Art education in the digital era

Dr. R. Preetha
ravikumar.preetha@gmail.com
M. O. P Vaishnav College for Women, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

ABSTRACT

The first external expression of a human being's soul is art. Art surrounds life, without us being aware of it. Art education in India is witnessing a remarkable shift. Art students interact through creative expression by encouraging cultural literacy. The main part of art and design education is to foster imagination expressing it in creative manner. The study aims to determine how important it is to incorporate art education in teaching and learning for visual media students at college level. It also aims to record what students learn in art classes and how they apply their knowledge in digital age. The study adopts qualitative analysis through interview techniques and documents conducted with visual media students.

1. INTRODUCTION

"We wrote, we sang, we acted, and we poured ourselves out on every side.' There was tremendous excitement and cultural richness."
Rabindranath Tagore

Art education in the digital world will enable students to engage in their own interests at a convenient time. With the increase in technology, it has provided a platform for the learners to collaborate and innovate with other artists and publish their work through the use of digital technologies which will enable the students to enjoy art. Art Education is the primary aspect of learning to create a path for aesthetic experience. This is essential for conveying expressions and emotions of human beings through their artistic skills.

According to Country Report (2010) the main purpose of Art Education is to develop creativity and expression through various forms of art activities. Art Education fosters cultural awareness and promotes cultural practices, and it is the means by which knowledge and appreciation of arts and culture which is transmitted from one generation to the next. It is therefore mandatory for impressionable minds to get the right exposure to arts in their formative years. Indian education has always highlighted the importance of art education, both through formal and non-formal methods from the preprimary stage to higher education with a vision to retain our unique cultural identity

The Ministry of Culture in its Eleventh Five-year plan highlights about how to preserve and promote all forms of art and culture. The Ministry works on the protection, development and promotion of all types of heritage and culture namely tangible heritage, intangible heritage and knowledge heritage. The areas of work are Performing Arts, Museums & Visual Art, Archaeology, Anthropology and Ethnology, Education, Research and others. The task is to develop and sustain ways through which the creative and aesthetic sensibilities of the multicultural people of India remain active and dynamic.[1]

Sabrina Faramarzi (2019) A survey conducted by State of Art Education proves that 52.2 percent of art teachers want to learn more about teaching digital art effectively, but only 21.9 percent of art teachers feel comfortable teaching digital arts curriculum. Schools like Massachusetts Institute of Technology and New York University have already incorporated arts education into their historically science and technology led curricula. [2]

The Primary Education Department of University of Aegean was carried out, during the year 2010-2011. After having participated in artistic activities which combined traditional art techniques with the use of New Technologies, 82 students took part in the

research and answered a questionnaire. The analysis showed that most students are positive towards using New Technologies in Art education. [3]

1.1 Aim of the Study
The aim of this study is to understand how visual media under graduate college students experience using digital art in education.

1.2 Objectives of the study
- To analyze how students develop visual art knowledge and skills
- To find out the digital platform usage patterns by college students in art education

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Engaging with art is essential to the human experience. The arts challenge us with different points of view, compel us to empathize with "others," and give us the opportunity to reflect on the human condition. Empirical evidence supports these claims that among adults, arts participation is related to behaviors that contribute to the health of civil society, such as increased civic engagement, greater social tolerance, and reductions in other regarding behavior.

Eisner, (1972) Using integrated approaches encourages students to challenge established ideas, concepts and ways of making, to resist stereotyped visions of the world and to break boundaries. Arts based learning illuminate's gaps and limitation in current ideas and helps students to organize frameworks and structures through which they can test limits and develop new structures that bridge the gaps between that which is known and that which will be created.[4]

The article published in The Hindu, 2018, Sara Vetteth founder of the Indian Art and Design Educators association explains about how educators are waking up in the digital world where animation and live action stories are exploding visual literacy and the ability to interpret in making meaning from visual information is the need of the next generation. Art and design improve perception and integration skills, it helps to learn to think out of the box, to innovate and it is a process-oriented exploration. [5]
Jovuta F Punzalan, 2018 mentions Art have long been considered part of the human affective experience and needed by our young people as a medium for safe expression, communication, exploration, imagination, cultural and historical understanding. The study was to assess the impact of visual art on the performance of the students from the College of Education, Bulacan State University. Results of the study revealed that significant difference exists in the posttest performances of the experimental and control groups in other words, the group who utilized the visual arts in studying art appreciation recorded significantly helps performance than those who used the traditional lecture discussion method. [6]

