

**A CRITICAL REVIEW OF STATUS AND FUNCTIONS OF ART
EDUCATION IN MODERN EDUCATION AND SOLUTIONAL
PROPOPALS**

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Abstract :

In this article, it is stressed that modern art education should be approached by determining planned, programmed, logical, and completely scientific methods.

The functions and the status of art education is also examined in details in this essay. It is emphasized that education has a significant influence on individual behavioral variations and on society with its all components for forming national agreement, mutual support, sympathy, cooperation and unity. Art education's responsibility of creating modern, dynamic, complete, rationalistic and new ideas in addition to its contemporary existence as an education of pleasure and impression is also stressed.

Key words: Art, Modern Education, Individual, Society, Changes, Arrangement.

Preface:

It is crucial to set the ideas on Art education on a clear basis before explaining contemporary art education. Though Art education is considered as a recent concept in our country, it is a widely known fact that this universal field has experienced two hundred years' process.

Art education, to some critics, has its roots in Plato's era and on the other hand it can be established to the beginning of the 20th century to some others.

Its acceptance as a practicable field by scientific circles rather than a theoretical one coincides with 1890's in Germany. It was argued, considered and debated in Educational Congresses in accordance with its different aspects first in Dresden in 1901, then in Weimar in 1903, and in Hamburg in 1905. However, it was not until 1928's that it was commonly agreed on that artistic creativity of children should also be appreciated in schools in addition to rational and objective learning; that artistry in all kinds of activities such as music, drawing, physical works, and even literature should be valued¹.

The appearance of art in Western Schools was in mid 1800's, during 19th century when industrial revolution was in power. The requirements of industrial

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¹ İ. San, *Sanatsal Yaratma, Çocukta Yaratıcılık*, T. İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, İstanbul 1985, p. 2.

designs had made art a current issue, and thus art began to be taught as an educational subject. Fine arts projects got importance. So, innovation in the design of industrial products was of priority. The aim was to find a good market. In this context, easy and smooth drawings of the low-priced goods were required. Therefore, 19th century art education had a commercial aim rather than an aesthetic quality².

Improvement in industry also brought competition in trade and that's how an understanding of better education targeting more qualified and aesthetic goods were formed.

It's supposed that art education and training has the same methods as in primal education in general; from the simplest to the most complicated, from the easiest to the most difficult topics.

So, we can accept that art is not a matter of skill, but of learning and education.

Applying reasonable motivations and effective schemes, it is a fact that every child can be educated in art³.

Towards the end of 19th century, art education headed to the aim of developing individual aesthetic expression instead of industrial service. Its different formation was not overlooked as its research area included many objects. Natural objects such as leaves, stones, flowers etc. are studied, examined and in this way, aesthetic interest also advances besides experimental– vital one. Seeing without drawing becomes improbable. The main purpose is to form rules for children and then to provide them with new experiences.

Child is not a scale model of adults, but a completely different being in both physical and psychological qualities⁴.

Early 20th century was an era when experience gained importance and the research on maturing of children was done completely. Abundant hypothesis were put forward on this subject and in general, they propose that education should not be based on teachers and books, and that pupils should find answers to the questions by themselves through a detailed research. Man is an organism living reciprocally with environment. His habitat does not always behave him friendly or meet his needs.

A living organism has to keep nature under control in order to adapt to it. In this context; the basic need for human being is to make progress in a healthy, harmonious and balanced relation with nature⁵. Development of Imagination and creativity in children is the main concern of art education. Art is a means which is

² O. T. Kırısöğlü, *Sanatta Eğitim, Görmek, Anlamak, Yaratmak*, Demircioğlu yay., Ankara 1991, p. 19.

³ İ. San, *Sanat Eğitiminin Kuramları*, Tan Publications, Ankara 1983.

⁴ O. T. Kırısöğlü, *Sanatta Eğitim, Görmek, Anlamak, Yaratmak*, Demircioğlu yay., Ankara 1991.

⁵ J. Dewey, *Experience and Education*, The Macmillan Co., New York 1938.

used for teaching abstract concepts, improving creativity and expressing one's undefined inner world. Talent can not be taught; it blooms within a period of time just like a flower does. Teacher is not an instructor, but only a guide.

Art helps child's mental condition, if applied appropriate. It decreases mental tension by way of expressing things which cannot be defined by words⁶.

Surrealists and Expressionists' works prove to be artistic styles in view of their formal similarity with child drawings.

Children can form their own expression styles. These are as meaningful as adult styles. Naturally, Art develops together with physical maturing.

During education, happiness and experience of creativity is significant for children. What is drawn by a child must be appreciated as a work of art. Art cannot develop without an education in arts⁷.

1. Basic Characteristics of Modern Education

It is a common fact that "Education" has the effective power of shaping, changing and developing individuals and societies.

"Education is a process of forming deliberate and specific changes in an individual's behaviours by making use of his/her experiences" is the most appropriate definition for education.

Individual behavioural changes gained by means of education have an influence on society and social changes on individuals. Through the agency of Education, an Individual's interaction and relation with his natural, social and cultural milieu are expected to be more orderly, healthy, effective and productive.

In modern education, the aim is to obtain the most appropriate and the highest level of individual's physical, emotional, cognitive and kinesthetic capacities.

Modern education deals with three main motives such as: science, technique and art. Because, all of these inborn attributes have the functions of supporting, comforting, completing, varying, and widening personality. Nevertheless, it's impossible for them to meet the needs of describing, interpreting, analyzing, perceiving or evaluating all aspects of individual's character. Because of each one of them has a limited function.

It must be kept in mind that art education and the general education undoubtedly have very vital and important responsibilities in meeting the needs of the modern age in accordance with individual and social expectations.

