ART AS A FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT IN INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOOL PROJECTS

ARTA CA ELEMENT FUNDAMENTAL ÎN PROIECTELE ȘCOALA INTERDISCIPLINARE

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This abstract explores the significant role of art as an integral component in interdisciplinary educational projects, emphasizing its potential to foster creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills in students. The integration of artistic expression with various academic disciplines fosters a deeper understanding of historical and cultural contexts, as well as technological competencies. For example, projects involving the creation of collages to celebrate local heritage allow students to explore architectural history while developing graphic design skills. This project model shows us how artistic engagement can serve as a catalyst for enhanced student motivation and learning outcomes across diverse educational settings.

Keywords: *Art, Education, Interdisciplinary Approach, Project, Creativity, Problem-solving skills, Research.*

INTRODUCTION

Humanity has always sought ways to express its emotions through art. Aesthetic education constitutes a fundamental component of personal development, facilitating the cultivation of creative abilities that are essential for addressing non-standard challenges across diverse domains within contemporary society. From an early age, individuals engage in a dialogue with art, striving to perceive beauty in the objects, people, and events that surround them. With proper support from adults and educators, qualities such as creativity and the desire to feel and create beauty can be nurtured in children from a young age.

Subjects like music education, visual arts, technological education, and graphic design - which was introduced as an optional discipline in the Republic of Moldova in 2020 - serve as vital pillars in a child's development. The curriculum for these disciplines contains extensive information regarding the significance of art in a child's life. Here are some moments highlighting key values:

MUSIC. The values of music education articulated in the curriculum include:

- Musical experience as the essence of musical activity.
- Musical culture, which encompasses the roles, functions, and objectives of ge-

neral culture, through which students discover and shape themselves as spiritual beings while recognizing the value of the world.

- Music education as the „musicalization" of the human being through the cultivation of specific structures: musical feeling (a unique sensitivity to music), musical thinking (reasoning within the framework of sound resonance of experiences), musical consciousness (the ability to perceive the world through an artistic-sound lens), and musical intelligence (a high degree of musical culture).
- Education through music, which aims to form key/ transversal/ transdisciplinary competencies essential for spiritual development. [1]

VISUAL ARTS. Harmonizing and balancing tradition with modernity, the educational concept of Visual Arts is oriented around the following principles:

- The principle of sensory and rational unity emphasizes the sensory perception of the natural environment and visual-plastic images, reflecting curiosity and an appreciative awareness of beauty in life and art, as well as their logical and rational relationships. [2]
- The principle of unity in self-perception and creative artistic development expresses the freedom of children's perspectives and emotions, activating imagination and stimulating the creation of new values (new forms), typically conducted within the framework of collaboration between teachers and students.

TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATION. The objective of technological education is to develop technology-centered thinking, aimed at understanding the fundamental principles that explain scientific discoveries, fostering intellectual curiosity based on personal research, cultivating an attitude towards the technical and technological environment, and stimulating the creative spirit to enhance the quality of life. [3]

GRAPHIC DESIGN. This optional discipline focuses on teaching and developing specific skills:

- An artistic and scientific understanding of the role and impact of graphic design phenomena in contemporary society, demonstrating critical and positive thinking by integrating various fields of inquiry, activities, and human values.
- Artistic processing of information within the realm of social sciences, displaying critical thinking, clarity, and accuracy.
- Implementation of applied art concepts in computer-aided graphic design product development, showcasing creativity, focus, and resilience.
- Interaction with members of virtual professional communities for learning and work, displaying an interest in active learning, research, and collaboration while adhering to ethical standards in virtual environments.
- Exploring problem situations through applied artistic thinking, demonstrating inspiration, analytical spirit, clarity, and conciseness. [4]

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova is genuinely concerned about the Art education of children. [1, 2, 3, 4] However, the reality faced by educators on a daily basis is different. Unfortunately, teachers of these subjects frequently encounter indifference and misunderstanding from school administration, lack of support, and the relegation of these subjects to a secondary status, with an emphasis on „important” subjects that are included in exams. At this stage, many overlook the fact that in the future, children will require specific skills to solve a variety of problems, rather than just disciplinary knowledge in specific subjects. This attitude may stem from the technical and practical challenges of demonstrating the utility of subjects in the arts. Mathematics teaches us to calculate and provides tangible results, while the ability to create a painting may seem less directly practical for a child's immediate school performance. Nonetheless, the outcomes achieved by students in these classes can serve as excellent visual examples - digital projects, animation, cards, drawings, lap books. The visibility of results, opportunities for multimedia engagement and the creation of digital projects are elements that can effectively showcase achievements across any school subject. Moreover, contemporary students expect educators to incorporate innovative and engaging pedagogical approaches that enhance their enthusiasm for learning. Consequently, we observe collaborations between artistic disciplines and other fields (such as science, history, and sports) in the pursuit of developing intriguing interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary projects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Over the past five years, we have successfully implemented interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary projects, which included working with subjects such as History, Mathematics, Computer Science, Romanian language and literature, English, and German. Art facilitated the visualization and representation of students' project outcomes, providing a tangible and multidimensional understanding of abstract concepts, thus enhancing the overall educational process. Let us examine a model of an interdisciplinary project where each discipline involved in the project played an important role, contributing unique perspectives and insights. However, it was the integration of Art education that synthesized these contributions into a coherent and comprehensive final product. Art served as a medium through which abstract concepts and findings from other subjects were effectively visualized, enhancing students' understanding and engagement. This underscores the transformative capacity of art in interdisciplinary projects. This project took place at IPL „Da Vinci”, Republic of Moldova, and it involved 5th Grade students.

