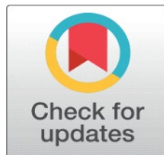
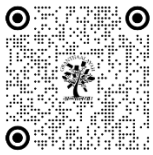


PROMOTING SELF-EXPRESSION AND POSITIVE VISUALIZATION THROUGH ART EDUCATION IN NON-ART-SPECIALIZED PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS

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DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v3.i1.2022.5318](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v3.i1.2022.5318)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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ABSTRACT

In today's time where there is always a sense of competition in every individual and apparent dissatisfaction towards life, individuals are more stressed and struggling with mental health. Positive visualization and meditation in teacher education will help future educators deal with stress, self-doubt, and burnout. This paper investigates the incorporation of creative pedagogies in the education of non-art-specialized prospective teachers drawing upon a workshop-based pedagogy to express their emotions and develop a positive outlook. This research is qualitative. 40 prospective teachers participated in the workshop, organized into five phases: Introductory activity – self-reflection and expression; Re-writing activity – transforming negative thoughts; Positive visualization and meditation with probes; Creation of artwork; and Reflection. The workshop's main purpose was to promote self-expression and help participants become more optimistic and encourage them to use visualization and drawing to understand and nurture their positive emotions. Through self-expression opportunities provided in this workshop, participants were encouraged to ponder about their emotions. The activities encouraged not only creativity amongst the participants but also enabled them to uplift their own self and identify their innate potential. It helped in enhancement of personal experiences and understanding of the place of arts in education. This study envisions the creative component in the teacher education program. It demonstrates that transforming teacher trainees' outlook and development is possible through incorporating art within the curriculum.

Keywords: Positive Visualization, Meditation, Art-Education, Creativity, Workshop-Based Creative Pedagogy, Self-Upliftment

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

Art is necessary in the social and cultural milieus that shape it; it is a powerful tool to transcend boundaries. Art has been essential in the social and cultural milieus that shape it; it's a powerful tool to experience unity and solidarity and sparks awareness directly and indirectly about societal issues. In this contemporary era, where an individual is subjected to constant competition and visible dissatisfaction with life, people are much more stressed and struggling with psychological issues. During the COVID-19 lockdown, many individuals resorted to artistic expressions to cope with anxieties and social isolation.

Art provides a space in which thinking and emotional experience can be liberated from the limits of reality. It allows contact to worlds different from ours, within an artificial, and therefore, safe space. Art can (also) help in reducing the stigma attached to mental illness. In recent times there is a new approach that is becoming strong and capturing the attention of the public and health professionals: art therapy. Mental health professionals are increasingly recognizing

the therapeutic powers of art. Many health professionals consider art an option to promote good mental health (Deirdre Heenan, 2006). Positive visualization increases the likelihood of a positive internal state (Hynes & Turner, 2020). Positive thinking is looking at the brighter side of situations, making a person constructive & creative (Naseem & Khalid, 2010). In healing, repetitive use of positive visualization and meditation allows access to the mind-body connection (Sheerha & Singhvi, 2016).

1.2. ART AND POSITIVE VISUALIZATION

Art Therapies, including Art, Dance, Music, and Drama therapy, originated in early 20th-century psychiatry, influenced by the discovery of the unconscious. Much of the existing research on art-based interventions has focused on the psychotherapeutically oriented forms of art therapy, where art therapy is associated with Freudian analysis and verbal psychotherapy (Naumburg, 1996). However, in the past 20 years, there has been increasing interest in arts for health initiatives, where engagement in the creative process per se is seen to have therapeutic value. The importance of creative expression to healthy human development and recovery from mental distress has been established in all world cultures. Art also helps to escape reality and helps individuals to withdraw into their creative worlds, without the negative impacts that the consumption of drugs and alcohol has. Thus, art helps to purge the negative emotions and make space for positive ones.

Art is also used analogously with imagination. Imagination is about thinking about what is 'not yet'. It helps to equip individuals with the skill and flexibility of mindset to live in a world that is fast changing. William Wordsworth said that imagination is reason in its most exalted form. It also offers intellectual freedom. It breaks the shackles of what is possible and what is not. It provides such freedom to individuals that they lack in other spheres of their lives. Thus, art helps them to develop a positive attitude towards things that may not be possible. It helps them to be comfortable with new and sometimes chaotic possibilities. American philosopher John Dewey in his book 'Art as Experience', also commented on the importance of art. He wrote about the importance of aesthetic experience. He said that no experience is a unitary experience unless it has aesthetic qualities in it. Indulging in art helps to develop an aesthetic sense. Dewey, J. (1934) emphasised that art and aesthetics are not synonymous but are closely related. He said that what separates an ordinary experience from an aesthetic sense is the predominance of imagination. Since art has a huge element of imagination, it can be seen how art and aesthetics are related to each other and complement each other. Graham-Pole J (2000) Report that artistic expression can significantly aid in the healing process for both mental and emotional well-being and has found acceptance across a wide range of cultural contexts. Throughout documented human history, rituals for healing have included the use of images, stories, dances, and chants. All these healing rituals are types of artistic expression, even healing chants. If we take a closer look, all the chants and mantras are precisely curated from words to tone to how to use them, everything is mentioned, so the individual gets all of their benefits. Chants are also a type of art, as they're a beautiful curation of words. There is no unnecessary word; all words are selected in order and arranged rhythmically to create a harmonious balance that the individual benefits from.

