

Art education holds a distinctive position in contributing to the holistic growth of students. Beyond fostering creativity, art activities provide a platform to nurture social and emotional development. The National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS) has outlined clear curricular goals and competencies under the Social, Emotional, and Ethical Learning (SEEL) domain. However, unlike traditional subjects, the socio-emotional development domain is not compartmentalised into a separate class. Instead, it is integrated into various subjects, offering a unique challenge and opportunity.

This article delves into the interconnection between specific activities aimed at attaining art competencies and their correlation with the development of SEEL competencies in students. The activities target the following competencies:

C-12.1 Explores and plays with a variety of materials and tools to create two-dimensional and three-dimensional artworks in varying sizes.

C-12.2 Explores and plays with own voice, body, spaces, and a variety of objects to create music, role-play, dance and movement.

Source: National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage. 2.4.5 Domain: Aesthetic and Cultural Development. p. 63

Activities

Here are some activities included during art classes for the students of classes I and II to achieve the above-mentioned SEEL competencies.

Creating a self-portrait

The students are asked to look at themselves in a full-length mirror in the classroom and create self-portraits. They are encouraged to include in their drawings details, like hair length and colour, and the clothes that they are wearing. The drawings are displayed at their eye level. After all of them have looked at all the drawings, we discuss the unique qualities that make each student different as well as the common features among all. This activity

helps them to reflect on not only their physical appearance but also promotes self-awareness, identity formation, and a sense of belonging.

Family collage

Each child is given a sheet of paper, an old magazine, scissors and glue and asked to cut out pictures that resemble their family members to create a collage. Each student then shares the collage with the class and points at each picture and who it represents – their names, relationship and other details, such as what they do. If they do not find appropriate pictures in their magazines, they can ask their classmates to share pictures from their magazines.

When we did this activity, students also wrote a few words or a sentence about each family member of their family and added pets and their favourite spots in their homes. Interestingly, a few of the class I students were unaware of their father's occupations. They were encouraged to ask their parents and share the information. Initially, some class II students were reluctant to disclose professions, like housekeeping, gardening, and domestic help. So, a discussion took place about the importance of each profession and how each person's work contributes to their families. Although the students eventually shared the details, it took multiple similar activities and discussions for them to truly appreciate their family members' professions. Overall, this activity played a role in cultivating in the students a sense of connection with their families.

Home, school and neighbourhood

The teacher shows a map of their own locality – their house and neighbourhood and shows how they go past important landmarks to reach the school. The teacher also talks about the importance of knowing the address and phone number of parents and other family members. Students are asked to talk to their parents and get these details. The teacher asks each student to draw a similar map of their neighbourhood with important landmarks in their drawing book and explain it to the rest of the students.

Students take time to complete this activity; they need practice and repetition to remember addresses and phone numbers and help with directions to draw the map.

Our students participated in this activity enthusiastically. Class II students extended the activity by creating and enacting a situation of a child getting lost and coming back to their parents because the child knew the correct address. This activity helped promote awareness of their surroundings and a sense of belonging to the community.

Emotion charades

The teacher writes different emotions on small cards (happy, sad, angry, surprised, etc) and each student picks up a card and acts out the emotion mentioned on it without speaking, while others guess the emotion. They discuss situations that might evoke particular emotions and how certain facial expressions or body language convey specific emotions.

Our students shared some funny incidents from the classroom and home. Some of them cried while sharing sad incidents. When one student seemed hesitant to share anything that made her sad, she was encouraged to share any simple incident, like a fight with her sibling. She started with that and

went on to share how her grandmother's death has affected her and how much she misses her. She started crying and the other children began to console her. This also led to a number of other students sharing incidents that made them sad or fearful.

Storytelling and enacting

Simple, contextual stories with interesting characters are narrated with appropriate voice modulation, facial expression, and intonation. The stories are retold/reread by the teacher and some students to make sure all the students understand. The students are then divided into groups. Each group is asked to create dialogues, assign characters, and practice acting. They are provided with props or use available resources.

Each group has to act out their story in front of the class and the students are asked to give feedback on their expressions, dialogue delivery, props and the sequence – what they liked and what needed to be improved.

