

Impact of Art Integrated Learning on the Children with Specific Learning Disabilities: A Study of Select Delhi Government Schools in District Central

Shveta Sachdeva

Vice Principal

SKV Dayanand Road

Email: shvetasachdeva73@gmail.com

Pooja Sachdeva

Research Scholar

Department of Education

University of Delhi

Email: poojaraghav81997@gmail.com

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Shveta Sachdeva

Pooja Sachdeva

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Abstract

Art Integrated Learning (AIL) is an instructional methodology that leverages the arts to augment and intensify the learning process across a range of subjects. By encouraging students to express themselves creatively, art integration is thought to improve learning effectiveness and engagement while also aiding pupils in comprehending and remembering difficult ideas. Since the method is found effective and useful in the teaching learning process, the current paper aims at studying the effectiveness of AIL on the progress in learning on the children with SLD. Pretest post-test approach was used to conduct the study which was conducted on 66 students form 8 Delhi government schools in district central. The results showed that AIL is a comparatively more effective method as compared to the traditional method in majority cases.

Keywords

Art integrated learning (AIL), Specific learning disabilities (SLD), visual arts

Introduction

Art has been perceived differently by different people, in different cultures, at different times and has served different purposes too. Philosophers, authors and others have not just tried to give a structure to what an art is, but have also tried to explore the usefulness and the potential the art accommodates in itself. One such field in the modern era is the field of education, where the educationists are trying to explore and utilise the potential of art to make the teaching learning process and overall, the education system more effective, more efficient and productive.

The major development in the field of art integration in the education system happened when art education was introduced in the formal education system by one of the most prominent and famous American educationists, John Dewey. Since then, the art integration in education has seen different forms and paths into the formal education system. According to (Srivastava, 2023) it can broadly be seen as follows:

1. Arts as Curriculum
2. Arts-Enhanced Curriculum
3. Art-Integrated Curriculum

Let's see how these three variations vary from each other.

Art as curriculum

A school's approach to teaching music, art, drama, or dance is probably based mostly on arts as curriculum. Students gain expertise in a certain artistic medium. The programs, which are frequently referred to as "arts learning," or "art for art's sake," are governed by municipal, state, or federal criteria specific to each kind of art. Students study the subject matter, procedures, and methods necessary for two- or three-dimensional work, for instance, in visual arts classes. Students participate in the production and analysis of works produced in a range of mediums as well as learning about the evolution and changes of the visual arts over time.

Arts-Enhanced Curriculum

This refers to the use of the arts as a tool or tactic to assist other curricular areas without explicitly stating the goals of the art form. Under this system, art is used as the means for inculcating the learning and there is no clear motive of teaching the art form to the students. For example, children might learn about one of the dramas of Shakespeare in their curriculum if the teacher assigns the roles and the students enact them in the class. However, they might not learn about the specific skills like expression, promptness *and movements to name a few, which are the essence of theatre.

Art-Integrated Curriculum

An art integrated curriculum, unlike the art enhanced curriculum emphasises on developing both the elements, i.e. the art and the subject area. Under art integrated

curriculum, the art is not just used as a teaching strategy for teaching the subject area, but the students learn the art itself in its nuances. For example, when the teacher is teaching about the architecture and art during mediaeval period, they are not just taught about the forms that existed, rather they also delve deeper into how that art was performed or the architecture made, what all techniques or material is used to build that, how to practically apply those skills and so on.

AIL and children with specific learning disabilities

AIL as pedagogy provides creative space to every learner to explore, experience, express celebrate without worrying about the judgment. This makes the pedagogy a serviceable tool for educating the children with special needs, as it not just assists in addressing the curricular arena, but also helps in developing multiple areas and helps the child develop holistically.

Since learning through art is not just enjoyable, but also more engaging, it helps in developing interest and enthusiasm for learning.

Further, Children with SLDs may experience frustration or low self-esteem due to their learning challenges. Art provides a medium for expressing emotions and experiences that might be difficult to communicate through words alone. Success in artistic endeavours can also build confidence and a sense of accomplishment, which can positively impact their self-esteem and attitude toward learning. An art integrated curriculum also introduces them and encourages them to delve deeper into more dimensions such as painting, crafts, drama, dance etc. where they can build their careers.

AIL offers a variety of methods for processing and comprehending data. A child with dyslexia, for instance, would struggle to comprehend text but could learn concepts more quickly from hands-on exercises or visual art. AIL makes knowledge more accessible by accommodating diverse learning styles and abilities through the presentation of material in many formats.

