

COLÁISTE NÁISIÚNTA EALAÍNE IS DEARADH  
**NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN**  
A Recognised College of the University College Dublin  
**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

Essay/Assignment Cover Sheet

**Name of Student:**

**Course:**

**Submission Date:**

**Lecturer/tutor:**

**Essay/Assignment title:**

**Word-count:**

<b>Criteria</b>	Ex	VG	Good	Fair	Poor	<b>Comment</b>
Introduction (statement of problem, response to task)						
Range and use of appropriate sources						
Development of argument (analysis, interpretation)						
Conclusions (application, findings, outcomes)						
Presentation, language, academic conventions						

**General comment:**

**Indicative grade:**

**Tutor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Copy of this sheet must accompany all written.

Through the use of both Maxine Greene's paper, 'The Artistic-Aesthetic Curriculum', and your own experience of education, discuss what you consider to be the role of art in education.

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This essay is submitted in partial fulfillment of the B.A. Art Education,  
1<sup>st</sup> Year.

## Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Excited and Innovative	5
Curious and Critical	7
Appreciative	9
Conclusion	11
Works Cited	12

## Introduction

Even though “art” and “aesthetics” have no set definition, they are a crucial part of every person’s life and they are a useful tool for people to express themselves.

Through art such as music, dance, painting, poems and so many more, people can see themselves and relate to each other without many boundaries. In education, art must be used as a method for improving the efficiency of learning in the classroom and as a tool for the students to become more conscious of the world around them. Additionally, art must not only be consumed by the students but also created by them. The student’s own creations are just as important and useful as their active participation in the analysis of other’s artworks. In Maxine Greene’s paper “The Artistic-Aesthetic curriculum”, the author explores how art and aesthetics should be used in an education environment but are willfully or subconsciously being “ignored or denied by both political leaders and educational leaders” (Greene, 2001, p561). Maxine Greene has major insight on the subject due to her great involvement in the arts and her experience as an educator. However, she fails to take into consideration how art produced by the students, individually and as a group, enhances their learning experience and makes them more open minded and enquiring. The role of art in education is to encourage the students to be excited and innovative in their methods of learning and solving problems, curious and critical about the world they live in and appreciative of different cultures.

## Excited and Innovative

As an educator, one of the most difficult things to accomplish in the classroom is to get the students to be excited and passionate about what they are learning. This is extremely difficult because not every single student will always enjoy the topics covered in school and they will not always pay their full attention because they have so many different classes within a school day. Therefore, apathy “may well be the worst enemy of education today” (Greene, 2001, p562). However, through the use of art, the teacher can get the students to be more engaged and focused. One easy solution is simply the use of accompanying images or demonstrations to a presentation or a lecture will significantly help the visual learners absorb knowledge much faster and get the rest of the students a bit more excited about what they are learning. This method of integrating art into the classroom gets students more enthusiastic because they now associate what they learn to an image which “expresses the feelings and perceptions of certain peculiarly sensitive and observant women and men” (Greene, 2001, p563 ). Furthermore, a classroom filled with artwork and photographs that relate to the subject taught in that room can be an extremely welcoming space for students. However, some might argue that too much art in the classroom can become “more of a distraction than an aid to learning” and overuse of images in presentations will not be as impactful (Adoniou, 2017). This is a valid argument that can be easily solved through a balance of art and spoken or written material the students have to consume in the classroom. But, it is impossible to talk about the use of art in the classroom by the teacher and not take into consideration how the creation of art by the students is extremely beneficial to their learning.

Through personal experience, art was always a crucial part of the classroom. Teachers would encourage the students to create different projects so that they familiarise themselves with the topics taught in the classroom through methods that excited them. For example, as part of Greek class, students were taught about the methods of persuasion commercials used to lure in customers to purchase the products or services. The teacher urged the students to find an interesting way to present those methods of persuasion so the students made the decision to create their own commercial in which they would implement those methods. Through projects like these, students got the opportunity to engage in an activity that was interesting and innovative which would assist them in learning about the subject in a meaningful way. Through art, the class could use the knowledge they received in class and apply it to a real life situation which is a lot more significant than just memorising everything and regurgitating it in an exam without any further cognitive thought or enquiry. Therefore, art can make the students excited about the information they are receiving and, in the long term, make them more innovative in the way they choose to express ideas, solve problems and learn effectively.

