

**Earning while Learning: A Model of Fine Arts Education**Yam Prasad Sharma^{#*}[#]Lecturer of English at Lalitkala Campus, Tribhuvan University.^{*}Corresponding Author: yamprasadsharma@gmail.com**Citation:** Sharma, Y. P. (2024). Earning while Learning: A Model of Fine Arts Education. *Journal of Fine Arts Campus*, 6(2). 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.3126/jfac.v6i2.84555>**Abstract**

Fine arts students have the potential for earning while learning. The genres of fine arts like painting, sculpture, graphic design, music and dance not only have aesthetic values but also provide technical skills to the students. The acquired skills can be immediately used in the field of making portraits, landscapes, book illustration, package design, product design, logo design, garden design, interior decoration, architecture, museum, art gallery, advertisement, theatre, musical bands and concerts, schools, art research and criticism, art history and so on. There is the lack of skilled human resource in these fields. Fine arts students can work part time or full time in these areas. When they learn basic techniques and skills of arts in the early years, they can immediately work. This supports for their livelihood and education. Similarly, they can be financially independent. Furthermore, the earning while learning contributes for smooth transition of students from education to employment. The universities should manage the time, schedule and teaching learning activities in such a way that a student can work while studying. The achievement of this goal brings the win-win situation to the students, teachers, campuses, universities, parents and the nation.

Keywords: fine arts education, independence, learning and earning, livelihood, skill.**Introduction**

Higher education in fine arts is comparatively costly, for the materials are costly and students do not have the access of educational institutions in their surroundings. Instruments, tools and materials like color, canvas, stone, wood, metal, various musical instruments, sound system and stage are expensive. Art studio needs wide space. Most of the students need to rent a room in the capital city leaving their home. College fee is higher as compared to other subjects. It needs four years to complete Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) course. It is a long period for productive young mind. It needs patience to stay in the study while financial pressure is on their head. As a result, the student may withdraw from the study. The questions arise: How can the students continue their study? How can they pay their tuition fee and rent? How can they earn their livelihood? 'Earning while learning program' addresses all these issues. Fine arts subjects like painting, sculpture, graphic design, music and dance are vocational and technical subjects. When they learn the basic skills in the early years of college, they can immediately get job opportunity in advertisement and design industry, museum, gallery, theatre, school musical band and concert. They can involve in creative and productive activity in the college. Their products and artworks can be showcased in



the campus and sold to the visitors. When the study period and class routine is flexible, students can do learning and earning simultaneously.

Earning while learning is the need of contemporary college students that need financial support due to the weak financial condition of the family (Carnevale, Smith, Melton & Price, 2015). The concept and practice is equally supportive to the students that want to run their life independently. It links them to the area of their education and learning. It provides their exposure to the reality and context.

Research Methodology

‘Fine arts education’ is the area of study of this research paper, and ‘earning while learning’ is the theory or perspective that has been used as a tool to analyze the research area. This is the qualitative research. There is the possibility of multiple interpretations of the situation and context. Secondary sources have been used to clarify the theoretical concept. The researcher shares the experiences and expectations of students, teachers and educational leadership as primary sources.

Learning and earning

Earning while learning facilitates for the smooth transition from graduation to the job placement in their area (Keskin & Zeevi, 2017). High school graduates already have basic education, enthusiasm and strength to work. This should be channelized in right direction in creative and productive manner. Bachelor of Fine Arts is a four-year course. In the middle of pressing basic needs, sole dedication to the study is weak. A sort of small income while studying provides a sense of comfort, autonomy and independence to the student (Harrison, Keskin, & Zeevi, 2012). This provides a joy for the study.

The working learners balance learning in campus with earning a livelihood. “In the United States today, nearly 14 million people – 8 percent of the total labor force and a consistent 70 percent to 80 percent of college students – are both active in the labor market and formally enrolled in some form of postsecondary education or training” (Carnevale, Smith, Melton & Price, 2015). In the present context, skills have become essential in job markets. Today, undergraduate students need the right preparation to gain access and sustain in the market. Employers need highly skilled workers in order to remain competitive. Industries and organizations need a highly skilled workforce. It is necessary to build attractive institutions to live, work and study (Van Beuningen, 2009).

Students can combine work with ongoing learning (Maitra & Mani, 2017). Going to college and working simultaneously is far better than moving straight to job after graduation (Zhu & Zheng, 2020). Students who earn university degree while working are more likely to move to higher positions with higher salary than people who go straight into work after college.

Working while learning has multiple benefits. It is more appropriate when students are involved in jobs related to their study. Work experience is an asset after graduation, for they are more likely to find the job and perform their work better. Students become workers, and workers become students. In the USA, from 1989 to 2008, 70- 80 percent of undergraduates were working. “Students work whether they are in high school or college; whether they are rich, poor, or



somewhere in between; whether they are young and inexperienced or mature and experienced” (Carnevale, Smith, Melton & Price, 2015). Workers are upgrading their educational credentials for better performance of their jobs along with a promotion.

