

The Effects of Art Teaching Techniques on Art Learning Achievement of Primary School Students in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province

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Abstract

This research project is a qualitative method of inquiry. It was conducted to determine the extent of art teaching techniques on art learning achievement. The project was carried out among selected primary school students in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. The target schools were chosen based on students' best national test score (O-NET) in art subjects namely drawing and painting, dancing, and music. Participants were administrators, teachers, guest speakers, and primary school students. Data were collected from classroom observations, interviews, and focus group discussions.

The target schools used 5 different teaching techniques to enhance student learning and development: 1) Do-it-yourself scheme, 2) teaching media and technology, 3) demonstrations, 4) field visits, and 5) participation in art competitions. These techniques enhanced primary school students in Nakhon Si Thammarat to earn the highest scores from the national tests in art in 2011. In addition to these data on art achievement, the researcher identified four key factors associated with learning outcomes: 1) administrators' support for art teaching and learning, 2) responsible and caring teachers, 3) students' motivation, and 4) community support.

Keywords: *art teaching techniques, primary school students, art learning achievement*

1. Introduction

According to the 1999 National Education Act, education is defined as a learning process by which individuals and the society are developed through knowledge transfer, training, culture inheritance, creativity, and the sustainability of academic progress. Additionally, it refers to the construction of knowledge resulting from the management of environment, learning society and the factors supporting lifelong learning in order to make learners become intellectual, happy, and refined persons as well as to instill a sense of 'Thainess' into them. In particular, the educational management for both primary and secondary levels (Prathoms 1- 6) needs to respond to learners' interests and to emphasize real learning situations, learning by doing with fun activities, personality and aesthetic development as well as to make them skillful and creative persons who can share their knowledge with others (NEA, 1999).

The art learning group is a learning section designed to promote learners' creativity and artistic imagination. The activities done in this group are outlined to enhance learners' body, mind, intellect, emotion, and sociability as well as to develop their learning atmosphere and lifestyles. (Department of Academic Affairs, 2008)

The ideas above were not new as Lowenfield and Brittain (1987) also supported them decades before. They noted that art learning could promote children's development in various areas such as their body and mind, emotions, social skills, intellect, as well as perceptual, creative and aesthetic growths.

The researcher, as a school director in the province or in Nakhon Si Thammarat, had experienced a number of problems at the school regarding art teaching and learning. For example, 1) some art teachers did not major in this field, so they had no art teaching experiences; 2) some teachers emphasized theories. As a result, they did not focus on practices; thus students lacked adequate hands-on experiences; 3) there were neither enough art teaching materials nor equipment in the areas where the schools are located; 4) the art learning sources were rare; and 5) students studied mostly in the classroom, so they did not have the opportunities to see others' work outside the school. In addition, during the past three years, the O-NET (Ordinary National Education Test) at the researcher's school revealed the unsatisfactory average scores on this particular learning group showed that in 2009, the score was 42.49 while in 2010 and 2011, the average score was the same or it was 41.10 (Office of Primary Education Area 2, 2001). This evidence demonstrates the scores in 2010 and 2011 were still lower than 50%, and it was, unfortunately, lower than that of 2009. This evidence implied that there were still some problems in art teaching and learning at the researcher's school, and they needed to be taken into consideration so that this issue could be solved.

The problems mentioned above made the researcher look for some practical ways to help solve them. Tracing back which primary schools in Nakhon Si Thammarat earned the highest scores on art was one way. That was why the best three schools that gained the highest score out of the O-NET were examined. The aims were to find out how the art teachers taught these students, what techniques they used, and how much the stakeholders supported them to this achievement. The expected results of the study could be applied to art teaching at the researcher's school. Likewise, they could be disseminated to other schools to enhance the quality of art teaching and learning. Best of all, the application would benefit all students who belong to the art learning group.

2. Aims of the Study

This study was conducted to find out the most practical art teaching techniques employed in the primary schools in Nakhon Si Thammarat where students earned the highest scores in art. Furthermore, the findings were to be disseminated to art teachers and interested individuals, who might apply them for the benefit of students in their context.

3. Scope of the Study

3.1 Target Population

The participants in this study included 12 primary school administrators, 12 primary school art teachers, 12 local art experts and 48 prathom 6 students. The purposive sampling was used to select participants from 12 primary schools whose students got the highest O-NET scores in 2011. In this sampling, the top 3 primary schools were selected from each of the 4 educational areas in Nakhon Si Thammarat.

3.2 Research Methodology

This study is a qualitative method where data were collected via the interviews, observations, documents, and focus group discussions. 1) *The interviews*: the semi-structured interviews were used with the school administrators, art teachers and local art experts. They were asked about administration, curricula, teaching media and equipment, teaching methods and methods of allocation of art teacher to each class. The students, on the other hand, were asked about art teaching methods in accordance with the curriculum and the key performance indicators of art subjects for prathom 6 students such as visual

arts, music, and dance. 2) *Observations*: These techniques were employed to observe the teaching and learning activities in art classes at the sampling schools. 3) *Documents*: The documents on art teaching methodologies were examined, and data were collected thereby. 4) *Focus group discussions*: The researcher talked with the administrators, art teachers, and local experts to triangulate data on art teaching, training, activities, and assessment with the other data such as data from the interviews, observations and documents.