Art has always been used as a medium of catharsis, expression, and a medium of healing physically and mentally, some researchers have found that art has been helpful in this process. Sholt & Tavron (2006) also found that molding clay can be a powerful way to help people express these feelings through tactile involvement at a somatic level, as well as to facilitate verbal communication and cathartic release and reveal unconscious materials and symbols that cannot be expressed through words. In another study, Reynolds & Lim (2007) discovered women participating in a qualitative study of challenges they encountered while undergoing cancer treatment. Participating in various forms of visual art (textiles, card making, collage, pottery, watercolor, acrylics) benefited these women in 4 significant ways. In the first place, it allowed them to concentrate on positive life experiences and lift their constant preoccupation with cancer. Second, it helped raise their self-worth and identity by giving them opportunities to display continuity, challenge, and accomplishment. Third, it allowed them to sustain a social identity that refused to be defined by cancer. And finally, it helped them express their feelings symbolically, particularly through chemotherapy. Since Kaimal et al. (2017) discovered in their research even a brief series of creative self-expression or art-making exercises, taken in about 15–20 minutes, can lead to individuals feeling that they have good ideas and can solve problems. Art-making may be one means to modulate mood and addictive behaviors and create a sense of pleasure. It is also necessary to know what positive thinking is, as the Mayo Clinic Staff (2017) in the article, "Positive Thinking: Stop Negative Self-talk to Reduce Stress," states, "positive thinking doesn't mean that you keep your head in the sand and ignore life's less pleasant situations," it means "that you approach unpleasantness more positively and productively". Researchers have also found that positive

thinking can aid in stress management and even plays an important role in overall health, mental health, and well-being. To understand the effect of art and positive thinking on healing Stuckey & Nobel (2010) reviewed previous research in the area of art and healing. Four primary therapies emerged: music engagement, visual arts therapy, movement-based creative expression, and expressive writing. The studies included in the review appear to indicate that creative engagement can decrease anxiety, stress, and mood disturbances. As can be seen from the analysis, creative engagement likely contributes to many aspects of physiological and psychological conditions typically associated with improved health status. But to focus on the positives of life, one needs to change the way one thinks, that is to think positively, and one of the ways is to indulge in the arts.

As we found the relationship between art and positive thinking, we discovered that they both have an impact on our health and our thinking.

The above research indicates how art affects health and healing. If we will incorporate positive visualization into art, it will undoubtedly alter our perception of the world and give a new perspective on doing art. Because art provides a safe space for us to be ourselves, an environment free of jealousy and envy, it teaches us how to be patient and provides a space for us to develop self-worth and identity through fearless self-expression. Art can help us feel secure in our skin, and a person who feels secure from the inside out is less likely to be scared by things. In a sense, art teaches us a way of living.

1.3. AIM

The major aim of the workshop is to help participants become more optimistic and encourage them to use visualization and drawing to understand and nurture their positive emotions. It also aims to provide opportunities to develop the ability to express oneself fearlessly and with originality. Through this, the participants will be encouraged to ponder, reflect, and transform negative emotions into positive ones by expressing themselves freely and uninhibitedly in their paintings.

2. PARTICIPANTS

As discussed, both self-expression and positivity are significant, therefore, they should be promoted, especially by prospective teachers who have a major role in further shaping the future of the participants after completing their training. However, prospective teachers with art specialization are negligible. Thus, non-art specialized teacher educators were considered as the participants for this study. Hence, none of the participants had exposure to art at the graduation level.

DELIMITATION: The study focuses only on the drawing and painting area of visual arts in art education.

3. METHOD

This study draws from my extensive classroom experiences, where I explored various creative pedagogies to enrich the learning of non-art-specialized prospective teachers. This study is a part of my classroom experiences, and I used a workshop-based teaching method (Simm & David, 2002) to add elements associated with arts in education. The detailed phases of the workshop are discussed below. Each phase of the workshop is designed with a specific objective. The duration of the workshop was four weeks, with four sessions. Phases from 1-3 were completed in three sessions with one session per week each lasting for two hours, and phase 4 and 5 together got completed in one session. Therefore, the total number of sessions were four, each lasting for two hours, and a total of eight hours were spent on the workshop. The workshop was held on the university campus involving 40 non-art-specialized prospective teachers. In addition, anonymity was maintained throughout the study, to ensure participants' removal of fear of performance and hesitation of sharing their innermost personal feelings. The workshop was divided into five phases, each designed with specific objectives to progressively build participants' creative and reflective skills. The ultimate goal was to foster positive thinking and self-expression through art, while also allowing participants to reflect on their own life experiences and challenges. The data that emerged at each phase was then analyzed thematically.

