LITERATURE AND THE ARTS: ITS BEAUTY AND IMPORTANCE IN THE CLASSROOM

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There are kids want to build cathedrals and bridges, some to save lives, others to defend justice, or to teach. But then there are some who are dreamers, whose imagination exceeds the vast space of our universe. Those who are awake at 3 am reading a book with a flashlight, giving vibrant colors to a blank canvas, and those who create worlds through writing. The kids who dream of becoming a writer, a poet, or a painter. The very set of kids that bring magnificence to our lives.

We have all encountered students who don't like to read, students who find reading a tiresome schoolwork. And we need to start addressing this issue. Perhaps the most important contribution of studying literature is by hastening our critical thinking skills- from reading comprehension to our writing aptitudes. As stated by the study of Tabačkováa (2014), entitled "Outside the Classroom, Thinking Inside the Classroom Walls: Enhancing Students’ Critical Thinking Through Reading Literary Texts", reading literature enables students to "identify the difference between the denotative and the connotative meaning, to associate particular parts of the plot, to give meaning to words and, all in all, to produce his or her unique interpretation of the text."

The realm of mathematics and science are technical by nature- as they are wired to be. Memorizing algorithms and formulas to solve a problem, memorizing different parts of our body, memorizing figures and terms to better understand the diversity of the world we live in. On the other side, literature and art compel us not to memorize- but to understand and empathize. Professor Shivaji Sengupta, Ph.D.(2012) of Boricua
liberal arts college in New York City notes that, "literature evokes such human emotions as pity and terror, love and compassion and many other epistemic values (i.e., virtues that help us to know the world and make it better) like honor, bravery, honesty, and integrity." A publication by Albert et. al. (2009) of the Aarhus University Press entitled, "Why study Literature" also proclaims that literature is a, "means of improving the ethical judgments of readers and provides a place of beauty and aesthetic experiences." With the given studies, Literature indeed enables us to understand deeply the world we are part of, and worlds that lie within fiction. Literature helps us to see the world in a different view, far from our own, a view from a different set of eyes.

On the other hand, studying Art in classrooms is just as important and beautiful as studying literature. According to the Public Broadcasting System (2012) article entitled, "The Importance of Art in Child Development", incorporating Art in classrooms enhances the following: painting itself, handling a paintbrush, creating a sculpture, using crayons are more than just art; they enhance motor skills of students. Moreover, a report by the renowned Americans for the Arts states that art education strengthens problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. When students create art, they tend to analyze what specific medium they will use, what story do they want to convey through such and the ability to reflect on certain societal issues being depicted in their art- all of which contributes to their critical thinking skills. Also, Visual learning enables students to see the world not just in technical terms, but in a creative way that not even memorizing could offer.

Towards this end, art and literature compose a thread of skills and understanding both of them can only give to our students. As with the preceding studies given above, both fields play an important role in hastening the minds of our students, not just for academic purposes, but for societal and humanitarian reasons too.
References:


