THE IMPORTANCE OF ARTS IN A STUDENT’S LIFE

by:
Ismael T. Canare
Teacher I, Mariveles National High School - Poblacion

I am a MAPEH teacher and one thing I am proud of is that we are somehow acting as gatekeepers of the past, present and future to students because we teach or facilitate the instruction to know the various elements of their culture and the culture of the world around them.

This has been my training about how I teach music, arts, dance and health and fitness. However, a recent study by Rinne et. al. quoted in an article in Edutopia, showed how integrating arts can affect a student’s cognitive ability for a long time. From the article, they stated activities that can be used to improve the long-term memory of the students. Let us try to put it into a local context.

Cognitive Activities to Improve Long-term Memory

1. Elaboration

This strategy is using forms of arts to explain the concepts that the students should learn. Through this strategy, students will not only memorize a series of written concept or enumerated facts but instead they will be aided by some form of arts to explain the idea. For example, the concept is about diversity and respect. The students can create stories that will demonstrate diversity and respect.

2. Rehearsal of meaning

This strategy is banking on the power of repetition but with a significant modification. The concept to be learned and to be understood should be repeated in other forms of presentation. For example, the concept of the harvest’s song can be
explained using a text, a picture or through the use of a film or video. In this way, students were exposed to multiple examples leading to or building the idea of one.

3. Generation

This particular strategy is a good way to let students apply or practice the concept given to them. This strategy involves students relating the concept taught or learned to another set of ideas or situation. Students need to come up with their own version of the idea through the use of different forms of art. For example, the students need to show the influence of the Greek culture in the arts scene we have today. They should find concepts that will show the influences that can be originated or related to the original concept.

4. Enactment

This strategy is particularly about demonstration. Students need to show their understanding by showing the exact concept using performing arts. For example, the concept is about the forms of courtship songs in Visaya. They need to create a simple skit or role playing demonstrating the rules of courtship for a particular tribe. In this way they are not just hearing passively the concept but they are already doing it first-hand.

5. Oral Production

This strategy is common but can have great effects. The idea of this strategy is to let students personally expound their understanding using their speech faculties. They sing, for example, the description of Maranao art. In his way they are giving themselves a form of relatable experience that could help them learn the concepts.
6. Effort After Meaning

This strategy involves problem-solving skills, sort of. This is about engagement of the students and trying to make connections from the set of experiences or examples presented to them. For example, the students need to explain the value of the tribes’ ritual for the dead. They will be presented with multiple scenarios or examples then they need to explain their observation until they are able to form the desired meaning.

7. Emotional Arousal

It has been proven that emotions of students provides a great pathway to effective learning but it should be done right to reap the positive effects. The students need to have the right level of motivation for them to be engaged in the learning process. It is also important not to overdo the triggering of the students’ emotion because it can make them distracted instead of being engaged to the concepts. Good sets of experiences should be provided for them to appreciate the ideas that may sometimes be new to them.

8. Pictorial Representation

This strategy is like a base for any arts class. Visual cues of the concepts makes students appreciate and understand the abstract concepts they are presented with. It helps them to make connection by individually analysing the concepts. For example, clothing or weaving pattern is the lesson. For them to appreciate the culture we have the need to see the intricacies of the patterns not just only using words or text.

If you can notice the following strategies are pointing to two things. First, you need to provide your students with a wide array of experiences they can manipulate or do. It is anchoring to the idea that retention is better if the person is doing the concept by themselves. The second thing that we can generalize from the set of strategies is that it
is about engagement. Students should be engaged emotionally, mentally and physically for the arts integration to work thus giving students more chances of holistic learning.

Reference:

Vega, Vanessa. A Research-Based Approach to Arts Integration. Published in Edutopia.org, August 29, 2012.