

Case Study

Title:

Set of Art Education Practices: visual arts in pandemic times

Abstract:

To celebrate the International Arts Education Week 2020, Arte Central launched a project called "Set of Art Education Practices: visual arts in pandemic times". We invited teachers from all levels of education to participate by sharing the activities they are working on with students. We received 30 generous contributions, published on our website. As a member of the International Society for Education Through Art (InSEA) and of the World Alliance for Arts Education (WAAE), Arte Central has decided to mark that special week by becoming an aggregating element, making the bridge between these teachers, sharing their practices, in order also to understand what happened in Visual Arts in our formal education system during the lockdown.

Context:

Arte Central is a Portuguese company that acts to connect art with people, providing art education to everyone possible. We've been acting in Portugal and this specific project responds to the necessity of sharing the work of Portuguese school teachers and their students, from pre-school to high school, making their activities visible. In Portugal, school routines have changed very sudden since March 16, 2020, the day that schools closed for being places of close relationship, very populated and, therefore, conducive to contagion. From night to day, teachers and students saw an altered form of relationship, mediated by technological tools (computers, tablets, smartphones, communication platforms and data management). This challenge was approached in very different ways and also conducted to unequal access to education, which schools tried to blur, but not always, because they were not endowed with the resources - human and material - that would allow it. The change was tragically sudden, and did not compromise solutions to the equity that was demanded. The effort to adapt to this new reality was severe, both on the part of teachers and students, and only in the future will we be able to better understand the impact and consequences of the measures and strategies that have been implemented.

Who was the project:

Arte Central served as a bridge to a number of teachers that were available to share the work they made with their students, from pre-school to high school, during the lockdown.

Objectives and contents of the project:

The fourth week of May was proclaimed by UNESCO in 2011 as the Week International Art Education, this year between the 25th and the 31st. This special week aims to recognize art in all its diversity as an essential component of education for the full development of each person. International Education Week Artistic 2020, and in this particular context of confinement, WAAE launched its members a challenge of making known how arts education can play a role important in the lives of children and young people, families and communities, during and after the Covid-19. As a member of WAAE, Central Art was constituted as an aggregating element, making the bridge between teachers in the field of Visual, in order to get a significant answer in relation to what was happening in this area in our formal education system.

Description of the solution:

We created this project entitled "Set of Art Education Practices: visual arts in pandemic times". We invited teachers from all levels of education to participate with work that they have developed with their students since the day schools closed. We used our mailing list and our social networks to publicize it and we received 30 responses. The contents of the responses are the sole responsibility of the teachers who sent them. This Set is intended to be shared and presents art education activities carried out in schools in the context of distance education imposed by Covid-19. The activities do not seek to be representative of the schools or groupings where they took place and generalizations should not be made, because each one was conceived and answered within a specific context. We can't also forget that each of these 30 participations exists because there were conditions in which teachers were able to communicate with their students, which we know that it didn't happen in all school contexts, nor with all students. The Set may be seen here: <https://artecentral.pt/dossier-de-praticas-de-educacao-artistica/> and it was published in our social networks during 30 days, 1 activity per day.

Reflections of the project:

The reactions exceed all our expectations. The Set had thousands of visualizations and many shares and comments. People in general found this a very important initiative because sharing experiences is truly useful for people that work on the same area. Students also loved to see their work on the internet as a valued content, because it meant that it was significant.

Conclusion of the case study:

In the particular case of teaching Visual Arts, the schools that have succeeded have maintained a distance relationship with children and young people, launching digital activities to which students - most, but not all, for different reasons - have responded. In most cases, the teachers' work proposals

were simple exercises of analogical execution. From the moment schools closed, and despite all the latent unpredictability, teachers knew 3 things: (1) that it would not be possible to give individualized support to his students as it occurred in the classroom; (2) that not all children and young people had conditions - material, psychological and / or comfort - to respond to their requests; (3) that many students were deprived of their art materials, because the urgency of the closure of schools left no time for them to take them home (and the closure of commerce prevented the purchase of new materials, if this could be an option). Under these conditions, the activities that have been requested in the subjects related to Visual Arts show some diversity. Both the proposals and the results presented by the students reveal that creativity and critical thinking do not necessarily have to be out of the process in the non-classroom teaching. The success of this initiative leads us to open a new call, this time extended also to colleges, non formal education and teacher training. We are receiving a significant amount of proposals, which reinforce the idea of the importance of sharing practices. This also made us think of extending this project to other countries (if you feel interested in participating in some way, please contact us)

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