



The artist within – Applied eMOTION

Dance and art expression in formal and non-formal education for developing entrepreneur skills – best practice sharing between sectors and methods

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Affective and Cognitive Outcomes of Arts-based Teaching and Learning: Background Analysis Based on Literature, Core and Pilot Trainings' Experience

The 'Artist Within – applied eMOTION' LO Team

“*The Artist Within*” project pilot trainings reports’ analysis proves that students and trainers, participating in arts-based learning are benefited both affectively and cognitively. There are strong relationships among affective development, cognitive development, and learning. As a learner develops cognition, she/he develops according abilities and expertise that support academic and social learning. Affective development, on the other hand, increases a learner’s interest in learning and a feeling of self-worth which, in turn, increase his/her willingness to learn and apply new skills.

1. Effects of Arts-Based Teaching and Learning on Affective Development

Affective development in this context means an increased interest in learning, self-worth, and willingness to try new things. Arts-based teaching promotes affective development by increasing the learner’s interest, motivation, and enthusiasm for learning.

Arts-based instruction increases interest and motivation. All students, including diverse learners and those at risk for academic failure, can reportedly achieve higher academic results.

Arts-based teaching and learning strategies are among those that **appeal to multiple types of intelligence and engage multiple ways of learning.**

Arts-based instruction increases self-esteem and willingness to try new things. Arts allows us to “invent and reinvent ourselves”.

As attitudes improve along with a willingness to experiment, **arts-based learning activities give students skills with which they can “explore uncertainty/ambiguity”**

When we are involved in arts-based learning, we are able to better express our thoughts and ideas and improve our communication skills, which allows us to “act upon our imaginations and curiosity,” cooperate with other students, and display our learning publicly.

2. Effects of Arts-based Teaching and Learning on Cognitive Development

Cognitive development in this context means areas of ability and expertise that can be applied successfully to academic and social learning situations. Authors describe these abilities and areas of expertise to include creativity, self-direction, and complex thinking. Arts-based teaching and learning practices reportedly influence the development of such skills.

Arts-based instruction develops learning abilities. Our pilot training activities proved some evidence of cognitive skill development through the arts. Standardized tests of creativity showed more highly developed creativity in students who participated in arts-based trainings. Our research showed that students in high-arts groups perform better than those in low-arts groups on measures of creativity. Pilot training activities proved that creativity is a “capacity” for learning that can be developed through an arts-based curriculum. In related areas, high-arts students also demonstrated better capacity than low-arts



students in the areas of fluency, originality, elaboration, and for helping professionals - resistance to burnout effects.

In addition to creativity, arts programs help students develop self-assessment, organizational, and planning skills. Students in high-arts groups, compared with students in low-arts groups, also demonstrated better rapport with teachers and more sustained focus. Such abilities help students connect with themselves, each other, and the outside world. These connections, along with self direction and self-assessment skills, help prepare students for the workplace, including that of helping professionals.

Arts-based instruction develops thinking skills. Thinking skills attributed to arts-based teaching include improved comprehension, interpretation, and problem solving. The cross-disciplinary learning environment associated with arts-based instruction, in particular, helps students develop deeper, broader, or “higher-order” thinking skills. Such skills enable the learner to recognize, contrast, and compare varying elements of the world around her/him and, therefore, to comprehend its complexity.

Higher levels of thinking are related to the comprehension of symbols: the ability to interpret symbols and construct their meaning. The arts, in its various media and approaches, offer a broad range of symbols and other ways of representing ideas. Students who experience the arts learn to interpret symbols and understand abstract ideas. Students of the visual arts, for example, learn visual problem solving by interpreting the symbolism of visual artworks. The ability to construct meaning through various representations leads to deeper, more conceptual thinking. Arts allow representation of ideas that are not otherwise easy to process. Once an idea is represented, it can be processed through comparison and discussion. Processing of information and communicating about it lead to new learning.

Arts-based instruction develops neural systems. Its influence on neural systems is another way to associate arts with learning. By engaging the brain, the arts enhance neurobiological systems that support cognitive, emotional, attention, and immune systems. Music, for example, has been found to synchronize neural firing patterns. Instruction in music promotes and maintains this synchronicity, which increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the brain. Authors attribute such brain activity with increased ability in the areas of spatial reasoning, creativity, and general math. Artistic experiences, among others, change the brain and, therefore, influence cognition in a positive way.

The influence of art on cognition is in its development of thinking abilities and motivation for learning.

Social skills development may be related to arts-based learning. The arts help students develop communication and cooperation skills. *When students learn to express themselves more effectively*, their relationships with other students and instructors improve. For helping professionals this means improved abilities for establishing relationship and linking both with their professional and target-group communities. In terms of social behaviour researchers note that students involved in music activities exhibit fewer at-risk behaviors than those who are not involved.

