

Seeing through Art: a Case Study on Transforming Students' Perspectives in the Efl Context

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of art as a pedagogical tool for transforming students' perspectives on social issues while at the same time encouraging empathy, inclusion, and critical thinking. The study was implemented in an EFL classroom with 14-year-old learners at a B1 (CEFR) language level and it focused on the refugee crisis—a theme closely related to contemporary global challenges. Using the Critical and Creative Learning through Aesthetic Experience framework, the aim of the intervention was to help students understand the difficulties faced by refugees through art-based activities that encouraged self-reflection, dialogue, and creativity.

The methodology involved three stages: firstly, assessing students' initial perspectives; secondly, using artistic materials and activities to promote critical and empathetic engagement; and thirdly, evaluating changes in their attitudes and understanding. Students dealt with a variety of artistic mediums, including photography, visual art, and film, to explore social issues in a meaningful and personal way.

The results show that the integration of art in the EFL classroom can effectively transform students' perspectives, enhance empathy, and promote inclusion. Moreover, it can support language development in the EFL context by connecting cognitive, emotional, and ethical dimensions of learning. The study highlights the potential of art-based approaches to nurture socially conscious, reflective, and engaged learners, offering a model for addressing other urgent global challenges through education.

Keywords: Aesthetic Experience, Art-Based Learning, Critical Thinking, Inclusion, Empathy