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Lifelong learning and art

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Abstract

The term of lifelong learning refers to the continuous building skills and acquiring knowledge during one's life through experiences faced lifetime. Today in this 21st century, changes in the social, economic, cultural and educational frames need to new ways of thinking about the arts, culture and creativity. This way of thinking helps to have more active and responsible people about their own learning and their societies. There are many subjects in the case of art in which learning takes place. Lifelong learning should be a promotion of the art of human maturity, a necessity for people to be involved actively in the local, national and international issues. This paper seeks to shed light on the relationship between art and lifelong learning. It is the purpose of this article to review the role of art and creativity in lifelong learning.

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, adults need to continue education and learn to enhance and create their opportunities for both professional and personal skill improvements. They need to learn lifetime to adapt and cope with the changing world. Easy and great access to information, swift changes, technical improvements, the increased universal communications and interactions, shifts in industry and also skill requirements are all driving the necessity to lifelong learning (LLL) in the 21st century (Gaymer, 2006).

If we think about what we have learnt during our lives, we realize that our learning mostly take place outside of the school system. This type of learning is called LLL (Lewis-Fitzgerald, 2005). LLL includes learning at all stages of life, whether formal learning at school or in the daily life (Maruyama, 2009).

LLL is about acquiring and updating all types of learning including skills, interests, knowledge and eligibilities from the preschool years to post-retirement. It enables each individual to adapt to the knowledge-based society, and

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actively participate in the social and economic life, taking more control of his/her future (Harvey, 2012). Therefore, this type of learning encompasses all types of social education activities (Ogden, 2010).

Laal (2011) cited Rojvithee (2005) who stated learning takes place at all times, in all places, as:

- Age 0-5 years: A lot of learning takes place during the first ages of life, which prepares humans for further learning in future. Children begin to follow and taking a model from their parents, peers and environment. The greatest amount of informal learning probably occurs in early childhood.
- Age 6-24 years: Formal learning takes place during this period mainly in educational institutions: elementary and high schools, and at universities. Family, organizations and social media play an important role in learning at this age group.
- Age 25-60 years: Adults can learn informally through their colleagues in works and work-fields, use of information technology (IT), environment and nature. They learn from the experiences of others as well as their own, and the ways of problem-solving. So, a continuous growth of skills and knowledge is needed.
- Age 60+ years: In elder ages, people can learn mostly from activities suitable to their age, for example, from: art, music, sports for the elderly, handicrafts and social works. They can also participate in organizations and associations, and be actively involved in community.

In 21st century, the social, economic, cultural and educational context need to new ways of thinking and viewpoints about the arts, culture and creativity. This new way of thinking and intelligence, whether formal or informal, help people to be more active and responsible in their societies and about their own learning (Scottish Arts Council, 2004). This article is an attempt to describe LLL in relation to art and art education.

2. Material and method

This article reviews the role of art and creativity in LLL. It starts with describing the term of LLL and continues with describing the role of arts in learning. Key issues were identified through review of the literature on LLL and through reviews of the literature on art education.

3. Results

Learning occurs when one encounters confusion and problems, and understands the lack of sufficient skills and proper knowledge (Joyce, Weil, & Showers, 1992). Prior to 1980, learning was not approached as a lifelong process (Collins, 2009). In 1980, father of adult learning, Malcolm Shepherd Knowles stated that LLL would become the organizing principle of all education, and the term of LLL is now a part of everyday conversation in educational parlance (Duyff, 1999).

Ability to learn new skills and training is needed to adapt and cope with the increased global fast-changing technology. Ever-changing universal knowledge economy indicates that individuals require enhancing their skills over their adult lives to cope with modern life, not only in the workplaces but also in their personal lives (OECD, 2007).

LLL literally stands for learning at all stages of life period, from the cradle to the grave. It means that learning should be life-wide and embedded in all life subjects from the school to the areas of work, home and society. Therefore, a learning society is where in which there are opportunities for learning of each individual irrespective to where he/she lives and how old he/she is (Green, A., 2002). The concept of *from cradle to grave* includes formal, non-formal, and informal learning. It means people should learn everywhere, at all times (OECD, 2011).

Art education is valuable for the positive affective, cognitive, cultural, personal, physical and social consequences that help learners to cope with the demands of life, enhancing their knowledge as well as their skills and abilities. These outcomes enrich lives and are obtained by extending of human knowledge, exploring feelings and sensibilities, looking at cultural difference and developing physical and perceptual skills (Robinson, 1982).