According to Cathy Smilan, new education paradigms fostering creative risk-taking, and re-discovery are needed as employers and ministers seek innovative individuals to stimulate economic growth. Arts based curriculum breaks traditional boundaries, allowing students to challenge established ideas and resist stereotyped world views. Effective art education encourages active, problem-based inquiry, data collection, evaluation, and communication. Museum and public art-based education paradigms uniquely engage learners, requiring multi sensory involvement providing multiple perspectives on discipline-specific and world problems. Such paradigms are consistent with the UNESCO Roadmap for Arts Education [7]

Lindstrom, (1997), Many countries are restructuring for the future and are adopting arts education as part of their core curricula. Sweden, for example, has redesigned its arts program as an essential component for developing student wellbeing. Another country that incorporates the arts in its curricula is Japan, which emphasizes craftsmanship in school to cultivate excellence in the workplace. Teaching expressive arts particularly at the elementary level enables the Japanese society to develop greater tolerance, problem-solving skills, and an appreciation for aesthetics, creativity, and decision-making in its students. [8]

3. METHODOLOGY
Techniques selected for the current research study is qualitative which includes interviews and art documents. Qualitative research provides an understanding of a situation or phenomenon that tells the story rather than determining cause and effect. observations, interview, and document analysis Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Glesne, (1999)[9]. Under graduate college students from visual art background were selected for the study. All participants in the study were those who actively use digital platforms for art leaning art aged between 18 to 24. Thorough in-depth interviews were conducted for the respondents using both open and close ended questions. These interviews were conducted for 45 mins for each respondent. Purposive sampling is used to describe as the sample is chosen bearing the study goals in mind of art learners who use digital platforms.

Data Collection
The data collection methods used in this study consisted of the semi structured interviews methods. Fifteen participants were selected for the interview. The interviews were conducted in the setting that participants who actively use digital platforms for art learning. Documents related to digital art was also collected from all the respondents. Interviews and discussions were made through Mobile phone, G meet and Skype at the convenience of the participants.

Telephone and Skype also served as efficient ways to conduct the interviews, making it possible for students with busy schedules to participate in the study. The main aim of the research was to make the participants share about their learning strategies, the knowledge and skills they develop for art education in this digital era.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

The result of the study revealed that when it comes to college students they prefer integrating art and technology in their academic part of learning. Encouragement from the teacher is a key. They provide a safe sphere to express student's ideologies through art work. Recognizing and encouraging the individuality of the students yet at the same time guiding them and suggesting ways to improve their vision. Collaboration among artists and students is more in traditional conventional set-up. As a student's creativity takes form, their individual style emerges. From strokes to texture, an individualistic style is seen in the students and this widens the creative potential of all the students present in the class.

Not just observing the objects in the room for still life, but observing the characteristic and approach each student has towards their art. Some are more patient while engaging in their artwork, while others engage in free spirited expression. Nevertheless, these observations also inspire the students to understand the traits of different artists and build their own style. The interpersonal relations that build in the class is elevated to an artistic level.

Traditional art in digital interface
Global integration and necessity brought out teaching art through digital interface. In this pandemic situation classrooms no longer need to be physical and teaching and learning happens on online platforms. Art takes on a more adaptive style in online learning. In online teaching, the patterns of teaching and learning itself takes on an adaptive form to convey the topics and make the students understand the concepts. Teachers are in a remote platform and the level of patience is increased. When students make a mistake, they are not in the same physical space to explain the right process by drawing or painting on the student's canvas. In situations like these the teachers need to be adaptive problem solvers to help them understand their mistakes from an online platform.

Encouragements become even more important to develop the creative thirst in students. Not able to be in direct contact or spontaneously help them when students have conflict in their thoughts or may struggle to bring out a technique effectively. Teachers put in extra effort to keep fueling the creative potential of students. Concentration that goes in is increased as students are isolated. Isolation can also be helpful as they are no longer in midst of a group of people but by themselves and the intrapersonal aspect leads to more personal expression. Their own style gains more prominence.

