

14. THE ROLE OF FORMAL, NONFORMAL AND INFORMAL SYSTEMS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL-CREATIVE COMPETENCES

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Abstract: *Art education plays a fundamental role in the development of cognitive, emotional, and aesthetic abilities, contributing to a well-rounded formation that is sensitive to cultural diversity. This article explores the specificities of art education within formal, nonformal, and informal systems, analyzing the contribution of each type of education to the development of artistic and cultural competencies among students. The aim is to highlight the differences and complementarities of these systems, emphasizing the importance of a multidimensional and accessible art education for all.*

Key words: *art education, creative pedagogy, educational technologies*

1. Introduction

Art education plays a central role in the aesthetic, moral, and cognitive development of students, contributing to the growth of a culturally sensitive and engaged society. The objective of this article is to explore the distinctive features of art education within the three educational systems – formal, non-formal, and informal – and to highlight the contributions of each system in fostering artistic skills and developing the community of artistic practice.

Formal education represents the standardized instructional framework, providing students with structured and curriculum-guided training. In this context, art education:

- Integrates information and communication technologies that modernize the teaching process, offering access to visual, musical, and theatrical resources globally.
- Develops skills through a structured and organized approach, where art pedagogy is systematically regulated and assessed.
- Enables the training of specialized art teachers, preparing educators to approach art from an interdisciplinary perspective and stimulate students' creativity.

Non-formal education offers a flexible framework, emphasizing experiences and voluntary participation, facilitating students' involvement in extracurricular activities, art courses, workshops, and art clubs. The specific nature of this type of education lies in:

- Interculturality and the intercultural dimensions of art education, where non-formal activities allow interaction between cultures and create a learning environment that cultivates respect for artistic diversity.
- Art as a means of community mediation, where non-formal artistic activities facilitate social interaction and encourage free expression and collaboration within the community.

Informal education is characterized by natural and continuous learning,

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occurring outside any formal or non-formal framework. It contributes to art education by:

- Providing facilitated access to information and communication technologies (e.g., the internet, online learning platforms), offering artistic resources accessible to the general public, especially children and adolescents.
- Promoting an intercultural environment, as access to various forms of global artistic expression opens opportunities for understanding and appreciating cultural diversity.
- Supporting art as a means of self-expression and personal development, allowing individuals the freedom to explore creativity and develop a personal relationship with art without the constraints of a pre-established program.

2. Art Education in the Formal System

The integration of technologies into formal art education transforms the learning process, enabling access to multimedia resources and interactive platforms that expand teaching perspectives and encourage student engagement. Recent studies have shown that using technology in art lessons enhances understanding of artistic concepts through digital simulations, 3D visualization, and real-time virtual interactions (Smith & Anderson, 2022). Additionally, educational applications allow students to develop artistic and aesthetic skills in a personalized and adaptable way, promoting student-centered learning (Jones, 2021).

Comparative approaches in art pedagogy are essential for identifying the most effective teaching methods. Various studies have demonstrated that art education methods in countries such as Japan, Finland, and France focus their curricula on creativity and free expression, in contrast to traditional systems emphasizing technique and form (Rosenblatt, 2023). These differences highlight the potential for art education to evolve toward flexible models centered on personal expression and creativity, essential for the holistic development of students (Barker & Leclerc, 2020).

The quality of art education significantly depends on teacher training. Teacher education involves not only technical aspects but also a thorough understanding of art psychology and the ability to utilize artistic resources integratively (Brown, 2019). Continuing education programs, such as those developed by UNESCO and national art organizations, underscore the need to prepare teachers to use technologies and interdisciplinary approaches, facilitating the understanding of art within a broader cultural and social context (UNESCO, 2021).

3. Art Education in Non-Formal and Informal Systems

Art education in non-formal and informal systems offers different opportunities for cultural and aesthetic development compared to the formal environment, emphasizing freedom of expression, personalized creative experiences, and the integration of intercultural dimensions. Non-formal systems, often represented by workshops, art clubs, or community projects, and informal systems, through access to digital resources and cultural interactions, create learning contexts that encourage active individual involvement in the artistic creation process.

