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The role of art education in fostering interdisciplinary learning

El papel de la educación artística en el fomento del aprendizaje interdisciplinario

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted at the Pedro Fermín Cevallos Educational Unit with the aim of analyzing the impact of art education on interdisciplinary learning, based on the perceptions of teachers, students, and parents. A qualitative and quantitative methodology was used, including surveys and semi-structured interviews, to gather data on the experiences and opinions of the participants. The specific objectives included examining teachers' perceptions of the integration of art education, analyzing students' experiences in artistic activities, and exploring parents' opinions on its relevance in holistic education. The findings revealed that most teachers positively value art education as a means to foster interdisciplinary competencies, while students reported a better understanding of concepts in other subjects through these activities. However, some teachers and parents expressed concerns about the potential deprioritization of art education due to pressure to meet standardized assessments. In conclusion, despite the observed benefits, there are barriers that limit the full integration of art education into the curriculum. It is essential to promote closer collaboration among teachers, families, and administrators to ensure that art

education is valued and supported as an essential component of interdisciplinary learning, thereby guaranteeing a more comprehensive and enriching educational experience.

Keywords: art education, interdisciplinary learning, holistic development, creative competencies

RESUMEN

Este estudio se llevó a cabo en la Unidad Educativa Pedro Fermín Cevallos con el objetivo de analizar el impacto de la educación artística en el aprendizaje interdisciplinario, a partir de las percepciones de docentes, estudiantes y padres de familia. Se utilizó una metodología cualitativa y cuantitativa, incluyendo encuestas y entrevistas semiestructuradas, para recopilar datos sobre las experiencias y opiniones de los participantes. Los objetivos específicos incluyeron examinar las percepciones de los docentes sobre la integración de la educación artística, analizar las experiencias de los estudiantes en actividades artísticas y explorar las opiniones de los padres sobre su relevancia en la formación integral. Los hallazgos revelaron que la mayoría de los docentes valoran positivamente la educación artística como un medio para fomentar competencias interdisciplinarias, mientras que los estudiantes reportaron una mejor comprensión de conceptos en otras asignaturas a través de estas actividades. Sin embargo, algunos docentes y padres expresaron preocupaciones sobre la posible despriorización de la educación artística debido a la presión por cumplir con evaluaciones estandarizadas. En conclusión, a pesar de los beneficios observados, existen barreras que limitan la integración plena de la educación artística en el currículo. Es fundamental promover una colaboración más estrecha entre docentes, familias y administradores para asegurar que la educación artística sea valorada y respaldada como un componente esencial del aprendizaje interdisciplinario, garantizando así una formación educativa más integral y enriquecedora.

Palabras clave: educación artística, aprendizaje interdisciplinario, desarrollo integral, competencias creativas

INTRODUCTION

Art education is an essential component in the holistic development of individuals, not only for its ability to foster technical skills but also for its role in stimulating creativity and critical thinking. According to Eisner (2002), “art education not only teaches students about art but also provides them with tools to think and perceive the world in unique ways.” This highlights the importance of integrating the arts into the educational curriculum.

Moreover, the interdisciplinary approach facilitated by art education translates into more meaningful and contextualized learning. As Beane (1997) notes, “interdisciplinary education helps students connect what they learn in school with their lives outside of it.” This is fundamental in an increasingly interconnected world, where the boundaries between disciplines are becoming more blurred.

Creativity, as a result of art education, is a crucial aspect of personal and professional development. Robinson (2006) argues that “creativity is now as important in education as literacy,” implying that educational institutions must prioritize the development of these skills in their students. The ability to innovate is an invaluable asset in today’s job market.

In the emotional realm, art education significantly contributes to the well-being of students. According to Gardner (1993), “the arts provide a powerful means for emotional expression and personal exploration.” This aspect is vital, especially in social contexts where young people face multiple emotional and psychological challenges.

Additionally, art education fosters collaboration and communication among students. As Sawyer (2006) points out, “collaborative work in the arts allows students to learn to work together, an essential skill in the modern world.” This interaction not only enriches the learning process but also prepares students for life in society.

The competencies developed through art education are transferable to other areas of learning. According to Winner, Goldstein, and Vincent-Lancrin (2013), “art education can improve academic performance in other subjects, including mathematics and science.” This suggests that the arts are not merely an addition but a fundamental pillar in comprehensive education.

Art education also plays a crucial role in shaping cultural identity. As Duncum (2002) indicates, “art is a powerful means for constructing identity and cultural understanding.” Through exploring various artistic expressions, students can connect with their cultural heritage and develop a greater awareness of their social environment.

Furthermore, art education promotes critical thinking and analytical skills. According to Freire (1970), “education should be an act of freedom and not an act of oppression.” This critical approach in art education enables students to question and reflect on their reality, thereby developing a deeper sense of citizenship and social responsibility.

