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CASE STUDIES OF ART EDUCATION IN EGYPT

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To my mother, without whom I would certainly have been lost!
Abstract

Art education, art class in particular, is not given as much attention as core subjects at schools in Egypt. The research examines two private language schools in Cairo and how they handle art education. It compares the teaching and viewpoints of art teachers at both schools as well as those of students. The research will address the following questions: (1) whether art education is neglected in private language schools in Egypt; and (2) if special attention is given to art education curriculum and teaching methods.

This study is a qualitative one; data sources such as key informant interviews and document reviews are used to gather data about the art programs at the two private language schools. The study concludes that there are art programs at both schools studied; however, the teaching methods used are very limited. There is no diversity. Schools do not provide professional development for teachers, and the curriculum is not readily accessible for the teachers to teach. The study ends with several recommendations that could enhance the art programs in all Egyptian schools.
Case Studies on Art Education in Egypt:
Chapter 1 – Introduction

Egypt is very famous for its arts and crafts, which date back to ancient Egypt. Egypt has always been, and still is, characterized by its beautiful scenery and colors. Varying from the blue color of the Nile, the pink skies, and the blue-green colors of the Red and Mediterranean Seas. The beautiful yellow, brown, black and white of the deserts plus the rust colored mountains, compliment the bright green dated palm trees. Egypt provides an inspirational atmosphere for artists.

Unfortunately, art making and the number of newborn artists in Egypt are declining rapidly. Artists are leaving the country as soon as they graduate from university, or even before, due to the limited appreciation of art around them. Many lectures and seminars are currently being given at universities which aim at reviving the memory of “Egypt’s once-successful, but now, neglected artists” (Ahram Online, 2011). One Egyptian sculptor, Mostafa Naguib, gained fame for his work only propagating the 1952 Revolution that was hailed by Gamal Abdel Nasser. Unfortunately, he moved to the United States, where he established two sculpture schools. In 1970 his absence from the Egyptian art scene led to the depreciation of his work. Not only was Mostafa Naguib neglected; many other artists were as well. “After the 1952 Revolution, artists lost substantial government stipends, as well as elite patronage; artists’ groups were disbanded along with all political parties,” (Mikdadi, 2004). “Artists working outside the mainstream, exploring controversial subjects or using unconventional techniques, found themselves isolated, and many emigrated to the West” (Mikdadi, 2004). Several of these artists would be the previously stated sculptor, Mostafa Naguib, as well as Moataz Nasr, and Mona Marzouk. Sadly, these
artists would only return to Egypt annually to participate in national or international exhibitions.

Art education goes back to early times, “when the crafts and art still formed one uniform whole” (Soika, 1964, p. 67). There have been different methods, and still are to teach art. Diverse techniques are still being discovered. Several aspects affect the teaching of art in all societies. These factors vary from cultural diversity, religious beliefs and, of course, parental influence that leads to art appreciation.

In Egypt, art education was given a lot of attention after the influence of Franz Cizek who was credited as the discoverer of “child art” (Malvern, 1995, p. 262). Franz Cizek was a student at the Vienna Academy in the 1880’s. In 1885 he began teaching visual art (drawing and painting) to children. He voluntarily gave art classes to children aged six to fourteen; his classes were later incorporated into the progressive Vienna Arts and Crafts School (Malvern, 1995, p. 262). In 1937, a wave of a worldwide movement in art education came to Egypt. Later, a conference was held in Paris where representatives from different countries delivered reports on the teaching of art. The movement was instigated by Cizek’s methods, discussion, and examples of his students’ work that were received enthusiastically by the conference. The term “art” later replaced the word “drawing” in Egypt. “Child art gradually became known. It started to acquire new importance and increased significance in the [Egyptian] curriculum” (El-Bassiouny, 1964, p.22).

“Every education system on Earth has the same hierarchy of subjects: at the top are mathematics and languages, then the humanities, and the bottom are the arts” (Robinson, 2006).
In 1937, art education was considered a significant part of the Egyptian curriculum; however, nowadays one can rarely find an experimental, language or even private school that has an art program offered or even offered as part of the curricular program. “We have visited three different schools in Ismailia, one was a language school, one was private and the third was an experimental school. Unfortunately there were no art programs offered in any except for the private school, and then it was only offered for high school students,” say Dr. Peggy Norman, and Dr. Stacie Rissmann-Joyce (Professors at the American University in Cairo.) “Whenever education budgets get tightened, art programs are the first to get cut,” says Lynda Resnick (2010).

A lot of people in Egypt are somewhat, unaware of the aims or benefits of art education. The great French philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, considered art education to be a pedagogical means in the training of human virtue (Soika, 1964, p. 67). Rousseau won a prize for his essay *Discours sur les sciences et les arts*, where he said,

"If the sciences really better'd manners, if they taught man to spill his blood for his country, if they heighten'd his courage; the inhabitants of China ought to be wise, free, and invincible. But if they are tainted with every vice, familiar with every crime; if neither the skill of their magistrates, nor the pretended wisdom of their laws, nor the vast multitude of people inhabiting that great extent of empire, could protect or defend them from the yoke of an ignorant Barbarian Tartar, of what use was all their art, all their skill, all their learning?" (From *Discourse on Arts and Sciences*, 1750.)
Chapter 2 – Literature Review

The review of literature includes four interrelated strands. First, the methods of teaching art to children will be covered. Second, the factors that affect the teaching of art are depicted. Third, the aims and benefits of learning art, and what art has to offer to children, varying from art therapy, social/emotional development to critical thinking. Last, but not least, is the negligence of art education in Egypt.

