



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Art of Learning: Using artwork in teaching

Vasiliki Brinia

Dpt. of Management Science and Technology, Athens University of Economics and Business, Athens, Greece

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*Corresponding Author

Vasiliki Brinia

Abstract

This research intends to present the utilization of artwork in the learning process. Specifically, this method is an implementation of the method proposed by Kokkos (2009, 2011, 2012) in a lesson from the new textbook Political Education for the 1st Grade of High School, which focuses on economics and business. The five pieces of art that were incorporated in this implementation are joined by two basic questions, which are the cornerstones of the lesson. All pieces are described and analyzed and their connection with the content of the lesson is presented, through a practical example which was tried in classroom.

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INTRODUCTION

This manuscript focuses on the planning and design of the lesson "Migration" shows the configuration of the lesson from the new textbook Political Education for the 1st Grade of High School in Greece Two paintings, a song, a poem and a film are used in order for the students to reply to two basic questions. In particular, they can be used in order for the students to understand the reasons and the impacts of "Migration".

THEORETICAL PART

The method of "Transformative Learning through Aesthetic Experience" by professor Alexis Kokkos (2009, 2011, 2012)

The method "Transformative Learning through Aesthetic Experience" attempts to offer adult educators a tool that allows a critical approach to issues by utilizing the aesthetic experience. This method is developed by Professor Alexis Kokkos (2009, 2011, 2012) and utilizes artwork and its influence and dynamics. As for the method, Alexis Kokkos mentions that "while a learning objective is explored, the analysis of works of art whose content is relevant with the objective occurs in the meantime. The meaning of the artwork is a trigger to place enriched and open interpretations of the issue. This enables the critical thinking, the feelings and the imagination".

The method explores critically and creatively various issues which concern the learners and poses critical questions. By processing and analyzing the selected artwork from any form of art, the critical questions are explored in order to transform the views and attitudes of learners in relation to the original question.

The method of "Transformative Learning through Aesthetic Experience" utilizes artwork to develop critical reflection on stereotypical ideas and assumptions (Kokkos 2009, 2011, 2012). It is particularly valuable in education as it promotes critical thinking and assists in the transformation of perceptions (Kokkos and Mega, 2007). More specifically, adult education utilizes adult experiences (past and present) and through experiential exercises, role-playing and dialogue aims at the positive transformation of these experiences. Transformative learning contrasts

with integrative learning. Transformative learning promotes the cultivation of critical thinking against the stem assimilation of knowledge. It aims to acquire new knowledge in a critical and creative manner and - if necessary - to transform dysfunctional beliefs and stereotypes. The trainee is invited to evaluate and transform himself. Art is a powerful auxiliary tool in transformative learning. It awakens the senses, touches sensitive chords and stimulates empathy. At the same time, it awakens the imagination, as it creates an intermediate space between the real and the imaginary, and it develops multiple types of intelligence. Additionally, art is an expression of freedom. It is open to many experiences and infinite interpretations and it familiarizes the individuals with unconventional, holistic and critical thinking.

Steps of teaching method “Transformative Learning through Aesthetic Experience”

The teaching method steps as developed and presented by Alexis Kokkos are as follows (2009, 2011, 2012):

1. The first stage (identification of educational needs) consists of the determination of the need for critical examination of students' stereotypical assumptions that refer to a specific issue.
2. In the second stage, the teacher facilitates a process whereby students express their assumptions regarding the issue.
3. In the third stage, the teacher examines the responses and identifies subthemes that must be approached holistically and critically in order to review the views that were expressed.
4. In the fourth stage, the teacher selects several important pieces of art, which will be used as a stimulus for analyzing the subthemes.
5. In the fifth stage, the teacher facilitates a process, which aims to reach the several subthemes from different aspects, in order to present to the students as many dimensions as possible and give them the opportunity to review their initial assumptions. One of the basic learning tools in this process is the aesthetic experience. The teacher presents successively different artwork. Learners can also suggest artwork and determine the order in which they will be processed. Each artwork is analyzed and critically linked with the relevant subtheme. Students express their experiences, feelings and thoughts.
6. In the sixth stage, the composition is taking place and students end up with conclusions.

RESEARCH PART

Structure of the lesson

At first, the educator will stimulate the curiosity of understudies with two paintings: “The immigrants' ship” by John Charles Dollman and “Le Radeau de la Méduse” by Jean-Louis-Théodore Gericault. Students are asked basic questions in order to construct the basic definition of migration.

Afterwards, they specify the reasons for the migration of individuals and then the outcomes of this phenomenon. At that point, the educator will play the song of L. Kilaidonis, while students will try to realize that unemployment is critical incentive behind for individuals to leave their country. The teacher is also able to determine the different types of migration.

The next artwork is a poem of the German poet Berthold Brecht with the title “For the term immigrants” and the students will watch part of the film “Nyfes” (Brides). The educator will discuss about the feelings and experiences of immigrants, who leave their country either individually or in groups. The reason for leaving is usually the search for better living circumstances in the host country. The teachers can also ask the students about their own experiences in order for them to further discuss and comprehend the severity of the issue.

