



Whitney Carter,  
grade ten, collage

# A Combo Platter of TAB & DBAE

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I am an artist-turned-art-teacher who designed my school's art program two years ago. I based my curriculum on my own formal training, the elements of art, and research done on the Internet; particularly the Incredible Art Department. Consequently, my yearly plan goes as follows: I begin with a self-identity project, moving on to the basic elements of art, then color theory, art history, and sculpture.

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From the start, I was free to design and implement my program, choosing which areas to emphasize. Because my main focus was based on a fine-art background, TAB (Teaching for Artistic Behavior) Choice felt like a natural addition to my curriculum.

**Making the Conversion to TAB**  
I had been thinking of my high school projects as open-ended, when in reality, they were a sort of combo platter of TAB Choice and DBAE



(Discipline Based Art Education). I barely knew about TAB at this point! The head of the arts educators group on Yahoo! began urging us to research TAB Choice, and incorporate it into our programs. All year, I had been having difficulty engaging many of my seventh- and eighth-grade students' enthusiasm towards our projects. After trying a variety of different approaches to spark their artistic interest, I introduced my principal to the idea of TAB Choice and the possibility of applying it to my class. With her approval, I set up a pilot program for the middle school.

**Color Wheel TAB Choice Style**

The majority of my middle school students seemed thrilled with the prospect of doing "free art" for the rest of the year. Well, not totally

"free," their only restraint was that they must stay within the specified format, concept, or medium the project endeavored to explore.

For example, I expect all my students to produce a color wheel while we are studying color theory. When the high school students began their color wheels, the only stipulation was for their colors to follow the proper arrangement. Other than that, size and media were optional, based on their preference.

They responded with a multitude of ideas; they did everything from collages to linoleum carved stamps and stencils for their formats. I loved seeing the range of

their ideas and knowing that they had fun while completing them! I think that's what appeals so much to me about TAB Choice. Many

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teenagers have so little control in their lives; it's nice to be able to empower them with freedom within their art experience, while

ensuring they learn the concepts so important to the art process.

**We're on Our Way**

I believe I'm onto finding the right formula of TAB Choice and DBAE for me and my school. I don't think I could do total Choice with every project—my students and I need a bit more structure than that. Applying the foundation of Choice by

providing an assignment and the opportunity to learn the concept in an alternate manner of students' own choosing seems to be the way to go for me. This manner of Choice will offer support for the kids who need direction as well as those who are exploration oriented, a win-win situation. My plan for next year is to implement my version of Choice into ALL my classes, and I can't wait to begin!

Thank you to the following people who helped educate me on the process of Choice: Judy Decker, Rebecca Burch, and the TAB Choice Group on Yahoo! 😊

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