Phase 1: Introductory Activity – Self-Reflection and Expression

In this phase, before the beginning of the session, all the participants were asked to explore the term 'positive visualization' as a task. Then a brief discussion on it was held to provide a direction for further activities related to the workshop.

Objective: This activity provides a platform for prospective teachers to express their present feelings, perspectives on life, and issues and challenges they're facing to achieve their goals.

Activity: In this exercise, participants were asked to reflect on their lives and write freely about their feelings about where they are in life, where they would like to be, and the challenges they face in achieving their goals or any other feeling that is challenging. This allowed them to express their inner thoughts and feelings. This stage was critical to gaining an understanding of personal context and mindset; two elements that would ultimately inform the visualization as well as the artistic process.

Phase 2: Re-writing activity – Transforming negative thoughts

Objective: To enable the participants to locate negative thoughts or emotions associated with self, others, and the environment and reframe them into positive thoughts and beliefs

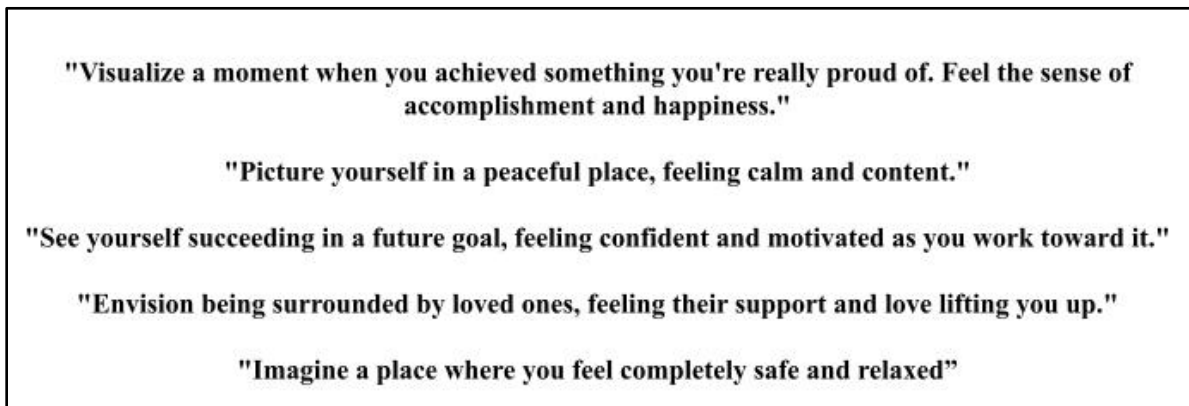
Activity: In this phase, participants were asked to recognize and highlight by circling/underlining any negative words, thoughts, or emotions that they had previously written in phase 1, and rewriting them replacing the circled/underlined negative words with the positive ones. This phase involved them in positive thinking. For instance, in phase 1, one of the participants wrote: "I can't achieve my goals because there are so many obstacles". In phase 2, it was rewritten and transformed to "I am determined to achieve my goals because I have the highest potential within to fight no matter what." Here "can't" has been replaced by "determined" and the phrase "there are so many obstacles" is replaced by 'I have the highest potential within to fight no matter what'.

Phase 3: Positive visualization with probes

Objective: To help participants achieve potential positive shifts through the practice of positive visualization and meditation techniques to shift focus from challenges to possibilities.

Activity: In this activity, participants were asked to close their eyes, soft instrumental music was played, lights were dim, and probes were used to encourage participants to meditate and slip into positive visualization. The participants were then asked to visualize the positive paragraph/line that they framed in phase 2. I, as a facilitator, gave verbal probes to guide them through positive visualization and meditation—encouraging them to imagine a future where they have overcome their current challenges, and where their goals and dreams have been realized as mentioned in Figure 1. Participants were guided to think about feelings of accomplishment, happiness, and fulfillment during this visualization exercise.

Figure 1



Phase 4: Creation of an artwork

Objective: To provide a platform to express the visualization through creative outlet and create an artwork

Activity: Before this phase, participants were encouraged to go into a flow state and meditate on seeing the things moving in the positive direction with their closed eyes. In this phase, the participants were encouraged to draw their

positive visualization. Along with their artwork, participants were also asked to write a brief explanation of the ideas or emotions behind their artwork.