Methods of Teaching Art to Children

In a research article by El-Bassiouny (1964), methods of teaching art are addressed, and specifically those in Egypt. He found that art education; specifically painting and drawing, methods were simple. One method was for the teacher to draw a sample for everyone to study and replicate. Another method was for the teacher to place an object somewhere, and the child is to draw that still-life object, whether in two or three dimensions. The instructor provides tips, varying from light and shade to dimension, that the child must include when drawing. Another method used to teach art was to start by introducing color. Often that was done with a color wheel. (p. 22)

Factors that Affect Art Teaching

Religion in several parts of the world plays a huge role in teaching art, and art appreciation. Some religious people such as Sheikhs and Popes would say that their religion bans art, because it is inappropriate. Although in the past in both Islam and Christianity art had major roles in their religions. This is evidenced in the Learning and Teaching Resource for Higher Education in UCL (University College London) where it reads, “Coptic art is quite often treated as isolated… Christian art in Egypt was always very much influenced by Byzantine art; only after the Arab conquest of Egypt (AD 641) did this influence become less important” (2003). If there is nudity
included (drawing nude figures) that could clearly be an issue with some religious beliefs. “The acceptance of figuration and the introduction of art education in schools were sanctioned by religious scholars” (Mikdadi, 2004). Although in the 80’s, artist and interior decorator, Rania Hamama, had nude figures pose for students to draw, paint, and study anatomy at Cairo University’s art department. The religious influences may not be helping interest in art education.

There are several factors that affect the teaching of art education worldwide. The following are encountered specifically in Egypt. Many people do not appreciate art, but this is no surprise, as art appreciation is not taught in K-12 Egyptian government schools. However it could be part of one’s culture or could be acquired with parental influence, or by talking about art and taking children to museums. Often art museums (outside of Egypt) “have weekend activities geared to families, and almost all museums now have, or are planning, hands-on exhibits and playrooms specifically geared towards their younger visitors, which help to enrich the museum-going experience” (Resnick, 2010). In Prague, there is a chocolate museum, where art pictures are painted with shades of melted chocolate; children can also experience this process by painting with chocolate. “Having looked at the art on display, you were able to try your hand at some chocolate painting yourself. I soon discovered that chocolate isn’t the easiest of materials to work with… It certainly made me appreciate the skill involved!” says Janosik, a child who visited the museum (Janosik, 2010). One’s culture influences the argument for, or against, art appreciation. Lynda Resnick, author of *Rubies in the Orchard*, supports that point. “Art is a great way of appreciating the other cultures in our society” she adds later, “when children view the historical works of their own culture, it builds pride in one’s heritage. Art builds bridges of understanding” (Resnick, 2010). Art is a main communication system in
most cultures, it acts as a medium to people who speak different languages and have difficulty communicating verbally. For that reason, art is used to portray cultural identity, heritage, diversity and change (Mason & Gearon, 2005).

Another problem with teaching art is not having enough resources, or materials to work with. Several underdeveloped countries do not have enough basic materials to teach or provide art in schools, and they are not making use of the natural art resources in their local environment. Therefore, art is not practiced in these areas, and particularly in poor areas in Egypt where the cost of materials is a massive issue.

Some examples would be:

- Using natural sources such as coffee, beetroot, or onions to dye fabrics.
- Using leaves as stencils, and to make crafts.
- Making paper with vegetable skin, as done in the Green School in Bali, Indonesia.
- Collecting stones to make little stone characters.

Many more projects and artwork can be created with natural resources.

The last problem with teaching art is the point of view that art is a waste of time to many people. This point is evident in Iman Farags’ article that identifies different problems of education in Egypt.

“Art and music are also largely regarded as a waste of time. ‘Of what use is music?’ one teacher asks. It is perhaps the lack of adequate resources that drives some teachers to consider the arts negatively. One teacher pointed out that art teachers must work in ‘a dismal art room’ with a class of one hundred students or with broken-down musical instruments. Instead of using their time on the non-graded subjects of music and art, teachers prefer
to use every available moment of the school day to prepare students for their exams in the core subjects” (Farag, 2006, p. 126).

However, there is a government exam at the end of the academic year, where students have to draw according to the Egyptian Ministry of Education regulations. This kind of art exam is very straightforward with no special techniques required or rubrics presented. One can therefore comfortably stipulate that art is being ignored in the national system schools.

Benefits of Art Education

El-Bassiouny, states many aims and practices of art education. Such aims and benefits are also depicted in Sofia Shillito, Kim Beswick and Margaret Baguleys’ articles (2008, p. 10-13); that mainly relate the aims and benefits of art education. The objectives of art education are also highlighted in Dawson’s (2007) study,

“It benefits the student because it cultivates the whole child, gradually building many kinds of literacy while developing intuition, reasoning, imagination, and dexterity into unique forms of expression and communication. This process requires not merely an active mind, but a trained one. Art education also helps students by initiating them into a variety of ways of perceiving and thinking.”

(Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1994, p. 6)

As previously mentioned, the authors Sofia Shillito, Kim Beswick and Margaret Baguleys’ articles and studies also claimed aims and benefits of art education. Children develop a sense of appreciation for all artistic values. Children build consciousness to value the working class and handmade products. Art education develops an inspired attitude and acquaintance with art principles and techniques,
which help in the expression in all aspects of life. Art broadens the knowledge and culture of children and develops integrated personalities. Art helps to foster human development and strengthen children’s skills of decision-making and problem solving. Art builds a sense of awareness of the relationship of art to other subjects, as it builds literacy by developing instinct, logic, and thought, into unique forms of expression. Gifted children will be discovered and given a chance to deepen their experiences and develop their talents. Art forces children to perceive and think differently. In other words, art education encourages lateral thinking (2008, p. 10-13).

