Integrating Arts Education for Learning Result: A Bright but Tough Way

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Abstract

In order to explore and respond to UNESCO Seoul Agenda: Goals for the development of arts education (Buck, 2010) [1] actions, this paper collected the results from Linyi University based on the survey that conducted by School Education Gateway platform. Then, the findings indicate that arts play an essential role in learning results by cultivating learners' ability to understand and express different topics and themes. However, some ignorance also existed in the long term on applying arts education to the well-performed learning result. Arts, as the critical component of Cultural Awareness and Expression Competence ("Key Competences for Lifelong Learning", 2019) [2] (The Eight Key Competences for Lifelong Learning), which indicates the cultural awareness goes first, nerveless, the survey's result implied that certain numbers of the institutions and individuals failed to realize that, even some of them do, the current situation is not capable of achieving that goal. Therefore, it requires not only the organizations but the individuals should also establish awareness toward the arts education in forming the learners with well-performed learning results under the guidance of the UNESCO's SDG4 (Quality Education). ("Goal 4: Quality education—The Global Goals", 2022) [3] Meanwhile, strengthening the arts education's integration with other subjects will enable students to develop more fully in a more relaxed learning environment than ever before.

Subject Areas

Arts Education

Keywords

Arts Education, Cultural Awareness, UNESCO, Integration

1. Introduction

In 2010, the Seoul Agenda: Goals for the Development of Arts Education, the UNESCO's Second World Conference on Arts Education held in Seoul, the Republic of Korea with gathered more than 650 officials and experts in art education from 95 countries. Drawing on the Second UNESCO World Conference on Arts Education, the Seoul Agenda aims to build on the UNESCO Road map for Arts Education, which was the main achievement of the First World Conference held in Lisbon, Portugal, in 2006. The Road map provides an essential rationale and practical outline to guide the promotion of quality development and growth in arts education. A centerpiece objective of the Seoul Conference is to re-evaluate and encourage further implementation of the Road map. The Seoul Agenda will serve as a concrete action plan integrating the elements of the Road map within a structure of three main objectives, each accompanied by a number of practical strategies and tangible action projects. ("Seoul Agenda: Goals for the Development of Arts Education", 2010) [4].

A study has shown that one of the best ways to engage students in learning is to include various forms of art in the learning process. ("Heutagogy in Action: An Action Research Project in Art Education". (2021) [5]. Learning through the arts is both experiential and visceral, which can make it unforgettable and participatory. It is also both creative and interactive, as the art process is one of both exploration and involvement; it includes high-level skills such as working collaboratively, competitive thinking, creativity, resilience in problem solving and self-assessment. In inclusion, using the arts in learning provides students with visible tools for self-expression and encourages them to identify their own personal interests and pursue solutions to problems. ("Poll on arts for learning", 2018) [6].

2. Methodology

This paper adopted the qualitative research methodology with a survey by questionnaire. Trusted results with the convenience sampling are collected in the Linyi University, among respondents with 9 school librarians, 3 education policy makers, 4 researchers, 2 parents, 3 school leaders (head teacher, principal, other management staff, etc.), 2 teachers in early years education, 15 in primary education, 21 in secondary education, 3 in VET education and 5 other educational professional/stakeholder with the total number of 67 (n = 67). The majority of the participants are teachers in primary and secondary education who have been teaching different subjects over the years. The rest of the respondents are related to the other sectors, like the public and policy level's awareness of the art education. The questionnaire has conducted the template of Poll on arts for learning—Results in School Education Gateway (2018) ("Poll on arts for learning", 2022) [6]. The questionnaire consists of 4 parts with the form of multiple choices below.

Questions like the following:

1) What types of arts education is accessible to students at your school or a school you already know? Choose all that apply.

2) In which other subjects do teachers include/use art in the course at your school? Choose all that are applicable.

3) To which degree do the below statements apply to your school or a school you have knowledge of?

a) Which types of art studies are exposed to students (visible arts, music, drama, and dance) frequently as component of the course?

b) Any additional opportunities that the school provide for students to involve with visible or performing arts (like, after-school programs).

c) The frequency that school collaborates with performers coming to exchange or cooperated with arts institutions.

d) Arts education is less attached the importance compared with (other subjects like math, ICT or P.E.).

