

# ART ATTRACTIONS AS THE MEDIA OF LEARNING TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL LEARNING

**Sutiyono Sutiyono**

Department of Dance Education, Yogyakarta State University,  
INDONESIA.

Sutiyonouny@yahoo.com

## ABSTRACT

*It is appropriate that the significance of learning in schools is questionable, given the schools at various levels to this day as if shut down, or in the sense of the schools seem to feel that the learning process is considered to have established. A very interesting issue raised the parents what are problem some teachers are unable to teach in the classroom. The parents received the complaints of the children who said that they often can not digest explanation of the teachers. One way to facilitate the meaningful learning, a teacher can express how teaching through aesthetic experience. This experience tangible amount of experience in the field of art as it has been mentioned to be used as a medium and variation while being taught in the classroom. What is meant aesthetic experience is to demonstrate the art of dance, music, and theater media of learning. The aesthetic experience of a potential gives a deep impression to the students.*

**Keywords:** Meaningful learning, media of learning, art attractions

## INTRODUCTION

A forum called 'arisan' is held by the parents in a bonafide middle school in Yogyakarta. The parents are determined to hold meetings once a month by holding this social gathering as well as a *catching-up* place between parents and between students. In this 'arisan', there is a core event that focuses on discussion on various problems faced by the students. Indeed, the forum was used as a place for a solution-finding if students are facing obstacles in the classroom, whether caused by academic and non-academic factors.

A very interesting issue was raised in this arisan; the problems that some teachers who are considered unable to teach in the classroom. Comments from the students indicate that they often cannot understand the explanation from these teachers. In other words, some teachers are considered to have a flaw. One of these flaws is how the subject gets to the minds of the students, meaning students find it difficult to understand lessons from several teachers. It is ironic that these teachers teach in bonafide school. On the one hand, a bonafide school is wanted by a lot of student with different achievement, but on the other hand there are some teachers who are not able to teach well.

What happened to the students is a common phenomenon. Whether in a good bonafide school or regular school, we always encounter students who complain that the teacher cannot teach or give lessons clearly, even though the teacher had dozens of years of teaching in bonafide school. Various problems faced by teach the years would have become part of the teaching experience. However, strangely they never evaluate themselves, whether their teaching

experience has been considered seasoned or not. Teachers do not realize that the subjects they taught the class is not understood by the students.

Teachers themselves sometimes do not understand that what he had done to teach in the classroom by providing the subject which did not go smoothly. It also includes their attitudes and behavior in interacting with students which is also not considered well. In short, teachers have felt that they already work in accordance to their profession to make the learning process well with the students. However, the teachers also should have a self-evaluation, with the aim that their capacity as a teacher will be more advanced in facing changes in education, along with the development of science which is also more advanced.

However, every year, the school always accepts new students. Of course, the teachers also always face with the new students who are always different from the old students; both regarding the parental background, the cultural situation, the physical condition of each student, their motivation, and their cognitive ability. A teacher should understand the problems of each student, not the other way around. In this current era of openness, a teacher must dare to evaluate whether their teaching methods thus far can be followed by their students or not.

In one case, for example, a student taught by a teacher will face the semester test. There are many who are confused, because they do not understand anything after being taught by said teacher. Although it has been given a handbook, it alone in fact does not help the student to understand the subjects explained by the teacher. The students feel unprepared for the semester exams. Relying on teachers to explain the subject in a clearer than the way handbook does also cannot go well. This often makes school students only stay quiet during the class, afraid to ask questions to the teacher, eventually frustrated.

In addition, the factor of the subject itself is often used as a scapegoat. When teachers and students have attempted to proceed in active learning, but because the lesson material is considered less up to date, that material has become a source of ridicule that makes the students could not understand the material clearly. As a result, the users of education and education managers concluded that it is necessary to immediately amend the curriculum. Similarly, in terms of teaching methods, teachers must adapt to the material being taught. Sometimes it was caused by teachers who are not responsive to the subject that is given, more often than not, they do not get a positive response from the students, in the sense of subject provided, it was not found to be communicative. When the method of teaching employed by a teacher is not good, then the ones suffer from the consequences are the students.

Based on the phenomenon that has been mentioned above, the learner will be the real victim of the learning process, as the user of mainstream education. So far, there is almost never a student of the school who complained, for example, criticizing the teachers' teaching method, lesson material that is considered less appropriate, curriculum imposed was considered old-fashioned, and so forth. What has been happening is that the students in various schools always obey school rules, obey the teacher, follow the lessons solemnly, and so on. No student is brave enough to be critical about the shortage of subjects and the teachers who are giving the lessons. This is due to the fact that as long as one can remember, the student is essentially hegemonized by the teachers.

