

THE COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL AND INNOVATIVE METHODS IN TEACHING PAINTING

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Abstract: *This article provides a profound analysis of the pedagogical, psychological, and methodological foundations of teaching painting within the system of higher and secondary specialized art education. It explores the conceptual differences between the traditional teaching system - which boasts a centuries-old history and relies on master-apprentice traditions, principles of academic realism, and the laws of direct drawing from life - and innovative methods that encompass modern digital technologies, virtual reality (VR), hybrid learning, and interactive case studies. The article evaluates the advantages, limitations, and functional roles of both approaches in shaping the aesthetic worldview, technical skills, and creative thinking abilities of future fine art specialists. According to the research findings, absolute reliance on a single approach does not yield the expected efficiency in today’s era of globalization and digitization. Instead, the scientific and theoretical necessity of integrating innovative pedagogical technologies while preserving the foundation of the traditional academic school - thereby creating an integrative-innovative model - is thoroughly substantiated.*

Keywords: *painting methodology, academic education, traditional methods, innovative technologies, digital painting, coloristics, compositional thinking, virtual reality, hybrid methodology, aesthetic perception, creative competence, master-apprentice system*

Fine art, particularly painting, has long stood as one of humanity’s most powerful means for understanding reality, expressing aesthetic ideals, and transmitting cultural values to subsequent generations. The process of teaching painting is not merely about forming technical skills; it nurtures a student’s philosophical worldview, visual thinking, and ability to materialize inner feelings into visual forms. Historically, painting methodology underwent a long period of formation and stabilization through Renaissance workshops, followed by European and Russian academic schools. Traditional teaching methods, which form the bedrock of this system, remain the cornerstone of art education today, relying on sketching from life, studying the optical and physical properties of color elements from a realistic perspective, and mastering technical secrets passed down from generation to generation through master-apprentice traditions. However, by the first quarter of the 21st century, the unprecedented development of information and communication technologies, along with the emergence of digital art and virtual spaces, posed entirely new demands to art education. Innovative methods in modern pedagogy - such as digital graphics tablets (digital painting), virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR) software, interactive multimedia textbooks, and project-based creative teaching styles - have begun to transform both the form and content of painting classes. This state of affairs has triggered unique scientific and methodological debates in contemporary art pedagogy. On one hand, proponents of the traditional school argue that digital technologies destroy a student’s hand motor skills, direct tactile connection with the materials (paint, canvas, brush), and the ability to perceive a genuine air-space environment. On the other hand, advocates for innovation criticize

traditional methods as time-inefficient, outdated relative to contemporary demands, and as a collection of dogmatic templates that restrict students’ creative freedom. Conducting a scientific analysis of the relations between these two opposing poles, searching for their points of mutual harmony, and contrastingly evaluating the impact of each method on instructional effectiveness stands as one of the most pressing tasks of modern pedagogy.

The genesis of traditional methods in teaching painting is inextricably linked with the philosophy of academic art schools. At the core of this methodology lies the principle of “observing nature and accurately reflecting it.” In the traditional educational process, a student first learns the color and light-shadow relationships of simple geometric shapes, followed by still lifes, plaster casts, human anatomy, and ultimately, complex compositional arrangements. Here, nurturing visual perception is a primary task, requiring the student not just to see colors, but to analyze their interaction with the environment, covering the valuer system such as reflexes, chromatic and achromatic contrasts, and the effect of air on color. The greatest pedagogical strength of the traditional method is live communication with materials and techniques. Working with materials like oil, watercolor, gouache, or tempera allows the student to feel complex physical-chemical processes, such as the thickness of the paint layer, its drying speed, and the mechanical or optical blending of one color with another on the canvas. This tactile experience leads to a highly refined development of the student’s hand motor skills and eye-measurement (visual estimation). Long-term assignments in academic painting (for instance, rendering a human portrait or a multi-figure still life over 20-30 hours) cultivate patience, focus, step-by-step artwork development, and the capacity for synthesis in students.