Art projects often involve real-life skills such as planning, organizing, and following through on a task. Also, many art activities are collaborative, providing opportunities for students to work together and develop social skills. So, for students with SLDs, engaging in art-based activities can help develop these skills in a practical, hands-on way, which can be applied to other areas of their education and daily life and helps them in developing social skills in a better manner. Teachers may foster a more accepting and encouraging atmosphere that supports the academic and personal development of students with particular learning impairments by incorporating art into the teaching process.

Review of Literature

Intervention of art in teaching has been a topic of discussion for a long time. Many researchers have worked upon making the teaching learning process conducive for the

children with SLD. (Robinson, 2014) noted in their review study on 1995 and 2001 that there were positive outcomes for both drama and multi-arts integration. Integration of the visual arts, dance, arts for children with impairments, and arts as a way to enhance the school environment were all shown to have potentially beneficial benefits. Further, in the study by (Cortina & Fazel, 2014) on the art room intervention for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties, even though not directly focusing on SLDs noted that the intervention is improving students' emotional and behavioural problems and promoting prosocial behaviour at school. (McMurray & Ofra Schwartz) did similar research by studying the cases. The results also demonstrated that AIL is an effective way of learning. According to **Gerber** and Horoschak (2012), art education enhances a variety of vital abilities and skills that support the overall development of students with special needs. In a similar study of Al-Yahyai et al 2021, described Art education can also help people with learning disabilities by enhancing their social, cognitive, communicative, motor, and activity participation skills. By encouraging academic and social development, improving skills, and supporting career ambitions, the author emphasises how arts education can empower youth with disabilities. But in order to do this, educators in the arts and classroom must be inclusive. (Crockett, et al).

Engaging in intense arts or arts-integrated training typically results in significant gains in the learning attitude, skill development, and conceptual comprehension of children with learning impairments. (Durham, j. 2010). Art education encourages social interaction, emotional expression, and critical thinking by combining artistic pursuits with cognitive processes. The general well-being of students with special needs is thereby greatly improved. (Al-Yahyai et al., 2021)

Methodology

Research Objective: to examine the effectiveness of art integrated learning over traditional teaching methods

In order to study the comparative difference between effectiveness of art integrated pedagogy and learning over the traditional method, a pre-test post-test study was initiated and purposive sampling technique was used herein, by selecting 8 Delhi Government schools in district central. The Special educators in these schools volunteered for the study. The program was designed for 30 days where in the Special Education Teachers (SET) having specialisation in SLD were expected to first teach the students of classes 6-8 (age group 10-14 years) using the traditional method for 15 days and assess them based on the different pre-determined parameters (*as discussed in tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 below*). The SETs were then asked to adopt multiple art integrated teaching methods and teach the subject matter with approximately same level of difficulty as opted for in traditional method for

15 days. They were asked to *focus* majorly on *visual arts* over performing arts. They were then required to assess the same students on the same parameters.

A questionnaire in form of a google form was generated to collect the data for each student on whom the study was conducted. The SET had to grade the student on a 10-point Likert scale (1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest). Following were the criteria defined for grading the students in both, traditional and AIL pedagogy.

Table 1: Parameters for assessment- Dyslexia

Parameters/ Grading	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Association of sound with letters										
Identifying slight words										
Pronunciation										
Fluency										
Clarity										
Punctuation										

Table 2: Parameters for assessment- Dysgraphia

Parameters/ Grading	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Formation of letters										
Sequencing of alphabets and words										
Neatness										
Self-motivat ion										

Table 3: Parameters for assessment- Dyscalculia

Parameters/ Grading	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Logical Reasoning										
Problem solving										
Sequential arrangement of numbers and symbols										
Accuracy in telling the time										

Table 4: Parameters for assessment- Dyspraxia

Parameters/ Grading	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Handling equipment										
Eye hand coordination										
Building structures and puzzles										
Posture										

After collecting the data from the SETs, some of them were interviewed to get the deeper insights into the topic. (Convenient sampling technique was used for the same.)

