

Peripheral Points of View in Arts Education

Perspetivas Periféricas sobre Educação das Artes Visuais

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Resumo: Neste artigo apresenta-se a Sociedade Internacional de Educação Pela Arte-InSEA, organização onde as autoras se vinculam, como uma comunidade de investigadores, professores e educadores de artes visuais. Discutem-se ferramentas essenciais para a educação do século vinte e um e a necessidade de justificar a importância da educação artística. O artigo descreve alguns aspetos da educação artística-visual no Egito referindo experiências inovadoras levadas a cabo nesse campo.

Palavras chave: InSEA / Egito / ferramentas para o século XXI / educação das artes visuais.

Abstract: *The paper presents the International Society for Education Through Art (InSEA) as an organization enabling networking possibilities for the community of visual arts researchers, teachers and educators. Skills for the 21 century education are described to explain the need to improve our tools for advocacy. The paper describes Egyptian Visual Art Education in current days and brings up some innovative approaches to art education in the country.*

Keywords: *InSEA / skills for the 21 century / Visual Arts Education / Egypt.*

Visions of the Future

From its beginnings InSEA members believed in art education as a tool to transform the society. The preamble to the Constitution reveals the idealism of the founding members of InSEA and their belief that:

Education through art is a natural means of learning at all periods of the development of the individual, fostering values and disciplines essential for full intellectual, emotional and social development of human beings in a community (InSEA Constitution, 1954).

Since then, members had actively worked for advocacy of arts in and through education, playing an important role in UNESCO discussions, namely in the beginning of the twenty-one century with the UNESCO Road Map of Education in 2006 and the Seoul Agenda for Arts education in 2010. In each world or regional InSEA congress many papers bring evidence showing that the arts play a vital role in encouraging students to learn in physical and embodied ways, by inviting them to collaborate with peers and by developing their cognitive and emotional capacities as they learn in, through and about the arts. Data about the role of visual arts in education is needed in all countries of the world to reinforce or maintain the presence of the area in education for all. More and more the policies require for such evidence and it is important that the experts in the field and the key agents such as art teachers and art educators make visible the results of their projects both in research and practice. According to the report produced by Ellen Winner, Thalia Goldstein and Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin for OECD (Winner *et al*, 2013) arts are unique and bring specific outcomes

for students in a society where cultural goods are traded and bring economic growth, as a way to produce users and train future artists and cultural producers, however we don't have enough data to prove it.

The 21st Century has ushered in a post-technological world order and the arts should be employed wisely to prepare students to succeed in this changing global community where the great majority of information is transmitted by visual media. Thus visual literacy is a key competence to read, transform and produce communication in order to keep our freedom of thought and expression (Eisner, 19991; 1996). The world is dominated by a knowledge based global economy that is driven by consumerism, technology, diversity, polarization, violent disagreements among peoples and great disparity between people and communities. It seems that our old models of education are unprepared to educate students to succeed in the future. Some directions are pointing to an education from an economical point of view towards competitiveness and innovation. Some other directions are pointing towards more humanistic and sustainable values. The consensus between educational experts seems to be that the education of students should be comprised of critical thinking and problem solving skills, communication skills, creativity and innovation skills, collaboration skills, information and media literacy skills, and intertextual learning skills. It seems, also that the market place and estimates for the demands of the century are pointing towards a need for creativity and entrepreneurial thinking—a skill set highly associated with job creation. The ability to think unconventionally, question the herd, imagine new scenarios is now highly valued by the society (The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008). Another set of skills that are considered important in this technologically interconnected global economy is life skills and these include: leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, personal productivity, personal responsibility, people skills, self-direction, and social responsibility.

Arts Education in Egypt

Historically, education in the Visual Arts in Egypt was limited to the College of Art Education in Cairo founded in 1957. Its 500 a year undergraduate and 100 graduate students were barely sufficient to the need for teachers of the visual arts in high schools and resulted in relegating primary and elementary students to teachers in possession of only high school diplomas. To address the need for qualified teachers in underserved areas, Egypt opened 23 Colleges of Specific Education in 1988-2015, each with a department of Visual Arts Education. The graduates of these schools tend to remain in their local communities rather

than migrate to the capital thus addressing the lack of the arts in their often closed and conservative communities, schools and colleges. They established art activities for children with special needs. Murals appeared on community buildings, local festivals included various forms of art and previously gender-segregated students worked and played together. The teachers exhibited their art and were soon assisting local crafts people to develop new techniques and diversify their handiwork.

