

A Study on Early Childhood Art Education Focusing on Aesthetic Experience

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Abstract: This article explores the issue of early childhood arts education in the context of cultural and artistic integration. Through on-site investigation and analysis of a provincial-level demonstration kindergarten, it was found that the practice of early childhood art education in the kindergarten has effectively promoted children's artistic interest and creativity. However, there are still problems such as insufficient participation of young children, lack of attention to their feelings, and lack of connection to daily life. In response to these issues, strategies and methods for early childhood education practice that focus on aesthetic experience have been proposed, including strengthening the optimization and improvement of curriculum settings, expanding teaching resources, paying more attention to children's feelings and expressions of art, further improving the evaluation system, strengthening teacher training, and improving teacher professional literacy. Overall, early childhood art education courses that focus on children's aesthetic experiences require teachers to enhance their participation and sensitivity from the perspective of young children, adopt diversified evaluation methods, strengthen the connection with daily life, and provide better support for children's comprehensive development.

1. Introduction

Cultural and artistic education is an important issue in today's educational circles. We look at art and culture from the perspective of integration, providing a wider range of arts and culture education in various forms to make it active in a wider place. However, although the quantity of cultural and artistic education has expanded, it is still within the operation system centered on "core courses", carried out through after-school activities, and regarded as additional or extracurricular. The cultural and artistic education for young children is mostly centered on "themes", rather than courses, and it seems to have a more rich and concentrated course structure from its characteristics. However, even if it is operated more colorfully, its quality is similar to the problems faced by cultural and artistic education in general school education. In other words, all cultural and artistic education, including young children, is difficult to escape from the quality concerns of "skill-centered" artistic education, lacking aesthetic experience.

As a philosophical discipline with a relatively short history and insufficient professionalization, aesthetics is a theoretical background of cultural and artistic education, which is not as well-developed as other disciplines that generate a lot of philosophy and theory. Aesthetic education does not simply mean teaching aesthetics correctly, and the philosophical understanding of art cannot be excluded

from aesthetic education. Due to these ambiguities, few scholars can clearly explain aesthetic education. Green bravely uses the term "aesthetic education" that many scholars avoid talking about, and explains its characteristics and practical direction in great detail. Scholars in the fields of philosophy, art, and education in the United States have greatly affirmed and respected his unique aesthetic ideas, and his original aesthetic theory has also been popularized. This is of great inspiration to our country's early childhood art education. Currently, there are some problems in our country's early childhood art education, such as emphasizing skills and neglecting experience, having a single teaching method, which affects children's artistic interest and experience. Therefore, this study combines Green's aesthetic education ideas to analyze the content of courses or theme activities related to art education carried out by kindergartens, early childhood education institutions, and early childhood teacher training programs, explores the true meaning of early childhood art education, and elaborates on the problems it faces, providing reliable support for subsequent research.

2. A Review of Relevant Research at Home and Abroad

Through a review and synthesis of relevant research, both domestically and internationally, we have gained an understanding of the current status, achievements, and challenges in early childhood art education. Additionally, we have analyzed the characteristics and educational value of children's aesthetic experiences in the context of existing research. In recent years, scholars both domestically and internationally have focused their research on several key areas related to early childhood art education.

2.1 The Value and Objectives of early childhood art education

The value of preschool art education is a fundamental issue in the field of early childhood education research. Scholars both domestically and internationally generally agree that preschool art education plays an important role in promoting their comprehensive development. Through artistic activities, children can cultivate their aesthetic perception, aesthetic imagination, and aesthetic understanding abilities while also enhancing their creativity, imagination, and emotional expression abilities. Artistic interest is the prerequisite and foundation for young children to learn art. Scholars both at home and abroad generally agree that cultivating children's artistic interest should be the primary goal of early childhood art education. Li Jimei believes that the primary task of early childhood art education is to stimulate children's interest and love for art, and help them discover and appreciate the beauty in life.^[1] When formulating the objectives of early childhood art education, it is necessary to consider the children's age characteristics, interests, and physical and mental development patterns. The goals should be specific, clear, and feasible.

2.2 The content of early childhood art education

The content of early childhood art education is an important means to achieve educational goals. Scholars both at home and abroad generally agree that the content of early childhood art education should include diverse artistic forms such as painting, handcrafting, music appreciation, and dance. When selecting teaching content, the cognitive characteristics and developmental patterns of young children should be taken into consideration, with a focus on interest and interaction. Aesthetic ability is the core ability for young children to appreciate and understand art, and early childhood art education should focus on cultivating children's aesthetic ability. Wang Xiaoying pointed out that early childhood art education should focus on the development of young children's ability to perceive and appreciate works of art, helping children learn to appreciate and understand various forms of artistic works.^[2] Creativity is an important ability for young children to create art, and early childhood

art education should focus on cultivating children's creativity. Johnson believes that the development of young children's creativity should be one of the focuses of early childhood art education.^[3] Emotional expression ability is an important ability for young children to express their own emotions, and early childhood art education should focus on cultivating children's emotional expression ability. Tao Xingzhi believes that through art education, young children can express their emotions and ideas, promoting their emotional development.^[4] Social communication ability is an important ability for young children to interact with others, and early childhood art education should focus on cultivating children's social communication ability. Pang Lijuan mentioned that collective creation can help young children learn skills and strategies for cooperation and communication with others.^[5]

2.3 The approach and evaluation of early childhood art education

The approach of early childhood art education is an important guarantee to achieve educational effectiveness. Domestic and foreign research advocates that the approach of early childhood art education should be diversified, including demonstration teaching, heuristic teaching, interactive teaching, etc. Teachers should choose appropriate teaching methods according to children's age characteristics, interests and physical and mental development rules, focusing on the interest and interaction of teaching methods to stimulate children's artistic interest and creativity. The evaluation of early childhood art education is an important means to test educational effectiveness. The evaluation of early childhood art education should be diversified, including work evaluation, observation evaluation and self-evaluation. Evaluation standards should be specific, clear and operable, taking into account children's age characteristics, interests and physical and mental development rules. Evaluation results should be timely feedback to teachers and parents in order to adjust teaching strategies and methods.

