HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

SCIENTIFIC AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF APPLYING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND THE STEAM APPROACH IN FINE ARTS EDUCATION

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Doi: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24040668

Abstract: This scientific article examines the scientific and methodological foundations of integrating digital technologies and the STEAM educational approach into fine arts lessons in general secondary schools. It analyzes the mechanisms of organizing art education based on interdisciplinary synthesis (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics), specifically linking the principles of geometry, optics, and spatial modeling with practical artistic activities. The pedagogical conditions for fostering students' visual literacy, spatial thinking, and creative engagement through digital platforms (Canva, Padlet, Google Arts & Culture) and graphic applications (SketchBook, 3D modeling) are systematized. Furthermore, methodological recommendations and practical proposals aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the educational process are developed.

Keywords: fine arts, STEAM approach, digital technologies, interdisciplinary integration, visual literacy, 3D modeling, spatial thinking, virtual museum, methodology of art education.

Introduction

The modern educational paradigm requires students not merely to assimilate ready-made knowledge, but to develop creative thinking, analyze problematic situations, and draw independent conclusions based on interdisciplinary synthesis. In the general secondary education system, the subject of Fine Arts serves as an essential pedagogical factor in fostering aesthetic cultivation, artistic and emotional perception, and spatial imagination. However, conventional lessons reliant solely on reproductive methods (copying, standard drawing exercises) fail to fully meet the intellectual demands and cognitive pace of contemporary learners in an information-driven society.

From this perspective, there is a compelling need to harmonize modern information and communication tools with the advanced international STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) concept within art education. In the STEAM framework, the artistic component (Art) integrates with natural sciences and engineering disciplines, cultivating not only aesthetic taste but also a culture of design, constructive reasoning, and spatial thinking in learners.

The **aim of this research** is to develop the scientific and methodological foundations of utilizing digital tools and the STEAM approach in teaching fine arts in general secondary schools, as well as to evaluate their pedagogical effectiveness.

In accordance with this aim, the following **objectives** were established:

- To examine the theoretical and didactic foundations of STEAM integration in fine arts education;

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- To systematize the didactic capabilities of digital platforms, graphic editors, and virtual museums in art classes;
- To elucidate the mechanisms for developing students' spatial thinking and visual literacy based on the STEAM approach;
- To elaborate a comprehensive set of practical and methodological recommendations for secondary school educators.

Methodology and Research Methods

The study involved a comprehensive analysis of fine arts curricula and textbooks utilized in general secondary schools, alongside a comparative-logical review of leading domestic and international pedagogical experiences. The research relied on theoretical modeling, pedagogical observation, and principles of interdisciplinary connectivity (fine arts – geometry – computer science – natural sciences).

Main Body and Discussion

1. Interdisciplinary Mechanisms of the STEAM Approach in Fine Arts Lessons

Applying the STEAM model in fine arts education represents an analytical and project-based endeavor rather than a mere drawing process:

- **Art & Science:** In studying color theory, optical laws, light spectra, the psychological impact of color on humans, and chromatic harmonies in nature are elucidated through biological and physical principles.
- **Art & Technology:** Traditional media skills (paper and paints) are enriched with digital illustration applications (SketchBook, Canva, graphics tablets).
- **Art & Engineering:** In mastering the fundamentals of applied arts and design, constructive thinking is cultivated through 3D paper modeling, maquette construction, and basic architectural design.
- **Art & Mathematics:** In compositional layout, principles of proportion, symmetry, asymmetry, scale, and the golden ratio utilized by Leonardo da Vinci are substantiated through mathematical calculations.

2. Didactic Classification of Digital Technologies and Their Role in the Educational Process

Modern digital tools utilized in fine arts classes can be categorized into four functional groups:

1. **Visual-Excursion Platforms:** Virtual museum tours via Google Arts & Culture, the Louvre, and the State Hermitage enable students to explore world masterpieces in a 360-degree format, analyzing textures and fine details remotely.
2. **Creative Design Platforms (Canva, PosterMyWall):** These platforms enable students to interactively master color harmony, typography, and poster and booklet layout design.
3. **Digital Painting Software (SketchBook, Tux Paint, ibis Paint X):** These applications foster skills in working with digital layers, cross-hatching, digital blending, and color rendering.
4. **Interactive Collaborative Environments (Padlet, Miro):** These platforms facilitate curating students' independent creative projects into a unified online gallery, enabling collective critique and peer-review workflows.

3. Practical Effectiveness of the Technologies

- **Sustained Interest and Motivation:** Digital tools break classroom monotony, actively engaging technology-oriented learners in the creative process.

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- **Enhanced Spatial Perception:** 3D models and perspective animations help students visualize objects three-dimensionally rather than merely as flat surfaces.
- **Digital Portfolio Development:** An organized digital archive allows teachers and students to monitor and assess individual artistic progression over time.

Recommendations

To successfully implement this concept in general secondary schools, the following measures are proposed:

1. **Introducing Interdisciplinary Modular Lessons:** Establishing a system of integrated, collaborative lessons connecting fine arts with mathematics, physics, technology, and biology.
2. **Upgrading Methodological Support:** Organizing targeted professional development workshops for fine arts instructors on operating graphics software and interactive whiteboards.
3. **Modernizing School Facilities:** Gradually equipping fine arts classrooms with multimedia projectors, touch displays, and foundational digital graphics tablets.
4. **Creating a National Digital Educational Resource:** Developing a specialized online educational portal (e.g., "TasviriySanat.uz") integrating the history of fine arts, national applied decorative arts, and fundamentals of digital design for school students.

Conclusion

Implementing digital technologies alongside the STEAM approach in general secondary school fine arts education serves to modernize the qualitative content of learning. This approach does not dismiss traditional academic proficiency; rather, it enriches it–elevating the student from a simple visual imitator to a visually literate creator equipped with analytical insight and engineering thinking.

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