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A sample activity applied at Mamak science and arts centre in the field of visual arts

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the training and application period of gifted and talented students at the Science and Art Centres and to inform those who are interested in this field. In this study the art education of the Science and Art Centre has been evaluated. This is a scientific study and has been written as the original and designed according to the screening method. At the end of this study it has been noted that those students who are interested in painting but who do not have reading habits have taken an interest in literature, and those students who love reading but who believe they do not have painting skills have taken an interest in painting. It has been noted that the students have written original stories and painted original book illustrations.

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1. Introduction

Studies related with the education of gifted and talented people throughout history date back to Platon. In the 19th century Sir Francis Galton was interested with intelligence and wrote articles about this topic (Dönmez, 2010;301). We can see that the best studies carried out in history were at the Enderun Schools during the Ottoman Period. These schools were the base for the science and arts in the 600 year Ottoman administration (Dönmez, 2004;70).

When we look at the Republican period we can see that gifted and talented students' education was important. These gifted people were given many opportunities by law. As a result throughout our history there were Enderun Schools, there is the 6660 law in Turkey which gives the opportunity for gifted and talented children in the arts, music and other fields to be trained and funded by the government, there are Science High schools, there are also special classes in some primary schools which have been in application since 1964 by the Ankara Guidance and Research Center, there are Tubitak (Turkey Scientific and Research Association) scholarships and competitions, and also Anatolian High Schools (Dönmez, 2004: 70). When we look at our near history we see there have been studies related to the education of gifted and talented children since 1993 and Science and Art Centres have been put into

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action (Dönmez, 2004: 71). There are also many unidentified gifted and talented children who continue their lives as ordinary people because they have not had the necessary education and training and are still waiting to be identified.

Different models from different countries have been evaluated and after many academic research a new model has been put into application. This model was named in Prof.Dr. Dönmez's study as 'Extra Curricular Application School' and has later been changed to Science and Art Centre and the pilot project was carried out in Ankara, Istanbul, İzmir, Bayburt and Denizli cities. With this project a systemized educative center and program was put into action within the law (Dönmez, 2004: 71).

Gifted and talented students are individuals who are 85% more successful from their peers in motivation and creativity and in general and special talent level and are 98.% more successful in at least one special talent (Özbaş, 2010: 94). Gifted and talented students receive their basic education with ordinary students in their schools and they receive special education with other gifted and talented students with their special field teachers of Science and Art Centres. One of the advantages of receiving education and training in Science and Art Centres is that these students are not differentiated from other students. Gifted and talented students are a part of our society and while they are not alienated from their friends, they also get the opportunity to receive education related to their special talents in the Science and Art Centres (Dönmez, 2004: 72).

The development of gifted and talented children, and their usefulness to the society in the future is very important so their characteristics should not be underestimated and should be taken into consideration. Their identification at an early age and development are very important for their success in the future. Necessary tools and a good educative environment support these children and enable them to use their abilities in the highest level (MEB, 2007: 1).

1.1. Science and Art Centres

Science and Art Centers are institutions established by the Ministry of Education to support gifted and talented students and to give the necessary education related to their special talents in pre-school, primary and secondary schools. The first Science and Art Centre was the Yasemin Karakaya Science and Art Center opened in 1995. In the next years the number of these centers reached to 61 in 55 cities. Gifted and talented students in these centres receive education according to their special talents with project based education after their normal school hours (MEB, 2010: 17). Projects are prepared collectively by teachers and student and cooperation is maintained with the universities, associations, and also business centers in the environment. Students can conduct individual projects or can carry out collective projects as a group of 3 to 5 students. There are no limit or boundaries when selecting a project topic. They are prepared by synthesizing different talents (Dönmez, 2010: 321).

An individual Education Program is applied at the centres according to the needs of the students. The activities are planned in harmony with the education the students receive at their own schools. After the students are accepted to the centres they are put through a five step programme. These steps are as follows: Adaptation, Supporting programme, Realizing Individuals' Talents programme, Developing special talents, Project application-development programme (MEB, 2010: 18). Art courses are given to the students as part of the supporting programme.

Art and sport activities are held in order to identify and develop the students' talents in visual art and sport at the Science and Art Centres (Çakın, 2005: 48).

Children who have started to receive art education from an early age such as in kindergarten start to develop their own aesthetic conscience and look into everything from an art view and also evaluate them at primary school (SAN, 1993:140). When children are given art education at primary schools they are guided towards logical thinking and using their left hemisphere of their brains. But children should be encouraged to use the right hemisphere of their brains in the art courses. Children should be encouraged to draw pictures from their hearts and

souls. There are certain changes in gifted and talented children's art talents which is parallel to their other talents (Yavuzer, 1992:31).

2. Method

This study is in the descriptive form. It has been organized according to the screening method and everything has been written without any change. This study consists of a group of 10 students who are in years 4 and 5 and who are attending Mamak Science and Art Centre. The sample activity in this study is 'I am writing and drawing my own story' which is carried out in the Visual Art lesson together with the literature lesson.

3. Findings and Evaluation

'I am writing and drawing my own story' activity in the Ankara Science and Art Centre has lasted for 14 weeks (one day a week for 4 hours). The stories were written in the first 4 weeks, in the next 4 weeks, the pictures were drawn, in the following 4 weeks the pages were designed, and in the last 2 weeks the book covers were designed and the books were published. First the students were informed about the activity. They were told that the stories and pictures had to be their own original ideas. The stories were written in a literature form. Students were free to choose their own story topics. The stories could be fiction or non-fiction. The stories were completed under the surveillance of their literature teacher and then they went on to the drawings.

During the drawings of the stories period, students were asked to draw draft pictures of the most important scenes of their stories. After the drafts were put into squares with the help of the Art teacher the final pictures were drawn. Guaj paint was used in the pictures. The size of the books were defined by the students. After the drawings were finished the stories were computerized and the page orders were done. In the last stage students were asked to design a book cover for their story. Students also added their personal information and their photos at the back cover of their books. Students were also asked to make book markings for their books if they wanted to.

The book designs which the students completed were formed into books by their Visual Art teacher and the activity was completed. All the stages of the activity were carried out in the class environment with the surveillance of their teachers. At the end of the activity these books were given to the students families. The parents saw the finished version of the books. 'I am writing and drawing my own story' activity in the Ankara Science and Art Centre continued for 14 weeks and was completed with the students original stories and illustrations.

At the end of the activity it was noted from the students and their parents' evaluations that those students who were interested in painting but did not have reading habits started to be interested with story reading, and those who were bookworms but were not interested in drawings started to draw pictures. According to the literature teacher of this activity students were more interested in story reading.

Result

Science and Art Centres are institutions where gifted and talented children receive education in their free time after normal school hours. Students are accepted to these institutions by group evaluation tests prepared by the Ministry of Education. While gifted and talented students receive their basic education with their peers in primary and secondary schools, they study lessons related to their intellectual interests on science and art with their branch/field teachers with other gifted and talented students from different schools.

When gifted and talented students receive education only at primary and secondary schools they are unable to fulfil their intellectual capacity therefore they are generally not motivated and psychologically affected. Students can assess their talents at Science and Art Centres where they receive project based education.

In this study it has been aimed to realize that gifted and talented students should receive special education otherwise their talents are wasted in the following years. These children are very important human resources to our country and society and they should be educated in the best form. In this study it has been targeted to form a background for the necessary basic information in the Science and Art Centres and for gifted and talented children. It has also aimed to set an example study to give the necessary art education to gifted and talented children according to their intellectual development.

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