These various phenomena can be pointed out that the significance of learning in schools has not meet the expectation. Therefore, the newest and emerging trend lately is that many parents are trying to send their children to bonafide school. With a record, these parents are people who have more money or the parents from middle class families and above. The

consideration of these parents chose the top schools which are usually based on their good quality of a teacher, the serious learning process, and its graduates can be accounted for.

Educational phenomenon that has been mentioned in the introduction is the matter of the significance of learning in schools. It is always appropriate to evaluate the significance of learning in schools, considering the number of *closed-off* schools at all levels to this day, or in the sense that these schools seem to feel that the learning process is considered to have been successful. In fact, as mentioned above, schools who considered themselves to have the established learning process is the bonafide school. The definition of top school is any school that has been well-managed and disciplined, with lessons plus, with adequate teacher resources, and produces qualified graduates. Non-bonafide school is a school that is not managed like any school of excellence. In addition, the teacher's quality factor is also not often discussed from people, even though the quality of teachers is one factor in managing the learning process quality. The public perception is generally that a qualified teacher is the teacher whose teaching job is at top schools, while ordinary schools are deemed not to have qualified teachers. Surprisingly, this kind myth often cannot affect the mindset of people who send their children to these kinds of schools.

Basically, both in bonafide school and non-bonafide, there can be found a teacher who teaches well. The number of qualified teachers is usually less than the less qualified teachers. However, there is an indication that today, the number of qualified teachers in bonafide school is more than in non-bonafide -school. This is due to the teachers who work at top schools, such as those in Yogyakarta, often attend any training, refresher, and evaluation which are organized regularly by the top schools. By contrast, in a regular school, teachers never receive any training, because there is no project fund though teachers should have to be trained, thus increasing their teaching abilities. The impact of this problem is schools with non-bonafide predicate with decreasing image, while schools with bonafide predicate gets even more superior and their image gets better.

As in Yogyakarta, the trend to send their children to top school is very well spread out in society. In fact, it can be said that the parents try to go out of their way to send their children to top schools. So what happens is, the number of students in the bonafide school is overloaded. For example, in SD Muhammadiyah (school communities regarded as the top schools) in urban environments of Kotamadya Yogyakarta in 2017, it accommodate 15 classes for new students of first graders. Conversely, non-bonafide school in a suburban of Yogyakarta on average can only accommodate 6 to 10 students. It is quite pathetic. As a result of this phenomenon, many ordinary schools could not get students to accommodate. In Yogyakarta until 2017, 15 public SD (Elementary School) have closed, while there are quite a few of SD Negeri merged with other public elementary schools.

Meanwhile, for the success of the learning process, now there has been a variety of methods and media found to be effective. The development of science and technology that took place so quickly also supports the development of education, including the methods and media for education. However, the problem arise in this paper is how do schools implement meaningful learning process in order to produce the intended learning outcomes? The further question is how a meaningful learning is meaningful in order for the students to be able to be successful in their learning process? In this paper, it will discuss the importance of a teacher to be able to create meaningful learning in schools, given the latest issue is teachers' competence. As an offer to create meaningful learning in school, teachers will need to show art as a medium of teaching and the learning process. Authors' considerations raise the issue of meaningful learning in school where a teacher is a key factor in terms of managing the learning process in schools.

## **IMPORTANCE OF MEANINGFUL LEARNING**

In order to see the importance of meaningful learning, here is given an overview of the learning process in the classroom with two examples. The first is a classic learning process, which is usually done by the teachers in general. The second is a creative learning process by utilizing cultural art attractions as a learning medium. Both are taught math. The first example, a Second grade math teacher in an elementary school was explaining about the sum of 1,500 and 750, the result is 2,250 written in a white board. To add these two numbers, the teacher perform it by compiling the first number with the other number. Step one was began to add them up. The summation is done first, by adding each unit, then each dozen, then each hundred. For the thousands, there is no partner, making it difficult for students. Teacher eventually adds the 1,500 to 750, and the result, 2,250, is written immediately. The teacher was explaining the subject of mathematics horizontally as stated in the textbooks.

In order to check whether the students can understand math, the teacher ask questions about the sum of the numbers to one student. The student is not able to answer the question completely. Similarly, the other students do not understand the sum of the numbers clearly. The learning process like this obviously only invite the students to compile the numbers, without being informed of the strategies to add the two numbers, i.e. 1500 and 750. The success of a learning process would not have lasted long in the minds of the students. Within a few months, the way one adds the figures given teachers will soon be forgotten.

