

## USING “CANVA FOR EDUCATION” APPLICATION WITH COLLABORATIVE LEARNING IN VISUAL ARTS LESSON: SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHERS

“CANVA FOR EDUCATION” UYGULAMASININ GÖRSEL SANATLAR DERSİNDE İŞBİRLİKLİ ÖĞRENME İLE KULLANIMI: ÖĞRETMENLER İÇİN ÖRNEK ETKİNLİKLER

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### Abstract

The proliferation of Web 2.0 tools in visual arts education has ushered in multifaceted learning environments that cater to diverse sensory experiences. Among these tools, Canva for Education application stands out, offering an array of visual assets, content, and templates for diverse design endeavors. This tool not only augments learning experiences but also enhances creativity by piquing students' engagement through its myriad features. Nonetheless, the efficacy of such a tool is augmented when intertwined with active learning methodologies in pedagogical settings. Specifically, when Canva for Education is embedded within a collaborative learning framework, it fosters a distinct learning milieu, promoting peer-to-peer interactions. In this paper, activities that can be implemented in collaborative groups with Canva for Education application in middle school visual arts class were introduced. These activities were prepared within the framework of the objectives related to the use of technology in visual arts curriculum in Türkiye. Within the scope of this study, products developed with different design types are presented to guide teachers. It is thought that these activities will provide insights for practitioners and students on the use of Canva for Education.

**Keywords:** Visual Arts Education, Collaborative Learning Approach, Canva for Education, Web 2.0 Tools

### Öz

Web 2.00 araçlarının görsel sanatlar derslerinde kullanılması, öğrencilere birden fazla duyuya hitap eden zengin öğrenme ortamları sunmaktadır. Bu Web 2.00 tabanlı uygulamalardan biri olan Canva for Education, çeşitli tasarımlar yapmak için birçok farklı görsel, içerik ve şablon sağlamaktadır. Ayrıca bu Web 2.00 aracı, sahip olduğu özelliklerle öğrencilerin dersi olan ilgisini artırarak öğrenmeyi kolaylaştırmakta ve yaratıcılığı geliştirmektedir. Ancak bu uygulamanın sınıf içinde aktif öğrenme yaklaşımları ile desteklenmesi büyük önem taşımaktadır. Bu aktif öğrenme yaklaşımlarından biri olan işbirlikli öğrenme ile tasarlanan Canva for Education uygulamaları, öğrencilerin birbirleriyle etkileşime geçmelerini sağlayarak benzersiz bir öğrenme deneyimi yaşatmaktadır. Bu çalışmada ortaokul görsel sanatlar derslerinde Canva for Education uygulaması ile işbirlikli gruplar halinde uygulanabilecek etkinlikler tanıtılmıştır. Bu etkinlikler MEB görsel sanatlar müfredatında teknoloji kullanımına ilişkin amaçlar çerçevesinde hazırlanmıştır. Bu çalışma kapsamında öğretmenlere rehberlik üzere farklı tasarım türleri ile geliştirilen ürünler sunulmuştur. Bu etkinliklerin uygulayıcılara ve öğrencilere Canva for Education uygulamasının kullanımına ilişkin yol göstereceği düşünülmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Görsel Sanatlar Eğitimi, İşbirlikli Öğrenme Yaklaşımı, Canva for Education, Web 2.0 Araçları

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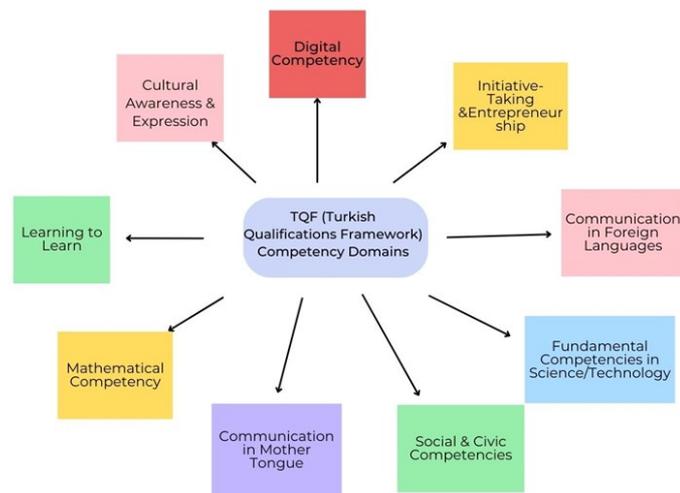
## Introduction

In the contemporary era, characterized by the swift evolution of science and technology, educational frameworks are compelled to cultivate individuals equipped with 21st-century proficiencies. The dynamic shifts in technological landscapes, coupled with unforeseen events such as pandemics, have recalibrated the expectations from educational paradigms. Consequently, the paradigms are now centered on reshaping the modalities of student learning, cognitive processes, and creative manifestations. Furthermore, these technological metamorphoses extend their influence beyond conventional education, prompting art educators to embark on novel pedagogical explorations. Such technological advancements invariably induce modifications in the policies, standards, and methodologies integral to art education (Buyurgan & Buyurgan, 2012; Patton & Buffington, 2016).