“The art-making process helps to resolve conflicts, providing an arena outside of the self to work through both their internal and external worlds creating a symbolic language that organizes thoughts and feelings” (Shillito et al., 2008).

Adding to all the above benefits and facts about what art education has to offer children as well as adults, Janis Boyd’s research talks about the dichotomy between community values and the arts,

“Art education is needed to foster a widespread creative life which counterbalances the forces of mass production and mass consumption in a specialized materialistic society. Arts education is needed as an impetus for change, challenging old perspectives from fresh angles of vision, or offering original interpretations of familiar ideas” (Boyd, p. 2).

Boyd adds more to the value of art education,

“Creative, innovative, divergent, curious, critical thinking should permeate the school curriculum as well as our life in the community. Yet, the community is at sixes and sevens with itself regarding the 'worthiness' of the arts, and generally teachers as agents of the community do not value the arts
despite the fact that the arts contribute to the education of the individual child through: Developing the full variety of human intelligence, developing the ability for creative thought and action, developing senses of feeling and sensibility, exploring values, enhancing the understanding of cultural differences, developing physical and perceptual skills (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1982)” (Boyd, p. 3)

“Research has shown that art education has great benefits on students in their intellectual, personal, and cognitive skills” says Deena Adel (2011). Also a report by the Rand Corporation about visual art states that art, “can connect people more deeply to the world and open them to new ways of seeing” (Adel, 2011). According to First Lady, Michelle Obama, “Learning through the arts reinforces critical academic skills in reading, language art, and math, and provides students with the skills to creatively solve problems” (Resnick, 2010). Also, art has a great ability to maneuver information in both long and short memories, so art can enhance geometrical representation (Gazzaniga, 2004).

Negligence of Art Education

The last point in the literature review is that of the negligence of art education in Egypt. Previously stated that art education is deteriorating in Egypt, and that artists are leaving the country is evidenced in the following article where Ali Metwali says, “Jenkins [Art educator at the British International School in Cairo] notices that in today’s Egyptian culture parents usually prefer their children to become engineers or doctors, leaving art as a not desirable career” (Metwali, 2011). The same exact point has been expressed in Janis Boyd’s study about the Myths, Misconceptions, Problems
and Issues with Arts Education, as she says,

“Parents of young children recognize the value and potential of the Arts in educating their children about themselves and their life worlds. Yet as the child grows, most parents steer their children away from the Arts toward something more purposeful in life. Some students feel guilty if they study the Arts as this seems to be viewed by educational communities as a 'soft option' or a 'corrupt' influence (Don't put your daughter on the stage, Mrs. Worthington!)” (Boyd, p. 10).

After the 25th of January 2011, Egyptian Revolution, a lot has been said about art education. “Art in Egypt had been viewed as a luxury that the average citizen cannot afford to care about… People think art is for the elite,” says Mohamed El Sawy, founder of El Sawy Culture Wheel (Adel, 2011). El Sawy adds, “Everyone should feel like they can speak their mind and express themselves.” He blames the former regime for neglecting arts and culture in Egypt (Adel, 2011).
Adding to El Sawy’s beliefs, Hossam Nassar, adviser to the Minister of Culture, “also blames the education system for producing individuals who are unable to appreciate art and lack refined taste” (Adel, 2011).
My Background

As a child I was given a great opportunity to explore art works and hands-on projects at school and at home. Fortunately, my mother knew the importance of art education, and how it would help both my brother and myself in our mental, social, emotional and physical development. As a child in kindergarten, I used to go home almost each day of the week with a different art project. They weren’t something huge, but fun art projects for children that would vary from finger painting to a collage with assorted beans or leaves. With these art projects, I was learning math, art and English since I had to identify how many leaves were used, what colors, and even spelling! So other subjects were tackled and learned though art. “Young children's first attempts to communicate ideas and feelings are through one or more of the art forms. A simple gesture is captured in dance, a mood that is expressed through music, an idea is painted on paper and a response is mimed. It is impossible to imagine a child's life and being without the arts” (Boyd, p. 1).

Going to a private elementary, preparatory and secondary school did not exempt me from the national assessments. In fact, they made me notice that art exams, compared to the other subjects, required little or no skill or creativity; thus, schools do not bother to teach and or give attention to art. Maybe this explains why schools are not giving much attention to art after kindergarten. I also believe that parents do not really care about art, so they do not ask for it to be taught in schools. There is a similar observation made in Australia that supports my point,

“Yet, as a child grows older and enrolls in school, the arts, which are the very heart of our culture are undervalued. They become less important and less understood in educational contexts. The spontaneity of 'home-taught arts’, which is meaningful and imaginative, is lost. The rich tapestry of the arts, as
ways of knowing and feeling, and sources of delight and enjoyment, are sacrificed for arts activities that are soul destroying and meaningless. Children are not taught the basic knowledge and skills in the arts and therefore their education lacks depth and dimension. Why is this happening?” (Boyd, p. 1)