Findings and discussion

After identifying the schools and the SETs the questionnaire was circulated among them. Overall, 66 students who were identified by psychological methods by clinical psychologists had the disabilities as follows:

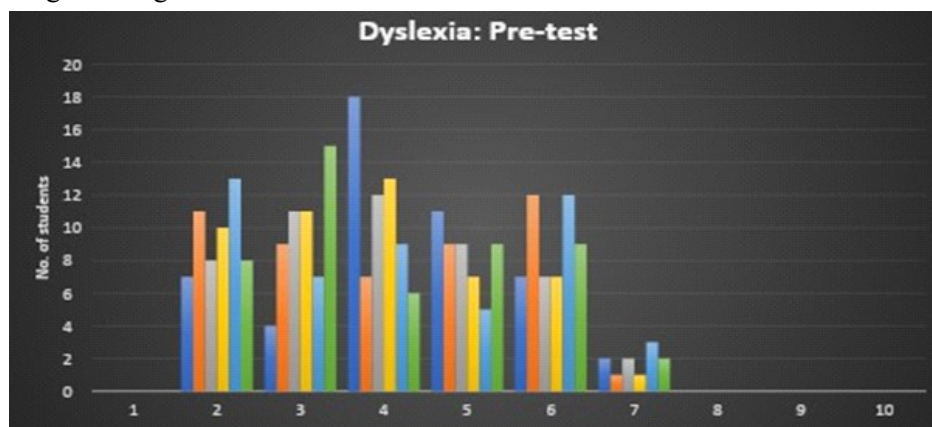
Table 5: Classification of children based on the SLD diagnosed

Disability	Dyslexia	Dysgraphia	Dyscalculia	Dyspraxia
No. of students	49	34	24	13

The data collected through the google forms was represented graphically for each disability, which was as follows:

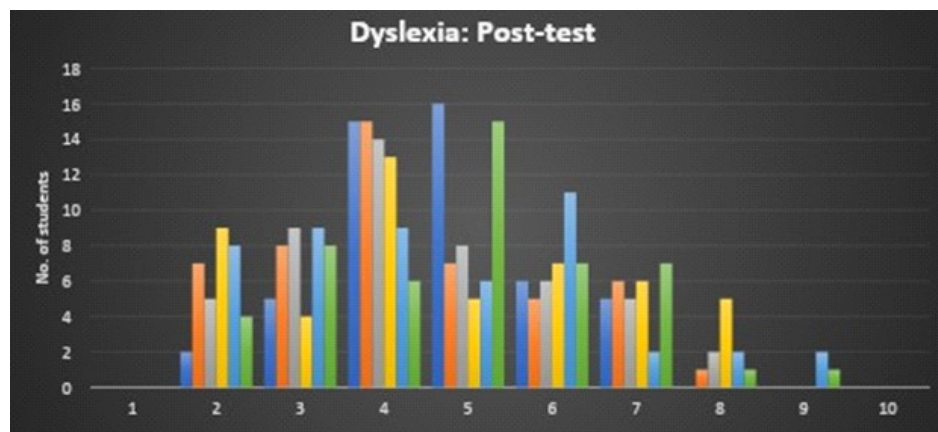
Dyslexia

With the data it was found that majority of the students were diagnosed with dyslexia. For dyslexic children, it was found that none of them performed well when they were taught through the traditional method.



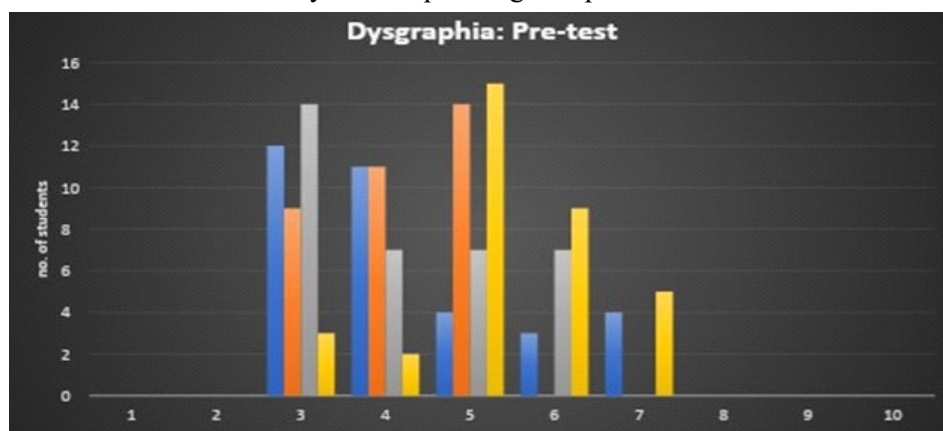
However, significant progress was seen when art integrated pedagogy was opted. Fluency and clarity improved in the students with the AIL approach.