This study endeavors to illuminate pathways for art educators, particularly in contexts where traditional pedagogies predominantly govern visual arts instruction. Notably, numerous visual arts courses continue to adhere to conventional teaching methodologies. In this vein, this study adopted an approach that acknowledges student heterogeneity, aspiring to foster an enriched learning environment through a technologically-integrated, web-based application. By incorporating Canva for Education within a collaborative learning framework, an endeavor was made to curate a distinct learning experience, promoting student interactivity. The study elucidates activities designed by middle school students in collaborative cohorts, leveraging the Canva for Education platform in their visual arts instruction. These activities resonate with objectives centered on technological integration within the visual arts curriculum, aiming to harness Web 2.0 tools in curating multisensory learning environments.

## Incorporating Technology in Visual Arts Instruction

The realm of visual arts instruction, representing the tangible facet of art education within educational establishments, necessitates alignment with technological innovations and shifts. Evidently, the 2018 Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE) Visual Arts Curriculum (MoNE, 2018, p.4-5) highlights 'digital competency' as one of the nine proficiency domains stipulated in the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF). Succinctly, this domain underscores the imperative of acclimatizing to the demands presented by our technologically-saturated information age. Upon analyzing Figure 1, it becomes palpably clear that in our contemporary digital era, ensuring art educators possess the requisite digital acumen becomes paramount for the delivery of a holistic and qualitative art education.



**Figure 1.** Competency Domains as Enunciated in the Turkish Qualifications Framework (TQF).

In the contemporary pedagogical landscape, the role of technology in facilitating children's creative expression, aligned with modern educational methodologies, has garnered significant attention (Dilmaç, 2019; Elmas & Geban, 2012; Özsoy & Alakuş, 2017). Central to this discourse is the educator's judicious selection of instructional methods and strategies, cognizant of the inherent individual variances among learners. Monolithic instructional paradigms are increasingly deemed inadequate for fostering comprehensive student development in the modern era. Contrarily, there's a pronounced inclination towards student-centric engagements, immersive multi-sensory environments, and efficacious pedagogical approaches underscored by problem-solving dynamics (Jagodzinski, 2009).

In light of this perspective, it is posited that accentuating student activity in visual arts instruction, whilst integrating modern pedagogical strategies, can yield profound dividends, especially concerning individualized learning needs. Engaging students via these avant-garde methods can stimulate enhanced subject comprehension, cultivate advanced cognitive proficiencies, amplify intrinsic motivation, and bolster critical thinking and creativity (Doğan, 2011; Murray & Brightman, 1996; Smilan & Miraglia, 2009; Tarlakazan, 2010; Zor & Tepecik, 2015). Additionally, there's an emergent consensus on the imperative of amalgamating web-based platforms with active learning paradigms. Such integrations not only augment student engagement and facilitate learning but also render the instructional process more dynamic, captivating, and contemporaneously relevant. Within the spectrum of active learning frameworks, collaborative learning stands out, offering students an enriched, enduring learning experience through mutual interactions.

### **Incorporating Technology in Visual Arts Instruction via Collaborative Learning**

Contemporary pedagogical perspectives underscore that while children possess the capacity for independent learning, their cognitive, social, and psychomotor development is significantly amplified when they engage collaboratively with peers, educators, and other stakeholders (Dewey, 2007; Piaget, 1957; Slavin, 1983; Vygotsky, 1978). Esteemed theorists such as Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky have delineated the instrumental role of peer interactions in nurturing children's collaborative learning proficiencies. Vygotsky's groundbreaking Socio-cultural Learning Theory accentuates the pivotal role of environmental interactions and social skill development in cultivating cognitive faculties like verbal expression and logical reasoning. He posited that social interactions are imperative for cognitive evolution, emphasizing the essence of collaborative paradigms in the learning continuum. In this vein, Vygotsky advocated for the integration of collaborative learning environments in classrooms, facilitating the cognitive progression of less proficient students through interactions with their more adept counterparts (McLeod, 2023; Vygotsky, 1978).