Really, LLL can raise self-esteem and allow to practice learning with joy, interesting experiences and as a whole improving the lives (Clayton, 2000). Positive art experiences confirm that the role of education is more than learning how to make a living; it's about learning how to make a life (Eisner, 1997).

For an active and effective life in a learning society, we need to enhance our skills, values and features. To help this, learners should have opportunities to be involved in creative problem-solving, critical thinking, learning in collaboration, discernment and judgment (Scottish Arts Council, 2004).

Read (1966) claims that learning in, and communication with the arts provides natural approaches to academic subjects and prepares a more confident basis in dealing with the social problems and conflicts.

Education through art is a life saver of transmitted memories whose spirit has the ability of educational problem-solving (Read, 1967).

To develop creative practices to make a learning society, we need to understand the role of arts, culture and creativity in issues, such as social justice, contribution, community development, the environment and sustainable progress of individuals (Scottish Arts Council, 2004).

4. Discussion

LLL involves all strategies that are put in place to make opportunities for people to learn in their lives. Therefore, it is a process of continuous learning throughout one's life in a way that supplies the needs of an individual and his/her society (Abukari, 2005).

Harvey, (2012) cites ENQA (2003) that states:

The frame of LLL is to make opportunities to enable each individual to choose the learning environment, job, region and country to increase his/her knowledge, skill and competency, and to use them optimally.

Fisher (2000) says that the term of LLL recalls that learning is not limited to childhood or to classroom, but takes place throughout life and in all situations. During the last 50 years, constant scientific and technological innovation and change created a demand to learn. Learning can no longer be confined to a place and a period of time to gain knowledge as occurs in the schools, or a place and time to use the gained knowledge as occurs in the workplace. Instead, learning can be seen as something that takes place on an on-going basis from our daily interactions and with the world around us.

Laal & Salamati (2012) cited Tissot (2004) definitions of the core concept of formal, non-formal and informal learning, as:

- Formal learning is the learning takes place in an organized context (formal education, in-company training). It is designated as learning that often leads to formal recognition (diploma, certificate) (p. 70);
- Non-formal learning includes some form of important learning element that embedded in planned activities which are not explicitly designated as learning; such as vocational skills acquired at the workplace (p. 112);
- Informal learning is defined as learning resulting from daily life activities related to family, work or leisure. It is often referred to as experiential learning and can, to a degree, be understood as accidental learning (p. 76).

Education of art and art history can bring some of the skills and values which can be subdivided into those of intrinsic; that attempted to benefit their own, and those of extrinsic; which are externally motivated. These aptitudes are:

Intrinsic:

- creativity and imagination
- self-expression and perception
- spatial awareness;
- visual aptitude (perception of color, tone, composition, size, etc.)
- physical acuity (drawing, hand–eye coordination, etc.)

Extrinsic:

- enhancing powers of explanation, evaluation and problem-solving
- developing intercultural awareness (icons, practices, symbols)
- planning and accomplishing art projects
- spreading and supporting perspectives
- collaborative peer working, self-directed learning (Newall, 2012).

If we agree to that LLL is a term indicating of consistency in learning throughout one's life in and beyond formal educational settings, then it denotes that there are many common ways through which, learning takes place. Therefore the idea of constant learning means that a consistency should be with the contexts outside institutional provision. In the case of art, a number of settings can be identified in which learning occurs, such as: at home, on the street, in school room, in art school at art gallery, at museum, in library, in cultural institution, in public place, through the media, and via the internet (Swift, & Steers, 1999).

Howard Cannatella (2007) a philosopher in arts education, says: Herbert Read summarizes his *Education Through Art* and notes: What I have in my own mind is a combination of two concepts, therefore when I speak of art I mean an educational process, a process of training; and when I speak of education I mean an artistic process, a process of self-creation (Read, 1966). Read (1947) viewed art in education provides a safety valve that its curved space formed part of the symmetry in education, the bleeding of it; because education without art would be based only on one type of human being.

5. Conclusion

LLL means that learning should take place at all stages of life cycle, from the cradle to the grave, and it should be life-wide. Some of the skills and values, including intrinsic and extrinsic aptitudes, are obtained from the study of art and art history. To encourage imaginative approaches to create an effective and forward-looking society it is essential that we recognize the role of arts, culture and creativity in issues of citizenship. Creativity has high currency as an aspect of contemporary life. It is becoming an essential feature of LLL as education is called upon to prepare people for a world that now is changing more rapidly than ever before. The art, in a unique and particular way, and as perhaps the most obvious and universal expression of creativity, has an important role to play in that educational objective.

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