
A REVIEW ON ART WITH THE AUTISTIC CHILD

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ABSTRACT

This article looks at some of the elements that lead to art's effectiveness as a therapeutic tool for children with autism, as well as some of the reasons why art therapy isn't more widely used in our schools. The essay goes on to describe the abilities that experienced instructors of autistic children may offer to the therapeutic environment. The paper ends with several recommendations for further study in this area. Children with autism live in a world that is not the same as ours. This may seem to be a strong, perhaps prejudiced remark, yet it will resonate with parents and professionals who deal with autistic children. Many individuals with autism find it difficult to explain their extremely distinct way of seeing the world and being themselves.

KEYWORDS: *Autism, Art Therapy, Art Education, Creativity, Spirituality*

1. INTRODUCTION

If we agree that individuals with autism live in a world that is fundamentally different from the rest of us, we must then consider whether teachers and children with autism can ever meet on common ground. This isn't a riddle to be solved, but rather a question presented in the hopes of bridging the gap between autistic and non-autistic individuals[1]. The purpose of this essay is to argue that art education and art therapy are especially well adapted to establishing this bond. For the sake of this essay, it will be essential to define the terms "autism," "teacher," and "therapist" before presenting this instance. The following important concepts will be discussed in more detail throughout the text's body[2]. The word "autism" in 1943, according to the International Journal of Autism, which provides a brief history of autism's emergence as a separate developmental disease. The term autism, which comes from the Greek word *autos*, which means "self," to characterize a group of youngsters he was dealing with in his therapeutic practice as a psychologist. He identified fourteen behaviors that prompted him to classify autism as a separate disease from other forms of juvenile psychosis[3]. The phrase "the triangle of impairment" to describe these fourteen characteristics of behavior. According to Wing, people with autism have considerable problems with communication, social engagement, and creativity.

Many authors and individuals with autism disagree with the claim that they lack creativity, and the phrase seems to have caused some semantic misunderstanding[4]. More recently, researchers have chosen to characterize the undeniable disparities in cognitive functioning that individuals with autism have as a loss of core coherence, inflexibility of thinking, or a lack of capacity to recognize or envision other people's states of mind. The focus of this article on art education and art therapy is on the visual arts, but it is recognized that the arts also include theater, music, and literature. Even a quick study of a sample of literature in this area is sufficient to demonstrate that art instructors and art therapists have fundamentally different expectations, purposes, and techniques. Adult guidance, goal-setting, and, in most instances, proof of success, if not tangible evidence of completed work, characterize art education[5]. In their handbook for arts coordinators in primary schools, and others cite OFSTED inspectors advice to art teachers and coordinators, which is indicative of much of the advice provided to art teachers and coordinators in schools.

This statement emphasizes skill development, high standards, and high expectations, as well as direct teaching. When we compare this statement to a sample statement drawn from a variety of comparable instances in this area related to therapy rather than education, we can see that the focus is on emotions and empathic communication rather than skill development or direct teaching[6].

It may be claimed that students with autism should have access to skill development, high expectations, and a feeling of self-identity, achievement, and self-awareness. The National Curriculum Council's 1992 report promoting art education as facilitating such cognitive functions as making decisions, forming opinions, remembering and adapting, sorting, calculating, counting, sequencing, appreciating pattern, and anticipating outcomes was instrumental in raising the profile of Art and Design in the National Curriculum. However, in the area of special needs, there is relatively little comparable advice. The study of children with dyspraxia is a very uncommon example of research in the area of special needs, although not autism[7]. Drawing practice has a substantial positive impact on the development of spatial awareness and hand-eye coordination, according to this research. According anecdotal evidence of the usefulness of art education in the area of special needs may stem from a habitual reaction to art as a positive thing for children with special needs, rather than a reasoned argument supporting the legitimacy of art education. She claims that there is a misconception that art is a non-academic topic that is thus "appropriate" for children with special needs.

Justifying a position on the schedule for the arts based on its non-academic status or arguing for its inclusion based on skill acquisition limits the arts' potential in the development of creativity, spirituality, and self-hood. It would be difficult to justify the inclusion of art in the curriculum only on the basis of cognitive and physical abilities[8]. It might be claimed that playing ball games in physical education promotes spatial awareness and hand-eye coordination in a more methodical manner than, say, painting with a brush. Counting and calculating abilities may be practiced in art activities, but numeracy skills are more easily acquired in the classroom. It is clear from this brief assessment of a sample of the literature in this area that advocating for art activities to be included in the curriculum because of their efficacy in skill development is barking up the wrong educational tree. Rather, the purpose of this essay is to argue that art activities have distinct and specific characteristics that justify their inclusion in the curriculum. Art may help people develop talents that aren't only utilitarian.