The Visual Arts Course Curriculum in Türkiye aspires to inculcate in students an acumen for innovation, harnessing diverse techniques for enriched artistic expression, and leveraging technological advancements in their creative endeavors (MoNE, 2018, p.11). It is evident from the curriculum that there is an emphasis on integrating contemporary technological innovations into art instruction.

While collaborative learning methodologies have a storied history and are prevalent across various academic disciplines, research focusing on its integration within visual arts instruction remains relatively sparse (Başbuğ, 2020; Dilmaç, 2019; Kurtuluş, 2001). Empirical studies, however, underscore the profound impact of collaborative learning on targeted skill sets and practical domains (Aydın & Alakuş, 2009; Başbuğ, 2020; Cartwright, 1993; Doymuş & Koç, 2012; Johnson & Johnson, 2002; Lyman, et al., 1993; Wall, et al., 2009). These studies generally highlight the efficacy of collaborative learning in augmenting student motivation and fostering interactive group dynamics.

Although Visual Arts instruction can oscillate between individual and collaborative methodologies, group engagements are comparatively less prevalent in academic establishments (Bobick, 2008; Tarlakazan, 2010; Yılmaz, 2007). Both pedagogical approaches offer distinct advantages. However, in an era characterized by pronounced individualism, fostering societal integration through group engagements becomes pivotal, enriching the learning milieu and promoting socialization. In this context, integrating platforms like Canva for Education, a prominent Web 2.0 tool, can augment pedagogies anchored in collaborative learning methodologies. It's imperative to note that the mere introduction of Web 2.0 tools in educational settings isn't sufficient; it requires the concurrent adoption of pertinent instructional approaches.

### **Leveraging Web 2.0 Tools in Visual Arts Instruction**

Web 1.0 tools, which preceded the Web 2.0 tools that are widely used today, were only text-oriented and continued until the 1990s. These tools were the simplest form of the web and users were only the receivers of information. In other words, it was not possible for them to interact on a page. In 2004, digital tools called Web 2.0, which allow interaction and are shaped by the contributions of users, emerged (Latorre, 2021).

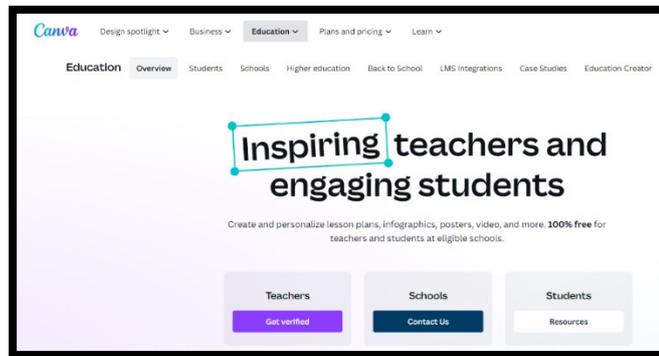
The technological transformation of internet infrastructure and software systems has ushered in a new era dominated by Web 2.0 tools. These tools empower practitioners with functionalities like digital content creation, storage, communication, and information dissemination in highly interactive environments (Ajjan & Hartshorne, 2008). The technological tools associated with the integration of these tools, especially in education, have made it easier to learn, structure and share knowledge. Moreover, Web 2.0 tools catalyze student engagement, knowledge construction, and foster profound social interactions (Elmas & Geban, 2012). Contemporary education transcends the confines of traditional learning, characterized by reading and rote memorization, evolving into an immersive experience enriched by diverse activities and engagements. Web 2.0 tools epitomize this transition, offering immersive learning experiences both within and beyond institutional boundaries.

Numerous digital tools and Web 2.0 applications have permeated the realm of visual arts instruction, including platforms like Davinci 15 Beta, weWord Art, Make Beliefs Comix, and others (Çelik, 2021; Horzum, 2010). However, this study primarily focuses on Canva for Education and its associated applications. The reason is that Canva for Education has many advantages over other Web 2.0 tools. First of all, this digital tool has an online platform designed specifically for teachers and students and is becoming increasingly popular as one of the most widely used Web 2.00 tools in education (Fauziyah, 2023; Nurhayati et al., 2022; Putra, 2022; Sutedi et al., 2023; Zebua, 2023). It also helps to create or develop creative and interactive learning media/multimedia for distance education and supports collaborative learning (Du et al., 2018; Li, 2020; Putra, 2022). On the other hand, it is thought that it is important for teachers to have information about Canva for Education, which is highly ergonomic in terms of use and whose effectiveness has been shown by the studies mentioned above, instead of digital applications whose benefits have not yet been proven.