The proposed project integrates **Art Education**, **History**, and **Graphic Design**, with students collaboratively designing postcards for Chisinau City Day. The interdisciplinary framework ensures that learners can explore various subject areas through a cohesive project that culminates in an evaluable product.

Art as a cognitive tool. In this project, students use artistic methods such as collage creation to visually represent architectural landmarks. This encourages learners to engage in analytical thinking while exploring visual composition, balance, and structure. The creative process in art, therefore, becomes a conduit for deeper understanding of historical context and urban design.

Historical Inquiry through Visual Representation: The integration of history allows students to investigate and analyze architectural evolution of the most famous buildings from Chișinău. The exploration of historical buildings, spanning from different time periods, enriches their understanding of cultural heritage and fosters historical literacy.

Technological Competence through Graphic Design introduces students to digital tools combined with art, enabling them to convert their traditional artistic creations into digital formats. This phase of the project provides an opportunity for learners to develop practical skills in software use, layout, typography, and image editing. It also demonstrates how artistic and technical skills can merge to create functional, professional-grade outputs.

The project can be outlined in the following stages:

1. Project Initiation and Planning - objective setting, theme selection. The primary objective of the interdisciplinary project was to engage students in a creative task designed to deepen their understanding of historical and cultural contexts while integrating artistic skills. This approach aligns with the concept of competence-based learning, where students are encouraged to apply knowledge in real-world contexts, fostering critical thinking and creativity.

2. Historical Research - exploration of architectural heritage and building selection: During History lessons, students did research on significant historical buildings in Chișinău. This included discussions about architectural styles, historical periods, and the socio-cultural relevance of each structure. Each student selected a specific building to focus on, fostering individual exploration and interest.

3. Artistic Development - Collage Technique Training: Students were introduced to collage techniques during art education classes, learning how to creatively manipulate images and materials.

Graphic Design Fundamentals: They were instructed in basic graphic design principles to prepare for digital editing of their postcards.

4. Creation of Postcards:

Photograph Selection (during the historical research): During graphic design classes, students gathered appropriate photographs of their chosen buildings and complementary elements, focusing on visual composition.

Collage Assembly (after the artistic development): Students created their postcards by arranging images and text, applying artistic principles learned in prior lessons.

5. Digital Processing:

Scanning and Editing: Once the postcards were physically created, they were

scanned and digitally processed. Students learned to use graphic editing software to refine their designs, add text, and incorporate decorative elements.

6. Presentation and Dissemination: **Printing and Distribution**: The final products were printed and prepared to be presented to the school community and some of the city authorities (Mayor, City Council), facilitating cultural exchange and promoting awareness of Chișinău's heritage. There could be way more options available for this step and it depends on the teacher's creativity. For example, these postcards could be utilized in post-crossing activities during English classes. As an additional educational layer, students could translate relevant text about the buildings into foreign languages, enhancing their language skills alongside their artistic output.

7. Reflection and Evaluation: **Feedback Session**: A debriefing allowed students to discuss their experiences, reflect on what they learned across disciplines, and assess their collaborative efforts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

An interdisciplinary approach and project-based organization of activities can enable students to assess problems from various perspectives and explore topics in depth and from new angles. Engaging in creative processes allows students to approach problems from various angles, leading to innovative solutions. By adding artistic methodologies, students learn to reframe challenges as opportunities for exploration and creativity. The shift toward competence-based learning emphasizes equipping students with practical skills that can be applied in future professional contexts. Integrating arts into education fosters competencies that extend beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries. Studies indicate that arts education enhances critical thinking, collaboration, and adaptability, all of which are vital for success in the contemporary workforce [5]. Artistic engagement often increases student motivation and interest, resulting in deeper learning experiences. Involvement of art in a project can lead to greater academic achievement, as students who are emotionally invested in their projects tend to explore subjects with more enthusiasm and curiosity. The arts facilitate connections among diverse disciplines, enriching students' educational experiences. [6]

CONCLUSIONS

By linking artistic concepts with subjects such as science, mathematics, and social studies, students develop a more holistic understanding of knowledge. This interdisciplinary approach enhances their learning and prepares them for the diverse skill sets increasingly demanded in the job market. This interdisciplinary approach reflects competence-based learning, which emphasizes preparing students for future work environments by equipping them with the ability to apply knowledge flexibly. The integration of artistic expression and technological competence enhances students' cognitive flexibility, allowing for multiple perspectives when tackling complex tasks.

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