Students save for their tuition fees by doing summer jobs. Learning and earning contributes in the smooth transition from youth dependency to adult independence and freedom (Carnevale, Smith, Melton & Price, 2015). Public funding in higher education is declining. Working learners need strong connection to the employment sector and their education. Policymakers should also invest in skill-based education that can be immediately used in the job market and reality. Competency-based education allows working learners to learn efficiently and improve their work. Work is a central component of honest livelihood. This is the foundation of human civilization in the past and present. Work offers income that is the means to get the daily commodities and services. The job provides identity to the workers. It is a matter of self-satisfaction. Many young graduates from college are taking longer period to launch their careers due to the lack of work experience while learning. This is the cause of additional stress on the young mind that contributes of unpleasant consequences. Colleges enroll numbers of students that need work. On the other hand, experienced workers also join the university courses to learn more and get degrees.

The transition from formal education into employment is not normally linear. The system of education for the students leading to learning on-the-job is more feasible in the present context. Lifelong learning along with the continuous enhancement of skills are necessary to adapt to modern workplace. Many college students can involve themselves in the summer jobs.

Early work experience develops good habits in the workers. This helps students make professional connections in the job market (Carnevale, Smith, Melton & Price, 2015). Work helps pay living costs in the college and educational costs. Learning and earning contributes for livelihood and education. It makes individual free and independent. Work promotes skills like management, communications and conflict resolution in the real context. Work is a meaningful entry into the adult world displaying maturity. Both formal and informal internships are highly useful to connect education and real life. It is better if campuses and universities award academic credits for internships. This makes aware about the students and employer’s relationship. On-the-job training and work experience prepare students and future workers for better occupations in the industry or the particular field. Working students get exposure to a professional setting. They get letters of recommendation for future jobs. Students form professional networks of institutions and fellow workers. Internships serve as an opportunity to test the field of their interest. Internships and on the job training pay off in the long run. There is the possibility of quick placement and better salary.

Personal and occupational exploration connects interests and values. A job is a powerful educational tool, for it provides learning and earning at the same time. Students’ access to careers is valuable. The access to the modern technology provides flexibility in learning and working hours. Working and learning on the job can be practiced over lifetime. Competent workers need knowledge and skills along with the abilities to work. They should focus on problem solving and innovation. Skills are best learned in the real context of in working environment. Critical thinking



of the students is tested while they are solving on the job problems. Creative thinking can be in the new projects, visions, execution and novel output. It is necessary to bridge the gap between book learning and applied learning (Carnevale, Smith, Melton & Price, 2015).

It is tough for the students to spend four years in bachelor level among the financial pressures. As a result substantial number of students have left the study before graduation. Work and practice are necessary along with knowledge and information. Livelihood precedes the learning for the students of lower and lower-middle class background (Grubb, 1999).

Successful education systems are continuously reinventing themselves in response to changing social and political context (Candy, 2000). It is the time to involve our students in works along with the academic classes. It needs the flexibility of the system. A university cannot ignore the demand of the students and employers. The working environment is constantly changing. The students should be aware of this. Continuous learning is required to adjust with the context. Thus, the attitude of lifelong learning should be emphasized. There is the intersection of work and learning. In the time of this rapid technological change learning and earning should go hand in hand to prove the relevance of education (Candy, 2000). Universities should attempt to address the student expectations to keep them satisfied, if they want to continue attracting them (Gorgodze, Macharashvili & Kamladze, 2020). Earning while learning is the suitable way for the transition from education to employment, self-confidence, independence and support.

Analysis and Discussion

In addition to human values and aesthetic aspects, fine art courses aim to teach skills that can be immediately used in real life. When the students acquire basic skills in the early years of university education, they can immediately work in spare time. The students, who do not have financial support from their family, can work for their livelihood and tuition fees. The students who want to be financially independent also can do earning while learning. Despite the fact that the subjects are related to art, humanities, human values, beauty and aesthetics, they have technical, vocational and practical aspects (Sharma, Message, 2025). Once the students acquire skills and craftsmanship, and open the broaden horizon of critical thinking and creative possibilities through the study of art and aesthetics, they grab multiple opportunities in reality (Sharma, Responding, 2025). Fine arts graduates work in the field of advertisement agency, graphic design, book and magazine illustration, fashion design, garden design, interior decoration, pottery, ceramic industry, furniture industry, musical concert, cultural programs, film industry, theatre, drama, museum, art gallery, art studio, and art criticism (Sharma, Message, 2025). Senior students of the Bachelor level can produce their artworks which can be exhibited in the campus and sold to the visitors and art lovers. This can promote the concept of 'learning and earning' at the same time. This can be the source of income to the students. The earning helps to complete the study. Similarly, the work experience while having education contributes for the smooth transition from education to employment.

Tribhuvan University has Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), Master of Fine Arts (MFA), Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Fine Arts and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Fine Arts in the genres of fine arts like sculpture, painting, graphic design, music and dance. BFA courses run for four years.