The master standing beside the student, directly introducing corrections to their work and demonstrating the brushstroke technique (*mazok*), forms a psychological and professional communication chain known as the “master-apprentice” system. This chain transmits not only technique but also shapes artistic ethics, creative traditions, and aesthetic values. Shifting rapidly into the pedagogical arena, innovative methods emerged to offset the aforementioned shortcomings of traditional methods and to modernize art education. Innovation in painting classes manifests primarily through digital technologies (software like Photoshop, Corel Painter, Procreate) and graphics tablets. While preserving traditional drawing principles, digital painting (digital art) offers the creator limitless technical possibilities. Here, the color palette is unrestricted, waiting for paint to dry is unnecessary, and most importantly, the “Ctrl+Z” (undo) function allows students to experiment fearlessly, make mistakes, and correct them within seconds. Psychologically, this eliminates a student’s “fear of the blank page” or the “anxiety of ruining expensive material,” thereby encouraging creative freedom. Furthermore, virtual reality (VR) technologies can be categorized under innovative methods. Utilizing VR headsets, students can create painting masterpieces within a three-dimensional space using virtual brushes, perceiving color as a spatial object. This fundamentally alters a person’s spatial and compositional thinking. Methodologically, innovative approaches are conducted in interactive and hybrid formats: for instance, through the flipped classroom method, students independently study color theory, coloristics, and composition laws outside of class using video lectures and 3D models, while using practical workshop hours directly for analyzing and refining creative projects. Similarly, case studies (analyzing problematic scenarios) and project-based learning methods are widely implemented in modern classrooms. Instead of simply drawing a still life, students are tasked with preparing conceptual projects that reveal a specific socio-

cultural idea through color symbolism. This transforms students from individuals who merely copy the shape of an object into creative-thinking modern visual artists who develop ideas. However, innovative methods harbor their own conceptual and practical crises. The biggest challenge is the absence of material substance and tactile sensation. A student working on a digital screen does not feel the density of the paint, the resistance generated by a brush rubbing against canvas, or the nature of the material. The visual and psychophysiological difference is vast between colors obtained through screen light radiation (the RGB system) and colors obtained from the physical mixture of paint pigments (a physical system close to the CMYK principle). Because digital tools offer ready-made filters, textures, and automated functions, an illusion of "superficial virtuosity" or achieving fast results without hard work can arise in students. This, in turn, can lead to the shallowing of deep artistic analysis, color sense, and individual style, causing the unique "aura" of an artwork (in the words of Walter Benjamin) to vanish.

From the perspective of pedagogical psychology, these two methods affect a student's personal and intellectual traits differently. The traditional method favors the formation of an introverted, deeply focused, meditative, and tradition-loyal psychotype, whereas innovative methods stimulate an extroverted, quick-decision-making, flexible, technologically minded, and project-oriented psychotype. The modern labor market and creative industries (such as filmmaking, game development, animation, concept art, and advertising design) primarily demand specialists who possess innovative digital skills, can work rapidly, and operate within teams on collaborative projects. However, education directed solely toward practical and commercial goals can cause the loss of the "aesthetic and spiritual essence" that forms the fundamental base of art. Masterpieces by great artists preserved in museums affect the viewer through their live texture, the radiance of paint layers, and the energy of the author's hand. It is impossible to fully replicate this "energetic and tactile charm" on a digital screen. This is precisely why the methodological crisis and the need for its solutions are higher than ever in higher art education institutions.

The most optimal solution to this scientific-methodological problem is not to oppose these two approaches against one another, but to develop and introduce their integrative-hybrid model into the educational system. The integrative model relies on a logical sequence of instructional stages. In the initial stages of art education (1st and 2nd years), priority must be given to traditional academic methods. A student must first observe nature and live human models, mix colors with their own hands on a palette, study the physical character of materials, and form eye-hand coordination as a foundation using classical drawings. At this stage, a computer or tablet cannot serve as the main tool, because moving to digital tools without a firm academic base causes professional stagnation, leading students to draw with technical superficiality and reliance on digital templates.

In conclusion, traditional and innovative methods in teaching painting are not two opposing forces that negate each other; rather, they form a dialectical unity that complements one another and ensures the sustainable and dynamic development of art education. Traditional methods serve as the heart and foundation of the system, providing the student with deep visual perception, a sense of color, a culture of direct communication with material, and academic mastery. A true artist cannot be formed without this foundation.

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