“What do you mean she wants to order computers for her classroom? Why she’s the art teacher!”

“My son is very talented in art, but I want him to take courses that will prepare him for a successful future. How can he make a living as an artist? He’ll starve!”

“I wanted my history students’ work to be more “creative,” so I taught them how to insert clip art.”

“Why are you using all that video and computer stuff with your students — that’s NOT ART! Let the tech department handle that, we art teachers should stick to the paint and clay!”
Introduction

Any arts educator who enters the realm of technology has most likely encountered comments similar to those above. The attitudes and perceptions of a large portion of the educational community regarding art and technology are often reflected by the larger American society. Art to many conjures romantic images of a bearded and bereted artist passionately lunging with loaded brush at a canvas propped in the corner of a crowded garret. Technology, on the other hand, induces visions of shiny metal and plastic humming with modern efficiency and usually manifested by a bank of glowing computers.

Administrators who are only marginally acquainted with art and technology too easily dismiss the probability of any connection between the two. Subsequently, they reserve computer hardware and software purchases for the math and science departments, rather than for art or music. Parents, unaware of the demand for talented artists in the technology-based design and entertainment industries, discourage their sons and daughters from taking arts courses. Teachers often fail to see the value that art and technology hold for their students. Or worse, they misunderstand how to effectively integrate art and technology into their subject area and actually create lessons that employ inappropriate uses of each. Fellow arts educators often add to the clamor of opposition, claiming, “Technology has nothing to do with ‘true’ art.”

Unfortunately, all of these stakeholders in our children’s futures are missing an extraordinary opportunity to meet the needs of a large portion of students, many of whom are visual or kinesthetic learners born into today’s “techno-culture.” Many in government, education, and the media speak out with concern over the barrage of images encountered in our culture and caution that education must begin to provide our children with skills to translate this “visual language.” Schools should provide a balanced education to help students acquire meaning beyond the literal. Computer technology and interactive media rely heavily on images, sounds, colors and movements: the language of the artist. Therefore, administrators, educators, and the community must realize that the most effective means of addressing our students’ present and future needs is through a marriage of arts and technology and the integration of the two across all disciplines.
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