Phase 5: Reflection

Objective: To allow participants to reflect on their overall experiences throughout the workshop Activity: At this phase, participants were asked to reflect and express their overall experience during the workshop.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected at every five phases was analyzed phase-wise and thematically.

1) Analysis of self-expression

The workshop took place in the different phases as mentioned above in the methodology section. This section includes three phases that are phase-1, 2, and 3. This section adopts a narrative analysis of the prospective teachers.

4.1. SELF-REFLECTION AND EXPRESSION

The participants were asked to express their emotions related to their current situation, dreams, and challenges to achieve them. The responses were majorly in the sense of having most of the focus on the obstacles, and incomplete, unsatisfied, and an unhappy perception towards life. The participants used different connotations to express their emotions. They highlighted the missing part of their life which they are striving for. One of the participants expressed,

“I am the kind of person who is a negative thinker and for whom things never go as expected. I am diffident and get nervous whenever I am on stage. I am always in a dilemma and just don't know what to choose.”

Another participant mentioned,

“For the longest time, I thought I was capable. I switched from one thing to another, trying to do everything, but nothing seemed to fall into place. Over time, setbacks in my personal life led me to start believing that no matter what I did, I couldn't bring about any meaningful change. The confidence I had as a child suddenly began to shatter. There are times when I feel helpless and hopeless—not just on an individual level but at the level of society and the world as well. This fluctuation often results in a shift where I become pessimistic, imagining the worst possible outcomes in the near future. My insecurity grows, and my ability to pick myself up fades away. I find myself left alone, stuck in a cycle of stagnation. I don't feel motivated to follow my daily routines. This fear of not moving forward in life, especially when everyone else seems to be doing better in certain aspects, leaves me wondering whether I will ever be able to achieve my goals. The idea of a perfect, happy life seems far-fetched and distant from my current state. The belief that I am not worthy of attention or respect slowly consumes me, leaving me drenched in sorrow. At times, I wonder if it is my nature to think negatively, which deeply hurts me. And if external factors are responsible, I feel equally helpless and hopeless. These are the challenges I am still striving to overcome.”

The responses revealed themes of fear, self-doubt, and stagnation. Participants frequently used language that emphasized barriers rather than opportunities. This phase was crucial as it provided the baseline for understanding the participants' starting points, both emotionally and cognitively. This phase aligns with reflective practice, where individuals are encouraged to engage in self-examination to gain awareness of their thoughts and behaviors. By acknowledging their challenges, participants created a foundation for transformative learning in the subsequent phases.

4.2. TRANSFORMING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

The second phase of the study encouraged participants to identify and shift their negative beliefs into rewriting the same in positive affirmations. This cognitive reframing process is based on the principles of cognitive-behavioral theories (Beck, 1976), which highlight the significance of thought structures in determining feelings and actions. One participant who originally expressed, “I am the kind of person who is a negative thinker and for things never go as expected. I am diffident and get nervous whenever I am on stage.” reframed and transformed the sentence as “I am the kind of person who is always a positive thinker, and things go well as I expect; I'm confident whenever I am on stage.” These changes in narration show how empowering positive affirmations can be. By systematically replacing negative thoughts with positive ones, participants felt an empirical change in their psychological frameworks.

4.3. POSITIVE VISUALIZATION AND MEDITATION WITH PROBES

The third phase was dedicated to guided positive visualization and meditation on the transformed text. The activity employed the tools of music and verbal cues to mold an atmosphere wherein participants could visualize and meditate on a successful and fulfilled future. One participant commented, "I feel really happy waking up each day and settling into my routines every day." A perfect life appears to be just a little more attainable than they've ever done." That statement reflects such a significant change in self-perception and expectation. It allowed the shift from struggling day-to-day to greater opportunities and built hope along with resilience in the process. Visualization techniques have been validated through research conducted within the positive psychology domain, particularly relating to mental imagery activities (Taylor & Pham, 1996). The second emphasis was on meditation on positive outcomes that enhance motivation and at the same time act as a stress reliever. Guided inquiries provided structure while allowing for flexibility in exploring potentialities within an accepting context.

5. ANALYSIS OF ARTWORKS

The artwork made by the participants and their ideas behind their work, expressed their thoughts and perspective towards life. Their artworks were analysed and the following themes were identified.

5.1. OPTIMISM, POSITIVITY, AND HOPE



2 a): "I want everybody on this earth to have attributes of equality, peace, brotherhood, integrity, protector, that makes us a good human being."

2 b) "... If this happens it leads to what I call nirvana flowers representing the peace I have, the intrinsic beauty that one possesses limitless without, without symmetry, an unbounded soul.

2 c) "Despite all the negativity around me, I have my own positive energy which helps me keep going forward in life and get motivated to be happy."

