of national development policies.*

**Keywords:** Importance, Art education, Sudanese, Educational institutions

### **Background**

In the Republic of the Sudan, the Government has recognized the importance of arts education and the consequential need for policy support and implementation. This recognition provided the foundations of an announcement by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education to promote a comprehensive initiative to facilitate arts education. Over the last two years, the Ministries have planned and implemented various policies to promote arts education across the country. The enactment of The Arts Education Support Law is underway to provide further institutional support. Two fields within society are positively affected by arts education. Firstly, it creates a demand for professionals in the arts with an understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. Secondly, it supports the programs and activities that are needed to establish respect for each other's diversity of historical experience and culture. The Arts in the republic of the Sudan (Ministry of Education, 2003) The Curriculum describes four strands each with eight levels of achievement objectives. The four strands include Developing Practical Knowledge in The Visual Arts, Developing Ideas in The Visual Arts, Communicating and Interpreting in The Visual Arts and Understanding the Visual Arts in Context. A range of resources supports teachers in interpreting the achievement objectives and implementing the curriculum. These resources include the Arts Curriculum Exemplars (Ministry of Education, 2003b) and a matrix that identifies progress indicators at each level.

The matrix describes broad levels of progress that cover up to two to three years of learning, with wording of some indicators remaining constant across two to three levels, in accordance with the achievement objectives. Teachers require further support and guidance to identify indicators of shift in student learning within these levels. Current educational research supports a focus on evidence-based practice to raise student achievement. Schools need to gather, analyze and use data to make informed decisions that ensure improved student learning. It is a professional responsibility of schools and teachers to critically examine assessment practice to ensure it reflects and supports the broad aims of visual arts education and improves the quality of teaching and learning.

Assessment practice must provide valid, meaningful data to help schools decide how best to cater for the needs of diverse students (Alton-Lee, 2003). Teachers need opportunities to engage in professional dialogue to define what significant learning in the visual arts looks like, identifying indicators or benchmarks of achievement. The four strands need to be considered as interrelated parts of a larger whole, as separating the strands for assessment purposes may serve to strip the arts of their purpose, meaning and significance. For example, considering students' practical knowledge with no reference to how they select, combine, arrange and use the various components to express and develop their ideas may undermine the complexity and richness of the visual arts. Existing International examples of learning progressions tend not to present the visual arts as a set of interrelated strands in the manner described in the republic of the Sudan Curriculum. In contrast, they are often lengthy and complex to use (Clement, 1998).

### ***Introduction***

The arts are an integral part of the human experience. Throughout history, they have empowered the transformation of individuals and societies by providing a place for people to revisit, reflect, and respond. A strong arts education is foundational to developing creative, educated citizens. Students explore the world through an artistic lens, and are able to express ideas, opinions, beliefs, emotions, and perspectives. Engaging in the creative process encourages thinking and problem solving skills vital to living in our rapidly changing world. The arts connect students with history, heritage and culture, fostering an understanding of the diverse values and perspectives of Aboriginal, Canadian, and global societies. For students in British Columbia, arts education provides an opportunity to explore, reflect and respond to knowledge embedded in language, memory, and story. The four strands of Arts Education — Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts — allow students to investigate, express, and interpret their personal passions and strengths. They also develop empathy and respect for the voices, traditions and creations of others. Opportunity is created to understand generational roles in the transfer of culture and knowledge. The arts provide students with ways to see, hear, express, create and communicate. Each of the arts has elements, language and structures that when understood and applied creatively, have the capacity to represent complex emotions and ideas. Arts education stimulates students' imaginations, innovation, and creativity, while developing competencies useful to their education and careers. Arts education allows students to dwell in a sense of wonder. Students learn to value creativity, imagination, and purposeful play. Creating art integrates mind, body, and spirit. Through the arts, students learn that there are many ways to convey their thoughts, and space is created for them to live in the unknown, the unfinished, and the unresolved. They learn, consequently, that there is more than one response to life's situations and that they have the capacity to choose the response they wish to live.

