

EXPLORING THE PHILOSOPHY AND FOUNDATIONS OF ART EDUCATION

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Introduction

The word, Philosophy, according to Vuletic (2011), literally means love of wisdom. But he believes that this does not tell much about the nature of philosophy as, according to him, "many disciplines seek wisdom". And so how does philosophy differ from these others'?

He proffers an answer by asserting their humanity's first systematic inquiries that took place within a mythological or religious framework. To him: wisdom ultimately was to be derived from sacred traditions and from individuals thought to possess privileged access to a supernatural realm". According to him, the legitimacy of these traditions or access of these individuals, in turn, generally was not questioned. He went on: ...starting in the 6th century BC, there appeared in ancient Greece a series of thinkers whose enquiries were comparatively secular. Presumably, these thinkers conducted their enquiries through reason and observation, rather than through tradition or revelation". These thinkers according to Vuletic (2011) were the first philosophers.

On the other hand, Philosophy is an academic discipline that exercises reason and logic in an attempt to understand reality and answer fundamental questions about knowledge, life, morality and human nature. To Vuletic (2011), Philosophy is characterized as much by its methods as by its subject matter. Philosophers deal with speculative issues that generally are not subject to investigation through experimental test. Philosophy therefore is more fully conceptual than science. Philosophers just like scientists, formulate hypothesis which ultimately must answer to reason and evidence.

The branches of philosophy Philosophy can be delineated into four branches. These are: ethics, epistemology, logic and metaphysics.

Logic: According to Vuletic (2011), logic is the attempt to codify the rules of rational thought.

Logicians explore the structure of arguments that preserve truth or allow the optimal extraction of knowledge from evidence. Logic is one of the primary tools philosophers use in their inquiries, its precision helps them to cope with the subtlety of philosophical problems and the often misleading nature of conversational language.

Epistemology: This is the study of knowledge itself. According to Vuletic (2011), Epistemologists ask, for instance, what criteria must be satisfied for something we believe to count as something we know, and even what it means, for a proposition to be true.

Metaphysics: According to Vuletic (2011), Metaphysics is the study of the nature of things.

Metaphysicians ask what kinds of things exist, and what they are like. The reason about such things as whether or not people have free will, in what sense abstract objects can be said to exist, and how it is that brains are able to generate minds.

Axiology: Vuletic (2011) sees Axiology as an umbrella term for different studies that center upon the nature of different types of value. These different studies, he notes, include and wrong, and of good and evil, both in theoretical considerations about the fine details of and political philosophy; and, most prominently, ethics, which investigates the nature of right aesthetics, which investigates the nature of such things as beauty and art, social philosophy moral conduct.

Philosophy of art education clearly explains one's attitude about teaching and learning. Dunn (2013), on the other hand, According to Pam (2007), philosophy of art education is a personal narrative that sees it as basic to an individual's perception and understanding of the world in which he lives. It is through these perceptions that creative learning enables the students to interpret in visual forms. Art education teaches the student how to respect and appreciate his or her own interpretations and those of others. A sequential art program develops basic skills and encourages visual awareness. It is fundamental to intellectual expression. According to Wikipedia encyclopedia (2010), Art is more than just an academic subject, it is a way of life. Art allows us not only to think for ourselves but to feel for ourselves. Through art, people can express their feelings. Art was the first means of growth and creative self-communication and it is universal, through art the artist is able to connect with the rest of the world as it also allows him to take what he sees and feels and transform the same into something that others can see and feel. Art is not only the production of a work, it is the understanding of why we feel the need to make it and why others before us needed to create it, what techniques we used to construct it, and why it pleases our eyes after we have it. Students should be able to practice art in the following ways: fundamental production, aesthetics, exhibiting, observing and studying cultures and history of art, as well as the artists finished that created the works.

Fitzwater (2011) asserts that: "the future of the world is in my classroom today, a future with the potential for good or bad". This statement perhaps explains why teachers and the education of all children are so vital today to the continuation and improvement of our society. The future of our world now more than ever depends directly on the people who live here. Because of this, the role of education must be rooted in fostering and nurturing.