Figure 2 Some paintings with their associated statements depicting optimism, positivity, and hope from the participant's work

The artwork presented by the participant (fig. 2a) shows the use of vivid colors depicting that the participant sees the future to be colorful, optimistic, and bright. The bold words—Hope, Truth, Love, and Laugh—show that the participant visualizes a positive relationship with the self and society. The participants not only shared their vision of a utopian (ideal and positive in this context) future but also reflected on the importance of oneness, acceptance, and positivity in building a better world (fig. 2b). In Fig. 2b the positivity and a vibrant future that the participant visualizes and expresses using the terms—Nirvana and Intrinsic beauty, this expression suggests that the participant believes in liberation and ultimate peace from external struggles. In the painting fig. 2c, the different range of colors used in the painting expresses the colorful positive life ahead. Encapsulating her journey, she conveys her change from initial struggles in understanding subjects to a confident individual who visualizes a bright and positive future. She expresses her resilience, aspirations, and hope for a brighter tomorrow. The participant represents two sides of life (fig 2c). On one side, life is dull, no green leaves can be seen; this side represents the obstacles that make life dull, stagnant, and uninspiring. On the other side, is a life that is full of opportunities, happiness, and factors that make life colorful and

joyful. The artwork suggests that while obstacles may prevent one from living life in the present, there is always the potential to transition towards a brighter, more fulfilling existence by taking action. In the write-up related to the idea behind the painting the participant shared that even after a severe medical situation, she visualizes (in phase 3) a positive situation where she can see her aunt's smile back on her face after her son's accident. She further writes that through her artwork, she expresses her wishes and hopes for a future where her cousin recovers and returns playful, joyful, and interactive.

5.2. RESILIENCE AND GROWTH



3 a) “Leaving the standards and burden of the society requires one’s efforts and pain, will, determination, and thickness of body and mind to feel abundant and one with our true self, if this happens this is called nirvana.”

3 b) “I don't feel stressed. I am in good health. I am at peace with absolute clarity... I am full of hope”

3 c) “The girl on the left signifies good health. The sun signifies energy, tree symbolises life, flowers symbolise beauty and the girl on the right signifies free-spiritedness. Birds flying symbolise freedom and fish symbolise survival. Both the girls seem to have time for themselves.”

Figure 3 Some paintings and statements depicting resilience and growth

The participant expressed her life challenges and fear of stagnation (in phase 2). She expresses herself through a Madhubani painting that uses a vivid range of colors. The participant uses inspiration from an animated movie— ‘UP’— to express herself (fig 3a). She expresses that the balloons represent the efforts she continuously makes to grow in life along with keeping the family together, depicting that she visualises a life where there is growth and prosperity of the self and there is a positive relationship with the family members. In the painting (3b) there is a glimpse of Madhubani style in one’s visualization. Initially (in phase 2), it is expressed in her write-up that being a participant from a different educational background posed a challenge before her as she was initially unable to understand the subjects, but now in (Phase 3) visualizing and realizing the issues, and reflecting upon them has paved a positive way forward that she expresses in the painting. The participant expresses that the laptop and phone have become an important part of her academic journey and visualizes herself growing academically, professionally, and personally where she can help her mother at home, study, perform well, and gain confidence. The different range of colors used in the painting expresses the colorful positive life ahead. Further, the artwork (fig-3c) depicts a profound sense of individuality and self-reliance that are necessary to face life’s challenges independently. The participant initially (phase 2) expressed that the stress of academic life has taken a toll on her health and thus her personal life has deteriorated, affecting different aspects of her life. The participant (in phase 3) visualizes a positive future for herself using a picture where she undertakes activities that improve her health and she gains energy from her surroundings—the sun. The empty cage and flying birds symbolize freedom in life. The fish outside the water symbolizes survival in all odd conditions.

5.3. INNER PEACE, SELF-AWARENESS, AND EMOTIONAL STRENGTH



4 (a)



4 (b)

4 a): "I am scared of public speaking or expressing myself in class ... So whenever I got time, I used to visualise that I am speaking in the class and ma'am is praising me and it gives me confidence. Later in reality I spoke in the class, it all came true and I felt a sense of achievement."

4 b): "All these things show that we have different shades of positivity in our lives, but with hope, courage, and confidence, we can navigate through them successfully."

"Two heads with contrasting thoughts a pathway that shows hurdles but still clear".

