

Exploration of the Gamification Practice Path of Early Childhood Aesthetic Education

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Abstract: Aesthetic education is crucial in early childhood, fostering aesthetics and creativity. As concepts evolve, it's a focal point in education. Gamified teaching, with its appeal and effectiveness, drives aesthetic education for young children. This study explores enhancing aesthetic appreciation, innovation, and emotional expression through gamified methods, respecting natural growth. It evaluates practical gamified teaching paths in aesthetic education, offering educators strategies for children's comprehensive development.

Keywords: Early Childhood Aesthetic Education; Gamification; Practical path

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1. Introduction

Aesthetic education for young children, a cornerstone of early childhood education, aims to inspire through artistic endeavors, nature observation, and social experiences. This approach harnesses vivid imagery to achieve varied developmental milestones. It revolves around using beauty to evoke children's inner aesthetic sense, nurturing their abilities, taste, and creativity, thereby enhancing their holistic wellbeing.

However, traditional educational assessments prioritize academic achievements, neglecting the artistic and aesthetic dimensions, hindering aesthetic education's progress. Amidst growing societal demands for well-rounded individuals and shifting parental perspectives on education, early childhood aesthetic education is gaining momentum.

In recent years, the Chinese government has introduced policies emphasizing quality education, underscoring the importance of aesthetic education. The goal is to cultivate children's aesthetic sensibilities and creative potential through this form of education, ensuring their holistic development. By doing so, aesthetic education not only enhances their artistic abilities but also contributes to their mental and physical well-being, fostering individuals equipped to thrive in a diverse and ever-changing world.

2. The value of aesthetic education for young children

2.1 Cultivate young children's aesthetic ability

Aesthetic education is vital in early childhood, fostering children's ability to perceive, appreciate, evaluate, create, and express beauty. This ability is integral to their holistic development, enhancing understanding of the world and promoting emotional, intellectual, and creative growth.

It emphasizes developing perception through encounters with nature, art, music, and dance. Additionally, it nurtures comprehension by dissecting, comparing, and analyzing beauty's elements. Evaluation skills are taught through art education, introducing aesthetic criteria and principles to assess artworks and nature.

Ultimately, aesthetic education encourages creative expression, transforming emotions and imaginations into tangible forms. By providing creative materials and tools, it ignites children's creativity and imagination, fostering a sense of accomplishment and

nurturing their aesthetic creativity and expressive prowess.

2.2 Inspire children's creativity

Aesthetic education provides a platform for young children to freely express their thoughts and feelings, and this freedom serves as the foundation for the development of creativity. By offering a rich variety of artistic activities such as painting, music, dance, drama, and handicrafts, children are empowered to freely explore and express themselves through diverse art forms. These activities ignite their curiosity and the desire to explore, prompting them to experiment with new ideas and approaches in their creative endeavors. Aesthetic education encourages children to venture into new artistic forms and expression methods, thereby fostering innovative thinking and problem-solving abilities. Through positive feedback and encouragement, we can strengthen children's self-confidence and inspire them to embrace bravery and innovation in their pursuits.

2.3 Promote the emotional and personality development of young children

Aesthetic education guides young children to engage with and appreciate various art forms such as music, painting, dance, drama, and more, fostering rich emotional experiences like joy, sadness, tranquility, and excitement during the process. These emotional experiences contribute to the refinement and deepening of children's emotions. Aesthetic education provides diverse avenues for children to express their emotions, allowing them to convey inner joy or sadness through painting, for instance, or to vent their feelings through music. Furthermore, artistic activities assist children in learning to regulate their emotions, nurturing emotional intelligence and self-management skills. Recognizing that every child is unique, they showcase their individual styles and preferences in artistic creations. Aesthetic education respects and encourages these individual differences, offering a platform for children to express themselves and shape their distinctive personalities.

3. Theoretical Framework for Gamification Practice of aesthetic education for young children

3.1 The theoretical basis of gamification teaching

The modern theoretical research on games can be traced back to 1938, when Johan Huizinga argued that games are a fundamental human activity, an innate and enjoyable behavior for humans. Piaget pointed out that games are a powerful means to promote children's learning. Aleksic-Maslac noted that students in gamified classrooms demonstrate higher levels of engagement than those in traditional classrooms. The "Guidelines for Kindergarten Education (Trial)" also states that the organization of educational content should fully consider children's learning characteristics and cognitive laws, with content from various fields being organically connected, mutually permeated, and emphasizing comprehensiveness, interest, and activity, integrating education into daily life and games. Gamified teaching refers to the adoption of game design concepts to adjust teaching models, introducing gamification elements to integrate and optimize teaching plans, content, processes, and other elements, with the aim of enhancing learners' motivation.

