

Turkish Marbling and Gifted Children

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Accepted: October 02, 2012 Published: November 14, 2012

Doi:10.5296/ijld.v2i6.2555

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/ijld.v2i6.2555>

Abstract

Gifted children display different characteristics, attitudes and behaviours not only from their peers but also from one another. Gifted children should not mean a single type of children with similar characteristics. On the contrary, these children display different characteristics not only from other children but also from other gifted peers. For the teachers of young children it is very difficult to find an activity that is suitable and contributes to the development of these children. In this circumstance, Turkish marbling might be helpful for the teachers. Although Turkish marbling (Ebru) is mentioned as a difficult art in various resources, it can be applied to children by using ready-to-use dyes and ready-to-use gum tragacanth. After all, marbling can be turned into an enjoyable activity by giving the children the opportunity to discover different characteristics of marbling and by not forcing them applying the marbling by using traditional techniques perfectly. Marbling activities done with children show that, pre-school and primary school children find it enjoyable and like to participate in these activities. Such characteristics of marbling as (a) giving opportunities for originality, (b) teaching patience, (c) experimenting, (d) allowing works in different in different ability levels, (e) relaxing and anxiety recovery, (f) suitability for different age groups, (g) giving chance for personal progression suits the needs of gifted children thus making it very advantageous for these children. Therefore, it is thought that marbling might make important contributions for the development of gifted children.

Keywords: Turkish Marbling, Gifted Children.

1. Introduction

Gifted children display different characteristics, attitudes and behaviours not only from their peers but also from one another. When we say gifted children, one should not think of uniform specialities. These children are special on their parts, just like the others. Furthermore, differences between two gifted children may be even more than two normal children due to some of their talents being superior and being gifted in different fields (Gur, 2010). When we say gifted, it should not be evaluated in an academic manner and one should consider that the word “gifted” refers to superior talents and skills in different fields.

Programs related to the gifted children are quite limited in Turkey. Most of these children go to the same schools with their ordinary peers where no any programs towards them are conducted, and may sometimes face problems regarding meeting their educational requirements (Gur,2006). Particularly during the pre-school period, teachers face problems regarding how to include them in the program and attract the attention of the children who can easily get bored in the class, lose attention and even refuse to attend the program applied (Porter, 1999). It is estimated that the ordinary children would slog away when the educators develop activities intended only for the gifted children. Thus, flexible activities in which all the children in the class – no matter if gifted or not – would like to contribute, improve themselves personally and present products towards their own abilities are needed. (Gur,2006).

Art activities would be the easiest to be developed and applied towards both the gifted and ordinary children groups (Gur, 2006). Particularly due to their relaxing features (Akdemir, 2011) in terms of relieving anxiety and concern, Marbling activities would be quite effective in gifted children who frequently face anxiety, worries and psychological tensions (Strip, 2000; Gur, 2011).

2. What is Turkish Marbling?

Turkish marbling which we frequently come across on the covers and end leaves of old books (Elhan, 2004: 7), is the art of painting on the concentrated water with earth dye and powder paint. It is obtained by scattering the dye by means of using special brushes on the water which is concentrated with tragacanth and similar substances and transferring the patterns occurred on the water to paper (Aritan, 1999).

In Marbling activities, dyes, tragacanth, cattle gall, paper, water, vessel, brush, punch and comb are used (Aritan, 1999;Dere, 2007, Sönmez,2007):

Dyes: From of old, colourful metallic dyes obtained from stones and sand in the nature which we call the “earth dye” and vegetable based non-water soluble dyes have been used in the Turkish marbling art.

Tragacanth: Plantal glue used to bring in a gummy stiffness to the water on which the dye is scattered.

Cattle Gall: In order to make sure that the dye on the tragacanth water spreads without precipitating, animal substances which contain bile acids are used on the plane. To prevent corruption, gall water is previously boiled and preserved.

Paper: An absorbing paper without shiny and slippery surface can easily be used for Ebru art.

Water: Hard and non-calcareous water is preferred.

Vessel: In Ebru art, sinks called “vessels” are used. A vessel is generally a rectangular and splay basin. The vessels are made from wood, aluminium, glass or zinc. Generally, vessels with 4 – 6 cm depth and 35x50 cm length are preferred. In addition, as the paper soaked in the water would expand, the vessel should be to some extent larger than the paper.