It is long period for energetic and young school graduates. In the developing country like Nepal, there is financial pressure upon the students and their family. It needs patience to persist in the study. Due to the lack of financial support, substantial number of students leave their study. To solve this problem, the free time of the students can be used to produce artworks and sell them. This supports the students financially and builds self-confidence. The university and the campus should reformulate the curriculum and reschedule the routine so that students learn useful skills and manage time to work.

Internship in the final year, can be the part of curriculum. Creation of works can be a part of assignment. Internship provides work experience in field of their study along with income. The produced work as a part of assignment can be exhibited and sold. Of course, the main objective of the courses is to produce autonomous creative artists that are rooted to their tradition along with the awareness of contemporary trends and technique of arts (Sharma, 2009). But work culture while study supports to achieve this goal. The connection of education to life and reality makes a sense their activity and motivates for further learning and better performance. Learning and earning makes a shift from dependence toward independence (Sharma, 2025). The subjects and courses are vocational and technical. While learning in the morning, the students can go for earning in the afternoon and evening. There is the possibility of job placement of the students before they are graduated.

Successful implementation of 'learning and earning' program can make a model educational institution in the domain of fine arts. This addresses the melancholy of the students and presents the brighter horizon toward prosperity. The focus is not only on the production of creative artists but also on their livelihood. The enhancement of civilization, cultural heritage and humanities along with the meaningful life and prosperity should be the focus of the institution.

Educational institutions and the campuses are required to provide art education to the students involving them in learning the practical skills, techniques and theoretical knowledge along with traditional skills and recent trends and techniques of arts. Appropriate mentorship, instruction and the supervision of the professors should focus on "earning while learning". The knowledge of graphic communication can be used in book and magazine illustration, newspaper, website design, industrial product design, package design and advertisement agency. Sculptors can make statues and portraits in metal, wood, stone, clay and concrete. Musicians and dancers can involve in cultural bands, restaurants and hotels, part time teacher at the school, theatre and film industry in addition to freelance and independent creations. Independent and autonomous paintings, sculptures, visual arts, designs, artworks, and musical compositions can also be created for their own sake. Due to the invaluable aesthetic dimensions in them, the works can be showcased and sold in the art market. This contributes for the income of the students.

Earning while learning connects art students and their artworks to the reality, society, life and industry. This facilitates for entrepreneurship of the students and their employment. Creative artists contribute for the preservation of the cultural heritage and human values. The campus can be the center for production, exhibition and sale of the artworks. Essential resources like space for creation and exhibition is the campus building. Resource persons and specialists are professors.



Similarly, skilled workers are senior students in the campus. There is involvement of teachers and students. The income can be used for their welfare. All the stakeholders like students, teachers and the campus can have benefit from earning while learning programs in campuses and universities.

To achieve the goals of 'learning and earning' program, certain strategy and action plan need to be formulated and executed step by step. The discussion of the issues and the consensus of the professors, staff and students are vital at the beginning. The concerned authorities and participants are introduced about the quality art education, learning and earning, students' placement in the society, reality and industry, and self-dependence of the students, and financial strength of the campus through internal income. The unity and solidarity of the stakeholders provides strength for better performance.

Students are allowed to pursue their learning according to their interest so that learning becomes the joy. Education is aestheticized. As a result, the students are involved longer in learning and working. The institution provides specialists, supervisors, time and space for this. This contributes for quick learning, craftsmanship and movement toward perfection. Students are assigned to respective professor on the basis of their interest. The mentors teach the forms and techniques through the demonstration of their own creativity. Careful guidance leads the students to create their own beautiful works that can be exhibited and sold.

The educational institution collects, exhibits and sell the outstanding works of students and teachers. The profit from the sale is shared among artists and the campus. This is an example of learning and earning (Sharma, Message, 2025). This is a movement toward independence from dependence. Furthermore, the professors and staff get incentive from the internal income for better performance of the service. Students work for extra hours in the campus for earning. Likewise, professors get more remuneration from extra work. Learning and earning program brings win-win situation. Close connection and network of the campus among art galleries, museums, film industry, theatre, cultural bands, schools, graphic design firms and publishers facilitates for the placement of our students even before the graduation from the college. Seeing the students self-dependent is a matter of great pleasure for the professor and the institution.

Conclusion

Earning while learning in the domain of fine arts education is the need of our time when education is expensive and livelihood is costly. The courses and subjects like painting, printmaking, graphic design, illustration, sculpture, music and dance are technical and vocational along with the humanities. The students acquire basic skills and techniques, and get employment opportunity in the immediate surroundings. The earning while learning supports for their tuition fees and livelihood. This helps them to complete their study. The time, study schedule and courses need to be flexible so that students can easily manage learning and earning simultaneously. Skillful, productive and creative students easily adapt learning and earning scheme. The campus connects fine arts students to industry and real society for their placement. The students become financially self-dependent through the production, exhibition and sale of their own works while they are studying. This brings the smooth transition of students from education to employment addressing their anxiety and melancholy. Due to the involvement of students, professors and



campus in the creation and production of artworks, there is low cost in production. As a result, the artworks can be sold in reasonable price. Greater mass has the access to the artworks. Learning and earning program brings benefits to all the stakeholders like students, teachers, educational institution and the art lovers among others.

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