### **Integrating Canva for Education in Visual Arts Instruction**

Canva for Education, tailored for K-12 educators and students, is a comprehensive web-based platform that champions creativity and collaboration across classrooms. Its expansive utility within the visual arts curriculum encompasses a myriad of design functionalities – from posters and logos to presentations and videos. The platform offers a plethora of design templates, effects, and customizable content, all accessible without any monetary commitments. Educators can curate virtual classrooms, inviting students to engage, design, and collaborate. Through this platform, educators can assign tasks, monitor student progress, and

provide real-time feedback. Canva for Education's dual compatibility as both a desktop and mobile application enhances its accessibility. Moreover, its integration within the visual arts curriculum not only bolsters student creativity but also aligns with both in-class and extracurricular learning objectives, providing visual and auditory stimuli (Artut, 2004; Canva, 2022; Gül, 2022; Yalçın, 2020; Yıldız & Ateşli, 2021). The subsequent Figure 2 offers a glimpse of Canva for Education's primary interface.



**Figure 2.** *Main Interface of the Canva for Education Application*

The adept incorporation of Canva for Education, a prominent Web 2.0 tool within the educational sphere, coupled with collaborative learning methodologies, can significantly enhance the caliber of art education (eg., Pedroso et al., 2023). Existing research indicates a noticeable gap wherein educators, despite possessing rudimentary knowledge about such applications, demonstrate a lack of proficiency in deploying them in a collaborative classroom setting (Duyku, 2021; Karaca & Aktaş, 2019; OECD, 2009). Given the contemporary context where students engage intensively with various social media platforms for socialization and knowledge dissemination, there emerges a pressing need for visual arts educators to scaffold students' creative cognition, collaborative learning dynamics, problem-solving acumen, and advanced learning paradigms (Black & Browning, 2011). In this light, the integration of the Canva for Education application both within and beyond the classroom infrastructure can exert a positive influence on student outcomes. This approach not only optimizes time utilization but also fosters inclusive classroom engagements. Therefore, the visual arts curriculum transcends its traditional individualistic format, characterized by uniform materials and confined environments, evolving into a boundary-less pedagogical space, marked by vibrant interactions. Furthermore, the symbiosis of technology and art pedagogy renders the visual arts curriculum more engaging, pleasurable, and ensures that learning experiences are both effective and indelible (Buyurgan & Buyurgan, 2012; Özsoy & Alakuş, 2017; Yılmaz & Bilici, 2016).

### **Deploying Canva for Education within Classroom Dynamics**

Incorporating Canva for Education within the visual arts curriculum necessitates a systematic approach. Educators may consider the ensuing steps:

1. **Orientation and Familiarization:** Commence with a foundational briefing about the Canva for Education platform. Acquaint students with the diverse design functionalities and modules integral to the application. The educator should secure a teacher membership on Canva for Education, subsequently generating a link to either establish a virtual classroom or grant students' access to specific tasks. Students can be integrated into this virtual space through four primary mechanisms:
  - Invitation through Google Classroom
  - Sharing a direct activity link

- Transmitting an access code via mobile
- Disseminating an access code through email.

Figure 3 illustrates a snapshot of the application's interface, while Figure 4 delineates the diverse modalities to engage students. Once the pertinent invitation link is relayed, students can access the collaborative workspace via the embedded invitation. Navigating to the 'Create Design' segment unveils an array of templates and components, facilitating the design process.