Establishing Content Criteria for Visual Art Education in General Education grades 1-12

When Egypt first established national content standards for general education grades 1-12 in 2003 it failed to address any of the arts. Student and teacher art books were withdrawn from the schools and art was relegated to after school voluntary activities. By 2007, with the founding of NAQAA, the arts were determined important vehicles of generic skill development for all children and defined as compulsory core subjects. This project addressed the need for Visual Art Education content criteria in grades 1-12 that had not yet been fully articulated and was designed to reflect the accreditation criteria which everyone received. In June, 2008, NAQAA A charged a committee of educators representing the College of Education, the College of Art Education, the Ministry of Education, and the National Council for Educational Research, Curriculum and Assessment to develop criteria for Visual Art Education in grades 1-12. It reviewed national and international Visual Art curricula and performed a needs assessment of Visual Art Education in Egyptian schools.

The committee produced a document that defined, Visual Art Education, Content Criteria for Visual Art Education, and Visual Art Student Skill Acquisition (See Appendix). The most important outcome of these efforts has been the dramatic change in the Ministry of Education's position vis a vis Visual Art Education in grades 1-12. Not only has it reintegrated Art as a core subject in the curriculum but has, for the first time, entered a formal partnership with the Ministry of Culture that will continue to improve and enhance art education by providing schools with art work, establishing artist in residence programs and supply other support (Sidky et al, 2010).

The case of Bantna vocational education girls art and drama high school program

To illustrate how art education in Egypt is now carrying on contemporary issues of participation; critical thinking and decision making we will present the case

of a woman craft arts education program taught at one of the vocational education high schools in Cairo through an educational unite during a four month period , twelve weeks for exploration of craft skills involving written emotions and affective reflections and reflection about TV novels .

The novel Zaat was interpreted into a television series in 2013. It offered a very detailed view of a girl named Zaat's struggles and feats. Sewing plays a very important role in her life. It becomes her engagement of life and her second source of income. She starts by making households like bed sheets and sofa coverings. Zaat moves on to making scarves and head covers for her colleagues at work. She dressed up her two daughters and herself. She made herself dresses and night gowns for her colleagues at work. Taking the novel as a starting point as well as "utopian ideals," to create feminist art, often in non-traditional ways to "change the world" the girls vocational education program aimed to :

- Starting off with a hoppy filling free time and giving hope
- Time engagement filling project success and financial options and availabilities
- Dedication changing to a profession as she starts vending and trading for money and extra income
- Craftsmanship like worshipping prayers , every day duty
- Changing to professionalism of a job or work criteria.

Through the girl's participation in the activist Banatna vocational art program, girl students developed skills for critical thinking, leadership, community engagement, and communication. While creating craftworks rooted on Egyptian family art, they engaged in three learning and teaching processes that were key to the development of these skills. Finally, students learned to see art as a way of future prosperity "teaching" the audience. They sought to present their ideas with a twisted balance between message and aesthetics, and developed communication skills on their way to final the process.

The case of KHayralah 2000 child artist – family program for children at risk at south of Cairo 2008-2013

This project involved community activist and NGO's of Masr Kadima district south of Cairo intending to connect modern Cairo with the old city contributing to the enhanced Egyptian child character. An after school education program was created and supported by community docents and training community personal helping the program to grow for five years affected 2000 child from

900 families. Created engagement content core curriculum depended on the main three factors: 1) Community Roles, 2) Communities Long Ago, 3) Communities Near and Far:

— Community Roles

These activities helped students recognize the importance of communities and that citizens of a community have certain responsibilities. An online activity for early day care and young primary readers allows students to explore and describe roles of different community workers members.

— Communities Long Ago

Students explore online the events leading up to the first Muslim and Coptic Pilgrim community many years ago Cairo starts up fatimy city. They can also learn about life in the “olden days” with hands-on activities. In these activities, students will recognize that communities and countries have histories, compare and contrast communities today with those in the past, and recognize holidays as ways of celebrating enhance old Cairo history.