In Egypt there are many carpet schools, which are considered a kind of art school since only carpet craft is being taught. These include the Aswan Carpet School, Pyramid Carpet School and Sakara Carpet School. In carpet schools like these, child labor is the key to success. “Reporting on the ‘child weavers of Sakara’ for the Louisiana Weekly in 2005, political columnist Christopher Tidmore had his doubts. “The work appeared tedious and boring, reminiscent of the sweatshops of the Industrial Era,” he wrote, noting that the “standards set by the international agency UNICEF declare such child labor as cruelty.” (Abernathy, 2005)) Children enter these schools because they have no other opportunity to go to another school. For that reason, they are being taught to weave. Some follow a certain provided pattern but more talented weavers create their own, these children are considered free artists (Abernathy, 2005). Some schools pay these children while others do not. The very talented students who can create a pattern will later in life have their own little family weaving business to make carpets and sell for a living. Opposed to being educated to read and write, students do create and are exposed to Bloom’s Taxonomy and 21st century skills of collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity.
Chapter 3 – Research Question and Methodology

Research Question

The case study, which follows, illustrates how private language schools handle art education in Egypt. The case study will include two such schools in Cairo. To balance the research, three different grade levels are examined: 3, 7, and 10, which represent elementary, middle and high school (in Egyptian schools those grade levels are titled primary, preparatory and secondary).

By gathering and analyzing data, themes related to art education will be identified. Also, special attention will be given to art education curriculum and teaching methods.

Methodology

Two privately owned language schools were studied in Cairo. The school owners and their respective art teachers in each school were interviewed. The key informant interviews were not representative sample interviews; they were completed with art teachers (identified by school owners) and students from different grade levels (identified by teachers) in the respective schools. Interviews were not recorded; however, teachers and students were not interviewed simultaneously to allow for more candid responses.

At School #1 three art teachers were interviewed. They represented primary, preparatory and secondary levels by two females and one male. The teachers had a great sense of humor and optimism; however, although an English language school,
the art teachers only spoke Arabic. Six students (two girls and four boys) were interviewed representing primary, preparatory and secondary levels.

At School #2, the art director and the art teachers were interviewed in the art teacher’s room, which was messy, however, not as cluttered as School #1. The interviews were conducted with three art teachers, one representing primary, one representing preparatory and another for KG/nursery class students. All were female. Only four students only were interviewed, two boys from primary and a girl and a boy from preparatory.

Description of the art education curricula from each school was reviewed. Such information usually was found on schools’ websites or gathered from the school itself. Document reviews included reports, research articles and newspaper articles, many from the National Art Education Association Journal.

A qualitative research method was used to collect and analyze data. Data sources such as key informant interviews and document reviews were triangulated.
Chapter 4 - Findings

School #1 was an Islamic school; however, it was not clear from the school’s website if boys and girls were taught together. The school is a huge building that is segregated into a side for girls and one for boys. Each floor is a different school division level. As an example, grades 4, 5, and 6 (Middle School classes) are located on the same floor; girls are on one side and boys on the other and are separated by a hallway door. The first impression about School #1 was that it was not a suitable atmosphere for students to learn. The school reception is very small and not very inviting. Walking about the school campus itself revealed unclean walls, the littered playgrounds and unhygienic bathrooms. There are thousands of students enrolled, no administrator or a representative wanted to identify an exact enrollment number. All the women working in the school were veiled and several all covered wearing the *niqab*. Student artwork was displayed on the walls of all floors. In the art teacher’s room materials were disorganized, and rubbish bins not properly used. On the KG floor (basement) and the playground, there are paintings on wall columns that depict veiled women and mosques; the culture of the school was clear.

School #2 did not have a website but had an infrastructure that was organized and spacious. The reception was very cozy and clean and the receptionist was very pleasant. During the school tour there were student art projects displayed in abundance. It does not have a required art program in the secondary level.
**Instructional time for art**

**School #1**

All grade levels have the same amount of instruction time, which is 40 minutes per class twice a week. Art class periods are two consecutive ones creating an overall 80 minutes of instruction per week. All art teachers in School #1 agree that class instruction time is not enough to finish a project. The primary/preparatory art teacher added that one art project is assigned allowing for two weeks for completion.

**School #2**

Each school division has different instructional time schedules. The KG/nursery class period is 30 minutes twice a week, the two art periods are consecutive which means an hour a week. The art teacher says that time is not sufficient. At the primary level, each grade has a different art instructional time. Grades 1/2/3 have 120 minutes of art class instruction time once a week, grades 4/5/6 have 60 minutes of art class instruction a week. The preparatory art class is 55 minutes, once a week, in grades 5/6 students get only one art class every two weeks. Again, another art teacher added that the instructional time is not enough to either finish the Ministry of Education curriculum or to finish art projects for the school curriculum.

**Curriculum/Course Content**

Both School #1 and School #2 art teachers claimed they have a curriculum to follow, but neither of the schools were able to provide the researcher a copy of such curriculum. In the preparatory and secondary school levels, there is a curriculum sent from the Ministry of Education, but again, neither of the teachers were able to show a copy.
School #1

In School #1 the primary level teacher assigns maquette work. He assigns a scene and the students have to create one using all available materials. Drawing and coloring projects are the predominant art teaching techniques in primary. Preparatory students do woodcarving and printmaking; however, for most of the year, students are assigned to draw with pencil/charcoal and add color.

Teacher #2, who also teaches the same grade level, makes and teaches origami and three dimensional storyboards and cards. In between projects, she makes the students draw with pencil/charcoal and color to express their feelings.

Teacher #3 bases her class projects on renewing and making home accessories that students can use to decorate their houses. Also Teacher #3 teaches printmaking only with primary students.