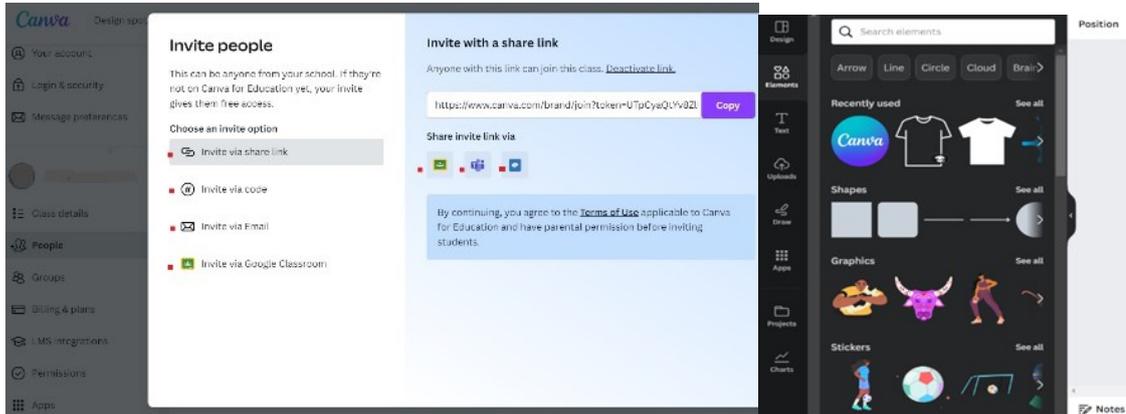


Figure 3. Interface Highlighting Virtual Classroom and Activity Initiation

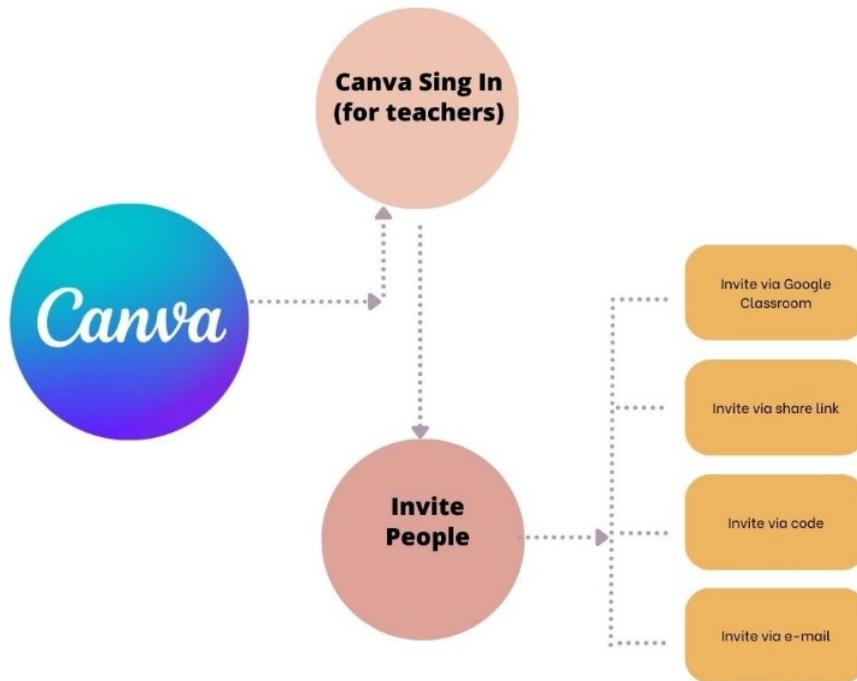


Figure 4. Methods Available to Educators for Initiating a Virtual Classroom in Canva for Education.

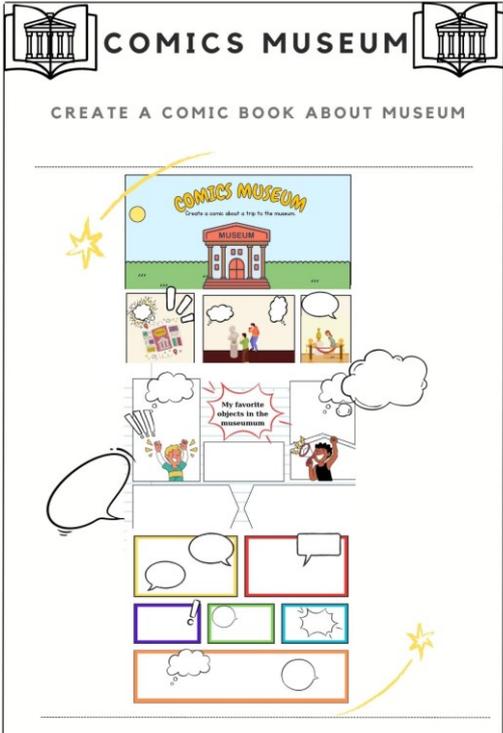
2. Utilize the pre-existing template section. With this feature, educators and students can effortlessly modify designs, adding relevant effects, imagery, videos, and objects as required.