4) Personally speaking, the areas below can be enhanced by arts programs? (at most 4 choices).

The questionnaire was delivered to Linyi University from June 8 and the results were collected and counted on June 29.

3. Findings and Discussions

The following charts and bars are the results of the survey.

Figure 1 shows that music in general and drawing/painting take the absolute priority percentages with 81% and 83%, respectively among other forms of arts education. Since the music and painting, as the traditional arts education, has been adopted over decades. The Ministry of Education issued the Provisional Teaching Plan for Secondary Schools (Draft), which was the first teaching plan in New China. A full range of subject curricula was set up, with courses in politics, language, mathematics, nature, biology, chemistry, physics, history, geography, foreign languages, physical education, music and drawing (First Curriculum Revolution 1950). ("Curriculum Reform-Baidu Baike", 2003) [7]. It indicated that introducing arts forms into education came into being at the very first beginning of the modern education era in China. However, the fact is that the arts form is too homogeneous, which is not helpful to have full development of the students. Fashion design accounts for 1% only, because of the low social recognition and lack of concerning experts teaching in the secondary education sector. Instead, fashion design is more likely developed into a skill as a major in vocational college. In this case, so many arts forms are regarded as the college major or research projects for frontier academic achievements and are ignored during primary and secondary education. This can therefore lead to the gap in arts appreciation and expression between ordinary students with those who learn these arts from their childhood by additional training after school.

Figure 2 indicates that the foreign language is the top one subject that school teachers incorporate/use arts in lessons because learning a foreign language is a
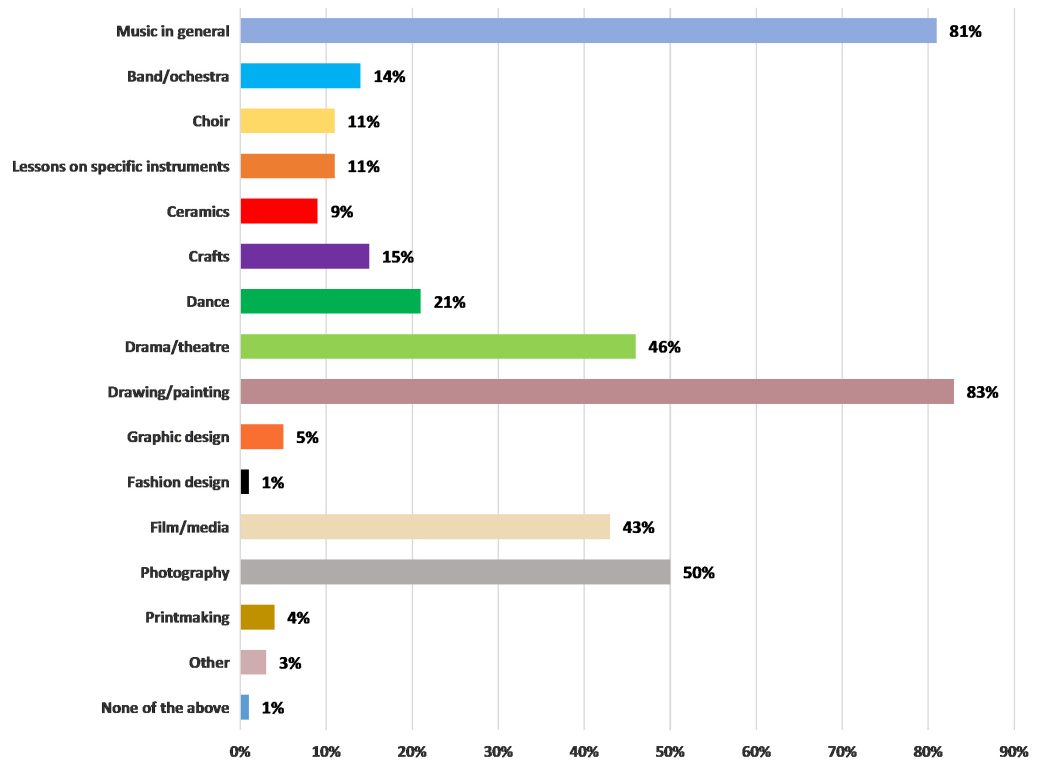
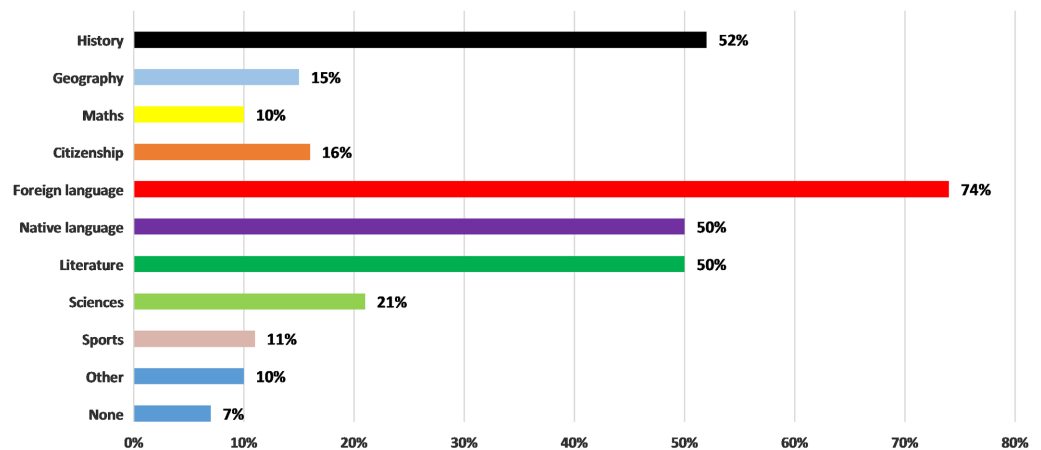**Figure 1.** The forms of available arts education.