Brush: The brushes are made from horse tail and the branches of rose tree. Stem length should be 20 – 25 cm.

Punch: Metal bars used to drop the dye on the water surface, give shape, control the air bubbles after putting the paper in the vessel and even take the paper back from the vessel.

Comb: Tools which are used to obtain splayed Ebru pattern with a variable width and length depending on the vessel and of which the sides are nailed with pins, wire or thin studs in order to obtain a comb shape.

3. How is Ebru Applied?

First of all, a certain amount of tragacanth is stirred in a cup. The mixture occurred is reserved for at least a day by occasionally impasting and stirring. At the end of this period, the tragacanth melts in the water and the mixture acquires a stiffness slightly thinner than boza. The mixture prepared is then cleaned by means of distilling with cheesecloth or a fabric bag which is not too loose textured. Tragacanth water is purged in the vessel without being lathered. The dust like earth dyes should be previously ground and reduced as much as possible to be ready for use. The ground and pasty dye is then mixed with gall, and trials are made on the tragacanth water in order to obtain the correct amount. Dye is scattered on the tragacanth water by means of a brush. It is then dispersed depending on the amount of the gall within and the desired consistency is maintained by checking the expansions of the dye on the water surface. The dyes prepared are preserved in separate cups. After these materials are prepared, the dye is scattered on the special water in the vessel by means of brushes (Aritan,1999; Dere, 2007). After it is scattered on the water surface, the dye starts to spread. Other dyes are dropped on the spread dye (Akdemir, 2011; Sönmez, 2007). After the patterns are formed, the paper on which Ebru art shall be realized is slowly and carefully laid on the tragacanth water in the vessel, without sliding. In order to prevent the air bubbles to occur between the water and the paper, paper surface is stroked. If air bubbles remain between the water and the paper, that part of the paper doesn't take paint and may remain empty (Akdemir,2011). For the dye to transfer to the paper, 10 seconds should pass. The paper is held from the two edges and pulled carefully from one side of the vessel, and its tragacanth water is leached. Then, the paper is left on a flat surface to dry (Sönmez, 2007). Each Ebru work is unique and it is impossible to create the same.

Ebru which is referred to as a challenging and demanding art in the related sources, can be used in the applications made among the primary school students and smaller children by means of using ready paints and pulverized tragacanth in order to facilitate teacher's work (Kıratlı,2010). Furthermore, Ebru may be rendered entertaining and amusing for children by means of not forcing them to fully use the traditional Ebru techniques, allowing them to discover the different opportunities of Ebru and letting them experience different aspects (Kıratlı,2010).

4. Why Is It Important for the Gifted Young Children?

Marbling activities done with children show that, pre-school and primary school children find it enjoyable and like to participate in these activities (Kıratlı,2010; Selek, 2010). Due to their features in terms of originality, teaching patience, providing experimental opportunities, referring to different levels of studies, being relaxing, avoiding anxiety, allowing people from all the age and talent groups to amuse themselves and allowing for individual improvement, Ebru applications would be valuable activities that would make a significant contribution in gifted children.

4.1 Giving opportunities for originality: When gifted children attend to an activity, they frequently ask themselves questions like “does this activity attract my attention?”, “do I want to continue to this activity- did I like it?” and “is this the kind of activity that I can make a contribution to myself?” (Sutherland, 2005). In order to eliminate the feelings of boredom and disappointment in gifted children, open-ended and flexible activities which give them opportunity to present original and creative products are needed (Koshy, 2002). As these

children find the opportunity to do so, they become more motivated. The main point for the educators is to find activities which could motivate these children (Sutherland, 2005). Each study presented in Ebru is original. It is impossible to present an identical of the product (Sönmez, 2007). Marbling activities give the children the opportunity to produce original products and gain unique acquisitions.

4.2 Teaching patience: Ebru, firstly teaches and develops being patient. As an Ebru artist is not always fully in control, particularly people with obsessions learn to accept what exists. (Aktay, 2011). Ebru activities will help to overcome the impatience (Porter, 1999) which is a frequently seen situation among gifted children, thus facilitate the child's adaptation to the group.