Studies have shown that non-formal and informal art education facilitates

intercultural interaction and understanding of cultural diversity. According to Freedman (2018), non-formal art programs are essential for developing cultural sensitivity and promoting respect for diverse artistic traditions. This type of intercultural education, described by Delacruz (2019), fosters an "expanded cultural awareness" and contributes to better social integration, with art becoming a common language for cultural communication and dialogue (Erickson & Young, 2020).

Non-formal art is recognized as an effective tool for conflict mediation and strengthening community cohesion (Kester, 2021). Through collective creative activities such as mural painting, public performances, and community art, individuals from different social backgrounds can collaborate, generating a sense of belonging and solidarity (Thompson, 2020). In his extensive study, Bishop (2019) emphasizes that community art functions as a social binder, transforming public spaces into places for dialogue, action, and social inclusion. Thus, art becomes a catalyst for positive social changes, strengthening bonds between community members.

The use of digital technologies is essential in informal art education, providing access to global resources and encouraging self-learning. According to Gee and Hayes (2016), digital platforms enable active intercultural exchange, with YouTube, Pinterest, and other interactive platforms becoming tools for artistic exploration and experimentation, helping young people develop their style (Mirzoeff, 2017). Moreover, studies by Jenkins and his collaborators (2019) have highlighted the role of participatory media and the impact of digital culture on forming new generations of artists, demonstrating that technology can expand access to art education and diversify modes of expression (Ito et al., 2018).

Informal arts education, defined as self-directed learning and individual cultural experiences, plays a crucial role in personality development and self-knowledge. As Efland (2002) shows, art helps individuals explore feelings and understand themselves in a way that is not possible through other forms of education. Dewey (2005) argues that aesthetic experiences are fundamental to the holistic development of the individual, allowing for deep reflection on values and existential meaning. This approach is also supported by Gardner (2006), who states that art contributes to the development of multiple intelligences, especially intrapersonal intelligence.

4. Teacher training in the field of arts education

Teacher training in arts education is a crucial component of the development of quality education, in which art not only transmits aesthetic knowledge, but also contributes to the development of students' creativity, empathy and cognitive skills. The training of art teachers must combine both pedagogical skills and advanced knowledge in the arts, developing a deep understanding of the artistic educational process.

Teachers in the arts need training that integrates knowledge from various fields, such as psychology, creativity pedagogy, educational technology and classroom management. According to Eisner (2002), art teachers must possess not only technical skills in various forms of artistic expression, but also the ability to create a stimulating and supportive educational environment. Fisher (2015) emphasizes

that interdisciplinary training allows teachers to adapt to the modern demands of art education, to use innovative methods and to develop transdisciplinary projects, approaching art in connection with other educational fields.

Active methods, such as project-based learning, problem-based approaches and experiential techniques, are essential in art education. Smith and Kaschak (2018) argue that teacher training in creativity pedagogy helps them implement methods that stimulate autonomy and innovation among students. Active methods are particularly effective in art education, where the creative process plays a central role. These methods, Stokrocki (2020) states, encourage personal exploration and allow students to develop critical thinking and creativity skills, essential in a constantly changing world.

Art teachers face numerous challenges in the training process, from the lack of specialized resources to the absence of adapted in-service training programs. According to Day (2004), many art teachers feel undervalued in traditional education systems, and this affects not only their motivation but also their access to professional development. Roldan and Santibanez (2019) have shown that, in many countries, art teacher training programs are insufficiently developed, not covering the essential elements of creative pedagogy, which affects the quality of the educational act. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) also highlight the importance of collaboration between art teachers and those from other fields to build a support network and facilitate the exchange of good practices.

Digital technology plays a crucial role in the continuous education of teachers, allowing them to access global educational resources, participate in online communities, and experiment with new teaching methods, such as AI-assisted teaching and augmented reality. According to Roland and Russell (2019), digital technologies offer teachers the opportunity to diversify their teaching methods and more effectively respond to the needs of current generations of students. For example, Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) are increasingly used in art education, allowing for immersive explorations of artworks and engaging students in a deep and engaging educational experience (Chung & Cho, 2020).