The data mentioned above were analyzed by Strauss & Corbin's (1998) grounded theory. The coding process involved three levels of analyses: 1) open coding where data obtained from the interviews and group discussions were organized in a systematic manner; 2) Axial coding was used when data were identified and categorized; and 3) Selective coding was employed to categorize data and interpreted them to garner the study results.

4. Results

The results of this research project showed that the primary schools, whose students earned higher scores on art, employed five teaching techniques including: 1) learning by doing scheme, 2) application of teaching media and technology, 3) demonstrations by teachers and local art experts, 4) the setup of art hubs and art learning sources visits, and 5) participation in art competitions. Moreover, it was found out that practical management, teaching techniques, close supervisions as well as suitable atmosphere and environment supported the increase of higher art learning achievement. The students were satisfied with their learning by doing. Many of them produced high quality paintings, dances and concerts, sculpting, and product designs. They also earned the highest O-NET scores in the province. This was a good model for other schools. The achievement made the students, their community and staff more active, and they were proud of themselves.

5. Discussion

In the light of data analysis, the researcher found out that the 5 techniques employed in the study showed significant outcomes as follows:

5.1 Learning by doing techniques involved students' practices on drawings and paintings. This technique was also used in playing Thai musical instruments such as xylophones, flute, and tom-toms. In addition, Thai classical dances were taught. These interactions encouraged the students' interactive manners; and thus they students enjoyed art classes. Since these activities enhanced students' creativity, they could create some art work with their own unique designs. Therefore, parents, teachers, and those working with kids should give them opportunities to do things by themselves. "There's no better way to foster imagination in children than to let them create something whether it's a drawing or painting, something made from modeling clay, or jewellery made from beads" Hose (2012). This idea supports teacher's practicum in which "an art teacher teaches students to practice and deal with a problem themselves, or discuss it with their team members. This teaching technique often yields positive results to teaching and learning, and it is the heart of art teaching" (Wattanasin, 1998). When using this technique; however, teachers could facilitate students with advice, suggestions, and equipment needed for their art creating objects. It can be concluded that learning by doing technique is an effective application of theory into practice.

5.2 Regarding teaching media and technology, the students learned art from various kinds of media, for instance, pictures, charts, audio and video cassettes, and the Internet. These teaching tools helped boost students' attention. According to the Department Academic Affair, teachers can use and develop various local learning tools such as printed matters, photos, toys, environment, and technology for learning more actively. Teaching media and technology could easily make learners enjoy learning and inspire them.

5.3 With respect to demonstrations by teachers and local art experts, it was found out that, demonstrations of creating art objects, for example, drawing, singing and dancing could inspire students to learn how to do them on their own or in a group. Then when a Thai musical instrument expert showed students how to play Thai musical instruments, students observed their demonstration seriously. After these demonstrations, they asked questions and tried playing those instruments. At this step, an expert usually helped with suggestions and more demonstrations when students needed them. This idea is similar to that of Wattanasin (1998) who suggested that theories are not enough. Teachers had shown students how to do the activity. Based on this technique, preparing some props and a step-by-step guide were essential. Art teaching usually aims to make all learners creative, confident, and self-reliant. Thus, students' own ideas to create things were emphasized. Alternative ways of learning such as watching YouTube, setting class outdoor, and field trip with an expert or artist of the field were very useful for students.

5.4 With reference to the visits to the organizations and the fields, findings revealed that this teaching technique promoted students' enthusiasm. Wattanasin (1998) suggested that "A field trip is an effective way of learning because learners can get a direct contact with the real world where professionals did their job. Visiting different interesting places such as a zoo, parks, and arts museum could make students excited about their awesome experience.

5.5 The participation in art competitions was an important technique which provided an opportunity for students to get involved in challenging activities. When playing a part in different levels of competitions, the students would enjoy the real atmosphere where they could compete with outstanding competitors from various different places. They had a chance to learn new things which would become impressive events in their life. As Wongyai (1994) pointed out "The learning management in which students are most important can help students learn by themselves and take part in making their own product meaningful to them." In other words, most powerful learning occurs when learners take part in doing some good things relevant and significant for them. Accordingly, the researcher found out that the participation in art competitions is a way to promote learners' skills. It makes learners feel proud to exhibit their abilities in public as well as to observe other distinctive participants in the competitive arena.

6. Suggestions

Based on this study, the researcher wants to suggest two things:

6.1 Art teachers could use different teaching techniques appropriate for students' ability, background, and needs as well as applicable to each teaching and learning context.

6.2 The school should recognize significance of art teaching with collaboration from all school personnel. It is crucial that all take part in the quality development of teachers and learners.

7. The Authors

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