The students were interviewed with the same questions and provided different answers from those of the teachers. One primary student responded, “We draw and color with colored markers.” While a second primary student responded “we listen to music, color, and draw.” Preparatory students’ answers were also not similar to the teachers’ responses. The first preparatory student interviewed explained exactly what is done in art classes; she said that art is divided into two sections, *Ebtekary* (innovative) and *Ta’beery* (expressive). Theory is introduced and the drawing focuses on a theme. Whereas the other preparatory students said that all they do is just draw and color with colored pencils. The two students from secondary levels provided different responses from that of teachers’ as well. One student said that they paint on
glass and learn calligraphy in addition to drawing and painting projects. The second student said that they paint with acrylic paint, learn how to use oil colors, and use oil pastels, as well as they paint on glass and carve wood. The only similar response to the secondary teacher comments in woodcarving.

School #2
As mentioned previously, School #2 has no art program for secondary level students. Teacher #1 said that class projects are based on events (Mother’s Day, Easter, feasts, Christmas, etc…). For example, on Mother’s Day students make cards. Also, she added that art projects depend on class themes. For example, currently the children were seated in groups making maps of different continents to learn for-social studies class. Teacher #1 specifies that in KG/nursery art classes, arts and crafts are the key in all subjects.

Teacher #2 teaches primary level and stated that event-based projects are also a focus in the curriculum. Teacher #2 said, “we use other subjects in art class to make students learn through art. For example, our last two art projects that are displayed in the hall are undersea and insect projects, the purpose of such projects is to intertwine science with art.” For primary level students arts and crafts are very enjoyable and for that reason the basic drawing and coloring projects are kept to a minimum.

Teacher #3, a teacher of primary students, said she also based her art projects on events such as Mother’s Day. However, she says that there is a curriculum that is received from the Ministry of Education that she has to cover with the students
because they get tested on it at the end of the academic year. Therefore, class projects are a mixture of event themes and the Ministry’s required curriculum.

The two primary students interviewed in School #2 agreed on the projects in art class, as drawing, painting and arts and crafts. No specific art projects were displayed from either one of the students. As for the preparatory students, one said that, “sometimes I draw and color depending if there is a grade given to the specified project”, while the other student interviewed said that students only draw in art class.

**Teaching Methods**

**School #1**

In School #1, almost the same teaching methods for all grade levels were the same. For primary and preparatory the teacher claimed that each level has a different method of teaching; however, interviews revealed the same teaching method is used in all grade levels. Teacher #1 uses the method of imitation. A sample of the required project is displayed for the students to recreate. Teacher #2 teaches in the same division, (primary and secondary), but different grades. Again, the same exact teaching method is used, student-samples from previous years are shown to clarify the assignment and let the students imitate. Teacher #3 teaches several primary classes as well as secondary grade levels. Once more, the same teaching method of imitation/recreation is implemented.

Students described the same teaching methods as the teachers. In primary the two students interviewed said, “the teacher brings in a sample of a project that has been done in previous years and we have to make one ourselves.” In preparatory and
secondary the same exact responses were received from the students interviewed, “the teacher brings artwork of former students and we have to look at the project and do the same.”

School #2

In School #2, most teachers use the same teaching method, but have different approaches. Teacher #1 is a primary teacher. She brings a ready sample of the project to show the students and lets them make their own, but during class she helps individuals with certain difficulties. Teacher #2 is a preparatory teacher; she prepares a sample before class, because there is not always time to make a sample of the project in front of the students to help their understanding. Because class instruction is very short, she shows the sample, distributes materials and goes through the creation steps with individuals (guided practice) if help is needed. A very similar teaching method is used for KG/nursery class as in the primary and preparatory grade levels, Teacher #3 makes a ready sample of the project to show the children then makes a quick one (as guided practice) to help the little ones with the steps to start working by themselves. Individual help is offered.

As for the students interviewed in School #2, each one had different teaching methods in mind to relate. The primary students interviewed said that the teacher explains the projects and lets them work on their own. The second student interviewed from primary said, “The teacher explains the assignment on the board and then helps individually.” For the students interviewed from the preparatory level, one student said that the teacher brings a sample of the art project they will work on and lets the students imitate and helps individuals, if help is needed. Another student from
What Benefits are Gained From Art Classes

School #1

In School #1 benefits of art classes were identified by teachers. All three teachers agreed that art classes benefit the students’ life in general. Teacher #2 added that art makes the brain stronger and helps in its development. Teacher #3 added the life benefits of clothing design, and fashion, since her class is based on making and renewing accessories.

In School #1, one primary student said that the only benefit he gets from art class is that he learns to draw “new stuff,” while the other student interviewed in primary replied, “I do not benefit anything from art class.” Students in preparatory did not know exactly what to say or were confused if they really benefited from art classes. At the secondary level, both students related benefit from art classes. Both answers were similar; they get the benefit of learning new techniques to use in and outside art classes. One student added that a benefit is to meet great new people such as their art teacher.

School #2

In School #2 art teachers identified different benefits from those of students. The KG/nursery art class teacher said that students improve and practice their fine motor skills when they use the scissors and glue. Also art classes provide opportunities for decision-making as students get a chance to choose colors and materials to work with.
Students learn how to draw lines and shapes that help them identify objects at home or an environment outside school.

Teacher #2, the primary art teacher, said that students improve their fine motor skills by using scissors and cutting shapes. They benefit creatively, as well as they use different materials that benefit their skills in art class and in their everyday life. Lastly, the preparatory art teacher said that students have fun making art, and that art can be their escape from problems when they want to express feeling and cannot with words. Also, they get to learn art history that benefits students’ knowledge.

Students at School #2, at the primary level responded differently. One student replied that yes he does benefit from art class without any explanation, while the other student said that the importance of art class is that he learns to do things on his own, and he learns to draw, which is something he likes to do outside the classroom. On the other hand, the two preparatory students one replied with “nothing” while the other one said that she benefited by learning new art techniques.

