

“A month and half into teaching art virtually to elementary age students”

Blog Post

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May 1, 2020

I rarely used technology in teaching my elementary students Art. I’ve found they appreciate using a variety of art supplies because many have none at home. For children it seems to me the thrill of working on a computer is not as exciting as it used to be Using clay, paint and markers is a novel experience for many.

So...technology, for me, was exactly that – for me– not as a way to teach my students. I now find myself learning how to use all the forms of Google I can possibly handle. I’m overwhelmed with the amount of resources that are out there and the number of ways I can share this with my students. Sure, numerous resources and ways to disseminate are wonderful and I’m thankful they exist. But...It’s simply exhausting.

Even now, trying to write this, my head is going in a thousand directions as I struggle to stop reading emails, texts or checking to see if someone turned in a Google Assignment.

Today, sitting and sitting and sitting at my desk, I realized I’ve been sending out lessons for a month with written directions and pictures. I include YouTube videos, links to videos, fun activities to get the kids outside making art, etc. BUT the main focus of our lessons is having the children read the instructions to make the art and then send me a photo of the art. Ninety percent of this lesson is in words. These are elementary children, often with no adult who has the time to read the directions to them. No wonder I keep getting messages from kids asking me what to do. ‘So let’s learn Screencastify,’ I say to myself. I’ve been avoiding taking on another new aspect of technology but my students need more than just words on a document. I struggled, but finally learned, how to do a basic recording of myself so the kids can hear me and see me point out all the things they can do for their artwork.

.....Honestly, at this moment, I do not wish to write about my students. I miss them. I miss hearing them talk about their art. I miss seeing them making art. I miss them and to write about it more is too hard at this time. I miss them.

There are, oddly, some bright sides of this -the other elementary art teachers with whom I teach, along with some colleagues in my building! In the past, we rarely met or planned together. Now there is hardly a day that goes by that we are not in communication with one another, sharing our struggles, frustrations, and sometimes, successes! It is through these friends, not my district, that I have learned how to use the all of the technology that I did.

And, it is through these friends that I am surviving.

This is where I need to end. Perhaps, some more scholarly thinking on this in the future... but, for now I say, “Thanks, friends!” Wendy Milne, Visual/not-so-visual now Art Teacher