This is true in both the situation of a typically developing kid and the case of a child with autism, but the example given here will show that the latter has a special worth. A common thread running through most of the literature on the arts emphasizes the characteristics of creativity, aesthetic appreciation, spirituality, and organizing or making sense that may be facilitated by engaging in art. These qualities are not exclusive to the arts and others would argue in their discussions of science's spirituality and creativity, and the case made here is that the arts are uniquely suited to the task of fostering creativity and giving voice to spirituality and a sense of self-hood[9]. However, before this argument can be made, it must first be attempted to identify these infamously difficult characteristics. Here's a quick rundown of what each one entails. Each is given in sequence for clarity's sake, but the reader will see that there is a lot of overlap between each category. Creativity is the first aspect that stands out in any study or practice of art. As one would imagine, there are differing perspectives on our creative creations[10].

2. DISCUSSION

According to the evolutionary viewpoint of experts who have mostly worked with animals, such as, creativity is a result of survival. Kohler determined that extending a stick by adding a second length in order to reach food constituted a creative act in his study of apes and their rudimentary use of tools. For example, this definition of creativity as a problem-solving example rather than creativity per se. He acknowledged that problem-solving was an element of creativity, but

maintained that creativity was fundamentally different from simple function. The link between creativity and elements of play has been established by several therapists and educators. Indeed, it's difficult to categorize the actions of a young kid engrossed in creative activities as either "art" or "play." claims that play and art have a number of characteristics, including the fact that they are both freely undertaken. He claims that a kid may be forced to participate in play or art, but that this compulsion makes the action devoid of the essence of creativity, and that it cannot legitimately be described as either play or art. Insisting on a kid making a Mother's Day card in an art class is a situation that many instructors and students have encountered. Such a scenario, could hardly be termed creative involvement. The fun nature of young children's artwork in a fascinating way. From his observations of young children sketching, he concluded that exploratory play was apparent in the inventive ways in which children mixed sound, movement, and mark creation. He refers to the choreography of play as the way his subjects mimicked aircraft sounds and flight paths in downward swooping motions, and how these movements were subsequently transferred into mark creation on paper.

Observations of young children playing and sketching are lovingly worded and appeal to a common inclination that we as teachers and therapists have toward children playing, creating, and having pleasure. Many authors believe that a good interaction between kid and adult is a requirement for effective engagement; an engaged, supporting interest is at the heart of both the therapeutic and educational relationship. Aesthetic sensitivity is defined as the capacity to make informed judgments about art in the National Curriculum guideline on art. Although this definition is so short that it will be of little use to a teacher doing art activities, the recommendations go to great lengths to explain how children may be exposed to art from other cultures and how they can objectively and critically evaluate their own work. Although this may be beneficial in the mainstream, there is little guidance in this area of the curriculum for children with special needs. Some insightful observations on what forms an aesthetic response to an object or a symbol. He claims that the context in which the object or symbol is seen determines whether or not the reaction is described as beautiful. A farmer gazing at a tree stump with the intention of removing 'the barrier' from his land is unlikely to have an aesthetic reaction to the tree stump; yet, a painter may have a significant aesthetic response to the tree stump. Say that aesthetic reactions may be elicited not just by beautiful or appealing shapes and objects, but also by discordant, ugly, or upsetting forms.

This is in stark contrast to the Aesthetic Movement of the 1870s and 1880s, whose defining ideas were in the beauty of a piece of art. Hargreaves' claim that aesthetics is concerned with not only the beautiful, but also what may be perceived as challenging or lacking in beauty is perhaps in line with the word's root, *aisthetika*, which means perceptible but not necessarily beautiful, and challenges to one's views of what constitutes an aesthetic response can elicit strong reactions. According to, the weakening and annihilation of one's treasured view of reality may be a traumatic event. Many instances of fierce, sometimes violent responses to new schools of creative thinking and practice might be cited. The early paintings of the Fauves, for example, were slashed, and it is not necessary to go far back into current art movements to see the degree of contempt that many modern artists have provoked in the media. This may seem to be a planet apart from the classroom. However, if we, as teachers, are responsible for assisting children in making informed decisions about art, we must weigh our own strong feelings about our aesthetic reactions to professional works of art as well as our students' art production. This is especially true in the case of the autistic student, since it is all too simple to direct, promote, and assist the student's artwork to the point that it becomes less the pupil's accomplishment and more our own as instructors, react to students' efforts at art. They encourage us to examine if our students' efforts are subjectively assessed and, as a result, are given less value than those we deem mature, capable, or more representational in terms of our understanding of what makes good or successful work. A

particular desire to create: we appear to revel in the act of creation beyond and in addition to utility; creation for the sake of it, as she puts it. Another element of growth that art may help with is the formation of a feeling of self. Several psychoanalysts attempted to connect psychoanalysis to children by expanding on Freud's work with adults. The therapeutic and analytical potential of play and art in early children was explored, among others. Many books and articles have been written on the specific debt that art therapy owes to psychoanalytic theory as espoused this text cannot hope to do credit to. However, one element of development highlighted by different schools of psychoanalytic thinking, the formation of the concept of self, deserves special emphasis.

