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The Evaluation of Success in Raising Environmental Awareness Through the Musical Instruments Produced Within the Scope of ECO Schools Program Implemented in Eskisehir

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Abstract

Substantial research which is related to raising awareness about environment has recently been conducted in Turkey as well as other countries. However, those studies which involved students practical experiences, conducted in educational context with a participatory approach can be subject to argument. One of the processes which is involved raising, particularly primary school pupils environmental sensitiveness is raising students environmental. Bringing out students' creative thinking abilities as well as raising their awareness concerning the recycling of the waste material is vital. The main purpose of the present study is, to evaluate the contribution of the musical instrument to raising students' environmental awareness as part of the ECO Schools Project. This study is a qualitative study and a semi structured interview form was used to gather data. The form was developed by the researcher. Content analysis method was used to analyze research data. The samples of this study consisted 20 students. The results of the study revealed students' development in terms of environmental awareness and how students produced and played instruments with other waste materials.

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1. Introduction

“Sound” is one of the most important manifestations of the human beings' existence on the face of the earth. Human beings communicate and express themselves through sound and they also define their surrounding environment by it. In other words, they define everything by sound. Even though, the basic sound is the humans' own voice, they also make sounds by hitting, blowing, shaking surrounding objects in their environment. On the other hand, it is true that all the objects around us have their unique voices. This helps, adults and children alike, to view these objects also as musical instruments. It may be the teachers' concern to be able to produce a sound from these objects, be it melodically or not. It may be the teachers' and students' concern to define the characteristic of an object either as a percussion or wind instrument, and produce a sound that is melodically or not. This concern surges when a certain effect is needed in a musical play or during musical instrument training which an essential part of music education is.

In this regard, with the addition of some parts and small formal changes, some paraphernalia can be turned into musical instruments outside their familiar use. Such musical instruments that made through the supervision of the

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teachers by the students, as a joint effort, will not only be useful in recycling scrap and waste materials but will also provide them a chance to produce musical instruments or make use of the objects that have a distinctive sound characteristic within a group environment. In other words, both environmental awareness and creative thinking will be materialized and put to practice (Ozturk, 2010).

In recent years, important work is carried out with regards to the development of environmental awareness both within Turkey and worldwide. However, it is hard to say that workshops of this kind are implemented in educational institutions with the understanding of a partaking approach. Especially in preschool age group, raising awareness is an important step in developing environmental sensibility. It is important to bring out their creative thoughts, and make them aware that some of the waste materials in the environment can be revalued. This study aims to find answers to the questions sited here below to evaluate the environmental sensibility development capability of the Project of Musical Instrument Production from Waste Materials within the scope of ECO Schools Project implemented by Eskisehir Tepebasi Municipality. In accordance with that:

1. What could primary school students gain from the experience of creating musical instruments from scrap objects and playing them?
2. Starting out with what's already been done how else can scrap and waste materials be put to use?

1. What is ECO Schools Program?

ECO-Schools Program is implemented in preschools and primary schools with the aim to develop environmental awareness, and to support environment management and sustainable development education. With its partaking approach, the program enables not only the students to learn about environmental issues but also plays an active role in raising public awareness within their families, the local administrations and non-governmental organizations (NGO) through their participation. This program is implemented by Turkish Environmental Education Foundation (TURCEV), established through the leadership of Ministry of Tourism in 1993. According to the data of 2010, the Project is implemented in 247 schools of 31 municipalities within Turkey, and in Eskisehir, 41 schools were involved in this project. This program not only teaches the students good habits that will help save the environment but it also gives them a lifelong direction which will have a direct impact on their future success (Kulaç, 2010).

This program enables students:

- To feel a part of a group and develop a new identity,
- To get used to group work and become an active participant,
- To identify and solve problems and develops skills of discussion,
- To take initiatives and develop the ability of decision making,
- To develop planning and reporting skills,
- To change their consumption habits and hence obviate extravagance,
- To develop an awareness to protect the natural resources (www.turcev.org).

2. Method

This study is a qualitative research, and a semi-structured observation form has been used in data collection. The data acquired was assessed through content analysis. Research group is formed of: 15 volunteering schools out of 41

schools that took part in the ECO Schools Project realized through the coordination of Eskisehir Tepebasi Municipality. And is limited to;

20 volunteering students from among the thirty 6th, 7th and 8th grade students that took part in the workshops carried out in 15 volunteering schools.

3. Data Collection

Realized through the coordination of Eskisehir Tepebasi Municipality, the ECO Schools Project could be summarized as follows: In February 2010, an informative meeting was held for the representatives of the schools attending the ECO Schools Project.

In March 2010, sample instruments were designed with 15 teachers coming from the primary schools attending the project. These instruments were classified as percussions (like bass, baritone, and tenor drums), maracas, cymbals, bells and rattles. The teachers were administered to produce these instruments with the students in their schools.

In April 2010, a 30 person rhythm orchestra was formed with the participation of 2 students from each primary school. The orchestration and rhythmic patterns to be played by the orchestra were composed by the researcher. The program was practiced in the Zincirlikuyu Town House once a week between 5-7 p.m. The first 3 weeks (6 hours) of practice was made up of playing techniques, group harmony, listening and echoing, and improvisation. The possibility of waste materials' functions to serve as musical instruments was discussed. The remaining 5 practices were reserved to the polyphonic performance of the 5 song repertoire. Following a total of 8 practices, a concert was held within the scope of Environment Day celebrations held on June 5, 2010 at the city center. The same concert was repeated within the scope of Teachers' Day Celebrations held on November 24, 2010 at the Anatolian University.

A year after the activities carried out within the scope of this project, the researcher formed a semi structured interview based on two questions and students were asked to answer these questions. These questions were:

1. Please write down in a short paragraph what you went through and what you gained from your experience of making a musical instrument from waste objects and playing that musical instrument.
2. Starting out with this workshop, what else do you think you can make from scrap and waste objects?

5. Analysis of the Data

Answers to the questions posed to students (20 out of 30 students participating in practice) are delivered to researcher with the help of students' teachers. All the responses and the opinions given were evaluated.

Accordingly:

1. 100% of the students (20 students) answered all the questions reported that they were very enthusiastic to make a musical instrument from waste objects and play that musical instrument. They added that they were happy doing business with their friends and teachers, and also they told that making a musical instrument by themselves made them to feel happy. They expressed that after the workshop, they tried to use scrap and waste objects to make a musical instrument, and they succeed it.
2. In response to questions, they told that they had difficulties to create a new type of instrument, but relatively they noticed that they could make new instrument which looked like new for them. Accordingly, 70% of students advised nearly same musical instruments and 30% of students proposed a new musical instrument.

6. Result

None of the students participating in this study participated in such a study before. As a part of understanding ECO Schools Project, it is observed that the students had awareness about making a musical instrument from the waste of objects. They summarized their views at this situation as the following; They expressed that they could practice their knowledge about the awareness of environment; they could try to make new musical instruments from the waste objects; they could accompany to the rhythm patterns beside the known patterns with their own musical instruments.

At the end of the research, the students expressed that they had development in terms of environmental awareness. Also, they stated that they could try to make new musical instruments from different waste materials and play them. However, it is seen that they had difficulties to propose different musical instruments. This can be explained by their not seeing and using different musical instruments in their daily life or music events.

This behaviour can be explained by the principle of recycling the waste objects which is the aspect of the environmental sensitivity. To use waste objects can be explained as gaining a new function as a music tool or creativity and problem-solving ability.

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