Figure 4 Some paintings and statements depicting Inner Peace, Self-Awareness, and emotional strength

The artwork developed by the participants depicts people with calm expressions symbolizing inner peace and self-awareness. The tranquility of expressions through the artwork and the written text expressed by the participant suggests that the participant focuses on internal aspects, personal growth, and well-being or the internal sources as the locus of control rather than external sources. The participant expresses herself (fig 4a) overcoming her fear of expressing herself publicly in a confident manner that is courageous for her. The participant's outstretched arms are in the center of the inspirational situation. Furthermore, they argue that positivity and strength are not reliant on concepts or factors outside themselves but rather make up the very essence of every human being. In another painting titled 'changed outlook,' (fig 4b), the participant expressed her contrast mindsets symbolising through the inverted faces. The eyes in the inverted face are aligned seeing the clouds of confusion (experienced in phase 2) while the other face shows the optimistic version (experienced in phase 3) with emotional stability where the eyes are aligned seeing the clear path with imprints of confident footsteps (in spite of the hurdles) and with the support of education and purity symbolically shown through pencil, book and lotus.

5.4. RELATIONSHIP WITH ONESELF AND OTHERS



5 (a)



5 (b)



5 (c)

5 a): "A person helps me to overcome my fear of bad relationships, and we live together like a happy family."

5 b): "I am calm and composed. I have time for both my job and my hobbies like drawing mandalas, listening to music, etc."

5 c): "I am on the journey of mastering the skill of taking complete responsibility and accountability of my responses."

Figure 5 Some paintings and statements depicting relationships and bonds

Words and symbols captured on the face add more to the explanation that the participant envisages a world, where there would be inclusiveness and a warm welcome to all religions and sects across the globe. No discrimination exists in terms of language, caste, religion, or sect of the world. The house represents warmth, coziness, fulfilling safety needs, and offering love and belonging to the participant. The painting in madhubani style (fig 5a) provides deep symbolism, the participant portrays resilience, growth, and the need for a balance between personal ambitions and family duties. This painting expresses the loving bond with her mother and the fear of relationships due to her past and present family experiences. The painting depicts a positive and nurturing relationship with a partner who has respect for her as well as her mother. The participant expresses the duality in thoughts and way out for their clarity. Painting also emphasised the importance of familial bonds that depict the importance of positive emotions and relationships in life. Art (fig. 5b) depicts a participant expressing challenges related to breathing clean air, saving time for hobbies, and leading a life free from chaos. Her art expresses her love for nature, mandala art, listening to music showing earphones, and contentment with life. The participant, through the note, expresses a positive future vision where she can create a balance in her life that helps her to live a peaceful and contented life, establishing a stronger bond between herself. The other participant expressed her feelings (fig 5c) showed herself in the center surrounded by a protective shield of energy ignited from within that protects her from all problems and obstacles. Here, the participant emphasises the power of mindfulness in helping her enhance the aptitudes of her brain to act and think reasonably. By employing mindfulness techniques and an inner locus of control, she believes that she will be able to face challenges with greater clarity and emotional equilibrium.

6. ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANTS' REFLECTION ON THE WHOLE PROCESS

The workshop was transformative for the participants and it provided an opportunity for the participants for self-discovery, self-reflection, and positive growth as the participants expressed:

".....I am the kind of person who often finds myself trapped in overthinking and negativity..., I feel diffident and get anxious, I constantly find myself in a dilemma, unsure of which path to choose, and I struggle to trust my own decisions. Despite this, I have come to realize that things often work out as they are meant to....I may stumble or feel lost in the process, but I eventually manage to find the direction I need. I know I have the potential to embrace positivity and resilience, even when I feel unsure of myself. This ongoing journey of navigating uncertainty has taught me to believe in the process and trust my ability to adapt and grow....."

The participant deeply explained her negative traits that can be completely reversed. This response showed the introspective nature of this workshop that benefited the participants through self-reflective accounts of their inner struggles, growth, and perspective on life (indecision, overthinking, and negativity). Introspection allowed the participants to find a way out of the negative situation through positive action and self-belief.

"I used to think that I am a shy and confused type of person,"

"As humans, we carry a lot on our shoulders—career, relationships, values, and identity—which burdens us to act as society wants us to."

The reflections reveal that through this workshop the participants realized- how societal expectations and external pressures burden them mentally and emotionally. The participants made an effort to reflect on one's true self through introspection and embracing self-acceptance. The participants have been able to confront their self-doubts and insecurities and take positive note of actions that can be taken to evade negativity. The participants throughout the process have been able to explore themselves in different ways and have expressed themselves. Their reflections reveal that positive visualization and meditation through art education help in connecting an individual with oneself, and help in self-exploration, self-acceptance, and emotional adjustment.

The last phase, Reflection, allowed participants to synthesize their learning by sharing their experiences and the lessons learned throughout the workshop. This reflective exercise brought a sense of closure while reinforcing some of the main takeaways. participants reported increased self-awareness as well as resilience and hopefulness. A good

number felt that the experience of doing self-expression, reframing thoughts, and visualizing a positive future had changed their outlook on life dramatically.

