

TEACHING OF SOCIAL SCIENCE WITH ART INTEGRATION: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

Social science is viewed as a discipline that is redundant, theoretic, and content-heavy. Such claims have been acknowledged since NCF 2005, and curriculum-forming committees have made steps to improve the methodologies and restore the subject's lost significance. The use of Art Integration is emphasized in New Education Policy 2020, and teachers are urged to involve pupils in artistic forms of teaching and learning. The use of Art Integration techniques in social science is anticipated to deepen learning and add depth to the cultural environment. This paper records perspectives of the students and teacher trainees in relation to the effective and suitable usage of Art Integration in real-world classroom settings. The paper also examines the challenges which come up during Art Integration activities. Further, this study provides a number of recommendations that would enhance the implementation of arts-integration activities in social science and other subjects as well.

Keywords: *Art integration, Social studies, Teacher training.*

INTRODUCTION

Arts Integration is an approach to teaching where learners create and express their understanding through an art form.

The arts are used as both a teaching strategy and a means of learning in Arts Integrated Curriculum. When students use the creative process to investigate links between one art form and another to develop a deeper understanding of both, they fulfill two learning objectives.

Teachers following the Arts Integrated Curriculum must participate in professional development to learn about arts forms and how to integrate the arts into the curriculum they teach, so that the learners can have a thorough understanding of both the art form and the subject content.

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Learning "through the arts" and "with the arts" are the foundation of the teaching-learning paradigm known as "art integrated learning." Through a variety of artistic mediums, students engage in creative exploration while making connections between distinct themes. Experiences with the performing and visual arts help learners build their knowledge and improve their understanding. Age-appropriate options for learners who can explore at their own pace can be accommodated by the flexibility of the arts. This is in sync with experiential learning.

Arts integration provides multiple ways for students show what they have learnt, hence making learning evident and visible. Teaching Social Science with arts allow students with diverse learning needs to become more effective learners. Students can also develop their musical, kinesthetic, visual-spatial, and interpersonal intelligences by combining the arts and social studies.

ART INTEGRATION IN SOCIAL SCIENCE-THE PRESENT RESEARCH

Social Science is a subject which has a very wide scope. It is basically content loaded. To make social science more interesting, Art Integrated Teaching can be used in class as it helps to gain focus and attention of students. According to NEP2020, teachers are expected to use Art Integration in classrooms for the better understanding and maximum participation of students. The need for Art Integrated learning is growing than ever for two reasons: the way that students think and process information is changing, and the world for which we are preparing them is changing.

As there is growing interest in use of Art Integration to teaching social science in schools, a study was conducted to examine Social Science teacher's use of Art Integration and their perceptions of the impact of Art Integration on students of class 6th and 7th. Also, students were asked to share their perspectives on being taught through this art integrated medium.

In the present study, the participants (teacher trainees) were asked few questions. They were instructed to rate the frequency (never, rarely sometimes, or often) of their use of art in instruction in their classrooms. To understand their enthusiasm for and opinions of using art, the teacher trainees were asked, "Why do you use art in instruction?" and "What is your opinion of integrating art into content area instruction?" They were also queried about common reactions by students when they see images of art and art objects in class. Finally, the participants were enquired about the resources for teaching with art they need and they were also invited to provide additional comments.

OPPORTUNITIES IN USING ART INTEGRATION IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

Following benefits have been collated from meta-researches on the topic Art Integration and help make the proposal for encouraging Art Integration.

1. Participating in the arts fosters the growth of learners' capacity for problem-solving.
2. Visual presentations of challenging ideas can be used in teaching to make them easier to comprehend.
3. Motor, linguistic, social, and decision-making, risk-taking, and innovative skills of learners improve as a result of art education.
4. Skills needed for academic presentations (visual and digital) can be learnt through the visual arts as it educates learners in colour, layout, perspective, and balance.
5. Using art in other academic subjects engages pupils who might not otherwise be interested in their work.
6. Exposure to the arts fosters critical thinking by encouraging pupils to observe the world more carefully and thoroughly.
7. Learners of different skill levels are challenged by arts.
8. Art education helps pupils develop connections to both their local cultures and the global community.
9. Learners regularly engaging in the arts, excel in co-curricular activities hence better personality development.
10. Arts integration also helps learners get better scores and increases their interest in class subjects.