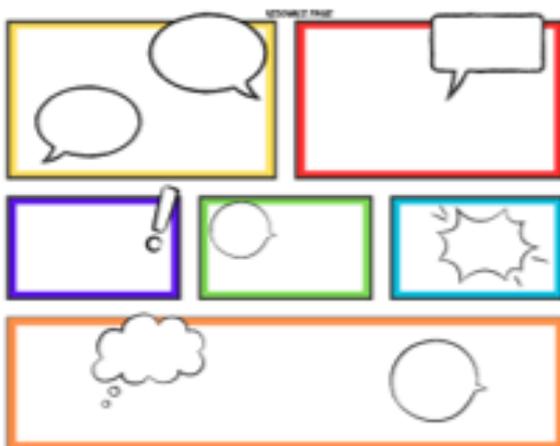
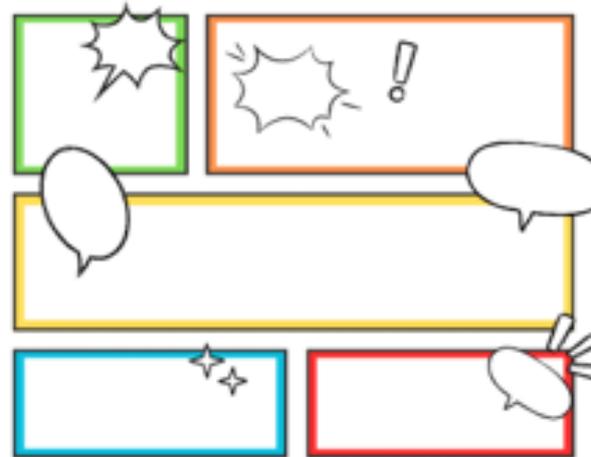
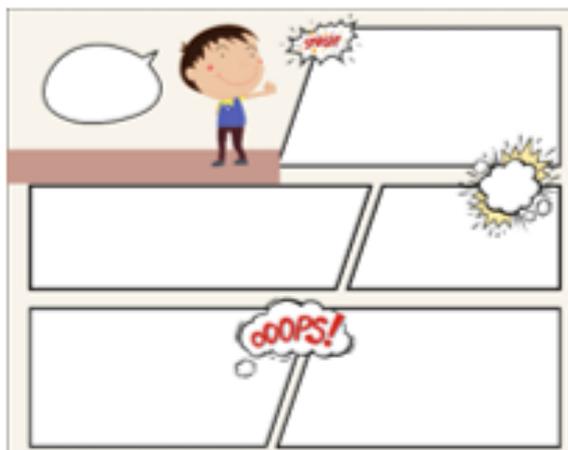
3. Groups are constituted heterogeneously, contingent upon class size. Alternatively, the entire class can operate as a singular cohesive unit. Prior to initiating the task on Canva for Education, the instructor delineates the assignment's objective. To preempt technical glitches, students are cautioned to ensure the reliability of their devices and internet connectivity.
4. Adherence to operational protocols is crucial. The instructor communicates the guidelines, elaborating on roles and responsibilities for the task at hand.
5. For optimal outcomes, it's paramount for the instructor to foster a conducive, positive environment, prepping students both intellectually and emotionally for the task.
6. Throughout the task's execution, the instructor assumes a facilitative role, guiding students as necessary.
7. Post-completion, the resultant products are showcased and collectively critiqued. This collective reflection not only focuses on the end product but also the process leading to its creation.

### **Sample Activities Integrating Canva for Education**

Outlined below are illustrative activities tailored for middle school students, aligned with the objectives of the Visual Arts Curriculum. In the process of implementing these activity plans, teachers can make instructional adaptations by taking into account the cognitive level required by the tasks and the readiness of their students. These activities, namely "Comics Museum," "Artist's Bookmark," and "Art Challenge," offer directives for effective implementation.

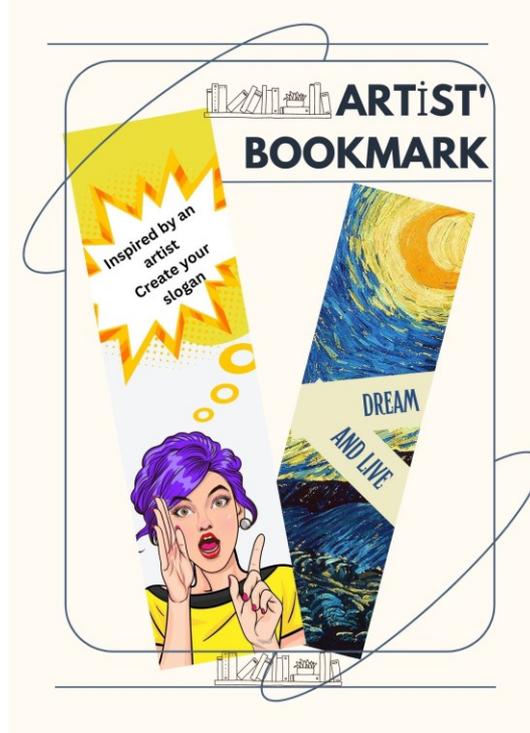
### Activity 1.