The workshop data was analyzed in a phase-wise manner and it highlighted changes in the participants' narratives and emotional states. At the beginning of the workshop, participants reacted strongly to emotions related to frustration, helplessness, and dissatisfaction. However, by the end of the workshop, participants' reactions were dominated by feelings of hope, resilience, and a sense of direction. The focus of the participants shifted from external control to internal control. These conceptions were further found in the artistic expressions representing themes of harmony within oneself, emotional strength, and striving for personal as well as social balance.

The innovative approach used in this workshop- positive visualization and meditation was useful. It guided the participants through a systematic process of reflection, cognitive restructuring, imagination, and artistic expression. The workshop not only equipped the participants to confront their problems but also empowered the participants with tools to imagine and strive for a better future. It was due to this all-embracing methodology that the participants realized the significance of positive affirmation, self-awareness, and emotional resilience which subsequently cultivated an impact that was both deep and durable on their personal as well as academic life.

7. ADDITION OF A CASE

This is one example of a participant showing phase-wise complete process of the workshop i.e., Introductory activity – Self-Reflection and Expression, Rewriting Activity – transforming negative thoughts; Positive visualization and meditation with probes; Development of art piece; and Reflection. The first phase, (6(a)) had the participant view her feelings of "fear", "inability to express me", and "overthinking". Such feelings created the initial barrier she experienced. The second phase (6(b)) was about transforming this negative feeling into a positive one: fear reconstitutes courage, difficulty in expressing oneself into speaking one's heart out, while overthinking becomes visualizing a positive outcome. In the third phase (6(c)), the participant was simply emotional about those visuals because the participant could project herself not only over and above the immediate fears and challenges during an activity, especially the fear of public speaking. In phase four (6d), that emotional transformation took shape as a design for an art piece representing public speaking. The design depicted a girl on a stage in front of a large audience, further giving her image of the reflection of the participant's success over the fear of public speech. It also has both of the two peacocks portraying grace, beauty, and confidence; a sign of empowerment that the participant developed that much for herself. The last activity (6(e)) ended up involving a reflection process whereby the participant shared her feelings about her experience of the workshop. The reflection sounded like much enjoyment and immense learning from the whole process. The participant was able to take from the workshop, address her fears, and reconstruct these fears.

Phase 1 and 2- are below:

<p>Phase 1 and 2- are below:</p>	
<p>Phase 1- self-reflection and expression (6(a))</p>	<p>Phase 2- Reframing negative thoughts (6(b))</p>
<p>Phase-1 Self-reflection and Expression</p> <p>Extract from fig 6 (a) shown as below. (Note: Instead of circling the words they are shown as underlined.)</p>	<p>Phase- 2 Reframing negative thoughts</p> <p>Extract from fig 6 (b); replacing circled negative thoughts with positive as shown below (Note: Instead of circling the words they are shown as underlined.)</p>

“There are certain things that have always scared me:-
 (i) **Fear** from failures (how to deal with the failures)
 (ii) **Fear** of public speaking (fear of being mocked)
 (iii) **Difficulty** expressing myself (fear of being judged)
 (iv) **Overthink**

It has always been very challenging for me to accept the failures in life, whether it is small or big, failure is a part of life even then, the failures always team me with lots of pain. It has been very difficult for me to express myself, even now I do not express a lot of emotions (either love or anger). Sometimes, I overthink even on very small issues. This only worsened the situation in my head.

(i) **Accepting** the failures with Courage and learning from them.
 (ii) One of the **best public speakers**, addressing the crowd and people feeling overwhelmed listening to me.
 (iii) **speaking my heart out**, especially all my emotions.
 (iv) **Visualizing positively**.

I want to develop these qualities within me, and I have complete faith that the visualizations will help me develop these qualities within me.”

Phase-3: Positive visualization and meditation with probes

Phase 4 and 5: are below:-



Phase- 4. Development of art piece (6(d))

Experience
 During the activity, when I started reading about positive visualization, I went through many stories and research, it was a new idea for me. I have never thought of such an idea, and researchers have also proved that it works. When Ma'am was telling me about positive visualization in the classroom, it was difficult for me to accept that only visualization can help us in achieving whatever we want in life, or to develop new habits. But reading (help us) about the real-life stories and going through research, I got to know more about it and I thought of trying it. As I mentioned in my essay, it has always been difficult for me to express and I have a fear of public speaking. In the next Class, we all had to say something whatever we read about positive visualization, was our next task. I read many things but one of the stories touched my heart so I chose it to share in the class for the whole week. Whenever I had time I used to visualize that I was sharing the story in the classroom and everyone liked it, and ma'am was praising me, it gave me confidence. (Then later in reality) I narrated the story in the classroom, and ma'am liked it, so this worked (my visualization came true). Although it was a small achievement, I enjoyed this a lot.”