In the literature review, we found that research on early childhood art education has achieved certain results. For example, some studies have shown that art education can promote the development of children's creativity, imagination, and emotional expression abilities. In addition, some studies have found that aesthetic experiences can enhance children's aesthetic perception, aesthetic imagination, and aesthetic understanding abilities. However, some studies have also pointed out that there are some problems in current early childhood art education, such as a single mode of education, emphasizing skills over experience, which affects children's artistic interests and comprehensive development.

3. Research Implementation and Result Analysis

3.1 Research content and methods

This study mainly adopts case analysis method to explore the practical strategies and methods of aesthetic-oriented art education for young children through on-site observation and in-depth analysis of a provincial-level demonstration kindergarten. Specifically, it includes conducting on-site observations in kindergartens to understand the curriculum setting, teaching methods, and teaching resources of the kindergarten art education, and analyze whether it focuses on aesthetic experience; observing the actual teaching process of the kindergarten art education, selecting typical cases for analysis, and discussing how teachers guide children in the teaching process for aesthetic experience; conducting interviews with teachers and parents in the kindergarten to collect their evaluations and suggestions on aesthetic-oriented art education for young children; exploring the impact of aesthetic-oriented art education for young children on comprehensive development.

3.2 Analysis of study results

Analysis shows that in terms of curriculum, the kindergarten has set up a variety of art education courses, including painting, handcrafting, music appreciation, dance, etc. These courses aim to cultivate young children's aesthetic perception, imagination, and understanding abilities. In terms of teaching methods, the teachers have employed a variety of teaching methods such as demonstration teaching, heuristic teaching, and interactive teaching. These methods can stimulate young children's artistic interest and creativity, and guide them to explore and think independently. In terms of teaching resources, the kindergarten has made full use of various resources such as art galleries, museums, concert halls, and the like, providing young children with a wealth of artistic experiences. These resources help expand young children's aesthetic horizons and creativity. In terms of evaluation, the kindergarten has adopted methods such as work evaluation, observation evaluation, and self-evaluation. These methods can comprehensively understand the aesthetic experience and artistic expression of young children, and help teachers provide feedback and guidance. Although the art education practice of the kindergarten has effectively promoted children's artistic interest, their creativity, imagination, and emotional expression ability have also been improved. However, there are still the following problems in the art education curriculum of kindergartens from the perspective of emphasizing experiential learning for young children.

First, children's participation is insufficient. In many art education courses, teachers often focus on their own teaching plans and goals, ignoring children's participation and experience. Children passively accept teachers' guidance and cannot truly integrate into artistic creation, lacking real experience in artistic activities. Second, there is a lack of attention to children's feelings. Children have many own feelings and experiences in art activities, such as preferences for colors or shapes, etc. However, teachers often neglect to pay attention to and guide these feelings in their teaching, unable to help children deepen their understanding and feelings of art. Third, there is a lack of connection with daily life. Art comes from life, but the art education courses in kindergartens often lack a close connection with daily life, which leads to children being unable to connect art with daily life and truly feel the charm of art.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study found through on-site observation and analysis of a kindergarten that aesthetic oriented early childhood art education can effectively promote the comprehensive development of young children. Therefore, it is recommended to further strengthen the importance and application of aesthetic experience in early childhood education. The specific suggestions are as follows:

First, strengthen the optimization and improvement of curriculum settings to develop reasonable curriculum plans based on the physical and mental development characteristics of children of different ages. At the same time, we should increase children's participation in art activities that can stimulate their participation and allow them to develop their imagination and creativity in the activities, enhancing their sense of participation and experience.

Second, expand the utilization of teaching resources and provide children with broader artistic learning spaces by utilizing rich cultural and social resources. At the same time, attention should be paid to strengthening the connection with daily life, guiding children to discover artistic elements and beauty in life, enabling them to apply the learned artistic knowledge to daily life, and enhancing their practical ability and innovative consciousness.

Third, pay more attention to children's feelings and expressions about art. Guide them to express their ideas and emotions through language or works, helping them deepen their understanding and feelings about art. Innovative teaching methods and means can be used to stimulate children's sensitivity and desire for expression.

Fourth, further improve the evaluation system and establish a scientific and reasonable evaluation standard and method system. We can formulate specific evaluation criteria according to the physical and mental development characteristics of children in different age groups. Teachers should not only focus on the perfection of skills and forms in evaluating children's art works, but also pay more attention to their experiences and emotional expressions during the creative process, and provide them with positive evaluations and support.

Fifth, strengthen teacher training and improve teacher professional literacy. Schools can improve teachers' artistic quality and educational level through professional training and practice, and improve teachers' ability to guide children's aesthetic experience.

In summary, aesthetic-oriented art education courses for young children require teachers to enhance their participation and sensitivity from the perspective of young children, adopt diversified evaluation methods, strengthen the connection with daily life, and provide better support for the comprehensive development of young children.

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