Figure 2. The other subjects that the school teachers incorporate/use arts in lessons.

process which required students to learn from arts, geography, history and so on. For example, the first English class that I took in grade 4, my English teacher played the song *Yesterday Once More* (Carpenters, 1973) for us. It aroused my interest in learning English and also got a good score on the subject. In contrast, Maths has the smallest proportion with only 10% compared with other subjects. Mathematics is an area of knowledge that includes such topics as numbers (arithmetic and number theory), formulas and related structures (algebra), shapes and the spaces in which they are contained (geometry), and quantities and their changes (calculus and analysis). ("Mathematics—Wikipedia", 2012) [8]. In this

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perspective, more quizzes and examinations are used in the learning process with the regular lectures proceeding. To some degree, scientific subject, like math, science has a lower integration than liberal arts ones, as the scientific subject contribute more to the practice of logic and thinking while the liberal arts focus more on cognitive and perceivable ability cultivation.

Figure 3 shows the results from the 4 questions:

Statement 1:

Which types of art studies are exposed to students (visible arts, music, drama, dance) frequently as a component of the course, most respondents with 70% hold the attitude to disagree with that and only 3% strongly agree on that. And certain numbers of the participants have no opinion on that case. This means that the schools did not regard the art studies as the part of the curriculum while few students had an awareness of the same issue. More seriously is that nearly 40% of the respondents hold an indifferent opinion on that, which arouse us the attention toward the conciseness construction way to go.

Statement 2:

Any additional opportunities that the school provides for students to involve with visible or performing arts (like, after-school programs), 60% of the respondents disagreed on that while 20% agreed, unexpectedly, there is also 30% hold no opinion on that. In fact, from statement 1 results that there is no more efforts that school put into the curriculum with arts studies, by the same token, additional opportunities for them to get access to arts is not realistic.
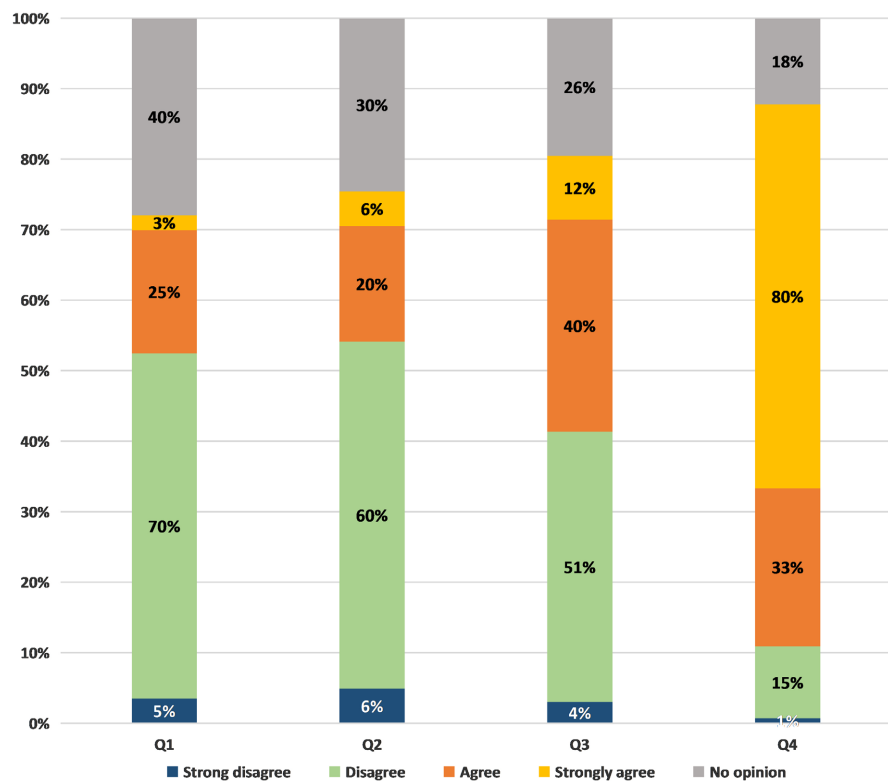

Figure 3. The four statements that applied in your school through arts projects.

Statement 3:

Regarding the frequency that schools collaborate with performers coming to exchange or cooperate with arts institutions, 51% of the respondents disagreed on that while 40% agreed, a small increase on the agree side compared with statement 1 and 2. Some schools do invite some artists to do the exchange with arts, which is a good sign. It is vital for international artistes to do the exchange since it generates an atmosphere for talents for true conciliation and compatibility, strengthening the education of all people, advancing the understanding of tolerance of different cultures in all countries and training students to prepare them to give artistic and economic inputs in a global community. (Enriching the Arts through International Cultural Exchange) (Ochoa & Orlove, 2015) [9].

Statement 4:

Arts education is less attached importance compared with (other subjects like math, ICT or P.E.), 80% of the respondents strongly agreed on that while only 1% strongly disagreed. No matter the students or the schools both did not attach enough importance to arts education.

Above all, the most important problem with arts education is the lack of awareness, perceptiveness and cognition from both individuals and institutions.