Arts-based learning generalizes to other learning. The question of “transfer” also emerges in this discussion of learning outcomes. Drama, for example, increases interpersonal relationship and communication skills which improve learning. This may be considered a transfer, or, an example of the so called “far” learning -- the ability to generalize or transfer learning to academic areas that are not part of the arts-based activity.

Arts teach students to solve problems, elaborate ideas, and to structure and organize different kinds of experiences. Such skills are transferable to science, math, and language, although this transfer cannot be characterized as “one-way.” Similar to the conceptualization of a web or constellation of influence across learning domains, this transfer happens in a dynamic, reciprocal relationship in which learning activities, such as visual arts, music, literature, reading, and social studies, are combined so that one subject challenges another.

Findings of the authors of reviewed literature as well as our own experience evidence to support positive relationships between arts and academics as follows: a) Drama develops higher-order language and emotional literacy skills; b) Music enhances language learning, spatial reasoning, learning concentration; c) Music & Dance enhance body-mind synchronicity, self & others reflection and rapport;



d) Art experiences develop writing and public talking skills, as well as general literacy; e) Art experiences develop social learning and communication skills.

Arts-based teaching may be particularly effective with diverse learners. Across the literature, authors seem to agree that arts-based teaching engages a wide range of learners. Arts challenge all students—including the hard-to-reach, the gifted, delayed learners, and others who may be, for a variety of reasons, at risk for academic failure. Arts-based teaching and learning work as a strategy for helping professionals because the arts give everyone a chance to learn and succeed. Instruction in the arts involves different kinds of learning activities that are meaningful for different kinds of learners.

According to our own project-related experience and many authors, **arts-based teaching and learning practices are particularly effective with learners from diverse cultures.** We can report a significant relationship between **arts-integrated instruction** and improvements in language studies and inter-cultural communication. **In addition to providing alternate forms of learning, arts-based instruction also appeals to intercultural learners.** University students who participated in interviews about the learning outcomes of arts-based instruction reported that **arts-based instruction is more likely to promote better understanding of our own culture and the culture of “the others”.**

Focused on integral expression, dance and humor therapy, our project based experience gives reliable evidence that arts-based instruction provides the optimum of stress and burnout alleviating learning and teaching approaches.

Moreover our training methodology is conducive to filling in the gap between the existing mostly theoretical and general knowledge on burnout syndrome prevention and the urgency of developing long-term and life-style oriented personal coping strategies. Having in mind that burnout syndrome prevention skills development is a long and learner-proactive process, we focused on cultivating the learning outcomes, you can find in the attached document “Key-words to be used in the promotion of 4th training in Łódź”.

We expect our method-specific learning outcomes to result in a better practical preparedness of helping professionals in meeting and coping with the challenges of the burnout syndrome, in cultivating skills for sustainable work motivation in highly demanding care providing environments. We expect these LOs to cater trainees for multi-spectral competences in dealing with increasingly complex and challenging social and professional situations.

We foresee these as possible if helping professionals

- are trained practically,
- are offered various methods they can rely on,
- are provided with chances to develop themselves personally,
- are opened to gain new experiences,
- have access to building a professional community/ network.

To reach this we have designed the ongoing training courses for adults in this field. We expect that adult learners will this way

- get skills and competences by learning by doing,
- adapt new methodologies to their work,
- discover and make part of their life-styles creativity and innovation,
- offer fitting support to their target groups, and
- ensure their own well being
- enable reinventing themselves and their work with creative resources,
- empower the use and maintenance of own personality (személyiség) as a working tool,
- be ready for a long-term quality work as helping professionals,



- understand that for achieving the above listed competences, personal development, capability to deal with conflicts and strengthen teamwork are essential.

Thus, on the background of our training methods are:

Non-formal learning principles:

- Learner-centeredness (i.e., a focus on the learner and their development)
- Shared agreement between trainers and learners on learning objectives
- Confidentiality
- Attention to content and methodology
- Not obligatory, based on voluntary commitment
- Participation
- Participants are in charge of their learning process (self directed)
- Democratic values and practices
- Learning by doing

Competences: system of skills and knowledge, attitudes and beliefs, as well as values that can be applied in practice to manage various complex situations and tasks successfully.

Skills: multi-spectral and prone to concrete applicability in complex situations

Knowledge: practical, renewable & sustainable

Attitude: opened, proactive, committed, reflexive, cooperative, creative & communicative

In conclusion, we would like to point out that **the offered training methodology, based on the synthesis of three different art methods is innovative and gives access to unique experience.** Moreover, as each innovative process, it is opened to creative participation. That's why we are looking forward to receive feedback from the participants at the end. The upcoming training is a great opportunity to take part in an international professional discussion on creativity and methodologies offering support and learning to Helping Professionals.