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The Fine Arts Learning of Free Expression As Children's Creativity Space: A Case Study At MI Alam Gaharu Baleendah School Bandung

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Abstract

Making children's experiences during the implementation of learning as the center of the best approach in guarding learning activities is a form of Experiential learning method application, namely by making the students get the hands-on experience and carry out all teaching and learning activities practically in the field. Knowledge results from a combination of understanding and transforming experience (Kolb, 1984). Experiential learning focuses on the learning process of each individual. It is a student-centered approach that begins with the premise that people learn best from their experience. As revealed by Garha (1980: 60), the method of artistic expression is a method that gives children the freedom to be able to express their feelings without being limited by conventional rules or norms of creativity in making drawings, there is no domination of teachers in its practice, and teachers/facilitator only directs the students. The elementary school period is a golden age for developing all students' abilities, one of which is creative expression. This research focused on students' creativity in making artwork in the form of performance tests, which are seen from the idea of creating (cognitive aspects), performance (psychomotor aspects), and work results (product aspects). This research was qualitative. In order to understand the various aspects and objectives of learning the Artistic Expression, the researchers used data collection techniques in the form of interviews, observations, and document studies.

Keywords: Experiential Learning, Artistic Expression, Creativity, School of Nature

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INTRODUCTION

Experiential learning is a student-centered approach that begins with the premise that people learn best from experience. In addition, for a learning experience to be truly effective, it must use the entire learning wheel, from setting goals, conducting observations and experiments, re-examining, and planning actions. If that process has been passed, it allows the students to learn new skills, attitudes, or even new ways of thinking.

Experiential learning defines learning as the process of how knowledge is created through changing the form of experience. Knowledge results from a combination of understanding and transforming experience (Kolb, 1984). It is a learning process in which a process of change that uses experience as a medium of learning. It is a learning conducted through reflection and a process of making meaning from the hands-on experience. It focuses on the learning process of each individual. It is a student-centered approach that begins with the premise that people learn best from their experience.

At MI Alam Gaharu Baleendah School Bandung, they make the children's experience in the school learning implementation as the center of the best approach in learning activities for guarding the children. They can get hands-on experience by doing all teaching and learning activities directly in the field.

The teachers/facilitators during the process of teaching art (drawing) at MI Alam Gaharu School becomes a supporting medium, which provide a stimulus to the students so that students can develop according to their respective strengths.

The need for children's expression to be channeled in educational activities has been widely voiced by researchers and art educators at the end of the 19th century as a result of scientific findings and the development of the art world.

The method of free expression is often misunderstood as "free drawing" or "draw as you please". The teacher only instructs the

students to carry out activities without direction and guidance to their students. As a result, the elements of expression that are the demands of this method are neglected, so that the results of students' drawings often deviate from the demands of drawing illustrations. Therefore, the teachers need to pay attention to some of the differences between the Free Expression Method and free drawing as follows: (1) the free expression method emphasizes the freedom of children to choose the theme or media used. As stated by Garha (1980: 60) that the method of free expression is a method that gives children the freedom to be able to express their feelings without being limited by conventional creative rules or norms in making drawing, (2) the assumptions underlying this method is a creative expression that must come from within the students themselves, because free expression basically cannot be taught by anyone, as stated by Muharam and Sundariyati (1993: 57) that the method of free expression emphasizes the spontaneity of children in creating their work, which is born and sourced from the students themselves, (3) there is no teacher domination in its implementation, all activities are only centered on the children's ideas in the form of personal expression (Muharam and Sundariyati 1993: 57), (4) the learning using the free expression method can be conducted in and outside the classroom. If the learning is carried out outside the classroom, the teacher should continue to supervise the students so that they remain orderly even outside the classroom.

While "free drawing" or "drawing at will" are as following, namely (1) the teacher gives the students full freedom to draw what they want without choosing a theme, (2) the teacher only asks the students to draw freely in its application then the drawings are collected and assessed, in addition the teacher occasionally leaves the class when students start drawing, (3) free drawing learning is usually only carried out in the classroom, (4) the learning is dominated by the teacher as a "knowledge transferer", while the students are more passive as "recipients of knowledge", (5)

the students tend to draw what they usually draw, it becomes monotony in drawing.