The teaching methods incorporated in Visual arts teaching using art and painting, which included Tribal arts like Worli, Madhubani and Gond art, block printing and other forms like Bandani, kalamkari and Ajrak. The teacher gave demonstration along with verbal cues while teaching. It was seen that by incorporating these activities into teaching, children majorly gained fluency and clarity. They were able to do the task with more concentration and were able to express the content with more clarity. However, the students still faced difficulty with associating sounds with letters and had problem with identifying the slight words.



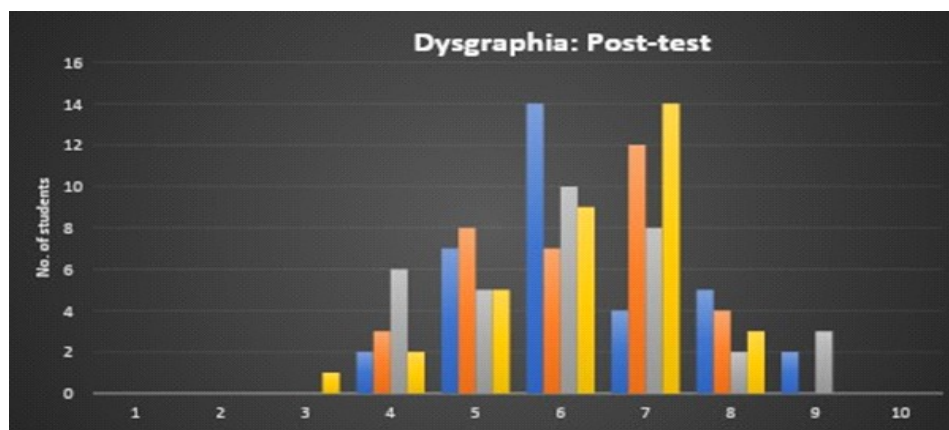
Dysgraphia

The students with dysgraphia lacked self-motivation which was majorly because these students' faced difficulty with sequencing of alphabets and formation of letters.



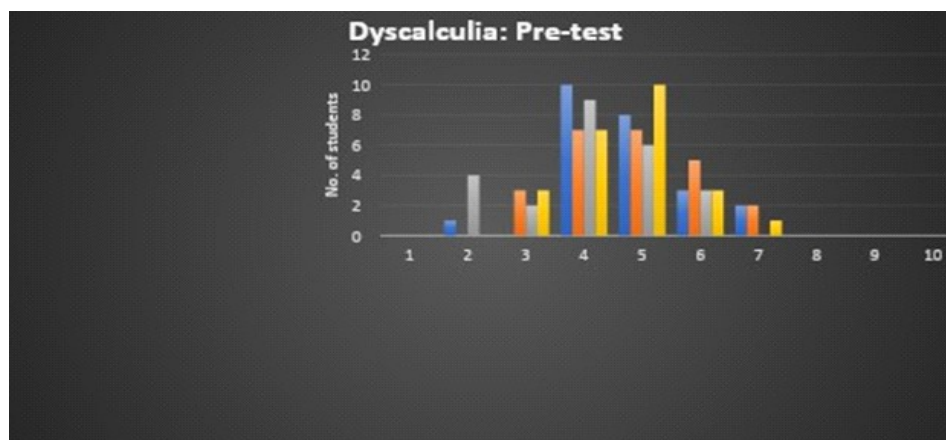
The post-test interventions included similar interventions in paintings as in dyslexia, which

included Bandani, ajrak, Madhubani, Worli and block painting. The pedagogy however included skeleton outline with prominent working. Sequencing approach was used. This helped the students as by focusing on the strokes in the painting, and through this practice, the formation of the letters improved significantly and the tasks were neater than before. These interventions also boosted the confidence and the children were more self-motivated.



Dyscalculia

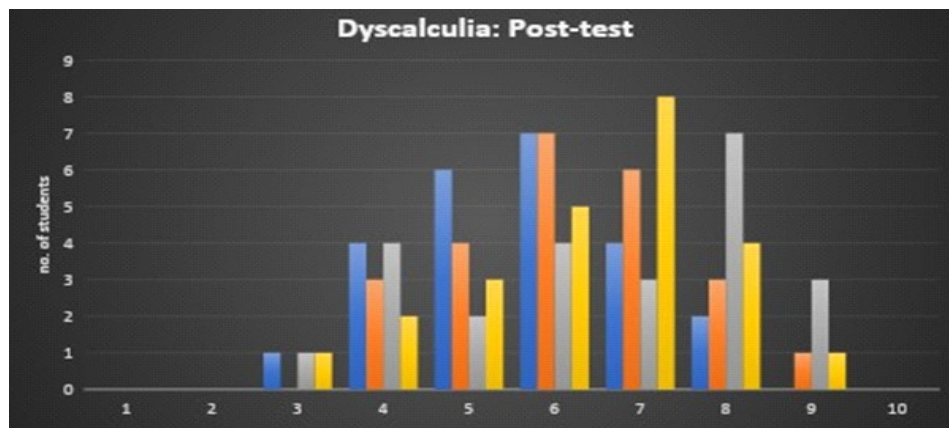
Logical reasoning and sequencing the arrangement of numbers was one of the major problems identified among the students diagnosed with dyscalculia.