Phase- 5. Reflection (6(e))

Extract from Fig. (6(e)):

“Experience: During the activity, when I started reading about positive visualization, I went through many stories and research, it was a new idea for me. I have never thought of such an idea, and researchers have also proved that it works. When Ma'am was telling me about positive visualization in the classroom, it was difficult for me to accept that only visualization can help us in achieving whatever we want in life, or to develop new habits. But reading (help us) about the real-life stories and going through research, I got to know more about it and I thought of trying it. As I mentioned in my essay, it has always been difficult for me to express and I have a fear of public speaking. In the next Class, we all had to say something whatever we read about positive visualization, was our next task. I read many things but one of the stories touched my heart so I chose it to share in the class for the whole week. Whenever I had time I used to visualize that I was sharing the story in the classroom and everyone liked it, and ma'am was praising me, it gave me confidence. (Then later in reality) I narrated the story in the classroom, and ma'am liked it, so this worked (my visualization came true). Although it was a small achievement, I enjoyed this a lot.”

Figure 6 Example of a case showing the phasewise entire process of the workshop

8. CONCLUSION

This series of artworks made by the participants reveals a journey of self-exploration. It has helped them to uplift their own self and identify their innate potential. This aligns with the ancient wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita, a revered Indian epic, which proclaims (in Sanskrit verse), "Uddhared Atman Atmanam, Na Atmanam Avasadayet" / "Elevate yourself by yourself, do not degrade yourself" (Prabhupada, 1972, 6.5). This underscores the importance of self-directed growth and personal elevation. This journey allowed them to find out and think about the challenges in their life that are preventing them from living their life to the fullest. Through the artwork, the participants were able to focus on every aspect of life- physical, social, emotional, and mental. Each art piece made by the participants illustrated profound themes of identity, inner conflict, overall well-being, and harmony.

Through different phases of this research work, it has been found that positive visualization and meditation through creative pedagogy- self-expression, positive visualization and meditation through art education can bring about a positive mindset. This workshop works as a form of positive art and expressive therapy for the participants. The participants have been able to deeply reflect on the factors that cause inner challenges, dreams, and hopes, initially expressing struggles and dissatisfaction.

The artwork and the testimonials of the participants show that positivity is felt when they achieve- self-liberation, positive engagement, positive relationships, the ability to balance personal and professional life, inner stability, and satisfaction of their needs. Maslow's theory on the hierarchy of needs aptly describes the reason for contentment in life because participants have expressed their optimism, and positivity when their safety, love belongingness, and self-esteem needs are fulfilled. Moreover, PERMA (Martin Seligman)- positive engagement, positive relationship, positive meaning, and positive accomplishment helps the participants to achieve positivity in their life. Phase 1 of the intervention targeted self-reflection and personal expression, enabling the participants to feel free to explore and express their present emotions, life views, and concerns. This introspective work gave them a test area where they could freely examine their inner thoughts, which laid down the groundwork for significant interaction in the later phases. Phase 2 was to redirect the negative thoughts and thereby alter the mindset into positive thoughts. The participants were helped to find their limiting beliefs and empower them with positivity through affirmations. This exercise helped the participants realize how language influences attitudes and also creates an atmosphere of hope and confidence in themselves. In Phase 3, the participants were introduced to positive visualization and meditation, to help them concentrate on possibilities rather than challenges, participants formed mental images of the scenarios where they have reached their goals and that triggered feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction. It is the approach which is experience-based that enables the participants to establish an emotional bond with the success they envisaged, thus increasing their motivation to achieve their aspirations.

The peak of creativity was reached in Phase 4 when participants created artwork to depict their imagined futures. It was an important transitional phase between imagination and reality since the artists gave form to their positive visualizations. The artworks reflected changing attitudes through bright colors, symbolic imagery, and positive themes. For instance, many artworks reflected stark contrasts- dull, lifeless backgrounds on one side and a thriving, vibrant background on the other; this represented the change in mindset from hopelessness to hopefulness. The capture of personal aspirations by others through family and social harmony themes highlights a composite view of growth and fulfillment for the participants. The study suggests that art education could be a way for participants to express themselves through which they would learn to manage their feelings, think critically about the problems they're facing, and eventually lead to thinking positively. Structured intervention within different phases helped the participants transition from reflection to action, which impacts positive thinking and resilience.

However, this workshop provides momentary results that emerge during different phases. Therefore, continuous interventions, proper practice, and implementation are required for long-term benefits. The research illuminates how safe and expressive spaces provide space wherein art education helps participants to use it for self-expression and also move towards positive thinking, emotional healing, and empowerment.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am thankful to the prospective teachers for their participation in the study and acknowledge the anonymity of the artworks.

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