The elementary school period is a golden age for the development of all students' abilities, one of which is the creative expression. The creativity level of elementary school students can develop very rapidly. Generating creative ideas needs to be trained through the sensitivity, curiosity, and courage to innovate. Schools and teachers need to adopt and apply an approach that supports the development of the students' creativity. Accompanied by the increase in students' creativity, it is hoped that they will be able to balance their intellectual, sensibility, rationality, irrationality, and reasoning thoughts, as well as their emotional sensitivity. To achieve this goal, various ways can be implemented, including developing sensitivity and creativity, as well as providing facilities for the students so they can express themselves by utilizing what is available in the surrounding environment, one of which is through the skill learning. Therefore, this research focuses on the students' creativity in creating their works in the form of performance tests, which are seen from the idea of creating (cognitive aspects), performance (psychomotor aspects), and work results (product aspects).

AECT (Association of Education and Communication Technology) (1977) defined learning resources as various or all sources in the form of data, people and certain forms used by the students in learning either separately or in combination to make it easier for them to achieve the learning goals. One of the six learning resources according to AECT are namely the source of the physical environment (natural-physical) and non-physical (socio-economic-cultural). However, there is information in the form of messages, materials, people, tools, and techniques that support art learning in that environment.

The expression of a children's drawings are influenced by their background environment, or in other words the environmental background (which has a certain style/character) can also give a certain style/characteristic to the drawing. Children

who grow and develop in a coastal environment with limited media and parental attention are more inhibited in their creativity. This is certainly different when they are compared to the children who grow and develop in a complete environment (facilities and attention).

METHODS

The approach used in this research was Fine Arts Learning of Free Expression as a space for children's creativity, for 5th grade students of MI Alam Gaharu Baleendah School in Bandung with a qualitative model. According to Bogdan and Taylor (Moleong, 2002:3), qualitative is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior. Kirk and Miller (Sumaryanto, 2007:75) defined qualitative research as a particular tradition in social research that fundamentally depends on observing humans in their own area and relating to these people in their language and terminology. Art activities (drawing) are activities that are integrated with the learning carried out in teaching and learning activities at MI Alam Gaharu School, so that this activity can be used as a space for students' creativity. Researchers observed the learning process that took place and analyzed the works of 5th grade students of MI Alam Gaharu Baleendah School Bandung.

The data were divided into two, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data is data taken directly by researchers, namely the results of interviews and documentation. Then secondary data is supporting data found in the field in the form of books and writings on Experiential Learning Education, Free expression learning, artistic creativity, and children's art. The source persons or informants came from the Chairperson of the Alam Gaharu School Foundation, teachers/facilitators, Principal, students, and staff of MI Alam Gaharu School who helped document videos and photos containing the teaching process at the School. Reference data

were writings, books, papers and articles about Fine Arts Learning of Free Expression and Creativity.

Data collection technique

The collection techniques in this study were observation and interviews. Observations are divided into two, namely: free observation (researchers do not participate) and involved observation (Ratna, 2010:219). Researchers did both ways by observing the teaching process. Observations were made during the teaching process both inside and outside the classroom. In this study, the observation technique aims to understand the role of the teacher in providing stimulus and opportunities for the students to be able to produce their works of art (drawings) with free expression. The researchers were also observing the students' responses in carrying out/completing tasks that had been given by the teacher/facilitator.

The data collection techniques with interviews were carried out in order to find the problems that must be studied, and also if the researchers want to know information further and deeper about respondents who were in a small number (Sugiyono, 2015: 194). This study also used the interviews to strengthen the data that have been obtained from observation. Specifically, the interviews conducted in the research aim to obtain accurate data from informants or source persons. The types of interviews that have been used in this research are structured interviews and unstructured interviews; and they can be conducted face to face or by telephone (Sugiyono, 2015: 194). The structured interviews were conducted by researchers to interview teachers/facilitators. They were used as a data collection technique if the researchers have been sure about the information they obtained. Therefore, the researchers prepared a research instrument in the form of similar written questions for the teacher/facilitator.