The second case is that the math teacher will explain about the sum of the numbers of 1,500 to 750. To explain it effectively, the math teacher first inform them about the number 1.500 and 500. The number 1.500 is portrayed as a tiger in the forest. The number 750 is described as a group of lions. Tigers and lions can join together, meaning that they do not fight. Two groups of animals were then calculated together, and the numbers are easy to determine which is 2,250. To determine the amount of these two numbers, the teacher uses a verse from a poem about hariamu and lions, sung gleefully.

After reciting the poem, the teacher continued the story of the tiger and the lion. But earlier, he gave an explanation as introduction of "what, how, and why" the tigers and lions do not fight? To explain it, the teacher saw that was a trap (wooden box with the measurement of  $2 \times 1 \times 0.5 \text{ m}^3$ ) beside him. The teacher feels there is an opportunity to take advantage of the trap. He went straight to the trap, and stood there. On that occasion, the teacher dances. It is the dance that brought the tiger and lion together. While counting the number of tigers and lions, and they finally see the total number of tigers and lions, which is 2.250. The summation of both animals is explained by the teacher with a clear and very impressive voice. The students were initially surprised to see the teacher on top of the trap. But when ther teacher was dancing on the trap, all the students were stunned and understood by what teacher teaches.

The students who have got a math lesson were happy and satisfied. This is due to the subject described by their math teacher was very clear. They also wonder why the math teacher can dance well and have agile movement. When dancing, the teacher acts in a way as if in his imagination, the students are real tigers and lions. Judging from the expression on the face, dance, accompanied by the echoing sound, it showed that the mathematics teacher is like a professional dancer and theater performer, when in fact, the teacher was neither a dancer nor a theatrical performer. Then, the math teacher has "plus" ability, which is that he can do art attractions, and this ability is rarely owned by any other teachers. This "plus" ability in reality can assist the learning process in the classroom (Leeuwen, 2015: 138-162), and even ease his duty to explain the subject of mathematics.

Then the students faced a Second grade final exam. Incidentally, in the mathematics exam, there are questions asked the students to explain a summation problem. In facing the problem, the students recalled that the math teacher once danced vigorously on a trap. The points how to sum numbers demonstrated by the teachers by demonstrating art attractions are still remembered by the students. When working on the problems of the sum of numbers, they feel it easier to work on another subject. This shows that the students seemed optimistic. It turned out that all students from Second Grades can solve the problems without any difficulty. Thus the process of learning mathematics can be declared a success. Even after these students turned 50-year-olds, they would still recall the day they were being taught by their math teacher. How they still remember everything even in their 50s, this showed that the attractions of art as a tool for meaningful learning.

## ART ATTRACTIONS AS EDUCATION MEDIA

Art attractions can cause psychological effects on human beings (Munro, 1963: 419). What are meant by the psychological effects are the perceptions in the form of recognition, imagination, rational and emotional. These perceptions give emphases that the activity of art is a spiritual one that should be taken seriously by all the existing aspects in life. For example, when someone hears a song that is very impressive; and the music will then be ringing in the minds of their heart for a very long time. Similarly, when someone sees a theatrical performance that was impressive, certainly the imagination that comes to mind will always haunt them constantly. This proves that the very real potential cultural attractions used as a medium of learning, because learning process that a teacher conducted will be filled with impressive imagination.

This impressive imagination was the objectivity pleasure, resulting in a happiness impression. As a review of music affects the human brain expressed by Sahman, that the deposition process of the brain begins from noticing a music, which resulted in the understanding of melodies and rhythms that make up the harmony in the brain nerves. Furthermore, these neurons roam the area of aesthetics (beauty). According to Basch (in Sahman, 1993: 65), the exploration can achieve *aesthetic enjoyment*, so that the human heart is feeling happiness. Indeed, beauty is the objectivity of a joy (George Santayana in Sahman, 1993: 26). With this happiness, man will be impressed with what he saw.

Here, the art of attraction is demonstrating any type of art that is favored for various purposes, e.g. for teaching media. Types of art include branches of the performing arts, i.e. dance, music, and theater. Dance can take the form of mime, gymnastics, *beksan*, and a dance. Art music can take the form of vocal, instrumental, or both. Theater arts can the form of monologue and dialogue. Indonesia is a country rich with art attractions.

One way to facilitate the meaningful learning, a teacher can express how teaching through an aesthetic experience in the form of art attractions. This experience takes the form of some experience in the art as it has been mentioned to be used as a media and variety when teaching in the classroom. The aesthetic experience was very potential in giving a deep impression to yourself and others. It is also emphasized by Fenner (2003) in his writings on "Aesthetic Experience and Aesthetic Analysis", that the aesthetic experience is a psychological experience in a person's actions. In this regard, it can be described, that the aesthetic experience affects the psychology of human life.