Assessment and evaluation

School #1

The primary and preparatory teacher in School #1 said that he assesses and evaluates his students only based on the students’ application. That means that the students apply what they learned in class and incorporate in their artwork. The same assessment procedure is used for both the primary and preparatory levels. Teacher #2 evaluates the same way, according to what has been taught and whether or not what she taught is being applied in students’ artwork. The last teacher interviewed, the
primary and secondary art teacher, said that she evaluates her students according to what has been taught in class and whether or not that information is being applied as well.

Students at School #1 have different beliefs on how art teachers assess and evaluate their work. At the primary level, students believed that the art teacher gives grades on whether or not the drawing is good, also on whether or not students have studied, what has been given in class, for exams. The second primary student said he does not exactly know how the teacher evaluates the student’s work, but he believes grades are based on drawing and coloring skills. At the preparatory level the two students had completely different views. Student #1 said that, “We take five marks on behavior, five marks on oral exams, and the rest on projects.” On the other hand, Student #2 said, “The art teacher gives the students good grades if they have good composition in a drawing and on whether or not the project has been handed in on time.” Secondary level students were confused when asked on what basis their art teachers assess or evaluate their work. The first student interviewed said that he does not know, but he said, “Maybe we are being evaluated on behavior or the end of year conduct? I don’t really know.” The other secondary student said that students are being evaluated on their responses to questions and whether or not the student is keen to know and learn.

**School #2**

KG/nursery art class teacher in School #2 response varied. The art teacher evaluates the students based on their motor skills: how they use the scissors and glue. Also, students are evaluated on their choice of color, whether or not they are improving to get a sense of color compliment.
At the primary level the art teacher evaluates students based on many aspects: (1) assigned group projects; (2) individual work; (3) behavior in class; and (4) exams (to test understanding). All previous evaluations are assessed as to, whether or not the project is finished, based on whether or not the aspect or the purpose of the assignments is included and standard. Finally, there is a little mark given for talent, “Talented students need to be encouraged and praised, but untalented students do not lose any marks at all for not being talented,” says the primary art teacher.

The third preparatory art teacher evaluates students based on written exams and their basic knowledge of the curriculum sent from the Ministry of Education. Also, the students are being assessed on behavior inside the classroom as well as cooperation with one another.

Students in School #2 both primary students said that their art teacher evaluates them based on their design of projects or drawings and on their creativity. At the preparatory level, one student said that the art teacher evaluates on their drawing and coloring, and whether or not the student is talented. Also, they are being evaluated on behavior and art basics such as composition and color. The other student in preparatory said that students are being evaluated on the projects they finish, on the design, and on classroom behavior as well.
Professional Development

School #1

In School #1 only one of the three art teachers attends or has attended professional development to take a step forward with his/her career. The primary/preparatory art teacher said he has no time for professional development because he will be starting his master’s degree soon. Teacher #2 (primary/preparatory art teacher) said that she attends, but did not wish to explain what she attended or will attend. Teacher #3 (primary/secondary art teacher) said, “Of course not, I give the workshops, you think I will attend any?”

In School #2 all three art teachers interviewed do not attend or have attended professional development to improve their careers; however, their responses varied. Teacher #1 (KG/nursery art class teacher) said the she wants to attend conferences and workshops and especially attend sessions for educational art. Teacher #2 (primary art teacher) said that she does not attend professional development sessions or conferences, but she works and learns on her own through the Internet to get ideas about new projects for her students. Teacher #3 (preparatory art teacher) said that she has no time for professional development, but she learns a lot from colleagues.

Resources

School #1

In School #1, all three-art teachers interviewed said that the school provides all materials for art classes. The materials are very sufficient and if teachers require additional items, the school provides those.
In School #2, all three art teachers agreed that the school provides all supplies and that they are sufficient. However, the KG/nursery art class teacher added that she could use more supplies, such as glue guns and fill. The preparatory art teacher added that she makes use of previous year’s art supplies. In other words, she recycles art materials and uses them with students, which also teaches students to recycle in their everyday life. Both primary and preparatory art teachers use other materials to make art, such as plastic bottles, old floppy disks, old damaged CD’s and many other items. Again, the curriculum is teaching the students to recycle, and be responsible citizens.

**Art Teacher Responsibilities**

**School #1**

In School #1 the primary/preparatory art teacher sometimes misses class instruction in order to finish schoolwork duties besides teaching. School event decorations are regularly requested. The other primary/preparatory art teacher said that she is responsible for the concert designs and the making of all school decorations, “I normally do these during revision time for exams; there is no need to revise art so I give the class period to students to revise other subjects and I finish my other work.” The secondary/primary art teacher instead of making school decorations on her own and skipping classes, she makes the students do the decorations in class with her.

**School #2**

In School #2, the KG/nursery art class teacher has duties other than teaching. She is to decorate the KG floor levels, “I don’t skip classes, I try to finish these duties between classes and in breaks.” The primary teacher also has additional duties, to decorate the primary floor levels and provide decorations for events. For that reason
the art teacher makes the students help in making the decorations, but only within the final 20 minutes of class, in order to not lose all class instruction time. The preparatory art teacher also has duties outside the classroom, but skipping class was never an option to finish these duties. For that reason, the students help in class to finish the school decorative work, which makes the decoration more valuable to the students and acceptable to parents.

Art Clubs and After School Art Activities

School #1
In School #1 there are no afterschool art clubs or activities. One art teacher added, “Only in summer vacation we provide art clubs, because parents do not agree to have an art club after school; they think that other subjects are more important than art.”