Figure 4 indicates that the majority hold the opinion that general creativity and imagination and critical and creative thinking skills with the percentage of 78% and 73% respectively can be improved through arts education. Only 14% of the respondents thought that arts education could improve the manual abilities. That is related to the functions of different arts education forms; most of the forms are emphasized in cognition and perceptiveness level, especially for general arts education, like music and drawing.
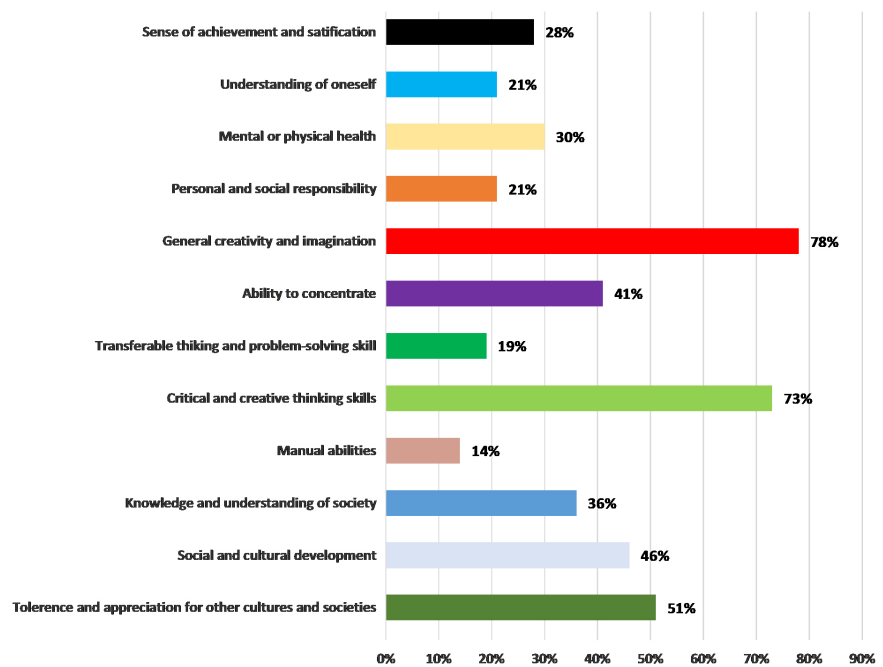

Figure 4. Areas that can be improved.

Figure 5 shows the types of respondents of the survey, a teacher in primary education and teacher in secondary education located the major percentages of 22% and 31% respectively.
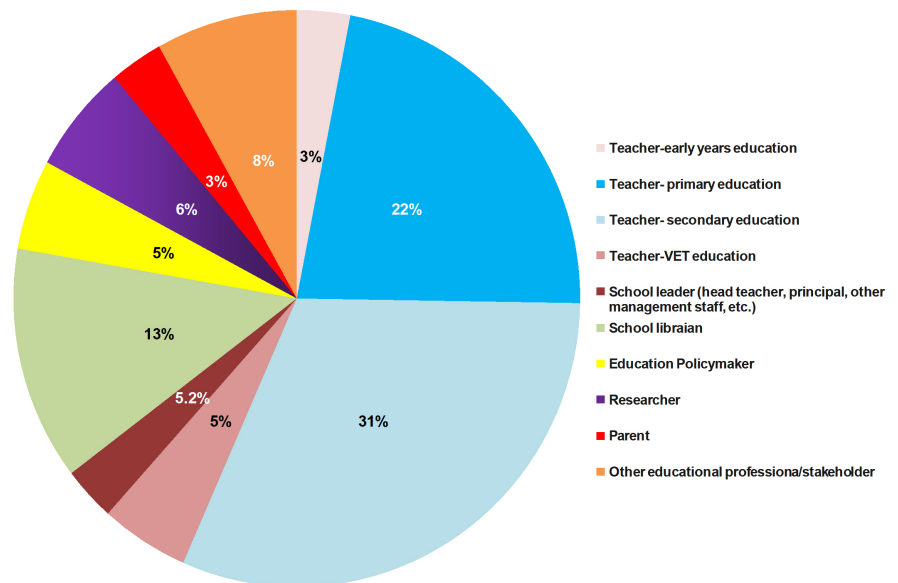

Figure 5. The scale group of the respondents.

4. Conclusions

Overall summary of this paper, it can be concluded that although the efforts put into the arts education, no matter the individual or the school are not sufficient, what benefits that the arts education bring is perceived by them. Under the guidance of UNESCO in the development of arts education, a bright future for arts education will finally come.

At the same time, the integration of arts education with other disciplines will enhance students' aesthetic and expressive skills, as well as their interest in other disciplines, leading to more holistic development. Schools will also need to strengthen the curriculum and provide management support for the integration of art education with other subjects, and society will change its perception of art education as more than just a game for the rich, improving the perception of art education and making it compulsory for the general public.

Limitation of Research

The major limitation of the study is the lack of sufficient samples because of COVID-19; lots of the schools have online classes. However, we selected Linyi University as the place to deliver our survey since the university is a micro-society that contains different walks of life. Even if the samples are not enough, they can also provide us with some deep thoughts and future perspectives on the integration of arts education into learning results.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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