Through education, the educated will become active participants in the world and can successfully navigate the complexities of life. Education cultivates people who cherish diversity and believe in equality for all and nurturing the desire in children to pursue their own happiness and hopefully work to help as well. But without excellent teachers

and without a well-rounded quality education, these dividends of education would be difficult to come by, if not impossible. Art education is therefore a key to bringing these things together.

Fitzwater goes on to say that, the student who goes through the schools ultimately acquires the skills and attitudes that will make it possible for him to be active and successful in whatever paths he chooses to pursue. More than any other discipline, art education helps the student develop these skills. He went on: "when experiencing the arts, students practice higher order thinking skill such as problem solving decision making and the investigation of new concepts and materials". In effect, Art offers the freedom to explore without judgment and often without rules, allowing the student to develop the understanding that personal success is ultimately the individual's responsibility.

However, the world is full of diversity and so the teachers of art education must be mindful of the facts that all children learn differently, and that all children can learn. Armed with fundamental knowledge and skills, the teacher helps to instill values of social interdependence, equality and respect for each other and the environment. The skills and thought processes taught in art education directly support discussing and creating art, which is a universal construct. Children therefore necessarily learn about themselves and others.

Because art education can be connected to nearly all disciplines, the student imbibes the concept of connections and relationships apparent in all of life. He learns tolerance and appreciation. He learns to take risks and have the confidence to try new things. As Dunn (2013) noted, creative learning enables students to interpret these perceptions in visual form.

A sequential art program therefore becomes imperative, as it develops basic skills, encourages visual literacy which is fundamental to intellectual growth and creative self-expression.

A balanced and sequential art education programme fosters the student's perception of both their real and imagined worlds. Through structured course work which includes knowledge of artists, art principles and educated critique, the student will be exposed to cultures around the world. The art programme enables the student to develop positive attitudes toward self, others and the environment through creative experiences. Problem solving and creative learning encourage the student to relate visual knowledge to other subjects. These enable him to respond with originality, appreciation, flexibility and imagination, even as Einstein (2013) notes that imagination is more important than knowledge". The use and application of skills, processes and mediums encourage self-expression, creative growth, discovery and the realization of ideas. Assessment is made on individual achievement related to each student's stage of growth and development. The art programme is sequential and cumulative, enabling knowledge aesthetic judgments, skills and abilities to be strengthened. Commitment to this programme is essential to the student's development as well-rounded, creative and productive citizen.

Implications and understanding of philosophy of art education Art education programme encompasses the traditions of fine art and popular arts of culture. These constitute the main trust of art education programme and the role of the arts in nurturing human growth and development (Wikipedia, 2010). As with other disciplines, art education has its

battles about the kind of teaching and learning it engages in. Art education provides an environment and practice in which the learner is actively engaged in creative experiences, processes and development. Introducing learners to artistic processes while Incorporating elements of their own culture and philosophy into education, cultivates in the individual a sense of creativity and initiative, a fertile imagination, emotional intelligence and capacity for critical reflection, a sense of autonomy and freedom of thought and action.

Education in and through the arts also stimulates cognitive development and can make how and what learners learn more relevant to the needs of the modern societies in which they live.

In order for children and adults to participate fully in culture and artistic life, they need to progressively learn to understand and experience artistic expressions by which fellow humans (artists) explore, and share insights into various aspects of existence and co-existence. As a goal to equal opportunities for cultural and artistic awareness art education needs to be a compulsory part of education programme for all. Philosophy of art education should also be systematic and provided over a number of years as it is a long term process. As Wikipedia (accessed 15" of Feb. 2010) noted, Art Education contributes uniquely to an education which integrates physical, intellectual and creative faculties and makes possible more dynamic and fruitful relations among education, culture and the arts. A curriculum that encompasses all of the above attributes should be established with a focus on interdisciplinary activities. It thus brings other subjects into the works and techniques of art, thus fusing art into those subjects.

Conclusion

Building a creative capacity and cultural awareness through art education is difficult and a critical task, but one that cannot be avoided for things to be right. Universal education of good quality is essential. This education, however, can be made of good quality if channelled through art education. This is so as it promotes the insights and perspectives, the creativity and initiative, and the critical reflection and occupational capacities which are so necessary for life.

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