— Communities Near and Far

Students learn more about their own communities through mapping small groups of crafts, reading, and art activities. They also learn about other communities by exploring the holidays celebrated in different cultures. Through these activities, students identify important features of their own closed communities, as well as recognize that each community has its own holly and reserved customs.

The case of Museum in Boxed — Egyptian museum family and school outreach cultural program 2016

Museum education Arts are unique because it focuses on learning by doing. That means designed activities for people of all ages to learn about ancient Egyptian works of art from the collection by participating in hands-on classroom workshops. The activities we create to accompany works of art prompt visitors to engage in ways that are different from the standard educational approach of a wall label. Project mentors wanted to provide experiences where visitors can make personal connections by drawing, writing, making, and discussing works of art with each other.

This kind of active engagement carries a certain humiliation; many people assume that it's only for kids, mainly because visitors are used to seeing

activities like these in children's museums. Part of our design process is to evaluate visitors' experiences by observation, interviewing and counting. Having ancient king or queen in a box with everything belonging to their family ancient Egyptian history excites kids and adults. Learning at half of our participants are educator's adults and that there is a reoccurring theme in their comments regarding why they participate. Draw, Write, Make, and Talk about art? Because it connects everyone to an enjoyable childlike curiosity and creativity, as an adult, often takes a backseat to other responsibilities and tasks.

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Appendix

General Skill Criteria for Visual Art Education in Egypt

- **Creativity and innovation**
Creativity, innovation and imagination in art production and personal insight. Using the arts to express ideas, emotions and beliefs.
- **Critical thinking and problem solving**
Critical thinking, reflection, evaluation, art criticism, art appreciation and aesthetic response to art and nature, building criteria for evaluating art work.
- **Communication**
Visual and verbal communication, cultural diversity.
- **Collaboration**
Group activities in art craft and design and community service.
- **Information literacy**
Visual and verbal knowledge and understanding of national and world art history.
- **Media and technology**
Using technology to create, perform and conduct research in the arts and advocate for art education. Use technology as a tool to access visual and digital media and verbal information. Encourage and promote the development of art practices through digital media.
- **Flexibility and adaptability**
Create multiple divergent thinking, sketches,

ideas and integrating the arts and making connections among the arts and other disciplines.

– **Initiative and self direction**

Relating art activities to community needs, engaging in art activities. Participating in the community's cultural and artistic life. Relates art activities to community needs, knowing various careers for art in the community and understanding the productive role of hand crafts, art workshops and exhibitions in society.

– **Global awareness**

Understanding the relation between national and international history of art and popular art.

– **Civic Art Education**

Recognize the role of Arts Education in preparing audiences and different sectors of the public to appreciate artistic manifestations.

– **Leadership and responsibility**

Choose art work to produce portfolios of original art work; participate in solo or group exhibitions.

– **Productivity and Accountability**

Using personal commitment and vision when reflecting upon and evaluating art. Demonstrate mastery of complex art techniques and skills. Pays great attention to details.

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Curriculum for Visual Art Education as a Core Subject in grades 1-12 in Egypt

- History and Culture
- International art heritage and tradition
- Contemporary art styles and time periods
- Egyptian art heritage and traditions
- Crafts and folk traditions
- Art museums and galleries
- Cultural, personal and practical functions of art
- Aesthetics and Art Valuing
- Principles and Elements of art
- Expressive Techniques
- Visual and aesthetic forms in nature and art
- Creative Expression and Art Production
- Creating and developing ideas
- Reflecting and revising ideas in subjects
- Applying design concepts in art work
- Expressive use of media tools and technology
- Art Criticism and Communicating Meaning or Purpose
- Basics of art criticism
- Criteria of informed judgment in art
- Basic tools for discussing art
- Summative evaluation and meta-analysis
- Communicating social and personal values
- Connecting Art with other Knowledge Fields
- Integrating visual art with other art forms
- Integrating visual art with other disciplines
- Art Activities and Community Needs
- Role of art in society
- Small partnership projects and craft development
- Directing artistic workshops and museum education projects
- Careers in art and design
- Art in other jobs and careers