School #2
In School #2 there are no afterschool art clubs or activities, however, they have an art activity where all students make art for a competition called “...got talent” and that is done twice a year for students to get a chance to make art projects they want displayed outside the classroom. This is an opportunity for secondary students to make art since they are not provided with art classes at school.

Reflection of Teachers

School #1
The first art teacher interviewed (primary/preparatory) wants the school art program to have more art projects, not only limited to using pencil colors and paper. Teacher #2 (primary/preparatory) wants the school to hire more art teachers in order to have
more time to work on other art duties, and lower the class size. The secondary/primary art teacher has a different approach on how to improve the art program. She wants to be able to take the students on field trips to draw/color from nature.

School #2
In School #2 different responses were received from the art teachers on how to improve the art program. The KG/nursery art class teacher wants to have more instructional time to be able to finish and introduce more challenging art projects. She also needs to improve her class management techniques to improve the class experience. The primary teacher wanted to have computers in art classes in order to show different examples of artwork; also, technology would make the class more enjoyable and taught in an advanced way. The preparatory art teacher wanted to make art class a choice for everyone not only secondary, she believed that she can never make art classes better if intertwined with the curriculum of the Ministry of Education.

Reflection of Students
School #1
Both primary students felt happy making art. One student added that he felt like an artist while the other student said that he felt he was learning. In preparatory, there is a contradiction. One student felt pleased when making art, while the other student felt that she wanted to finish the project to get a good grade. In secondary, both students enjoyed making art. One student felt that she could express her feelings while making art while the other student simply felt like enjoying and liking the art project process.
of the moment. All students in School #1, except for one primary student, felt that art classes were not a waste of time.

School #2
At the primary level, the two students liked art and believed art classes were fun. One student said that he felt happy and that his mind is cleared while doing art. The other student said that she felt delighted and that a new learning experience was rewarding. Both preparatory students identified nothing. Primary students do not see art classes as a waste of time; however, the preparatory students believe so. One student said bluntly, “Art class is a waste of time,” while the other student replied, “Sometimes.”

Student Career Choices
School #1
At the primary level, one student said he wanted to become an engineer when growing up, while the other student wanted to become an airhost. At the preparatory level one student wanted to become a fashion designer while the other student wanted to become an engineer. At the secondary level, both students wanted to become engineers. One student wanted to specialize in medical engineering or electronics.

School #2
One student wanted to become a scientist or an engineer while the other student wanted to become an architect. In preparatory, one student wanted to become a doctor or a pilot while the other student wanted to become an engineer.
Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations

Analysis of the data from the interviews conducted at the two private language schools indicates a lot that can be learned about art education in Egypt. From the interviews conducted, a conclusion about art teaching methods in private schools in Egypt is that they are very poor and have no diversity. Private language schools are not providing art teachers with professional development opportunities to better their art skills or teaching. Some art teachers want to get professional development, be able to attend conferences, share their ideas to learn more about art teaching and skills, but they have no opportunities.

A very important aspect that can be drawn from the study is that the benefits gained from art classes are not clearly identified by the teachers in School #1, “Art will help the students in their lives in general”, whereas in School #2 diverse answers were stated, such as helping students with their fine motor skills, decision making, creativity, and lifelong learning skills. In School #2 teachers may be more experienced or have more teacher training.

Private language schools in Egypt take art teachers for granted, assigning duties besides art teaching, such as creation of theater backdrops and decorations, instead of hiring a professional to make theater design and/or teach stagecraft. Some art teachers must skip classes to complete duties while others let their students help finish school artwork. Several art teachers work during their break times to get their additional school duties done, while others miss instruction time to finish their duties. The art students are not receiving their allotted instruction time. From interviews conducted, it seems that art projects claim to be made in classes by teachers are not
the same as students claim they do in class. The dilemma in Egypt is not with the art projects, it is with the quality and creativity of the projects. From the interviews conducted, it seems that schools are not penny-pinching with art materials; they supply the art classes with all supplies requested. Both schools had an art program where teachers claim they have a curriculum that they follow, neither of the schools were able to show the curriculum or provide a copy, therefore, it is uncertain whether or not the teachers are following the curriculum, School #2 at the preparatory level mentioned a curriculum from the Ministry of Education, but again a copy of the curriculum was not provided. A conclusion that art teachers in private language schools in Egypt lack supervision is probable.

Acknowledging the fact that the research conducted is just a small sample, the interviews reveal a lot about the state of art education in Egypt. Art education is not being given its whole right; other subjects are taught at the expense of art education. Schools are not exerting much effort to teach art in schools, teachers that are hired to teach art are not necessarily art graduates or have been educated to teach art; therefore, art knowledge is limited. Also, schools are not providing teachers with professional development to make the teaching and student learning a better experience. Curricula are not being followed, as there has been no proof that the schools even possess such curriculum in the first place. Instructional time for art classes is very short and particularly since it is offered only twice a week and for some it is offered once a week; therefore, students are not encouraged to finish projects or work with diversity. The teachers’ interviews indicated that parents are not very fond of art education being part of afterschool activities and having art clubs. For that reason, afterschool art activities are not provided in schools for students to
clear their minds and be stress free from studying math, science and Arabic. Art teachers assess and evaluate students on a process called basis. There are no specific details, rubrics or assessment sheets on how or on what standards do art teachers grade the students’ work, which also proves that there is little or no art teacher supervision in schools in Egypt.