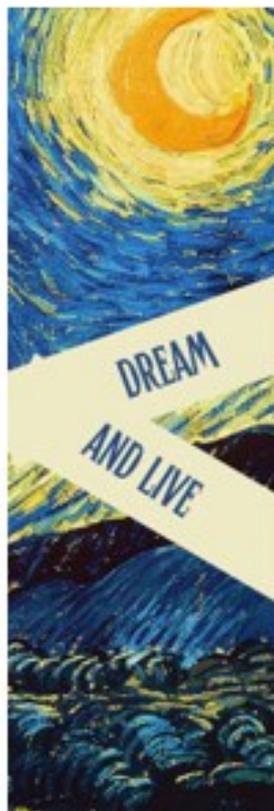
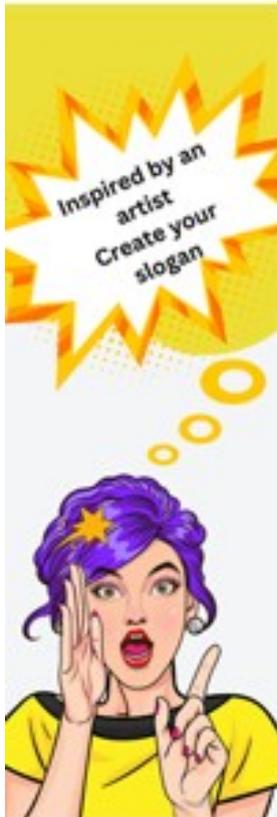
COMICS MUSEUM	
<b>Grade:</b> 5-8	Analyze art specimens within a museum (or visual museum) setting and humorously design a representation of the experience on Canva.
<b>Objective:</b>	
<b>Directions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This activity takes place as a large group activity with the participation of all students in the class.</li><li>• Students are informed about the activity.</li><li>• The instructor disseminates a link facilitating group collaboration.</li><li>• A specific museum or cultural heritage site is identified for a virtual visit.</li><li>• Under the instructor's guidance, students are asked to convert their museum experience into a comic narrative.</li><li>• A pivotal artifact, resonating with individual students, is centrally featured in their comic representation.</li><li>• Students are asked to design their own original and creative page based on the example.</li><li>• Sequentially, the instructor compiles individual pages, culminating in a comprehensive comic book.</li></ul>
	



## Activity 2.

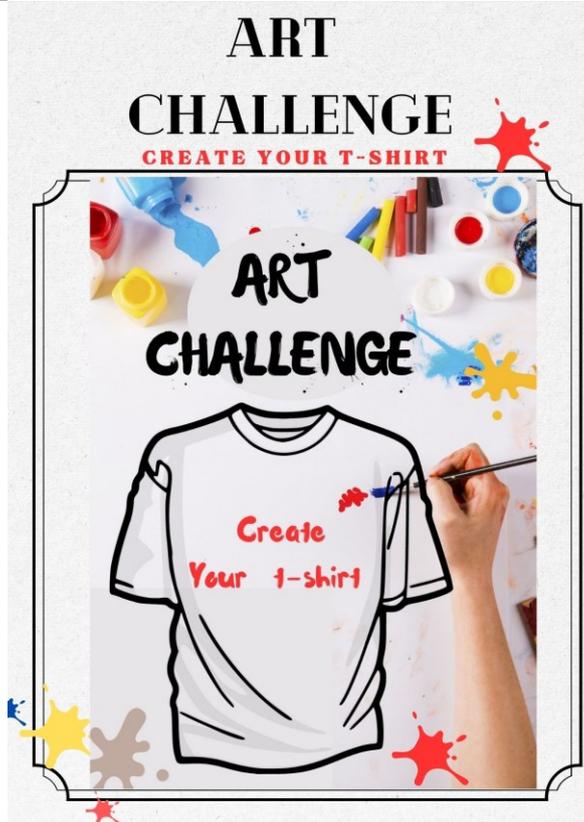
ARTIST'S BOOKMARK	
<b>Grade:</b> 5-8	Seamlessly amalgamate contemporary media imagery, symbols, and text with a theme chosen by students and teachers, leveraging Canva to manifest design concepts.
<b>Objective:</b>	
<b>Directions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students are assorted into heterogeneous groups, each comprising 3-5 members.</li><li>• Students are informed about the activity.</li><li>• The instructor disseminates a link facilitating group collaboration.</li><li>• Within their groups, students select an artist or artwork as their inspiration.</li><li>• Each group then formulates a slogan pertinent to their bookmark design.</li><li>• Utilizing the shared link, students contribute to the group's collective design.</li><li>• Leveraging the bookmark template on Canva, students craft their unique designs.</li><li>• Post-design, bookmarks are printed, serving as tangible artifacts for students.</li></ul>