3.2 Gamification theory of aesthetic education for young children

Piaget's theory categorizes children's cognitive development into distinct phases, with the preoperational stage typically occurring between the ages of 2 to 7. Characterized as early childhood, this period is marked by children's use of symbolic play to discover and comprehend their surroundings. Incorporating gamification into teaching can offer a plethora of symbolic interactions, aiding young children in cultivating abstract reasoning and an appreciation for aesthetics.

Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences theory posits that people have a variety of intelligences, such as musical, spatial, and bodily-kinesthetic. Gamified approaches to education can nurture these diverse intelligences, with a particular emphasis on the role of games in aesthetic development—musical and visual arts activities being especially influential. These games, rich in sensory stimulation, enable young children to directly experience beauty, enhancing their aesthetic sensibilities and preferences.

Vygotsky viewed play as a crucial medium for children's socialization. Through play, young children can acquire social norms, articulate emotions, and immerse themselves in cultural experiences like art and music.

Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives delineates three domains: cognitive, affective, and skills. A gamified aesthetic education framework can address each of these, fostering a well-rounded development in children's intellectual understanding, emotional responses, and manual dexterity through engaging, hands-on learning experiences.

4. Analysis of the Practical Path of Gamification in Preschool Art Educations

4.1 Content Gamification Design

Artistic Integration in Daily Life: Leveraging familiar childhood activities, such as bubble blowing, as artistic exploration avenues. During these activities, children are encouraged to observe and discuss the varying colors, shapes, and sizes of bubbles,

even attempting to capture their ephemeral beauty through artistic expressions. This process guides children to perceive and articulate artistic phenomena in their daily lives.

Theme-Based Games: Designing games centered around specific themes, like “Seasons in My Eyes” or “Journey through the Animal Kingdom,” allows children to explore diverse artistic forms, including painting, sculpting, and dramatic performances. These games foster creativity and deepen their understanding of artistic representation.

4.2 Material Gamification Design

Diverse Material Selection: Offering a wide range of materials, such as recycled calendar paper, colored paper, sponges, fabrics, and wool, encourages children to select materials based on their individual interests and creativity. This free choice sparks curiosity and refines fine motor skills through hands-on manipulation.

4.3 Environmental Gamification Design

Immersive Spatial Arrangement: Regularly transforming classroom decorations to mimic various festive or cultural themes (e.g., Chinese New Year, Christmas, Halloween) or setting up nature corners showcasing seasonal flora and fauna creates an environment conducive to exploration.

Outdoor Aesthetic Experiences: Organizing visits to parks, gardens, museums, and engaging in activities like picnics and hikes exposes children to the beauty of nature and societal life, thereby elevating their aesthetic perception and comprehension.

4.4 Process Gamification Design

Integration of Games and Training: Devising games like “Color Connection” and “Shape Scavenger Hunt” integrates basic artistic elements like colors, shapes, and patterns into play, fostering color recognition, shape discrimination, and problem-solving skills amidst enjoyment.

Free Creation Time: Establishing a “Creation Corner” provides ample time and space for children to express themselves freely through painting, paper cutting, or construction, nurturing individuality and emotional expression.

4.5 Innovative Teaching Methods

Guided and Inquiry-Based Learning: Employing question prompts, such as “What color would you choose to represent happiness?” stimulates children’s thinking and exploration. Additionally, encouraging observation and experimentation encourages the discovery of artistic principles like lighting effects and color harmonies.

4.6 Teacher Role Transformation

From Instructor to Facilitator: Teachers evolve from mere knowledge dispensers to designers, guides, and supporters of learning activities. They actively listen to children’s ideas, respect their choices, offer timely affirmation and guidance, and facilitate the enjoyment of creative endeavors.

5. Conclusion:

Through these gamified designs, early childhood aesthetic education becomes more aligned with children’s interests and demands, fostering learning through play and growth through exploration. This approach cultivates a profound love for art and heightens sensitivity to beauty, ultimately shaping well-rounded individuals with a keen artistic sensibility.

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