

Jayci, artwork inspired by Harry Styles' Fine Line album cover.

TAB in Remote Learning

Clyde Gaw

Educators across the world faced a new challenge this year. With little or no warning, teachers restructured their educational programs to accommodate school closures by state and local governments. For the first time ever, a majority of the nation's students would be learning virtually, at home, in front of a screen.

Due to COVID-19, the social-emotional vibe, playful conversations, and intellectual happenings of the art room were placed on mute. Despite the fact that that students were living with anxiety and fear, art teachers would move forward—we had no choice. I was determined that experiences related to art-making and universal creativity would benefit my students' intellectual and emotional well being; we would not take a back seat to COVID-19.

Continuing TAB at Home

Could students' remote art activities be self-sustaining as they were in our TAB (Teaching for Artistic Behavior)

classroom? Could students carry out self-directed art activities at home without adult support? Short answer: Yes! Could students generate ideas, realize them, reflect, and report their

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findings back to me? Absolutely! With a learning management platform already in place, we continued to communicate instruction in several modalities. I used text, images, video, and live meetings for regular demonstrations, criticism, art history talks, and class announcements.

Digital Portfolios

Fortunately, we already had an established digital portfolio program. Stu-

dents were comfortable photographing their work and sending files to me. They were also comfortable writing about their art and dialoguing with me. From my experience with electronic portfolios going back to 1998, students as young as eight can participate in this process. At the beginning of the pandemic, my goal was for students to continue to operate just as they did in our regular classroom. But adjustments were needed.

Adjustments

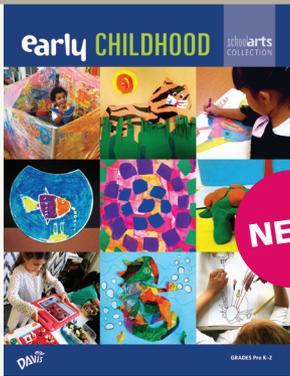
Despite the fact that many students would have limited materials at home, I was willing to accept whatever creative efforts they could generate. My main adjustment to the curriculum was to offer more online content, engage in more dialogue, and suggest more possibilities for creative self-expression. I would continue to play the role I had been playing all along in our TAB classroom, that of provocateur: "Can you draw deep like Louise Despont?" I would continue to challenge students to think about artistic possibilities in the virtual realm.

Most students responded positively to this arrangement. There was little need to utilize behavior modification incentives to coerce art-making. I didn't want to burden students or their families with tasks that caused undue stress. I would accept most creative efforts by students, including family projects and "feral" art. Some of the art I was seeing students produce was truly wild.

Documentation

There was a sense of urgency in students' work; they were experiencing a pandemic. I observed expressions of sadness, anxiety, and fear in their art, but there were also expressions of hope and humanity. Students would document their work through photography, video, or other means, and place the files inside their virtual portfolios. I was doing a lot of correspondence, but that's what was required in this new situation.

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SchoolArts Collection: Early Childhood

Discover diverse lessons based on theoretic foundations common to the Reggio-Emilia approach, choice-based art education, and play-based art education. Developed by art teachers from around the country, these lessons reflect child-centered approaches to art education for young students that illustrate an exploratory approach to encountering artists' tools, materials, and ways of working.

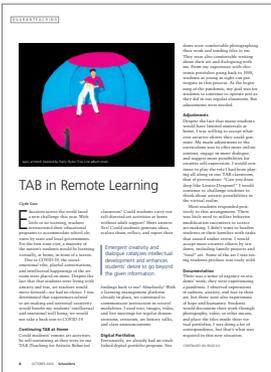
DavisArt.com/SchoolArtsEarlyChildhod



Skutt Kilns & Potter's Wheels

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Reflections

COVID-19 did not stop the learning students had already begun. We shifted gears and made the adjustment to asynchronous, home-based art-making. I expect a hybrid transition back to school for the 2020–2021 school year. I am preparing to open our studio classroom again and offer online experiences to students who want art experiences but can't attend the physical space of school.

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Personal communication greases the wheels of learning. Emergent creativity and dialogue catalyzes intellectual development and enhances students' desire to go beyond the given information. The pandemic has laid bare a national failure to imagine, prepare, and solve wicked problems with intelligent, equitable, and just solutions. I look forward to working with students inside our TAB studio classroom once more, strengthened by the knowledge that art education is more important now than ever before. We cannot afford more future failures of imagination. 🌀

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The Studio Tracker

More than ever before, we are seeing students who are...
Why Students Need a Studio Tracker
 • It allows you to track student progress...
 • It provides a visual representation of student learning...
 • It helps you identify students who need extra support...

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Making It Meaningful

The process has made me realize that a studio tracker can go beyond just a simple graph or chart. Studio trackers have also become a meaningful reflection and data tool for students in my TAB classroom. This reflection time helps students learn how to grow and set goals as artists, helping me achieve my goal, which is to grow artists! Every classroom structure and routine is designed to achieve this objective. What other ways can a studio tracker be used to build artists? 🌀

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