Interventions for these students involved Worli art, Block painting, Kalamkari and Ajirk. For integrating these art and painting, the major pedagogical interventions included demonstration by breaking the tasks into small steps with cues, collaborative learning, sequential approach with picture representation or flash cards. The teachers also used craft related activities such as toy making, cane craft, jewellery making, mat/ carpet

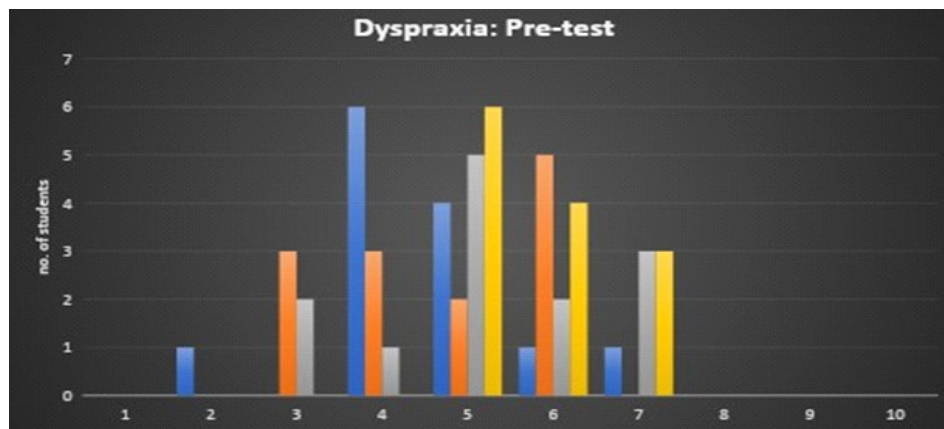
making, origami. It was observed by the SETs that the craft related activities were more effective for the students with dyscalculia as it helped them with sequential arrangements and logical reasoning. This was also reflected in the assessment done by the teachers as the grading improved significantly.

The area in which the art intervention was not too effective was in the area of accuracy in telling the time. Even though the students were able to perform better, the difference was not much significant.



Dyspraxia

The students diagnosed with dyspraxia faced major difficulty with handling the equipment like pencil, notebooks etc. They also tend to exhibit a clumsy behaviour and frequent accidents due to poor posture.



The interventions for the children diagnosed with dyspraxia include craft related activities such as carpet/ mat making, toy making, clay modelling, cane craft, clay modelling,

weaving, jewellery making, wall hanging, origami to name a few. The teacher used demonstration, task analysis with manageable components and collaborative learning for these activities. These activities not only helped the students with handling the equipment and better hand eye coordination, but also helped them gain confidence. Also, their fine motor skills improved when they engaged in these activities. The teacher also included activities such as dancing to improve the posture, however in this short duration, it did not show much improvement.

Overall, according to the SETs, the students with SLD have diverse needs and each student needs individualised attention to ease the disability. They also noted that, even though these can't be cured, integration of art helped in betterment in performance of these children, both academically and in co-curricular areas.

Conclusion

Art Integrated Learning (AIL) significantly enhances educational experiences for children with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLDs) by providing alternative pathways to understanding and expression. By integrating visual arts, music, drama, and dance into the curriculum, AIL addresses diverse learning styles and needs, allowing students with SLDs to engage with material in more accessible and motivating ways.

After discussing the interventions using AIL, most SETs found that this method was more effective than the traditional teaching method. Further, there were some complications with this method, as it was difficult to assess which method would best suit especially in the short duration of the study, but it could be concluded that the AIL had an edge over the traditional method.

It can be concluded that, the approach not only fosters creativity and self-expression but also builds confidence and reduces frustration by offering multiple modes of engagement and assessment. Consequently, AIL creates a more inclusive and supportive learning environment that recognizes and values the unique strengths and challenges of students with SLDs, leading to improved academic performance and overall well-being.

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