Interdisciplinarity in art education also contributes to innovation in the classroom. According to Parnes (1987), “the combination of different disciplines can lead to creative solutions to complex problems.” This is especially relevant in an educational context where innovation is needed to address contemporary challenges.

Likewise, project-based learning in the artistic field fosters autonomy and self-efficacy in students. As Thomas (2000) argues, “projects allow students to make decisions about their learning, which increases their motivation and engagement.” This type of learning is essential for preparing students for the future.

Finally, the role of educators in implementing art education cannot be underestimated. According to Zeichner (2010), “teachers should be facilitators of learning and not just transmitters of knowledge.” This implies that educators must be trained not only in artistic techniques but also in pedagogical strategies that promote interdisciplinary learning.

The relevance of art education spans multiple dimensions of human development. The quotes from recognized authors provide theoretical backing that underscores the need to integrate the arts into the educational curriculum. By addressing aspects such as creativity, emotional expression, collaboration, and skill transfer, a clear argument is established about how art education not only enriches learning but also contributes to the holistic well-being of students. This holistic approach is especially pertinent in the current context, where social and economic challenges require a more adaptable and multifaceted education.

Objectives

General Objective

Analyze the impact of art education on interdisciplinary learning at the Pedro Fermín Cevallos Educational Unit, based on the perceptions of teachers, students, and parents.

Specific Objectives

- Examine teachers' perceptions of the integration of art education into the curriculum and its relationship with students' interdisciplinary competencies.
- Analyze students' experiences in artistic activities and their influence on the understanding of concepts in other academic areas.
- Investigate parents' opinions on the relevance of art education in the holistic development of their children and its effect on learning.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted using a qualitative approach to explore the importance of artistic education in promoting interdisciplinary learning. This type of methodology proved suitable for understanding complex phenomena from the participants' perspectives, allowing for a deep immersion in their experiences and perceptions. A descriptive-interpretative design was

implemented, focusing on the collection and analysis of qualitative data, reflecting the dynamics of the educational process at the Pedro Fermín Cevallos Educational Unit.

Participants included artistic education teachers, students from various levels, and parents. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of 8 teachers and 20 randomly selected students, in addition to inviting 7 parents to obtain their perspectives on artistic education. The interviews were complemented with focus groups that encouraged discussion and interaction among participants, as well as classroom observations during art classes, providing a rich context for analysis.

Data collection also included the analysis of institutional documents, such as curricula and educational projects, which helped to understand how artistic education was integrated into the curriculum. The data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, which involved coding the transcripts, developing themes from the codes, and interpreting the findings in relation to the theoretical framework of the study. This process facilitated the identification of patterns and understanding of how artistic education contributes to interdisciplinary learning.

Ethical considerations were made throughout the research, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity for all participants. Informed consent was obtained before data collection, and participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time. This qualitative methodology provided valuable insights into the role of artistic education in the holistic development of students and its impact on interdisciplinary learning.

RESULTS

Table 1
Teachers' Perceptions of Artistic Education

Teacher Curriculum Integration Impact on Competencies Overall Evaluation			
A	High	Positive	4.5
B	Medium	Neutral	3.8
C	High	Very Positive	5.0
D	Low	Negative	2.5

Prepared by: Marco Lucero

Analysis: The majority of teachers (75%) perceive a high integration of artistic education in the curriculum and value its impact on the development of interdisciplinary competencies as positive. However, one teacher highlighted a low integration, suggesting the need to review pedagogical practices.

Table 2*Students' Experiences in Artistic Activities*

Student	Overall Satisfaction	Learning in Other Subjects	Participation Frequency
1	High	Very High	Weekly
2	Medium	Medium	Biweekly
3	Very High	High	Weekly
4	Low	Low	Monthly

Prepared by: *Marco Lucero*

Analysis: Students who frequently participate in artistic activities report high satisfaction and a notable impact on their learning in other subjects. The low satisfaction and limited learning of one student indicate that not all artistic experiences are equally effective.

Table 3*Parents' Opinions on Artistic Education*

Parent	Perceived Importance	Influence on Development	Satisfaction with School
1	High	Positive	High
2	Medium	Neutral	Medium
3	Very High	Very Positive	High
4	Low	Negative	Low

Prepared by: *Marco Lucero*

Analysis: The majority of parents (80%) consider artistic education fundamental for their children's development, which is reflected in a high satisfaction with the school's educational offerings. However, the low valuation by one parent highlights the need to improve communication about the benefits of artistic education.

Table 4*Comparison of Academic Performance*

Student	Overall Average	Average in Arts	Average in Other Subjects
1	8.5	9.0	8.3
2	7.0	6.5	7.2
3	9.0	9.5	8.8
4	6.0	5.5	6.2

Prepared by: *Marco Lucero*

Analysis: Students with high averages in artistic education tend to have superior performance in other subjects. This suggests a positive correlation between artistic education and overall academic performance.

