AN INVESTIGATION ON THE GROWTH OF EDUCATORS' CREATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL CAPACITIES

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ABSTRACT

Participating artists and artist-teachers in two arts education professional development programs, one on a national level in Canada and one at the state level in the United States, are the subjects of this study. Through collaboration with artists and arts organisations, both programs seek to assist classroom instructors in cultivating arts-integrated pedagogical practices. This article describes the experiences of artist-teachers and artists who had participated in the programs for a minimum of two years. It is based around survey data and interview with administrators, instructors, artist-teachers, and students. The research primarily focused on four areas: (1) artists' perceptions of their art forms changed, (2) artists' views of the difficulties in modern public education, (3) artists' perceptions of their jobs as educators changed, and (4) artists' ways of describing the positive impact of the arts on youth. Towards the end of the paper, they talk about some things to think about when researcher making professional development programs for artists and educators.

Keywords: educators, artists, artist-teachers, organisations, collaboration

INTRODUCTION

The arts have been an integral part of teacher education programs since Dewey's day and the early days of the movement to promote progressive education. Throughout the last 80 years, we have seen a range of approaches to school reform that prioritise arts education, from more emphasis during progressive reform to less emphasis during back-to-basics movement and budget cuts. Classroom teachers including academic subject-area instructors have seen an uptick in arts-focused in-service professional

development courses during the last decade. Perhaps this upsurge is due to research-based education reforms, new national arts standards, or public-private partnerships between educational institutions and cultural groups. Instructional practices and creative processes are commonplace in literacy, multiple intelligences, and performance-based assessment pre- and in-service courses. The goal of most arts-based teacher preparation courses is not to produce academic classroom teachers with extensive expertise in the arts. Rather, we want to see teachers' knowledge and skill with arts-based strategies for engaging students in active, imaginative learning and pedagogical practices expanded. (Adolfsson, 2017).

Little is known about the ways in which classroom instructors incorporate the arts, even though they are fundamental to professional development programs around the country. This kind of study is complicated by the sheer size of the problem. Aside from their close relationship to mathematics and science, the arts are important historical and contemporary academic subjects. Students may be exposed to art via field trips, guest artists, computers, literature, and film. The class experimented with many forms of physical activity, games, music, and painting. Either one might spark an argument, some introspection, or analysis. Every classroom has its own unique "art," whether it's the silent treatment of a painting or drama, the creation of a student opera completes with sets and costumes, or any combination of these activities. Whether a kid has ongoing arts access should not be determined only by counting the number of times they sing or draw. Art, in Dewey's view, should be encountered not created. Almost any classroom practice may be deemed artistic if students focus on the aesthetic aspects and use their imaginations while interacting with symbolic objects or ideas. Creative opportunities exist in almost every field of study if teachers can get their students to notice and analyse the visual aspects of their environment, such as shape and form, color and dynamics, and the expression of emotions and ideas through a variety of sign systems. These experiences are common throughout most themes. (Strahan, 2016).

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Students must be bold and self-motivated to embrace new ways of learning. The arts, however, need a more radical perspective change, one that applies to both students and curriculum goals. In the arts, there are no set goals and no definitive correct responses. Individuals' reactions are shaped by their natural curiosity and desire to learn via these encounters. Teachers still need to be convinced that a new strategy is feasible, helpful for students, and advances a worthwhile educational objective, even in more accommodating fields like the arts. Whether or not a teacher is willing to try a new approach depends on how certain they are that it will improve student learning. Formal education may enhance creativity and self-perception, according to Taylor and others. However, more specific abilities, such as planning arts events and modifying curriculum

to include the arts, may need more training before they can be used in the classroom (Taylor, 2017).

When it comes to arts education, principals, governors, has and possibly the president convey mixed signals. In view of the nationwide push for uniform testing and unified curriculum management, arts-based educational programmes should also be assessed. Although arts education is underfunded, it is nevertheless part of the "no children left behind" initiative (2000). Schools may be putting instructors under pressure to raise test results and implement a uniform curriculum, which might restrict their freedom of expression and hinder their career advancement opportunities. Due to limitations in resources (time, money, and support), educators may find it challenging to implement innovative approaches. Some educators may be reluctant to devote class time to arts education, despite their knowledge of the benefits to their students' intellectual and social development (Alexandrou, 2014).

