

FROM BRUSH TO TABLET: EVOLVING TOOLS FOR ART EDUCATION

by:

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Art has always existed as an important part of our culture that continues to be driven by the needs of the moment — today's classrooms exemplify the possibility of creative expression alive and well in the embrace of both technology and tradition. Students have more media and tools to explore their ideas — brushes, pencils and clay are now supplemented by tablets and styli. Now it is an opportunity and challenge for teachers, to not only mentor students in the spaces of creativity and exploration, but support students in looking for opportunity in both spaces of tradition and the new digital world.

For generations, brushes, pencils and clay have been vehicles for so many students to learn observation, patience, and craftsmanship. The hands-on experience of working with art materials is also crucial to our practice. When students mix paint colors, draw with their hands and when there is clay involved, they are learning to slow down, investigate, and accept that creative expression is a process. Specifically, engaging with physical materials, connects the young artist to a direct human experience in culture and art history that stretches back centuries.

But our learners today live in digital times as well - and technology affords them a myriad of new and exciting ways to make art. Tablets, software, and editing suites give students the ability to take their ideas and experiment with ideas that can only be imagined in pencil. So let's list few things a tablet can do: animation drawing /digital painting /graphic design.. And for most learners, the feel less scared to do things on a

digital medium than on a white canvas or sketchbook - leading them to the media design and entertainment fields of work.

Finding that balance can be tough for teachers. The best art program is not necessarily about swapping out traditional brushes for tablets. It is about recognizing the benefits of both. One lesson might be on watercolor painting and another on digital illustration or photo editing. When students can use traditional and digital art at the same time, they are more engaged in their artistic process and are beginning to understand new ways to express their ideas. As art teachers integrate old tools and new tools in practice, they help students open themselves to being adaptable and curious which inspired them to share their creativity with the world through paint + paper or pixels + a digital platform. The tools might shift along the way, but the spirit of art, sharing your ideas and stories, has remained the same.

References:

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