From the beginning of time, the compulsion to create a visual vocabulary has been as innate in every society as the desire to acquire a system of spoken symbols. Visual art from past civilizations is frequently one of the few remaining clues with the power to illuminate which values were held most dear. Today, every aspect of our designed environment will serve to explain who we are to those of the future. The pattern of human growth in society is to develop a multi-sensory means of communicating symbols and values. A child discovers objects, those objects take on meaning, and this meaning is denoted and communicated through the various means of expression available to that child. The visual arts program is designed to develop visual literacy by promoting fluency in the various modes of visual communication. Students learn the visual arts by using a wide range of subject matter, media, and means to express their ideas, emotions, and knowledge. They evaluate the merits of their efforts and this assessment forms the basis for further growth that extends to all disciplines in school and to life. Visual arts education is a multifaceted creative process, which includes the development of perceptual awareness and the ability to use materials expressively. Through participation in visual arts, students have the opportunity to recognize and celebrate the creativity and diversity inherent in all of us. Research into the benefits and outcomes of arts learning include quantitative studies with comparison/control groups, and qualitative studies that focus in depth on the impacts for students of learning and involvement in the arts. The literature reveals two main paradigms for research on the benefits of arts learning and arts participation: approaches that seek to identify the benefits of arts education in terms of non-arts outcomes (the "instrumentalist" approach); and approaches that explore in detail the practices and outcomes of arts learning in relation to the educational goals and values intrinsic to the particular arts discipline(s). Several large studies that foreground "instrumental" benefits provide evidence that students with higher levels of arts participation have greater educational achievement across a range of measures (Catterall, Chapleau, & Iwanaga, 1999).

However, most authors comment on the theoretical and practical limitations of instrumentalist approaches. For example, these approaches often fail to sufficiently explain why an effect may be occurring, or how the learning benefits could be extended for more students or in new contexts. Most authors argue that research in arts education requires an integration of approaches that consider both the “instrumental” and “intrinsic” learning benefits of the arts.

### ***Importance of the Study***

1. The researcher is expecting from the development of art education curriculum in the Sudanese educational institutions the arts make a valuable contribution to the total education of children especially in relation to academic performance, attitudes to school, and perceptions of learning. According to research on the impact of arts within education, the benefits of arts education fall into three main areas; the child, the teaching and learning environment, and the community.
2. To provide students with ways to see, hear, express, create and communicate.
3. To allow students to dwell in a sense of wonder.
4. Students learn to value creativity, imagination, and purposeful play.
5. To connect students with history, heritage and culture, fostering an understanding of the diverse values.

### ***Objectives of the Study***

1. To recognize the importance of student learning through arts will support a collective understanding of student achievement and learning progression.
2. Develop an understanding of the elements of the various arts, and the ability to interpret and express ideas through a variety of art forms.
3. Explore, experience, and appreciate art forms from diverse cultures across times.
4. Engage in arts experiences, which foster critical, creative and reflective thinking and problem solving skills within a creative context.
5. Engage in the creative process accessing and appreciating multiple arts forms within the arts disciplines and across various areas of learning.

### ***Methodology of the Study***

The descriptive analytical and experimental methods were used in this research.

### ***Hypotheses of the Study***

1. There is a significant difference between student’s performance before and after the development of art education curriculum.

### ***The Importance of Arts Education***

The arts are an integral part of the human experience. Throughout history, they have empowered the transformation of individuals and societies by providing a place for people to revisit, reflect, and respond. A strong arts education is foundational to developing creative, educated citizens. Students explore the world through an artistic lens, and are able to express ideas, opinions, beliefs, emotions, and perspectives. Engaging in the creative process encourages thinking and problem solving skills vital to living in our rapidly changing world.

### ***Arts Education in the General Curriculum***

The evidence of arts and cultural subjects in the national curriculum is particularly evident in European countries. Most European curricula reflect a strong presence of arts education at primary level yet at secondary level, arts education exists on the periphery. In most cases, compulsory arts subjects disappear completely from the curriculum after the early years of secondary education (Robinson, K., 2002). In comparing the available statistics and research, it is worth noting the varying definitions of arts and cultural education and their incorporation in to the curriculum in a cross-disciplinary approach. For instance, it was noted that in Finland there is a very high number of hours devoted to arts education but within the Finnish curriculum areas of arts and cultural education, such as theatre and dance, are often integrated into other subjects, such as mother tongue and physical education classes (Bamford, A., 2006). This inter-disciplinary approach can also be seen in countries such as the Netherlands, where the integration of culture into the curriculum is an important objective. Culture is taught within an inter-disciplinary framework of history, geography, economics and language.

Other countries have used performance-based arts practices, such as drama, in the classroom as an effective tool in language learning. In France, Belgium and the UK, major programs have been introduced to increase the level of culture in education.

### **Quality Education and Arts Education**

Are we successful in educating young people to develop the knowledge, skills and qualities necessary to meet the demands of today's world? How effective have the current school curricula been? Are they valuable today and will they be relevant tomorrow? Are there better and more efficient ways for us to deal with pressing education and societal goals? The answers to those questions point to a great need to comprehensively restructure current school curricula and teaching practices (Kyung-he Sung, Korea Institute of Curriculum and Evaluation, Republic of Korea). Quality arts education, which promotes emotional development, as well as cognitive achievement, is a key factor to achieve quality education (Tereza Wagner, Senior Program Specialist, Division of Arts and Cultural Enterprises, UNESCO, Paris).