When asked about student future careers, none wanted to pursue art in the future. Only one student in School #1 wanted to become a fashion designer. All other students want to become engineers. The sad reality is that all careers identified, have art as the foundation of the education. For example, architects use art to draw with perspective and to draw three-dimensional objects. Also through art, students’ spatial intelligence is being developed for future engineers. This fact is evident in Andrew Loh’s article, “Famous psychoanalyst Gardner segregates this special ability (spatial intelligence) into three components: The rare ability to recognize the identity of an object, when seen from different angles, the ability to gently imagine the internal movements or displacements within the parts of a bigger configuration, and the ability to assess about all invisible and graphical relations embedded within a larger configuration” (Loh). Techniques to teach spatial intelligence for future engineers exist through art. “Advanced techniques may include a number of unusual techniques that include: Teaching and visualizing spatial world in the minds of children, by using common concepts like forms, shapes and colors. Manipulate the visualization to create a three dimensional pattern that looks like clear images” (Loh).

There are simple specific steps that these two schools can take in order to improve their art programs. Professional development for teachers is the initial step, in order for teachers to enrich their art education knowledge and teaching methods.
Both schools should have a documented curriculum ready to share at the beginning of each year, so both parents and students know the objectives of the course, how students will be graded, and what will be covered during the academic year. Also department meetings need to be held regularly to discuss student matters, share teaching techniques to make class more enjoyable, brainstorm projects that could engage different students from different grade levels, and divide the additional school art work among all art teachers and schedule times where these duties can be done apart from instructional time. Both schools should start engaging after school art activities and art clubs for students who are interested. Not all parents are ignorant about the importance of art education for students. Both schools should have a teacher evaluation done every academic year, so art supervisors knows what teachers are doing and how they are teaching in class.

Specifically, School #1 needs to have a better teacher room: a larger and a more organized one. Currently, the materials are all over the place, student artwork are scattered, stuff can easily be lost as the room is used by many people with a lot of materials. A good solution rather than having a larger art teacher room is that materials can be moved to a separate room where everything can be organized and easy to find, also provide more shelves, and keep a room for teachers to prepare for classes. In addition, an area to display students’ artwork instead of keeping it all cramped together in one room should be identified. Another important step to improve the art program at School #1 is to have several art specific rooms for classes and create an outdoor space for students to paint and work freely. The situation at School #1 now is such that each art teacher takes materials to the student’s core classroom. This creates a loss of instruction time due to cleaning up and moving of
materials back and forth to the teachers’ room. Also a sink should be provided and
more recyclable materials used. Doing so, students will be more engaged and aware
of recycling and what can be done with it. Finally, English classes need to be given to
art teachers if it is an English school. If the school claims to be an English Language
School; one assumes that the teachers can speak English.

In addition to the above, School #2 should have an art program for secondary students
and make art a requirement for all students. Students should have to take art.

The analysis of teacher’s suggestions for an improved art program indicates passion.
Teachers really want change and an improvement in the art programs. The
improvement the teachers want vary from having technology in art classes, having
fieldtrips in order to paint and draw nature, having more teachers to decrease the work
load and class size, and having more art class instructional time. If these
improvements actually take place, the art programs in both schools will improve, and
that can just be a start to take the art programs in schools to a different level to benefit
the students.

Egypt can do a lot to improve the status of art and its place in K-12 education. The
Ministry of Education can have workshops, conferences, and funds provided for art
teachers to improve their teaching experience and methods. Art community schools
can be established; the government can offer small rooms to use for art purposes, or
small group art classes. The status of art in Egypt has improved after the 25th of
January Revolution, where everyone had the urge to express their feelings of sadness,
stress, depression and suppression of the previous regime as well as the difficult times
during the insecurity of the revolution. To improve the status of art, conferences and workshops about the importance of art education need to be provided, as well as opportunities for artists and art teachers to travel abroad and participate in international art competitions and seminars.

Speaker Sir Ken Robinson sums up the situation of art in Egypt when he stated, “The whole system of public education around the world is a protracted process of university entrance. And the consequence is that many highly talented, brilliant, creative people think they’re not, because the thing they were good at school wasn’t valued, or was actually stigmatized.” Sir Ken Robinson also added, “Picasso once said that all children are born artists. The problem is to remain an artist as we grow up. I believe this passionately, that we don’t grow into creativity we grow out of it. Or rather, we get educated out of it” (Robinson, 2006). The Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) articles 28 and 29 call for education and talent enhancing, art education is part of education; therefore, art education is a child right that needs to be given to all students, not only in Egypt but everywhere else.
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Appendix 1

Teacher Interview Questions
-What teaching methods do you use?

-Do you add to your professional career by attending conferences and workshops to enhance and richen your teaching?

-What materials are offered from the school to use in art classes? Are they sufficient?

-What kind of projects do you make with the students?

-How do you assess and evaluate the students?

-To what extent is your teaching effective?

-What benefits do students gain from art class?

-How can you improve the art program at the school?

-Is there a curriculum you follow?

-How do manage the class and is your class organized?

-Is the learning environment suitable for students to learn and make art?

-Are there classroom rules?

-How long is class? (Instruction Time/per week)

-Is there an art club or afterschool art activities?

-Do you have other duties as an art teacher other than teaching? Do you miss instruction time to work on outside duties? Like making posters, or signs or work on backdrops.

-Is art required for students?

Appendix 2

Student Interview Questions
-What do you do in art class?

-How do you benefit from art class?

-What do you feel when making art?

-What methods does the teacher use to teach art?

-How is your work assessed? How do you get evaluated?

-Does the teacher make you like art making?

-Is the teacher able to control the class? How?

-Do you feel art is a waste of time?

-What do you want to be when you grow up?