

Are traditional art education methods still relevant in today's modern era? Exploring Henry Schaefer-Simmern's ideas



Marija Pavlović

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Teacher Education

marija.pavlovic@uf.bg.ac.rs

The importance of art education for the cognitive, social, and emotional development of children and youth

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Abstract

Our research relies primarily on the ideas of the art educator Henry Schaefer-Simmern, who worked until the end of the 1970s. Supported by Rudolf Arnheim and other contemporaries, he had extensive experience in educational work and aimed to achieve specific goals through art. Though he wrote little about his approach, we can learn about his goals and teaching methods from his students and followers. As his approach relied heavily on tracking the development of students' artistic expression, frequent discussions, and self-reflection on their own artistic work, it raises the question of whether such a method can be carried out today within the school context. He asked his students to carefully observe, identify problems, suggest possible solutions, and test their assumptions, and all of this would be useful for the artistic and holistic development of children even today.

The goal of our work is to examine his ideas and teaching methods by researching available literature. Based on our findings, we can identify which aspects of his approach could be beneficial in a modern context, as well as whether his principles can be adapted to the current education system. By implementing the proposed approach, it is possible to aid students in developing not just their artistic expression but also their comprehensive skills, which are vital for their success in the future.

Key words

art education; development of students' artistic expression; Henry Schaefer-Simmern's ideas; the contemporary context

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