At that point, the educator will spend some time in a group activity. Students will be divided into small groups and they will be asked to record their perspective and their opinion on whether there can be, eventually, a world without migration.

Finally, there will be a summary of the lesson and a short evaluation in order to examine if the teacher's goals were met.

Amid the following stage the substance sheet with the essentials of the lesson will be shared and there will be a rundown of the lesson. At last, the agendas/assessment will be disseminated to the understudies.

Description of the topic

This method looks for a social - sociological way to deal with a critical social issue, that of “migration”. Migration is an issue which is constantly present in history of all countries. Therefore, it is important to be investigated by students. The reasons that amplify the phenomenon are varied and rely upon circumstances (financial, social and political). Depending on the type of immigration, it can cause socioeconomic consequences. Specifically during this period, there are critical problems in places of migration and immigration. Numerous individuals relocate on account of ecological destruction and climate change, wars, financial hardship (poverty) and of the pursue of a better life in general.

Through this lesson, understudies must be able to understand the phenomenon of migration with the help of five (5) pieces of art.

Learning Objectives

After the lesson, the students must be able to:

- (a) Define the term “migration”.
- (b) Explain the reasons for migration by giving examples.
- (c) Identify the types of migration.
- (d) Describe the impact of migration for the origin country, the host country but also for the immigrants individually and in groups. Examples are necessary.

Other than the above goals and in view of the utilization of artwork as a stimulus for the lesson, an extra objective is to acquaint the students with some pieces of art, to integrate art in their lives and to improve their creativity and critical thinking.

Teaching methods

Lecture, dialogue

Teaching tools

Table, photocopies, computer, chalk, , slides, projector

The expected results

After the lesson, the understudies should be able to understand that migration is a change of location of an individual or society, either permanent or temporal. This phenomenon exists from the ancient years due to social, financial, political or mental reasons and is for characteristic, social, financial, political or psychological reasons - or some combination of the above reasons. Through aesthetic intercessions, paintings in this case, understudies should comprehend that when movement is forced, for example, refugees, the conditions they will encounter from the origin country to the new one which will host them are very difficult and the financial results are complicated.

Migration differs from society to society and within the years. Understudies read the poem of German Berthold Brecht which was composed in 1937. For the term “immigrants”, they will draw pictures and encounters of the creator himself, as he composed it while being estranged abroad in Scandinavia, oppressed by Hitler. The Second World War had not yet broken out, but the Nazi had effectively uncovered their rough and unfeeling face with the savage mistreatment of Jews and German protesters. The educator can emphasize to the numerous democratic artists and intellectuals who were ousted or forced to escape their nation to get away from the ethical and physical annihilation.

Afterwards, the understudies listen to the song of Loukianos Kilaidonis, "Migration", from 1975, and they must be able to understand that an imperative reason for migration is unemployment.

Finally, the film “Nyfes”, by the awarded director Patelis Voulgaris, means refers to the year 1922, when Norman and Niki are sailing to go to America. Norman is a photographer who comes back to his country from Mikra Asia and Niki is one of the 700 brides who go to America to wed a Greek husband who chose them from a photograph, with the high expectations of a better life in the new world. Norman meets Niki and they fall in love, while this film also explored the lives of the other brides. This film offers the chance to the students to encounter the emotions and feeling of immigrants and see pictures of mass migration of individuals who have only their hope to guide them during their journey.

After the completion of the lesson, the students should have understood that migration cannot be eliminated and there is no world or era without migration

Presentation of the method

For the presentation of the lesson, the educator will use two paintings, a movie, a poem and a song. Students will be encouraged to express their thoughts and emotions for critical questions. The steps of the learning process are:

1st stage: The topic "Migration: necessity or choice?" will be explored. In the first stage, the educator focuses on the thoughts of understudies on whether they believe that immigrants move from their country voluntarily or not and on the definition and causes of migration.

2nd stage: Students write their thoughts on the topic in groups or individually as a short exercise.

3rd stage: The instructor presents some sub-topics which are:

Sub-point 1: Causes of migration: Economical, educational, social, psychological etc.

Sub-point 2: Social and economic outcomes of migration

4th stage: Artwork and relationship with the content. At this stage the educator uses the pieces of artwork that will be utilized as triggers to talk about the topic of the lesson and the sub-topics from various forms of art (paintings, songs, cinema, literature, etc.)

Artwork

1.

Title	The immigrants' ship
Creator	John Charles Dollman (1851–1934)
Features	Oil painting on canvas, 111.0 x 162.5 εκ.
Year	1884
Source	Page url: http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/exilesandemigrants/ed_journey_03.htm ↓
Museum/Gallery	Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide



The painting shows a little girl playing happily with toys while besides her there are the exhausted mother and troubled father. The other passengers are skeptical and tired, sharing the same pain on the deck of the ship: the pain of parting their homeland. Having all necessary belongings to their side, they move to a new location. It also reveals

the difference in children's toys of 1884 with those of the 21st century. It is easy to find the social class of the people as they are not in the rich areas of the ship. The frustration and unhappiness are displayed on their faces.