This activity is regularly done in our classrooms and has proved to be an excellent activity for students' social and emotional development. A lot of disagreement and negotiations happen within a group on assigning characters and roles of the story and the students are able to resolve their conflicts,

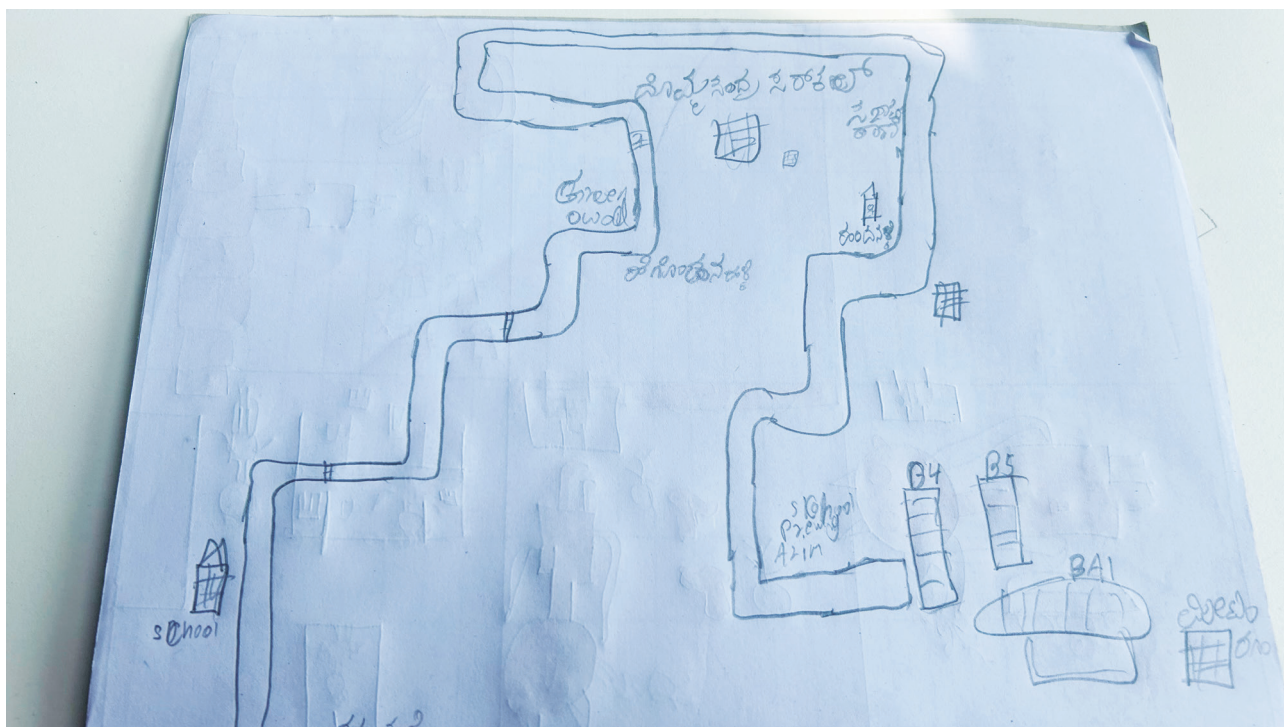


Figure 1. Students' map of their locality.

sometimes with a little help from the teachers. Their feedback progresses from general, such as, 'I liked her performance because she is my friend', to concrete observations on expressions and acting skills, like 'He should not be smiling while enacting a sad situation'.

In summary

Along with achieving art competencies, students achieve the following SEEL competencies through these activities:

C-4.1 Starts recognising 'self' as an individual belonging to a family and community

C-4.2 Recognises different emotions and makes deliberate efforts to regulate them appropriately

Source: National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage. 2.4.5 Domain: Aesthetic and Cultural Development. p. 60

The teacher should consider both art and SEEL competencies while assessing students' learning from these activities. For example, during the

role-play, the teacher should observe how they are exploring their voice, body, space, and props as an art competency and, at the same time, how they work collaboratively with their peers as a SEEL competency.

The activities mentioned above represent just a handful of examples. While transacting the art curriculum, it is imperative to regularly consult the competencies and learning indicators of SEEL and change our strategies appropriately. Equally important are other aspects, such as allowing students to express themselves in their preferred language, establishing meaningful connections with students, creating a positive atmosphere, and maintaining a consistent schedule and structured environment to make them comfortable in sharing their emotions and building healthy relationships.

Embracing inclusivity, our school welcomes students from diverse economic, social, and cultural backgrounds, as well as varying physical and mental abilities. This diversity fosters an environment where the students are learning to be tolerant, cooperative and supportive of one another.



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