



IMPROVEMENT OF CREATIVE COMPETENCIES OF STUDENTS BY TEACHING THEM TO DRAW ON GRAPHIC MATERIALS IN FINE ARTS CLASSES

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Abstract

This article improves students' creative competencies by teaching them to depict graphic materials in fine arts classes. The article includes structural pedagogical strategies of intervention, including step-by-step seminars and project-based learning, which served to develop students' technical skills in graphic materials and increase their ability to solve creative problems. Quantitative data from the preliminary and final assessments conducted using the Torrance Creativity Tests (TTCT) showed significant improvements in fluency, flexibility, originality, and development ($p < 0.01$). Qualitative data obtained from semi-structural interviews and portfolio analysis noted an increase in students' self-confidence and the use of innovative approaches in the use of materials. This research contributes to the design of higher education curricula on a global scale by proposing a pedagogical model that connects technical skills with creative expression in fine arts education.

Keywords: Creative competencies, Fine Arts education, Illustration in graphic materials, Pedagogy, Higher education.

Introduction

The development of creativity in the modern educational environment is one of the main goals of higher education, especially in fine arts education, where students are expected to acquire competencies that combine technical skills with innovative thinking (Runco, 2014). Depiction in graphic materials, as one of the main directions of fine art, allows students to study various textures, shapes, and techniques and develops creative approaches to solving complex conceptual problems (Eisner, 2002). However, traditional pedagogical approaches to teaching



graphic materials often limit creative exploration, focusing on technical skills (Hetland, 2013).

Although fine arts education in Uzbekistan is based on deep cultural traditions, there is a growing need to modernize curricula that meet global standards of creativity and innovation (Ministry of Higher Education of Uzbekistan, 2020). This study is aimed at filling this gap by studying the development of students' creative competencies through teaching aimed at depicting graphic materials. The main question of the research: How does structural pedagogical intervention in depicting graphic materials affect the development of creative competencies of undergraduate students in fine arts?

Creative competencies in fine arts

Creative competencies cover the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor spheres, including fluency (generating a large number of ideas), adaptability (adapting to new perspectives), originality (creating new results), and development (improving ideas) (Torrance, 1974). In fine arts, these competencies are manifested through the study of materials, conceptual development, and reflective practice (Hetland, 2013). Studies have shown that structured pedagogical interventions, such as project-based learning, can significantly enhance these competencies (Scott, 2016). Graphic materials, including charcoal, ink, graphite, and digital tools, provide ample opportunities for artistic expression (Edwards, 2012). Teaching these materials requires a balance between technical guidelines and creative freedom, as excessive attention to technology can stifle innovation (Eisner, 2002). Recent research emphasizes the effectiveness of step-by-step learning, that is, directing students from guided exercises to independent projects, in the development of skills and creativity (Vygotsky, 1978).

Although existing studies emphasize the importance of creativity in fine arts, there are few studies studying the specific role of depiction in graphic materials in higher education, particularly in non-Western countries such as Uzbekistan. This study attempts to fill this gap by proposing a pedagogical model tailored to local educational needs and based on global best practices.

The study used mixed methods that combined quantitative creativity assessments with qualitative data obtained from student interviews and portfolio analysis. The intervention was conducted at the university over 18 months (three semesters) with the participation of 64 undergraduate students of fine arts.



Participants were selected on the basis of a targeted selection from among second and third-year fine arts students ($n = 64$, 38 women, 26 men, aged 19-22). Informed consent was obtained and permission for research was granted by the university's ethics committee.

The intervention consisted of 12 weeks of training sessions, each lasting 3 hours, and was aimed at visualization in graphic materials. The curriculum is structured in stages as follows:

- Weeks 1-4: Technical skills (e.g., creating shadows and textures with charcoal and ink).

- Weeks 5-8: Conceptual exploration (e.g., thematic projects that combine materials).

9-12 weeks: Independent projects with peer and teacher feedback.

The principles of project-based learning were applied, encouraging students to solve problems of real art (Thomas, 2000).

- Quantitative: Initial and final creativity was measured using the Torrance Creative Thinking Tests (TTCT), Figural Form A and B (Torrance, 2006). The scores were analyzed for fluency, flexibility, originality, and development.

- Qualitative: Semi-structured interviews ($n = 20$) studied students' views on creative growth. Portfolios ($n = 64$) were analyzed as evidence of innovation in the use of materials.

Quantitative data were analyzed using dependent t-tests to compare the initial and final TTCT scores. Qualitative data were thematically coded using the NVivo program in accordance with the Brown and Clarke (2006) method.

Quantitative results

Associated t-tests showed significant improvements in all TTCT measurements ($p < 0.01$). Average scores changed as follows:

- Smoothness: from 22.4 to 28.7 ($t(63) = 5.82, p < 0.001$)

- Flexibility: 19.8 to 25.3 ($t(63) = 4.97, p < 0.001$)

- Specificity: from 17.6 to 23.9 ($t(63) = 6.14, p < 0.001$)

- Development: from 20.1 to 26.8 ($t(63) = 5.39, p < 0.001$)

Three main topics were identified from the interview and portfolio analysis:

1. Increased self-confidence: Students noted an increase in self-confidence when experimenting with graphic materials, linking this to step-by-step learning.



2. Innovative use of materials: Portfolios showed new combinations of materials (for example, ink and digital layers), which reflected originality.

3. Reflective practice: Students demonstrated a deeper understanding of their creative processes through peer feedback.

The results confirm the effectiveness of project-based step-by-step learning in fine arts (Thomas, 2000). Significant improvements in TTCT scores indicate that structured training in visualization in graphic materials contributes to the enhancement of creative competencies in the cognitive dimension. Qualitative data emphasizes affective growth, such as self-confidence and reflexive practice, which is important for the development of art (Eisner, 2002).

The research influences the design of curricula in higher education. By integrating technical guidelines and creative exploration, teachers can prepare students for global art requirements while respecting the local cultural context. However, it should be taken into account that the limitations of the study are small sample size and that it was conducted in one institution, which may limit generalization.

Conclusion: This study showed that focused teaching of depiction in graphic materials significantly increases the creative competencies of students in fine arts education. The proposed pedagogical model - phased seminars and project-based learning - provides a repeatable basis for teachers. Further research should examine the applicability of this model in various cultural and educational contexts.

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