4.3 Experimenting: Many researchers agree on the necessity to design the activities in a manner to promote the gifted children's sense of discovery (Kitano, 1982; Koopmans-Dayton and Feldhusen, 1987; Parke and Ness, 1988; Snowden, 1995; Vydra and Leimbach, 1998). While doing marbling activities, children try to guess the results of their works and arrange the distribution and colours of the paints, develop new styles and compositions by comparing the results they have obtained from their previous works and their recent works, and solve problems. Each technique they apply and new colour they include in their compositions is an experiment, the result of which they will see when they finally hold the paper. Each Ebru work is a separate experiment for children.

4.4 Allowing works in different ability levels: Marbling activities allow the children in the same class but with different talent and skill degrees to work together and let each child to present products towards his skills. While these products allow the children to experience the sense of possessiveness within the learning process, they are also the physical tools which allow the children to evaluate themselves and play a significant role in their learning life (Cukierkorn et al., 2007).

4.5 Relaxing and anxiety recovery: It is a fact which is proven by experience that Ebru has a therapeutic feature, contributes to improving the aesthetic sensitivity, communication, using the time correctly, motivation, creativity, patience, discipline, adaptation, and gives positive results in coping with certain problems such as stress, instability and anxieties (Akdemir, 2011). Ebru firstly teaches to espouse. In Ebru art, the patterns are developed beyond the absolute will of the person, and the person cannot fully control the drops falling on the water, nesting and the gaps between them. Thus, not being fully in control reduces the obsessions in time. Ebru lifts the person out of the routine life and takes him to the other worlds, and provides soul tranquillity. It allows the person to express his current sentiments by means of colours and patterns. Coping with stress and acquiring motivation provide significant benefits for increasing creativity and self confidence (Canbolat, 2008). Water has positive effects on people especially when it spreads positive ions (Akdemir, 2011). When the child focuses his attention on the water and the movement of the colours, his tension decreases and he loses track of time. In addition, creating something and the product being admired by others increase self-confidence (Aktay, 2011).

4.6 Suitability for different age groups: Marbling activities are the activities in which people from all age groups fondly participate. Especially the children find it enjoyable and like to participate in these activities (Kıratlı, 2010; Selek, 2010)

4.7 Giving chance for personal progression: Marbling activities give an opportunity to children's physical improvement. Each Ebru work is a separate experiment for the child and the works he accomplishes, styles he applies and comparison between the colours he uses give him the opportunity to develop himself towards his own knowledge and skills.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

It would be challenging for the pre-school teachers to find activities in which the gifted children would also participate with their friends, present products and gain acquisitions regarding their skills. Despite the fact that it is commonly known as a difficult art, Ebru can become an activity in which the small children can participate by means of artificial dyes and ready to use pulverized tragacanth. Giving opportunities for originality, teaching patience, experimenting, allowing works in different ability levels, relaxing and anxiety recovery, suitability for different age groups, giving change for personal progression, Ebru is considered to be a supporting activity which can be applied to gifted children.

Children fondly participate in marbling activities. Various applications show that the primary school students fondly participated in this study and the special education group liked Ebru. However, as the result of the literature review made, no Ebru applications regarding the gifted children were encountered. The reason for this is thought to be the fact that the gifted children occupying a quite small part of the total population, activities made with this children being generally evaluated on a scientific activity basis (science facilities, discovering the operation system of the machines, etc.), the very few of marbling activities made with these children not being subject to any research topic, or the applications made not being reflected to the internet or the printed media.

The fact that Ebru promising various acquisitions to gifted children connotes the necessity of the pre-school teacher education. For this purpose, teachers may be offered various in-service opportunities and teacher candidates may receive Ebru courses at the university.

Works accomplished may be exposed in order to encourage children, enforce their self-confidence and the works made by the children may be used as bookmarks, framed pictures and as trays by means of attaching grips to both sides. Organizations in which the parents could participate with their children may be held. Expositions of the products presented by the children may be organized.

In addition, it is thought that sharing the studies made by the contribution of the gifted children within the scientific researches, book chapters, printed media or the internet environment would also make a major contribution in the studies of the researchers working in this field.

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