⁶ W. D. Ecker, *The Artistic Process as Qualitative Problem Solving: Readings in Art Education*.

⁷ M. Steveni, *Art and Education*, B. T. Batsford Ltd., London 1968.

2. Modern Art Education and Functions of Art

Art education is one of the three main components of modern education. Art education is the process of forming deliberate and specific aesthetic changes in an individual's behaviours by making use of his/her experiences.

This kind of definitions reveals us that art education in general is; "the process of forming behaviours aesthetically".

Activities of art education intend creating a more modern, productive, orderly, effective, and a much healthier relationship and communication especially among individuals and societies.

In a plain and intense definition, art is; " an aesthetical integrity used for functional expression of experiences, circumstances, events and personal facts, which include specific emotions, thoughts, impressions, and conceptions, in view of beforehand determined aesthetics criterion and through a certain methods, objectives and requisites."

The role of art in modern life is that people can seek and find beauty and originality by means of art and can meet their needs while they make use of art's various functions in daily modern life as well⁸.

The functions under consideration are basic principles of aesthetics. In addition to the fact that they have individual or social structures, they may also have sociological, economical, cultural or educational qualities.

Art observes certain behavioural changes while it shapes individual's aesthetic creativity, inspiration, impression and reaction for the purpose of make him a happy, sensible, successful, satisfied, healthy and sensitive person for all along his life. This is art's function on individuals.

On the other hand, art has an undeniable crucial role in fulfilling agreement, intimacy, assistance, mutual support, coalescence and unity among individuals and social strata.

Art expands and transfers cultural values among generations as well as it enlarges and strengthens cultural relations. So, we can infer from this explanation the cultural role of art.

Moreover art, with regard to its economical function, has the responsibility of realizing social concepts in an effective, regular and fruitful way⁹.

In this point of view, the place and the effects of art's cultural, social, individual, and economical functions in human life made itself both an effective

⁸ S. Avcı, "2-4 Yaş Arası Çocuğun Sanat Eğitimi", Gazi Üniversitesi, Kırşehir Eğitim Fak. Sınıf Öğrt., unpublished course notes, Kırşehir 1994, p. 12.

⁹ S. Avcı, "2-4 Yaş Arası Çocuğun Sanat Eğitimi", Gazi Üniversitesi, Kırşehir Eğitim Fak. Sınıf Öğrt., unpublished course notes, Kırşehir 1994.

means of education and a different field of research. Actually, the reflections of “Education Through Art” and “Education for Art” spring from this basic fact, and form characteristics.

What we understand of Art Education educations do, fundamentally it keeps its unity although it has many branches are that; like scholarly and technical

3. Associations of Art and Education

Today, art is considered as not only forming aesthetics in shape or an education of pleasure, but also a process of creative mental activities which include producing modern, dynamic, genuine and new ideas.

The aim is; educating people who are able to develop uninfluenced thoughts independently, to use their abilities in full capacity, to prepare themselves both for today and for the future, to shape society besides their own characters, who feel frank to their neighbourhood and to other people, respect both to society and to themselves, have responsibilities for the society, and who are productive, exuberant but moderate in feelings, reasonable and sensitive¹⁰.

Art education is necessary for individuals, and has an important place in their lives. In fact, Art education is individual. It is required for educating individual creative potential, organizing aesthetic observations and comprehensions, and for arranging existence of aesthetics.

Abilities of animating and putting ideas down contribute to educational careers of people who have artistic or scholarly occupations¹¹.

Being an inevitable aspect of our individual and social lives, art is the most humanistic action constituted of sublime values.

Education is the ancient and long-lasting function of art. A work of art which is formed of various factors in a social structure will be able to contribute to improve and to change its society with time as long as it is accepted and appropriated in public.

The approach of putting man’s inner and outer sources to use through art which is a combination of abstract and concrete emphasizes the necessity of art. That is why it’s very crucial that both tutors and learners should comprehend and appreciate the importance of art, and make society accept it¹².

We come up against problems arousing from individual and social approaches and applications on each grade of education at equal rank in almost all

¹⁰ İ. San, “Çağdas Sanat Eğitimi”, *Öğretmen Dünyası Dergisi*, Ankara 1984, pp. 49, 6-9.

¹¹ W. Whitford, *An Introduction to Art Education*, New York 1929.

¹² M. İnce, “Sanatta Eğitim Sorunu ve Sanat-Eğitim İlişkisi”, *Anadolu Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, (10), Eskişehir 2000, p. 2, Güz, p. 145.

of the countries. However, there may be differences of priority and importance along these problems.

Undoubtedly, it is not a proper solution to assume that all these problems originate from a single source. In this respect, the reasons of these problems should be sought in economical, educational, environmental, social, political and even in governmental systems.

The before mentioned problems can be illustrated as it follows; “underdeveloped structure of a country, differences of opinions, poor economical position, social and structural problems, problems aroused from the difference of perception and capacity between tutors and learners, systemization of education programmes, inappropriate establishment of theoretical and practical information obtained during art education, interferences of political powers in education system.”

Solution and Conclusion:

Solutions to the problems mentioned under titles above can be obtained by means of rational and total investigations through optimistic and modern approaches, and only in this way contemporary art education will be comprehended soundly.

My intention is to emphasize the fact that we can create answers for the problems under consideration only by way of determining logical objects, making good use of everything representing modern technological and scientific developments, capturing the unifying effect of international communication network and by way of putting suitable methods, techniques and materials into practice.

Art education will head towards an answer that approaches just as long as all social strata support these actions take place resolutely and without any concession, intimidation, or deviation of aims.