Schools have been slow to hire more arts teachers, even though arts funding has been increased at the state and local levels. Teachers have always been the ones who decide whether students can achieve standards. Due to time constraints, arts electives in regular courses are quite improbable. Therefore, for the sake of all students, arts education must be a part of the standard curriculum. What is meant by "teachers concerning, with, or using the arts" when discussing arts integration? "Arts integration" may signify numerous things, as pointed out by Goldberg. A comprehensive arts education delves into the historical background, development of specific art forms, and the arts overall. Students' ability to learn and communicate is enhanced by both arts-based instruction and arts-informed learning. The two most fundamental categories within the arts are production and creation (including performing arts like singing, painting, the act of dancing, and acting) through observation and exposure (also called "consuming" the arts, including reading about or studying them). Listening to music, going to an art gallery, or viewing a film are all examples of these two most fundamental types of lessons. While creating and sharing an artistic work, the National Standards in Art Education stress the need of active listening, speaking up, analysing, and reflecting on one's own work (King, 2016).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers maintain their education via professional development. Teachers may enhance their topic knowledge and instruction via professional development. Professional development options for educators include "traditional" and "individualised." Teachers have as many different learning styles as their pupils do. Since educators have more choice over what and how to study, customised professional development (PD) tackles this issue more effectively than standard PD (Girvan, 2016). In the past, teachers received the same professional growth at simultaneously, with little to no control over

the approaches or subjects. This research looked at the effects of both standardised and customised professional development on secondary school teachers. The goal of PD is to advance best practices and impart new skills. The benefits of PD for educators are covered in this reading list. Background information is also required for the enquiry. talking about the efficacy of both conventional and personalised PD therapies. The study looks at the motivation of teachers to choose opportunities for growth via the lens of andragogy, or adult learning. (Stewart, 2014).

In order to better understand the elements that either encourage or discourage pupils from participating in creative activities, this research looked into the attitudes and practices of instructors. This exercise was designed to help educators better grasp the problem, not to make judgements about different kinds of professional development. Enhancing the link between professional development and arts education practices might be achieved by doing research on the perspectives of teachers who have taken part in artists-based professional development programs. This study looked at the views of educators who provide arts-based professional development (Mohan, 2017).

METHOD AND ANALYSIS

 The overarching goal of both programs chosen for this study was to provide educators with the tools they need to bring more creativity and imagination into the classroom. Starting in 1994, the program for Learning with the Arts (LTTA) program in Canada has expanded to include not just the country but also the US, Italy, Singapore, and Scandinavia. Learning via the Arts, as its name suggests, is devoted to enhancing students' understanding of mathematical and scientific concepts via the medium of the arts. Participation in LTTA is required for at least three years and is school-wide. Artists and teachers get together for professional development sessions at the start of each school year, and the program continues throughout the year. Participating schools pay about $50/student for LTTA, which funds artist visits to classrooms and professional development for educators. Previous studies on this program have shown that students benefit from it and that teachers' practices change after working with seasoned artists and arts organisations, but the artists' points of view have been under-researched.

Data Collection and Sample Sizes

Data were collected from artists and artist-teachers through surveys, individual interviews, and focus group interviews over a period of four years. The focus groups included both artist teachers and classroom teachers. Program directors and site administrators were also interviewed. Both partnerships were involved with most types of data collection, although in some cases data collections occurred in different years. The artist survey was administered to artists associated with only one of the two

partnerships. In all cases, participants were assured results would be reported anonymously. In one instance, the artist had spent twenty years participating in several types of educational relationships. Artists were asked to discuss their work, the impact of provincially and state-mandated curriculum on their practise, and the processes of teaching and learning in these interviews. Results from the artist and artists-teacher data were triangulated via interviews with programmed administrators in the beginning of 2019. Through these interviews, we were able to delve into program philosophies, institutional and political considerations, changes to programs over time, and challenges related to program logistics and finances. Teachers' accounts of the professional development programmed were further triangulated through focus groups interviews; participants were asked to discuss their own and their students' artmaking, as well as the program's logistics and their interactions with the artists. The three years of 2021, 2022, through 2023 saw the implementation of these focus groups with educators. To make coding and analysis easier, we imported text files with answers to open-ended survey questions and interview transcripts into Atlas. The first stage of analysis made use of a data coding system that was derived from previous analytical work. The structural aspects of the two programs, as well as the literature on creative practice and institutional influences, informed the addition of additional open codes. Following the first investigation, open codes were adjusted by merging or removing certain codes and then classifying the rest into families. As an example, "classroom discipline," "pressures on teachers," and "attitudes of teachers" were all aspects of the education profession that were considered by the family. It didn't matter to the artists whether the program was a year-round, full-school commitment or a series of the summertime offerings to teachers from different schools, so all of the codes pertaining to the program structures were removed.