### Activity 3.

ART CHALLENGE	
<b>Grade:</b> 5-8	Design t-shirts on Canva, incorporating elements of art and principles of design.
<b>Objective:</b>	
<b>Directions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students are assorted into heterogeneous groups, each comprising 3-5 members.</li><li>• Students are informed about the activity.</li><li>• The instructor disseminates a link facilitating group collaboration.</li><li>• Groups are tasked with a challenge: crafting the most inventive t-shirt designs.</li><li>• Students enjoy the liberty to harness any art form or technique for this endeavor.</li><li>• Concluding the activity, designs are evaluated, and the most inventive one is selected through a class-wide consensus.</li><li>• As a tangible testament to their creativity, each group's design is subsequently printed on t-shirts and exhibited.</li></ul>





## Conclusion

In an era increasingly dominated by digital and visual mediums, the integration of such advancements into the educational spectrum has become indispensable. The surge in online education mandates the incorporation of technological apparatuses in art courses within educational institutions (Taşkesen, 2020; Türker & Sabahat, 2011). Beyond merely instructing children on artistic techniques, the onus is on art educators to furnish avenues for authentic self-expression and to navigate these pathways alongside their students. Contemporary technological tools facilitate students in articulating their sentiments and perspectives through distinctive artistic expressions. The integration of computing devices into school curricula empowers students to experiment with diverse designs, configurations, and three-dimensional constructs in their artistic endeavors. The digital realm offers them unfettered access to a plethora of art-related resources, including virtual museums and galleries (Tepecik & Tuna, 2001). The contemporary student demographic's affinity for technology bolsters their imaginative capabilities and broadens their visual horizons. This not only amplifies their intrinsic motivation towards artistic pursuits but also fosters active lesson participation and the creation of more innovative outputs.

Historically, technological progress has invariably influenced both the conceptual and tangible facets of creativity and artistry. This intersection is most palpable in the educational domain. Within this sphere, the visual arts curriculum, a cornerstone of school-based art education, underscores the importance of crafting art by manipulating materials and immersing in artistic processes (Eisner, 2002; Kırışoğlu, 2009; Robyler & Doering, 2010). Consequently, in alignment with technological strides, the integration of digital tools in the visual arts curriculum emerges as an imperative of our times.

The 2018 Visual Arts Curriculum delineates objectives and guidelines advocating the adoption of technological applications. An analysis of the middle school visual arts curriculum reveals explicit and implicit objectives that promote the crafting of unique artistic designs through digital means. The digital proficiency of both educators and students is pivotal in this regard. Enhanced competency in digital tools augments the efficacy of the visual arts course, streamlining the achievement of desired outcomes.

This research proffers sample activities devised using Canva for Education, an exemplar among Web 2.0 tools suitable for the visual arts curriculum. This platform, granting students the capability to craft both pre-existing and novel designs online, boasts an ergonomic interface, coupled with adaptable menus, catering to middle school students. Its collaborative feature, enabling sharing among users, fosters socio-cultural interactions and collaborative endeavors among students on Canva.

In a nutshell, Canva facilitates the creation of varied outputs such as posters, logos, emblems, collages, brochures, bookmarks, videos, presentations, and invitations, all congruent with the Visual Arts Curriculum. Activities can be pursued individually or collaboratively. Especially, the platform's pre-existing templates offer guidance, while also presenting interfaces for crafting prepared designs for novices.

The sample activities presented in this research only aim to facilitate art teachers to use Canva for Education application effectively in their lessons in the classroom. On the basis of the current Visual Arts Curriculum, it is recommended that art teachers produce activities in creative ways and prepare the technical and knowledge infrastructure of their students before the application. It is important to include group applications frequently, especially taking into account its collaborative nature, and to share the artistic products produced in exhibitions. In conclusion, it can be stated that Canva is an effective digital tool for both visual arts educators

and students due to its attractive design, user-friendly features that can be accessed from smartphones and laptops, and its support for creativity and collaboration.

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