2.

Title	Le Radeau de la Méduse
Creator	Jean-Louis-Théodore Géricault (1791 – 1824)
Features	Oil painting on canvas, 491 x 716 εκ.
Year	1818 – 1819
Source	Page url: http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/raft-medusa
Museum/Gallery	Louvre Museum, Paris



Géricault, presents a boat traveling to Senegal transporting immigrants. The ship is about to sink. From afar, the castaways see another boat and their hopes for salvation are revived. It could be a direct parallel: people live in a country which does not ensure quality of life (ship sinking) and they seek a new home (second boat). The painter captures the fatigue and the desperate attempt for survival in people's faces. The light, falling over the bodies of castaways, multiplies the dramatic facial expressions and movements of the bodies, creating more emotions to the viewers.

3.

Title	Immigration - Η Μετανάστευση
Lyrics	Giannis Negreontis - Γιάννης Νεγρεπόντης
Music	Loukianos Kilaidonis - Λουκιανός Κηλαηδόνης
Record	Simple lessons of political economy - Απλά μαθήματα πολιτικής οικονομίας
Year	1975
Source	Page url: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsgczP1cYrw

One solution: migration
when unemployment
plagues our country
but in economy
let's see what it costs.
One solution: migration
in an individual plan.

When you leave as a worker
18 years old
to your country
you are passive
and although you had cost
for the land and the people
to the foreign land
you become an asset.

etc.

The song is timeless, as the phenomenon of migration due to the fact that it was written in 1975. It presents views on unemployment: immigrants are solely responsible for their migration. Furthermore, it says that unemployment may be due to the economic crisis, lack of investment, etc. However, before judging the young immigrant, it is advisable to consider the services that he/she can offer in whichever country of residence and / or to put ourselves in his/her position.

4.

Title	For the term "immigrants"
Writer	Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht (1898 - 1956)
Publishing	Berthold Brecht, <i>Poimata</i> , Marios Ploritis, Themelio Publications

The German author wrote this poem in 1937, when he lived in exile in Scandinavia, persecuted by Hitler's power. The Second World War had not yet broken out, but the Nazi had proved that they were violent and inhumane with the wild pursuit of Jews and dissidents Germans. The title indicates the issue that concerns the poet: the term "immigrants". The narrator shows that immigrants are those who deliberately leave their homeland - meaning that their decision is voluntary. However, many have not left their country deliberately, they have not chosen their destination and the host country. They do not consider the new country as home, but as exile. The poem displays anger, indignation, injustice and hope for repatriation.

5.

Title	Nyfes (Brides)
Director	Pantelis Voulgaris
Duration	135 minutes
Year of production	2004
Country of production	Greece
Source	Internet - Pages url: (Official trailer) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSLfRdziVuw

Award-winning dramatic film of the famous director Pantelis Voulgaris describes the journey of 700 women of various nationalities, from Istanbul to New York, where they would meet the men who were sent to marry. Emotions such as grief, melancholy and loneliness are presented. The "Brides" is a film that makes the viewer to experience the pain of an immigrant at a very intense level.

5th stage: Artwork and correlation with the critical questions. Here is refined works of art and the correlation with the critical questions through dialogue of teacher and students.

Artwork	Why a refugee varies from an immigrant?	Why immigrants should have the same rights as locals in the host country?
Painter "The immigrants' ship"	✓	✓
Painter "Le Radeau de la Méduse"	✓	✓
Song "Immigration"	✓	✓
Poem "For the term immigrants"	✓	
Movie "Nyfes"	✓	

Students are asked to answer some additional questions, including:

Artwork	What did impress me?	Why did it impress me?	Which are my emotions?
Painter "The immigrants' ship"	;	;	;
Painter "Le Radeau de la Méduse"	;	;	;
Song "Immigration"	;	;	;
Poem "For the term immigrants"	;	;	;
Movie "Nyfes"	;	;	;

6th stage: Critical reflection. Students are required to write the same exercise which they produced in the second stage. Then there is an assessment of their thoughts based on a rating scale, which the teacher will make after the lesson. Finally, the conclusions and observations of all the lesson will be presented.

Conclusions from the implementation of the method "Transformative Learning through Aesthetic Experience" in teaching economics in high school

Our research for teaching economics with the method "Transformative Learning through Aesthetic Experience" in High School has the following conclusions:

- Art opens the door to discover ourselves and the others, to learn from our own knowledge and experience, to evolve and to transform through the cathartic aesthetic experience.
- The integration of art in education is easily implemented without financial costs. The benefits from the implementation of this particular methodology in teaching economics are important and multilayered both for the students and the teachers.
- Direct and dynamic involvement of students in the teaching process through collaborative teaching is achieved. Experiential learning through art is a dynamic teaching intervention in school.
- It is necessary to utilize art in teaching economics at school in order to provide students with comprehensive education based on creative learning and critical thinking. Additionally, it helps at cultivating emotional intelligence skills and it creates a pleasant and creative learning climate in the classroom that improves the quality of school education through culture based on the senses, at no cost.

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