



The Future of Artistic Creativity: Models of Integration in School Curriculum

Tatiana Chemi

Department for Learning and Philosophy, Aalborg University (Denmark)
tc@learning.aau.dk

In the current paper I will present the findings of the research project Artfulness (2009-2011), which has involved several Danish Public Schools in the description of how the arts can be integrated with other school subjects throughout the curriculum. Findings from this project show that this integration is able to generate both emotional and cognitive benefits. Out of this study's original empirical data, I will present two specific cases, intended to be practical examples and inspiration on how schools can integrate the arts in curriculum, using design and animation.

What we experience nowadays, in times of globalization, environmental disasters and financial crisis, is an even deeper need for creative solutions and new approaches. In an inverted Maslow's pyramid [2], we can conceptualise the basic needs for the future as immaterial: security, social relations, creativity, self-realization, and resilience. The challenges that our society is experiencing, makes creativity and life- satisfaction the basic needs that we cannot ignore.

Findings from the Artfulness project show a large body of reported benefits, both in the emotional and cognitive domain, when the arts are used as active learning tool and are being integrated in school curriculum. Both students and teachers feel challenged by the tasks and at the same time report a wide range of positive emotions, going from enjoyment to excitement, feeling of meaningfulness and positive social relationships. A challenging cognitive task and a positive emotional response, when in balance resemble a flow experience [1], and strengthen each other in a learning perspective. Children who are able to crack the nuts of a challenging task, and have fun with it at the same time, are able to develop a sort of "learning resilience", in the sense that the more they enjoy the learning task, the more they are motivated to stay concentrated even though the task is complex or difficult. The cracked nut results in a positive experience of achievement, and therefore more positive emotions related to learning experiences.

This positive self-strengthening synergy is the core of the Artfulness project's findings, and I will argue that the arts, the artists involved and the artistic tasks had made a difference in the participant's experience.