CHALLENGES DURING ART INTEGRATION IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

It is true that Art Integration in classrooms is beneficial, to keep up with the modern needs our education needs to be modernized every now and then and necessary updates are to be instated. But, implementing Art Integration is quite challenging, especially in Indian classrooms.

1. Evaluation of learning: The biggest challenge that occurs is that the Indian education system demands evaluation on the basis of academics and any form art is not treated as part of curriculum by parents.

2. Lack of Motivation is the biggest issue: Not only students, but teachers too are not motivated enough to teach by Art Integration and not daily basis.
3. Art Classes are not academic - In higher classes, most students don't find Art Integration activities important or useful for their syllabus and thus do not want to participate in it. Whereas in primary classes, they already have so many activities to do that students feel overburdened.
4. Lack of resources: Art Integration requires students to be equipped with basic art material. Some schools lack the facility of providing students with art supply when needed.
5. Expenditure: It is not practical to expect out of each student of the class to be able to afford the art tools required at each level. Often parents start to question the expenditure done on art activities.
6. Management: Managing a classroom is also a difficult task. Students in primary classes tend to create clutter while performing these types of activities. While students in higher grades don't follow the instructions properly and disturb the teaching learning process.
7. Lack of Sincerity (Students): Students in most classes do not consider Art Integration/ art activity or a class with art implementation to be close or equivalent to teaching, hence they are not serious about it.
8. Perspective of parents: In most cases, parents do not consider "art integrated classroom" a place to learn as they are much inclined toward traditional teaching practices. Parents of students in pre - primary standard consider art to be a way of learning but prefer their child to learn "normal/traditional content" too, as it helps them be ready for the outside real world.
9. Society: Indian Society does not view Traditional academic content and Integration of art in classroom very favorably. Most people have a view that Culture transmission and preservation is important but its integration in the subject content through arts makes the content weaker.

KEY OBSERVATIONS FROM THE FIELD

Teacher Trainees – Most of the teacher trainees consider Art Integration to be a beneficial way of learning and are trying their best to integrated art into the classroom. Most of the teacher

trainees interviewed have a basic of Art Integration and try to inculcate such learning experience for students. But on a clearer note, Art Integrated teaching is not possible every day. Issue of Class management came out as one of the biggest challenges in conducting an Art Integration activity. Younger classes students, were more excited to bring art resources during the activity, on the other hand, students of higher grade did not seem interested in getting art supplies. Teacher felt art integrated classes were less academic oriented.

Students – Students had a fair idea about the Art Integration in their classes. Some students preferred visual arts and some performing arts based on their comfort zones and skills. Students always wanted more time to engage with activities and art supplies. These activities created more spaces for discussions. Also, such classes seemed more enjoyable. Many indicated that they would like to use art more often. There was strong liking for performance arts than visual arts. Some also felt Art Integration classes were not serious classes and a “serious class” will be conducted later to complete the topic.

SUGGESTIONS

Art Integration in Social Science is a method to improve involvement and interest of students in the class. Social Sciences is considered a text loaded, content loaded, descriptive, information heavy subject and that too with least practical knowledge base. It is but necessary to find and implement new ways of teaching social sciences which can make this subject interesting and more practical. But before we change the teaching styles, we need to work on fixing loopholes in the evaluation system as students tend to not like Arts based class when they realize that Arts have less weightage than academics in evaluation. With change in the Evaluation system, we can bring a change in the perspective of society towards art and its integration in Social Sciences.

The content load of this subject is another concern to teachers which restricts them from implementing Art Integration more often. We need to reformulate our curriculum and add more practical, art-based concepts in the social science curriculum.

Art Integration in classroom is also about making the learning inclusive. Schools need to take care of needs of requirements of students and provide ample number of resources for exploration of the artist within them.

CONCLUSION

Social Science is a subject that has diverse approaches and a wide content base. One of the best ways of excelling the subject at school level is to make it experiential and Art Integration is the best solution in this regard. With help of new researches, social science teachers are trying to bring changes into this subject. The teacher trainees and teachers are trying new ways of teaching social sciences, to make it more practical and applicable. Schools, Teachers, Parents and society need to come together and work in a single direction to help change the perspective and approach to this subject and the Integration of Arts in it. Integration of Art in social science might open doors of immense knowledge for both learners and teachers. These reforms and changes in the teaching of social science, can promise a brighter future for its learners and society at large.

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