In the early baby, a strong link between play and art. Playing and painting are both fundamentally creative activities, according to and are important to the infant's developing sense of self. The touching, investigation, and absorbed attention to the process of creating matter, whether with smearing feces, food, or paint, is a creative act in that it externalizes the child's activities and reflects the child's feeling of agency or influence upon the world. The transition from complete absorption in the mother's literal presence to a feeling of the mother's absence is characterized as a requirement for the formation of the sense of self. Anxiety triggers the child's capacity to replace, fantasize, and begin to have a feeling of an internal/external world and a distinct sense of identity. This worry, they thought, stemmed from the child's fears that his or her needs may not be fulfilled right away, or that the mother could leave her. the kid participates in a process of separating, projection, and restoration in order to cope with the anxiety. Klein's portrayal of the kid at battle with himself may be depressing. Significant doubts regarding the existence of inherent or instinctive impulses, instead emphasizing the importance of the nurturing environment in the formation of self-identity and the resolution of conflicting emotions.

In order to begin to make sense of the world, one must first have a feeling of one's position in it, and in order to do so, one must have established a sense of self as a distinct entity. The capacity to play is contingent on the ability to recognize a sense of reality outside of oneself. In what refers to as the potential space between mother and child, this awareness is 'practiced' both physically and figuratively. Sucking with the fingers, fist, or thumb is a common habit among infants. Sucking and mouthing is later expanded to encompass sucking or stroking the mouth, nose, and face with an external item e.g., the corner of a blanket. According to one reason for this behavior is that the kid is simulating the presence of the breast and sucking at the breast, while another is the investigation of the "me/not me" phenomenon. The blanket represents "not me," whereas the thumbs and fingers are "myself. At a later stage, this usage of external items typically moves to a favorite item or toy, which becomes a very significant fixture in the child's life. According to Baron-Cohen, if a young kid is not given the chance to perceive things as substitutes for other items, he or she will not acquire a symbolic understanding and will stay tied to the physical world, unable to access an inner realm of imagination and imagining.

The fact that we are tied to the concrete world of literal, physical objects causes us to be oblivious to the presence of things like ideas, beliefs, and wants in brief states of mind. Children with autism often have a hampered sense of symbolic comprehension, and therefore of inner and outward reality; they prefer to perceive things in the present and in a tangible rather than imagined manner. This proclivity will affect how people arrange or fail to order experiences, think about activities, plan for the future, and recall or connect to previous occurrences. A kid with autism is unable to imagine the past or speculate about the future due to a lack of symbolic comprehension. The 'construction of meaning' is the art of childhood and adolescence. Although Matthews was writing about his observations of typically developing youngsters, his results may be used to support the argument that art activities might help children with autism create meaning as well. He convincingly describes how infants arrange their experiences via material involvement and how early markings on paper demarcate a sense of exterior and interior events. Several psychoanalytic

therapists have reported evidence that art therapy may be helpful in creating a sense of meaning, organizing events, and restoring a positive sense of self.

This article contends that, despite certain limitations such as the necessity for substantial assistance from trained art therapists for the teacher and the challenges in assessing development, art therapy may be of special value to children with autism. The rationale behind the claim that art therapy is beneficial to children with autism will be examined from the perspectives of both the instructor and the kid. Because it is independent of verbal communication and less fundamentally focused with cognitive methods of knowing than many other curricular topics like mathematics or physics, art offers a common ground for the autistic student and the therapist or instructor. These disciplines may need the instructor to take on a more instructional position, one that is more conducive to the development of abilities such as reasoning, deduction, and empirical evidence gathering, rather than the enabling, permitting one that creative activities favor. Although a creative approach to the teaching of all topics may be taken, the argument being made here is that the arts provide unique access to creative methods of knowing as well as an understanding of spiritual and aesthetic issues.

3. CONCLUSION

The National Curriculum Guidelines in Art and Design for Special Schools provide some general guidance for schools that serve students with a variety of special needs; however, there is little particular advice for instructors and parents of children with autism. The offered advice is based on a pedagogic perspective that favors directive techniques, teaching, and a product-oriented approach over a process-oriented approach. This article presented data that suggests a more therapeutic child-led approach that focuses on process rather than goods may be especially beneficial to children with autism. Working in a more therapeutic way would have far-reaching consequences for teachers. Any shift from adult-directed to child-directed treatment techniques would need a lot of assistance from art therapy experts. Furthermore, the classroom teacher would need attentive assistance as she learns the abilities required for this kind of job. She is not without abilities, though, and it is probable that she has acquired a high level of empathic rapport when interacting with youngsters who are nonverbal. Before committing to this shift, the instructor must be persuaded of the advantages of this more therapeutic style of working for the students. Children with autism do not think, learn, or exist in the same manner as children with other special needs; their requirements are extremely unique to the condition of autism, and any strategy to working with this group must not waste or squander their time.

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