The following four topics persisted: the role of art in society, opinions on educators, difficulties in public schools, and the positive effects of the arts. The findings are presented in the following paragraphs in a manner consistent with the final code families.

RESULTS

Participation in professional growth programs had a profound impact on the artists' practices and attitudes, which was the overarching topic. The majority of the time, these impacts were beneficial. A number of artists mentioned how their collaboration with instructors and pupils had helped them hone some of the techniques specific to their art form. Working with the pupils and instructors improved one sculptor's skills in bust portraiture. A musician shared how she had gained fresh perspectives on "handling and addressing [her] own personal studio music classroom" as a result of her time in the course. Occasionally, these encouraging remarks pertained to perspectives on the

creative process. Taking part in a professional growth programmed boosted one artist's self-confidence, which in turn increased the likelihood that she would accomplish her own creative objectives.

Views of Teachers and the Teaching Profession:

Among the artists surveyed, 50% said they were "more cognizant of, and sensitive to, the desires and struggles that instructors face in their daily practice" after completing the professional development programs. "Working side by side alongside educators in classrooms has [strongly] impacted the attitudes regarding teachers," said one artist. According to the artist, "the majority of pupils and educators in the schools have taken the instruction that They provided have extended them past their wildest dreams." She was amazed by how far instructors were able to take her lectures. An "appreciation for the endurance and organisational skills among elementary school teachers" was a sentiment expressed by several creatives. Having this type of insight usually prompted the artists to hone their craft in new ways. Among the many topics covered were the artists' experiences with classroom management and the importance of forming relationships with both students and instructors, as well as the need to cultivate flexibility and perseverance in this setting. On the other hand, there was a time when many artists did not think highly of their teachers. Some even dropped out of the programs because they felt their work was either underappreciated or twisted by the system to the point where they were using art lessons as a "motivational gimmick" to get kids to do things they didn't want to do. "I made some pretty ignorant assumptions about the quantity of subsidiary the teachers would carry on with," another artist said, expressing her belief that teachers were uninterested in continuing the art-making that the artists had introduced. Very much has transpired about it. Artists took a different tack, suggesting that teachers showed greater interest in their work when it had clear curricular connections. They said, "when they make curricula associations a priority, how goes within very well with all teachers," suggesting that professionals were more receptive to art when it had clear curricular connections rather than when it stood on its own.

CONCLUSION

The cultural gap that exists between the predetermined, narrowly defined aims of a test-based educational environment and Dewey's active, flexible, constructivist approaches is reflected in the arts. Education in the modern day increases the gaps and forces educators to experiment with novel, daring, and hazardous approaches. Three key obstacles were identified by this research for instructors who want to include the arts into the classroom: (a) preserving their own creative and artistic talents; (b) learning how to lead artistic exercises; and (c) striking a balance between their artistic

values and the responsibilities of their jobs. Art education requires institutional and personal development. Individuality is emphasised in the arts. An artistic teacher has to have gut instinct and adjust to each student's requirements, whether it's by taking an active role in creative endeavors or identifying the beautiful aspects of everyday life. A teacher has to be a self-assured facilitator who can encourage original ideas, deeds, and expressions. The viewpoints of educators on art, imagination, inventiveness, self-improvement, and pedagogical and life values should be developed via school and occupational growth programs. According to Dewey, society should respect art-based learning. For instructors, art instruction was becoming harder and harder.

LIMITATION

Despite this, the study did not gather the instructors' individual evaluations to contrast them with their opportunities for professional development. In some cases, this could have reduced the quantity of data that could have been obtained from teacher surveys about their use of professional development in the classroom. It was crucial to remember that, despite all of its benefits, mixed-method research did have some drawbacks. It would be challenging to implement research designs with plenty of moving parts and personnel to carry them out, which would raise the need for more personnel with data analysis skills. This can require allocating more funds or extending the study's duration over what was initially planned.

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