Nowadays, there have been various methods and media to support the success of the learning process, but it does not necessarily generate successful and satisfying result. It can be seen from a variety of quality of the *output* from the so-called *so-so* schools. In fact, many of the former students could not remember the material that has been given in schools, after they

leave school. The same case also happened to a student at a university. They could not remember any material ever given by the lecturers while in college, when they had been in employment. What also happens is that college students could not even remember the lecture when they were in the final exam, because the material has been given four months earlier.

Inside a human, there are two kinds of memory; short-term memory and long term memory (Higbee, 1988: ii). Short-term memory has a limited capacity. This means that the stored information is not durably embedded inside the memory and easily distracted by other information and discourse. Long-term memory has a large capacity. Information stored in the long-term memory is usually very durable. In the learning process, of course long-term memory plays a bigger role than the short-term memory. A durable information is allowed to be transferred in other situations and can be used to solve problems in everyday life. James L Mursell (1982: 2) argues that based on public feedback, the learning process should be judged based on the durable results and the subject can learn to use the memory for the purpose of his life.

The learning outcomes of students who produced the short-term memory will greatly be doubted in helping to shape their mental development. However, as we have known, the interest of establishing a school is none other than to form the students' personality. This goal also distinguishes schools with other institutions. Therefore, it needs to consider the role of teachers in providing the materials to students, because such material will be remembered later by the students.

John Dewey (2004: 86-87) pointed out that education taught in schools often is abstract. When in fact, a lot of experience of educators is needed to be pursued into something educational, and can be directed at a subject, as well as the representation of information and ideas. This condition can be met when educators look at teaching and learning as a process of ongoing experience reconstruction. This condition also in turn can be met only if the educators are visionary, and always look at every experience of the present as the moving force to continue to influence human lives in the future.

Implicitly, John Dewey wanted to propose an idea that a teacher needs to give concrete examples of the subject that is given to the students. Concrete materials proposed by John Dewey are in the form of life experience from a teacher which will make the learning process in the classroom livelier, educational, and not to mention will greatly affect the attitudes of the students in the future. Dewey's intent contains a command to teacher in order to explain the subject to, as much as possible, relates to the reality of everyday life, thus not making it abstract. This kind of explanation makes students become confused.

That problem was also expressed by Martiningsih (2004: 77). She stated that the educators explain these topics completely in a foreign way, far from concrete experience of the learners. The definition of foreign is that the teacher explains the subject in a very abstract way, so it is very difficult to be understood by the students. In other words, knowledge is only understood by the students while at school. When they are at home or in their neighborhood, they already forgot all the knowledge that has been gained from the school, which means that only the abstract version of the knowledge is gained. The knowledge referred to as the subject from the curriculum, which is the subject that is separately presented as such by an educator, and its relationship with the concrete reality experienced by learners is very much new. According to Freire (1979: 37), it is cut off from life, because the subject is centered on the words that represent the reality to be conveyed, and less concrete activities.

Therefore David P. Ausubel (1963) proposed a psychological study in a way to manage learning concretely (*organizer act*), which is a form of learning that can bridge the gap between the subject of ideas that will be presented. This is because to so far teachers explains the subject or the ideas that will be presented in a class in a very abstract way, as a result not many teachers' explanations can be targeted to students. What Ausubel meant is that it is certainly to point to how teachers can manage the class well, or may institute a meaningful learning for the students.

Ausebel's version of meaningful learning perspective is an important factor that greatly affects the learning success. A teacher must be prepared in the classroom. According to Ausubel (1968), the most important part of learning process is to see how the subject is presented to realize the relevance of cognitive ideas to reality. As for what Ausubel meant, it is the use of *advance organizers* (a form of learning that is managed adequately).

## CONCLUSION

Not all teachers can master the art of attraction. But for teachers who master the art of attraction can create meaningful learning. To reach the success of the process of meaningful learning through art attractions, it needs to be laid out neatly. This is important because the skill in the art attraction can be a capital to achieve a meaningful learning. Of course, the way of expression needs a preparation, so that if one wants to do an art attraction, they can perform satisfactorily in front of students.

Given the importance of meaningful learning, teachers need to make steps to elaborate artistic attractions that can be used as a medium of learning in the classroom. In Indonesia, many art attractions are found useful, from music, dance, theater, and thousands more. Art attractions can be developed into meaningful learning media. Of course, the attractions of art must work out well, thus will result in students being able to interpret the subject presented in the classroom by the teacher. This is due to the presence of the attractions of art as a medium of learning that will be easily understood by the students.

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