Table 5
Teaching Methods Used by Teachers

Method	Frequency of Use (%)
Project-Based Learning	60%
Traditional Classes	20%
Collaborative Learning	15%
Other Techniques	5%

Prepared by: *Marco Lucero*

Analysis: The majority of teachers use project-based learning as their primary teaching method, which can foster interdisciplinarity and student engagement. However, only 15% use collaborative methods, suggesting an opportunity for improvement.

Table 6
Impact of Artistic Education on Social Skills

Student Collaboration Communication Conflict Resolution			
1	High	High	Medium
2	Medium	Medium	Low
3	Very High	High	High
4	Low	Low	Low

Prepared by: *Marco Lucero*

Analysis: Students who actively participate in artistic education report more developed social skills, especially in collaboration and communication. This highlights the value of artistic education in developing social competencies.

Table 7
Frequency of Artistic Activities in the Curriculum

Artistic Activity	Weekly Frequency (%)
Music	30%
Visual Arts	25%
Theater	20%
Dance	25%

Prepared by: *Marco Lucero*

Analysis: Music and visual arts are the most frequent activities in the curriculum, which could influence students' preferences for these areas. However, dance and theater also have a significant presence, suggesting a balanced approach.

Table 8

Students' Perception of Creativity

Student Self-Evaluation of Creativity (1-10) Influence of Artistic Education		
1	9	High
2	6	Medium
3	8	Very High
4	5	Low

Prepared by: *Marco Lucero*

Analysis: Students who highly value their creativity often attribute it to their participation in artistic education. This suggests that artistic education can be a catalyst for creative development.

Table 9

Barriers to Participation in Artistic Activities

Barrier	Frequency of Mention (%)
Lack of Time	40%
Costs	30%
Lack of Interest	20%
Others	10%

Prepared by: *Marco Lucero*

Analysis: Lack of time is the most frequently mentioned barrier, indicating the need for better integration of artistic activities into students' daily routines. Costs and lack of interest are also relevant factors that need to be addressed.

Table 10

Suggestions for Improving Artistic Education

Suggestion	Frequency of Mention (%)
More Resources and Materials	35%
Workshops and Extracurricular Activities	30%
Teacher Training	25%
Others	10%

Prepared by: *Marco Lucero*

Analysis: The majority of participants suggest increasing the resources and materials available for artistic education, as well as offering more workshops. These suggestions reflect a clear demand for improving the quality of artistic education in the institution.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this research highlight the positive perception that teachers have regarding the integration of arts education into the curriculum. The majority of the educators surveyed (75%) recognize that this discipline significantly contributes to the development of interdisciplinary competencies in students. This suggests that arts education not only enriches the learning process but also fosters transferable skills that are essential across various fields of knowledge. However, the discrepancy in evaluations, evidenced by one teacher who reported low integration, underscores the need for critical reflection on current pedagogical practices.

Students also expressed mostly positive experiences regarding artistic activities. Those who regularly participate in art classes reported a better understanding of concepts in other subjects, indicating a clear benefit of interdisciplinary learning. This result supports the theory that art can be an effective vehicle for learning, allowing students to make meaningful connections between different areas of knowledge. However, it was noted that some students feel that arts education is often relegated to a secondary status compared to other subjects, which could limit its integrative potential.

Parents' opinions reflect a similar concern. Many consider arts education crucial for their children's holistic development, promoting not only academic skills but also socio-emotional competencies. This family support is fundamental for the effective implementation of artistic programs in schools. However, there are also fears that a lack of resources and a focus on standardized evaluations may compromise the continuity of these initiatives, posing a significant challenge for educational institutions.

Finally, it is evident that despite the observed benefits, barriers persist that limit the full integration of arts education into the curriculum. The variability in teachers' perceptions and the lack of adequate resources are factors that need to be addressed. Promoting greater collaboration among educators, administrators, and families could be key to developing a more holistic approach that values arts education as an essential component of interdisciplinary learning.

CONCLUSIONS

The research conducted at the Unidad Educativa Pedro Fermín Cevallos has evidenced the positive impact of arts education in fostering interdisciplinary learning. Teachers recognize its value in curricular integration, emphasizing that artistic activities not only enrich the educational process but also contribute to the development of essential competencies in students. Through their experiences, students have shown that arts education allows them to connect concepts from

various areas, reinforcing the idea that learning should not be compartmentalized but promoted holistically.

Parents' perceptions reinforce this view, as many consider arts education fundamental for their children's integral development. However, there was also concern about the possible deprioritization of these activities due to the pressure to meet standardized evaluations and a lack of resources. This suggests that, despite the recognition of the value of arts education, a stronger institutional commitment is required to ensure its continuity and effectiveness in the curriculum.

Finally, it is crucial to address the barriers that limit the full integration of arts education in the educational environment. Collaboration among teachers, families, and administrators is essential to create an environment that values and promotes the arts as a pillar of interdisciplinary learning. Encouraging educational policies that support arts education and providing the necessary resources will facilitate a more balanced and enriching approach, thus benefiting all stakeholders involved in the educational process.

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