The unstructured interviews were free interviews conducted by researchers without using any interview guidelines that have been arranged systematically and completely in data

collection (Sugiyono, 2015: 197). They were conducted with the Alam Gaharu School Foundation, principal, staff, and extracurricular teachers. The interview technique was used as a tool in understanding more about Fine Arts Learning of Free Expression as children's creativity space that was integrated with teaching and learning activities carried out at Alam Gaharu School.

The characteristics of the document are that they show the past, with the main function as a record or evidence of certain events, activities, and events (Sugiyono, 2015: 235). The document technique was seen as very helpful in working or analyzing the data obtained from the results of field work both from observation and the interview process.

These documents came from various books that were relevant to the topic of research, such as magazines, newspapers, tabloids, photos and videos that were useful as additional information in order to sharpen the validity of the data. Through the audiovisual documentation, it is hoped that it can be an important reference for this research. In 2011, it was the first time that Alam Gaharu School was opened with the initial level of education was Raudhatul Atfal (RA). In 2015, it opened an education level for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI). During the launching of RA, the activity was published in *Pikiran Rakyat* newspaper in February 2011. This made an advantage for the researchers to collect data on the history of Alam Gaharu Baleendah School Bandung. The literature review was useful to complete the reference on Fine Arts Learning of Free Expression as a creativity space for 5th grade students of MI Alam Gaharu Baleendah school Bandung.

Data analysis technique

Interactive data analysis techniques (Miles and Huberman) were used to process the data collected during the data collection process on Experiential Learning, Free Expression of fine arts learning. The data collected in various ways must be processed before it is ready for use through recording, typing, or editing

(Sumaryanto, 2007: 106). The analysis were divided into 3 parts, namely: (1) Data Reduction, (2) Data Presentation, (3) Verification or Drawing Conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Student Activities Work

Art and Cultural Education (SBK) is given at schools because of its uniqueness, meaning, and usefulness to the developmental needs of students, which lies in providing aesthetic experiences in the form of activities of expression/creation and appreciation through the approaches: namely "learning with art," "learning through art" and "learning about art." This role cannot be given by other subjects (KTSP, 2006:612). Broadly speaking, Arts and Cultural Education (SBK) can foster an attitude of creativity, productive appreciation, and independence, as well as develop the students' thinking skills (Herawati and Iriaji, 1997:viii)

The children in elementary school level (7-13 years) have the competence to combine craft work with self-expression skills. In addition, the ability to criticize is also owned by them in line with their intellectual development. In particular, the characteristics of children aged 11-13 years have the ability to think critically and to be involved in the artistic process. In general, it can be said that children's art works are expressive and dynamic (Camaril, et al. 1999). What they depict reflects their personalities, express what they know and they do not draw according to reality. The love for motion is depicted by striking the sharp colors and moving objects such as animals, people, and vehicles. However, if they are studied, it turns out that there are stages (periodization) in the development of their art world in general.



Figure 1. Students are given the freedom to draw according to the theme given by the teacher.



Figure 2. Students can choose a place to complete the given task



Figure 3. Nature is one of the learning media available at Alam Gaharu school to provide experiences to students



Figure 4. Students present their work in front of the class

Teacher's Activity in Assisting The Students

The difference between the free expression method and the free drawing method should be clear. According to Tarjo (2004: 134), in order to make the free expression method can be achieved optimally, the teacher needs to take the following steps: 1). Offer and set several theme options as a stimulant to the students' creativity. 2). Determine several options of suitable media/materials, such as watercolors, oil pastels, ink tubs, plaque paints and so on. 3). Explain the type of paper and the reason for choosing the paper. 4). Explain the form of the drawing activity, whether in the form of a sketch or painting.