Continuous education of art teachers is essential for updating skills and adapting to new educational challenges. Cultural institutions, such as museums, art centers, and galleries, play a key role in this by organizing professional development programs for teachers. According to Burnham and Kai-Kee (2018), museums are becoming important educational partners by offering training programs that integrate art into a broader historical and cultural context. These programs allow teachers to deepen their knowledge and learn new ways to stimulate students' creativity and artistic sensitivity, combining art with experiential education (Hooper-Greenhill, 2020).

Teacher training in arts education must also include an intercultural dimension, as art is a powerful means of intercultural integration and communication. As a component of continuous training, integrating elements of intercultural pedagogy allows teachers to broaden their perspectives and include cultural diversity in their teaching. Studies by Nussbaum (2010) suggest that teachers who are prepared to approach art from an intercultural perspective contribute to the development of empathy and mutual understanding among students, which is essential in a

globalized society. Arts education requires a multidimensional approach that integrates both formal and non-formal and informal systems. The findings highlight the need for diversified teacher training that responds to current challenges and supports an arts education that promotes creativity, empathy and social cohesion.

Teacher training in arts education is an essential condition for the development of quality education. The integration of technologies, innovative pedagogical methods and collaboration with cultural institutions are fundamental elements for the continuous training of teachers. In the modern context, art teachers must be not only specialists in their field, but also facilitators of intercultural learning, creativity and empathy, contributing to the complete development of students' personalities through educational art.

Arts education, in all its forms – formal, non-formal and informal – contributes significantly to the development of cultural competences and awareness among students and the community. Our article highlights the importance of promoting a diverse educational system, capable of responding to the artistic and intercultural development needs of young people, thus ensuring an environment conducive to the integral development of their personalities and an active community of practice in the arts.

5. Conclusions

The characteristics of art education within the formal system are specified, an organized and regulated space where art is an integral part of the educational curriculum. The focus is on the role of information and communication technologies in formal art education, which offer digital resources and multimedia platforms that enhance learning experiences. In this section, we also present a comparative analysis of art pedagogy based on international educational models, highlighting the differences between technique-centered approaches and those that promote creative freedom. Lastly, we discuss the importance of art teacher training, an essential component of the formal system that directly influences the quality of art education and students' ability to develop a well-defined aesthetic sense.

The specifics of art education within nonformal and informal environments, which allow for a more flexible and adaptable approach to individual needs and interests, are outlined. In this context, we explore the intercultural dimensions of art education, highlighting the role of visual and performing arts in promoting cultural sensitivity and respect for cultural diversity. Additionally, we discuss art as a tool for mediation and community action, an essential practice for developing social cohesion and promoting inclusion within the community. Digital technologies, such as Virtual and Augmented Reality, are analyzed in the context of nonformal and informal education, emphasizing their benefits for broad access to resources and self-directed artistic learning. The informal dimension of art education is presented as an open and accessible space, where individuals can build a personal relationship with art, exploring their cultural and creative identity.

The necessity of teacher training in art education, a crucial dimension for ensuring quality in the artistic field. Art teachers have a significant impact on how students perceive and engage in artistic activities, and their training should include not only technical skills but also pedagogical competencies that promote creativity,

autonomy, and critical thinking. Here, we address the challenges encountered in art teacher training, such as the lack of resources and continuous training programs, as well as innovative professional preparation methods, which involve active pedagogies and adaptation to new educational technologies. Furthermore, we emphasize the importance of intercultural dimensions and ongoing teacher training in collaboration with cultural and artistic institutions.

Formal, non-formal and informal arts education encourages the use of flexible pedagogies, focused on individual needs and preferences of students. Alternative approaches such as project-based learning, artistic mentoring and experiential pedagogy are recognized methods to stimulate creativity and autonomy in the process of arts learning (Noddings, 2013). Programs run by arts communities, for example, those reviewed by Wilson and Lobato (2015), show that such pedagogies not only improve technical skills, but also promote a deep and personal relationship with art, making arts education a personalized learning experience.

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