## Curious and Critical

Art and aesthetics are extremely helpful in the classroom since they are great tools for students to learn but the most important thing they offer is an insight to each person's experiences and their subconscious. Art allows people "to reach beyond where [they] are" and enter a new level of understanding themselves (Greene, 2001, p566). Specifically, art and aesthetics are so important in the classroom because through them, people's "own moral choices" habits and experiences come into question (Greene, 2001, p564). It is extremely difficult to observe and analyse a painting, poem or other form of art without reflecting on you own life and the world around you. Thus, by introducing more art in the classroom and teaching students how to question what they see or hear and properly analyse elements of art to reach a conclusion of its meaning, we naturally create adults who are more curious, observant and enquiring. Such people are necessary in society because they are open minded and are less prone to being manipulated by institutions like the government due to their ability to always question what they observe and what its implications are. Such enquirers are necessary for the checks and balances within the societal structure because they now have the ability to see through things such as bias propaganda.

Through personal experience, teachers always urged us to question everything we are shown and even question what they are teaching us. This was accomplished through constant analysis of texts and art pieces within the classroom in group discussions that only the students would participate in. The teachers would be present to focus the group

and bring them back on topic if they were going off topic but would otherwise have little to add so that the students are forced to search for meaning on their own. As an example, in history class, students were given political cartoons which they had to analyse. They had to take into consideration multiple factors such as color, composition, text and people portrayed along with information such as the time it was published, who published it and the events that occurred during the time. The use of art in the classroom in this case teaches the students to always be critical of what they view and that there is often meaning and purpose to things that we might not think much of in our day to day lives. This sparks curiosity within the students and it almost becomes an automatic function to observe, question, and analyse everything around them.



## Appreciative

Acquiring the tools and skills to make informed analyses of artwork from different cultures is becoming more necessary in our day and age where the boundaries between countries and cultures are getting blurred due to technological advancements. Additionally, in a diverse environment such as a classroom, “children clearly benefit if they find books and plays [...] that have to do with the people who look like them and act as their families do” (Greene, 2001, p565). As Maxine Greene points out in her paper, everyone needs to acknowledge that in every culture “has something important to say” (Greene, 2001, p565). By introducing art from more diverse and foreign artists in the classroom, students get the opportunity to understand how different cultures perceive the world and how they perceive the culture of the students. It is a fascinating exchange of ideas and perspectives that, when taught properly, will end up creating open minded individuals who have the ability to not only understand art from different cultures but also appreciate its uniqueness. This however could be a difficult task considering the fact that if someone is not part of a culture, it is not easy to fully grasp certain attitudes and beliefs. This is why teachers should be trained to handle such situations with an open mind and allow the students to interpret the art freely as everyone’s opinion is valid so long as they have evidence to back up their argument.

Through personal experiences, being in an international school, teachers would be required to explore art from different cultures in their classrooms. Specifically in the International Baccalaureate diploma, which is what most students in that school

completed, it was required in every course that dealt with any form of art that the students had to be taught something from a different culture. For example, in the art course, students had to compare three paintings which came from different eras or different cultures. That way, the students compared how artists from different places and time periods interpreted similar themes or situations through their art. Another example is that in the english course, the students had to read three translated books in class and analyse how the culture impacted the plot and how it differed from our own culture. Since it was an international school, it was extremely enlightening to listen to students from different cultures analyse the same piece of art or text. Additionally, since the classroom was a safe environment open to differing opinions, the students exchanged their ideas in a respectful manner as to not offend others who did not agree which is how we should teach students to act with everyone they meet and interact with.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident that through art and the introduction of an aesthetic curriculum within school, students greatly benefit in many ways. They become more excited about being in the classroom and innovative in the ways in which they solve problems. They grow to be curious individuals who question everything they see and through art express their inner self or through other's art see a similar experience. They mature into citizens who are open to new ideas and perspectives and who are respectful to others who have a different culture to theirs. Overall, art does not only serve the students in a classroom environment. Art and aesthetics help develop and form well rounded individuals who are well equipped to experience the world in its entirety.

## Works Cited

Adoniou, M. (2017) The Conversation. *Decoration or distraction: the aesthetics of classrooms matter, but learning matters more*. Available from: <https://theconversation.com/decoration-or-distraction-the-aesthetics-of-classrooms-matter-but-learning-matters-more-83418> [Accessed 16 December 2019]

Greene, M. (2001) *The Artistic-Aesthetic Curriculum*. 561-566