The things that must be considered during the application of free expression method according to Ganda (2011: 16-17) are namely: (1) theme, is the content of expression that will be conveyed by the students when they work. The appropriate theme for elementary students is a theme that comes from their own lives. (2) Media, are the materials and tools that can be obtained by the students to realize the forms of expressions created. (3) Style of expression, is the strokes created by students. The application of Free Expression Method is in accordance with a statement by Garha (1980: 60-72) that the freedom in this method does not only concern the freedom in determining the form or theme of the work created, but also involves the selection of materials or tools and how to use them.

The model of learning about art does not consider the full potential of art in relation to

knowledge and intellectual development. The art learning at MI Alam Gaharu Baleendah School Bandung cannot be separated from other subjects, such as natural sciences, mathematics, social sciences, or languages. It has the potential as a methodology for learning and teaching in general. As a methodology, art involves the students in learning the activities that are meaningful to them and becomes a means of dealing with the complexities of knowledge.

The integrated learning curriculum in all subjects at MI Alam Gaharu Baleendah School Bandung does not make art as an independent subject that requires special time. For example, the teacher would involve the students to make a class display that is made every time the learning theme changes. The goal is that beside as a hands-on activity, it also can provide a deeper understanding of the theme.



Figure 5. Class Display with Globalization Theme

Realizing the difficulty of applying a pure free expression approach in schools, the teacher has developed a "directed" approach to free expression. With this approach, he carries out the learning activities according to a set schedule but with certain tactics so that the students can express themselves according to what is expected. The tactic is in the form of "warming-up" activities to stimulate and provide a motive for expression. The warming-up activities or also known as giving motivation that can be done in various ways, including: (1) telling stories or having dialogues with the students to arouse their attention and stimulate their motives that can be used as the basis for their works. The theme of the story or dialogue

should certainly about the students' daily life. They will be interesting if the teacher shows photos, pictures, or films; (2) giving the students the experience of direct contact with nature consciously, for example by inviting them to pay attention to their surroundings that may have been ignored, such as the details of flowers that grow around them, the animals around the school. To direct the students' attention, the teacher can ask questions such as: "How many red flowers are in this school?", "How can a turkey make such a loud sound?" and etc. (4) demonstrating the process of creating an artwork that will be taught. Giving motivation to the students can be carried out in a short time (less than 5 minutes) but it also can be carried out in 10-15 minutes. Generating motivation in the form of direct contact with nature takes a relatively long time, but this activity can be arranged with other activities (e.g. class outings) so there is no need to take the available time for classroom practice. Before the practice, the teacher only needs to remind the students about their memories of what they have observed to arouse their motivation.

After they are motivated, they are asked to express themselves freely. The role of the teacher during that expression is to accompany the students in order to provide assistance and praise when he is needed. In connection with the assessment of the students' works, the teacher should certainly go back to the philosophy of free expression approach that is "children's expressions are unique and natural, and there is no right or wrong in expressing themselves through their drawing" Ratings given are appreciative, which is to receive and appreciate what is expressed or created by showing the possibility of increasing the work quality they have created.

Jamal Ma'mur Asmani (2011: 82) explained that the role of teachers in the implementation of education in schools are the followings:

- a. Exemplary, who is providing a good example, be it moral, ethical or moral issues wherever they are.
- b. Inspiration, who is able to raise the spirit to move forward by mobilizing all the potential they have in order to reach the achievements for themselves and the community.
- c. Motivator, who provides motivation or encouragement so the task given can achieve the goal.
- d. Dynamisator, it means that the teacher not only raises the students' enthusiasm but he/she also becomes a "locomotive" that really pushes the carriage towards the destination with very high speed, intelligence, and wisdom.
- e. Evaluator, teacher must always evaluate the learning methods used in character education. He/she must also be able to evaluate the behavior displayed and the planned agenda. As a teacher who manages the teaching and learning process, he/she must certainly be able to improve his/her ability to plan, implement, and manage the learning effectively, to assess the learning outcomes objectively, as well as to motivate and guide the students, especially if they have learning difficulties.



Figure 6. Teacher's Activities in Curriculum Arrangement



Figure 7. The teacher accompanies the students in doing the assigned task

The Opportunities of Expression Provided by The Teacher In The Class

What is meant by the quality of learning is the high or low or whether or not the learning process is effective in achieving the learning objectives. While the elements that can affect the quality of learning are teacher competence, class and school characteristics. This means that in learning, a system is needed in which there are learning components that are interrelated among learning materials, methods, and objectives.

Therefore, a teacher who is one of the components in the learning system is required to be creative in carrying out his/her duties as a teacher, so that the learning process will be more effective and directed which will make it easier to achieve the learning objectives. In this case, the student achievement will increase with teacher's creativity, both in managing the learning and in dealing with students.

The learning process carried out by many teachers today tends to achieve the target curriculum material and they are more concerned with memorizing concepts rather than understanding. This can be seen from the learning activities in the classroom which are always dominated by the teacher. In delivering the material, the teacher usually uses the lecture method in which the students just sit, take notes, and listen to what the teacher says and there are few opportunities for students to ask questions. Therefore, the learning atmosphere is not conducive so that the students become passive.

In the teaching and learning process at MI Alam Gaharu Baleendah School Bandung, the teacher is active in monitoring the student learning activities, providing feedback, asking challenging questions, questioning their ideas and they also must be creative in developing various activities, making learning aids or media. Therefore, the learning will be effective so that it can achieve the learning objectives. To make the students able to feel the fun learning, the teacher packs the material to make the students easier to understand, uses learning methods and learning media that are in accordance with the material to attract their attention in participating in teaching and learning activities.



Figure 8. Students are given the opportunity to draw with the school wall media



Figure 9. The result of students' drawing on the school wall



Figure 10. The activity of drawing puppet shapes as teaching materials in class.



Figure 11. The introductory image in the context of World Tree Day by distributing the tree seeds.

The learning system at MI School of Alam Gaharu Beleendah Bandung is not only theoretical learning. The students are taken to the 'nature' to see the subject matter directly that they need to know so that the knowledge gained can be applied. Through the experiential learning, they are trained to think and solve problems using the knowledge they have acquired. The student-centered learning is based on the premise that people learn best from their experience and it makes the students' experience in the implementation of learning at school as the center of the best approach during the learning.

Little-C is a person whose creativity is developed in everyday life, another form of creativity. Little "C" is more towards the creativity in everyday life where someone can produce something new for themselves but not for others. It is recognized as a form of creativity. Mulyasa (2014:103) explained that the development of children's creativity will be

the basis for the development of other personal aspects. The development of early childhood creativity can be done through real work and imagination. The researchers have directed this research to 5th grade elementary students of MI Alam Gaharu School who were still experiencing the stage of Early Realism Period. During this period, the children's work is more like reality, their perspective awareness begins to emerge, their attention to objects has begun to detail, their understanding of color has begun to be realized, their mastery of the concept of space begins to be recognized, their mastery of design elements such as balance and rhythm begins to be recognized, and the differences of general pleasure begin to emerge based on gender.

Creativity at a small level is called as Little-C Creativity. People who are in this category are they whose creativity is developed in everyday life. If it is traced, creativity in this category is actually a continuation of creative experiences that were first applied to the basic category (mini-c). With the right learning system, the progress of the art learning outcomes will eventually produce works that can be enjoyed and even useful for others (Sugiarto, Eko. 2019: 84).

CONCLUSION

The school makes the children's experience during the implementation of learning at MI Alam Gaharu Baleendah School Bandung as the center of the best approach in learning and teaching activities. The students can get hands-on experience by doing all the teaching and learning activities directly in the field.

The teacher/facilitator in the process of teaching art (drawing) at MI Sekolah Alam Gaharu becomes a supporting medium, who provides stimulus to the students so that they can develop according to their respective strengths.

Fine Arts Learning (drawing) Free expression at MI Alam Gaharu School is a learning that integrated with the subjects taught

in teaching and learning activities in the classroom. Students are given the freedom to express and create works by making available media in the form of books, information obtained from the internet, as well as discussions in class and making nature as a learning medium that is practical. They also can see firsthand how the natural conditions, location, shape, and others so that students' creativity is more well-honed.

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