

The Creative and Expressive Arts in Korea Today: Education, Therapy and Research

当今韩国创造性和表达性艺术：教育、 治疗和研究

Mina Mo

Integrated Life-Art Education POIESIS, Korea

The creative and expressive arts are growing in the fields of education, therapy and research in South Korea. Korea Art & Culture Education Service (KACES), a public agency under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea, was founded in 2005 to create an environment where all Koreans are able to experience the arts and cultural education in their daily lives. It has trained art-education practitioners through schools and social welfare organizations (<http://eng.arte.or.kr/about>). The national license Arts and Culture Education Instructor (ACEI), has been issued by KACES since 2013. The purpose is to develop the quality of art education, to increase employment, and to enhance public confidence in the instructors and field of the arts in education. Students of elementary and middle school will learn drama as a compulsory subject, and high school students will have a drama class as an elective subject from 2018 onwards. In universities, masters and doctoral courses related to the expressive arts have been created. As a result, research is increasing, but in the field of expressive arts therapies, much research studies still focus on quantitative research to prove its effectiveness. We need the kind of research that is also appropriate to the arts.

In the fields of art education and therapy, interest in integrative application is increasing. For example, Tamalpa Institute in California opened a Korean branch in 2010, and the number of its students has increased yearly. I also developed in Korea an integrated model; the Tamalpa movement approach and Non-Violent Communication(NVC), which is useful embodied learning approach to body-mind awareness and communication. Although the social demand and supply of integrative art education and therapy have been expanding, the concepts of inter-modality and *poiesis* are not well-known yet in Korea.

The mainstream current of expressive arts in the fields of education and therapy is under Western influence. Some art performance and education companies however, are doing it differently, as seen in *Madangguk*. which is a traditional Korean art performance and a community art piece. Recently they are also running experiential workshops, including the making of *Madangguk*.

Although the use of the arts in therapy is growing, the arts are still regarded as an auxiliary means of psychological or medical treatment. In my opinion, we should find, explore and define through our own research, what is healing in the arts and how it enables recovery. Even though we have our own wisdom as Koreans and Asians, we tend to make obstacles for ourselves by putting more trust in Western theories and

approaches. Although the creative and expressive arts therapies have been initiated and developed in the West, the therapeutic resources of the arts are found in every culture. We have to identify these resources and develop them in our own cultural and creative way. This can also be a contribution that will make these fields richer.

Art-based education, therapy, and research will continue to grow in Korea for many reasons. Social conditions such as keen competition and social polarization, have triggered severe stress. As a result, the field of psychotherapy has grown, which has also further opened the door and interest for creative arts therapies. Moreover, many studies pointing out the limitations of cognitive psychotherapy have been reported, which influences a growing interest in the arts therapies. Further, the study of somatics has been attracting many people in Korea, showing that people are interested in improving their quality of life through other approaches. We need to consider the meaning of the arts in education and healing and propose a way forward for the future. This is a responsibility for arts-based research.

Last year, Whasung Office of Education¹ asked me to offer a community culture workshop for teachers in the city, for the purpose of self-care. I included meditation, movement, and drawing, so that participants could have the experience of relaxation, empathy, and nurturing of each other.

Ever since, over 500 teachers from over 10 schools have been experiencing this workshop. The feedback was wonderful, with participants asking to expand this training. At the beginning, they were involuntary participants, but after the workshop their attitude changed in a positive direction. Teachers in Korea have many tasks and training workshops, most of which focus on the development of job capacity and job-related skills. Even though they had received training in art-making before, it had been mainly about using art in their classes. Thus, I interpret their feedback as showing needs for connection with their lives and the arts on different and personally meaningful levels.

About the author

Mina Mo, registered Somatic Movement Therapist/Educator (RSMT/RSME), certified Non-Violent Communication Trainer (CNVC Trainer), Integrated Life-Art Education POIESIS Representative director and founder.

Reference

“KACES”. Korea Art & Culture Education Service. < <http://eng.arte.or.kr/about>>. (24 June. 2016)

¹ A city of Kyunggi-do South Korea