The definition of quality in arts-education teaching – by applying five of Cecilia Braslawski's ten principles of quality education to arts education – can be approached through the following principles:

1. Relevance of the teaching content in relation to the social and cultural environment of the child. The concept deals with inner-contentment, well-being, independent thinking and other feelings, which create enjoyable or satisfying learning conditions. Practices should have universal scope but be locally relevant. In addition, they should be both active and reflective and also practical and theoretical.
2. Teamwork has many benefits and is per se part and parcel of arts education. An interdisciplinary approach to knowledge is another important pedagogical method for improving quality education.
3. Partnerships between schools, families, cultural and artistic institutions and the community. The contributions of external cultural organizations and institutes bring new value, guidance and pedagogical support to tuition, and encourage teachers to display students' work, thus also convincing parents of the benefits of arts education. Artists and recognized creative agents should also be included in the teaching process.
4. Planned curriculum for each grade level provide guidance and structure for the teaching of arts practices on each grade level. Project-based work should be encouraged, and time structured to allow for formal teaching and practice.
5. Pluralism and the quality of teaching methods: the divide between practitioners and theoreticians has become a huge problem for arts education. Teachers should be allowed more freedom to investigate new methods of teaching and, if they wish, contribute to research in this field (Former Director of the International Bureau of Education, UNESCO, and Geneva).

### **Arts Education in Africa**

Arts education in Africa, that it develops the child's sensitivity, enables him or her, through a personal creative experience, to understand a work in its aspects of form (aesthetic and emotional) and technique, as well as its meaning. This approach is crucial to enable young people, particularly those from an underprivileged background, to retrieve the link with their traditional cultural environment from which they have often been disconnected. Re-creating or reinforcing this link is essential to their mental and psychological balance and social integration. By opening up the mind and critical ability, arts education also enables the young person to become part of the contemporary world. On the other hand, in our current context of globalization, arts education based on cultural heritage and contemporary artistic creation can help enhance local cultural productions' value in the eyes of the young, favoring a kind of creativity that is rooted in the local cultural environment and sustains cultural diversity. Due to the absence of arts-education programs in schools and the growing number of children that find themselves marginalized in African towns, museums have an important role to play, for instance, in setting up pilot arts-education workshops for underprivileged children, using their collections and archives as teaching aids (Wagner, 2006).

### **Discussion of the Results**

#### **Analysis data of the first hypothesis:**

2. There is a significant difference between student's performance before and after the development of art education curriculum.

**Table 1: Statistics Test**

Variable	Sample Size	Arithmetic Mean	Standard
ExperimentalBefore	24	15.72	3.48
ExperimentalAfter	24	42.8	1.30

**Table 2: T. Test for two Samples**

Variable	T. Test Value	Degree of Freedom	Potential Value
Before - After	30.6	25	0.00

Through the above tables (1-2) there is a significant difference between the performance of the experimental group before and after the implementation of the developing curriculum. Through the potential value, which amounted to (0.000) which is less than the level of error allowed (0.05%) for the benefit after applying the program, through the arithmetic mean value. Which is amounted to (42.8) that is greater than the arithmetic mean value before implementing the program, amounting to (15.72). This confirms that importance of the development of art education curriculum in the Sudanese educational institutions. Through the results, the researcher noted that the performance of students as a whole before the implementation of developing curriculum were not able to apply skills. Through the results, the researcher noted, schools need to develop effective tools and methods to gather meaningful data on student learning in the visual arts. Working collaboratively to analyze and use the information to identify a student's stage of development and next steps learning will support a collective understanding of student achievement and learning progression in the visual arts. Developing learning progression for the visual arts that can be used across levels 1-4 and applied to any art making or responding context should enable schools and teachers to define and communicate their understanding of student learning in the arts. There is a need to recognize the importance of student learning in, through, about the arts, and across the inter-related strands, valuing the visual arts as a significant form of communication and a tool for thinking. There is a need to develop a framework for teachers where student learning in visual arts is broken down into smaller and more easily identifiable stages. This is based on the assumption that if teachers can identify a student's understanding more finely they will be able to communicate more effectively.

### Results

1. There is a significant difference between student's performance before and after the development of art education curriculum. This confirms that importance of the development of art education curriculum in the Sudanese educational institutions.

### Recommendations

1. Promote arts education as an integral part of national development policies.
2. Ensure the training of arts education trainers and teachers and promote active, participatory teaching methods.
3. Create budget items to facilitate the professional integration of graduates from arts-education institutions.
4. Set up arts education departments in Sudanese universities.
5. Make arts education compulsory in all schools in arts education.

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