Trends in Art Education - Digital art in Digital interface
In the recent years there has been a shift from traditional art forms to digital art either on iPad, a stylus and tablet, or using a mouse to create artwork in Photoshop, Corel Painter, Sketchbook. Things become much easier when learning digital art. The tools used here are already digital or software based and the difference between face-to-face classes and online based are minimized as screen presenting and sharing facilities are available. The task of communicating becomes easier for both students and teachers. The digital transferring of artwork and seeking help makes the process easier. As the digital medium is more contemporary and newer to a lot of students, curiosity is more in digital art when compared to traditional mediums and this fosters more creativity. The tools are much more simplified and the ability to perform many tasks easily results in increased learning pace. In digital art, these are simplified and made easy for the artists by many tools available in the software.

Students also pointed out that it helps them to create Digital portfolios to showcase their talent and work and this is advantageous during distance learning for students to present their work. Procreate a digital art application exclusively available on the iPad is useful for all artists from beginners to advanced learners. It has a unique brush toolbox, where the user can create their own brushes increasing the flair for creativity and also making it fun and interesting for them. This provides scope for experimentation and collaboration becomes easier and multiple artworks can be combined and published on Apple Books. Adobe Fresco is a digital drawing and painting application, that has a range of watercolor and oil brushes for drawing.

Artists and designers will require problem solving and critical thinking skills to move ahead in this competitive world. In several places, new models and partnerships are being formed to provide art education to students to enhance their creativity. Students of different age groups are using tablets and phones to sketch and draw; this fosters several learning skills required for the digital age. Sumo Paint a free web-based graphics program allows to take iPads at home and work on our skills at our own pace. Showbie is an app which allows to create different folders of work for students to access. Also making free websites in minutes is possible using platforms such as Wix or Squarespace.

Most of the students agreed that they use Draw space to learn to sketch and draw for beginners. It's not only the variety of things which is learnt but strong skill levels are also been developed. Drawing Coach is anywhere we dive into the art of cartoons and caricatures teaching you everything step-by-step from drawing people to tracing tattoos. To learn the theory of art, Arty Factory an online resource for anyone who wants to learn how to draw, paint, and understand more about design of tribal masks or pop art lessons.

Rate My Drawings is a leading online art community with 50,000 plus members. The site is a platform for drawing tutorials and community forums to learn and share. The site has a web interface that's like an online canvas. Users draw using the Flash based or the more advanced Java-based or HTML5 drawing software tool, and people rate drawings. Pinterest is used to find and save drawing lessons on your own boards by making mood boards using various pictures to understand colour scheme, theme designing and creativity.

5. CONCLUSION
Digital art learning techniques has made a significant impact among the student's community. The attitude of students towards the use of this technology has brought a tremendous change in learning styles. The study highlights that most of the students felt that

digital art learning tools based on caricature, designing, learning brush strokes, calligraphy etc help them with learning and knowledge sharing. As an art educator it becomes much more difficult when it comes to educating students about the ever-changing trends in contemporary art. Integrating digital art skills into the curriculum brings a new dimension to create high quality and customized learning.

6. REFERENCES

[1] Country Report (2010) Art Education in India, Department of Education in Arts & Aesthetics National Council of Educational Research & Training Ministry of Human Resource Development - Govt. of India, Retrieved from https://ncert.nic.in/deaa/pdf/1.pdf

[2] Sabrina Faramarzi, Art net news, 2019, Retrieved from https://news.artnet.com/art-world/art-school-tech-adapt-1742802

[3] Kampouropoulou Maria (2011). Students' Views on the Use of New Technologies in Art Education: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Higher Education, Review of European studies, Volume 3, No 1, 2011. Retrieved from www.ccsenet.org/res

[4] Eisner, E. (1972). Educating Artistic Vision. London: Macmillan

[5] Surya Praphulla Kumar, (2018) The Hindu, Why Art needs to stay in Class, Retrieved from https://www.thehindu.com/education/schools/why-art-needs-to-stay-in-class/article22471482.ece

[6] Jovita F. Punzalan, (2018) The Impact of Visual Arts in Students' Academic Performance, International Journal of Education and Research, Volume 6 No 7. Retrieved from https://www.ijern.com/journal/2018/July-2018/10.pdf

[7] Cathy Smilan, Art Education at the intersection of creativity: Integrating art to develop multiple perspectives for identifying and solving social dilemmas in the 21st century, file:///C:/Users/R.Preetha/Downloads/UNESCo%20art%20education%20study.pdf

[8] Arts Education and Student's Perception Dr Eulalee Nderu-Boddington, 2008

[9] Fraenkel, J. R. & Wallen, N. E. (2003). How to design and evaluate research in education (5th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED485012.pdf