

# Visual Culture Art Education: An Approach to Art Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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**Abstract.** In the 21st century, life has changed a lot, both in society and in the world of education. The 21st century is also known as the knowledge age. In that era, almost all efforts to fulfill the necessities of life in various aspects were based on knowledge and technology. Referring to the P21 Framework (Partnership for 21st century) it is explained that there are skills, knowledge and expertise that must be mastered so that students can be successful in their work career life. Many careers are still underestimated and may not yet exist and be introduced in the curriculum. With the development of technology, many new careers and professions have sprung up, such as content creator, video editor, cinematographer, videographer, illustrator and other new professions that are urgently needed. In the context of art learning, visual culture may play an important role in raising this awareness. In the art education paradigm, it does not emphasize that all students will be proficient at drawing or like to paint, but through art education, especially with a visual culture approach, it gives an idea to students that there are many alternative ideas and new opportunities that are closer to their daily lives for example in terms of branding, design, advertising, video games, fashion, logo and design. Adding visual culture to the curriculum, is a concept that is inevitable that not only makes students more motivated in learning but also allows students to see other career paths that they might choose in life.

**Key words:** Art, Culture, Education, Learning, Visual

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## INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is marked as the century of openness or the era of globalization, meaning that human life in the 21st century undergoes fundamental changes that are different from the way of life in the previous century. It is said that the 21st century is a century that demands quality in all human endeavors and results. The reality faced in the life of the 21st century demands quality human resources, which are produced by professionally managed institutions so that they produce superior results. These all-new demands call for various breakthroughs in thinking, drafting concepts, and actions. In other words, a new paradigm is needed in dealing with new challenges. The new challenge demands a breakthrough thinking process if what is desired is quality output that can compete with the work in an open world (Tilaar, 1998). The 21st century has many differences with the 20th century in many ways, including in work, social life and self-actualization. The 21st century is marked by the rapid development of information technology and the development of machines, both production machines and computers.

In the 21st century, life has changed a lot, both in society and in the world of education.

Schools that are understood until now have been formed since the 19th century in the context of developing children's education and also encouraging industrialization. The 21st century is also known as the knowledge age, in this era, all alternatives for fulfilling the needs of life in various contexts are more knowledge-based. Efforts to fulfill the need for knowledge-based education, knowledge-based economic development, knowledge-based social empowerment and development and knowledge-based industry development (Mukhadis, 2013).

Referring to the P21 Framework (Partnership for 21st century) it is explained that there are skills, knowledge and expertise that must be mastered so that students can be successful in their work career life. Many careers are still underestimated, and may not yet exist and be introduced in the curriculum. With the development of technology, many new careers and professions have sprung up, such as content creators, video editors, cinematographers, illustrators and other new professions that are currently very much needed. In the context of art learning, visual culture may play an important role in raising this awareness. Not all students will be good at drawing or like to paint, but it is possible, with changing patterns

of life and thinking many students show an interest in design areas, such as brand design, advertising, video games, fashion, logos, and more. Adding visual culture to the curriculum, is a concept that is inevitable that not only makes students more motivated in learning but also allows students to see other career paths that they might choose in life. In addition, art is a discipline that has the power to know about oneself. Malcolm Barnard, author of *Art, Design and Visual Culture*, notes that visual culture, "...is one of the ways in which society is produced." He goes on to say it is, "...one of the ways in which social orders, different group hierarchies, practices, beliefs, and so on, are challenged and contested." Thus, it is hoped that visual culture art education can prepare them to become involved citizens who play an active role in shaping the world and their future. Teaching visual culture is integral, it doesn't just stop at "pay close attention to the following picture" but invites students to think critically about advanced things such as "What do I see? What do I know?" about a visual-based work or artifact.

## METHODS

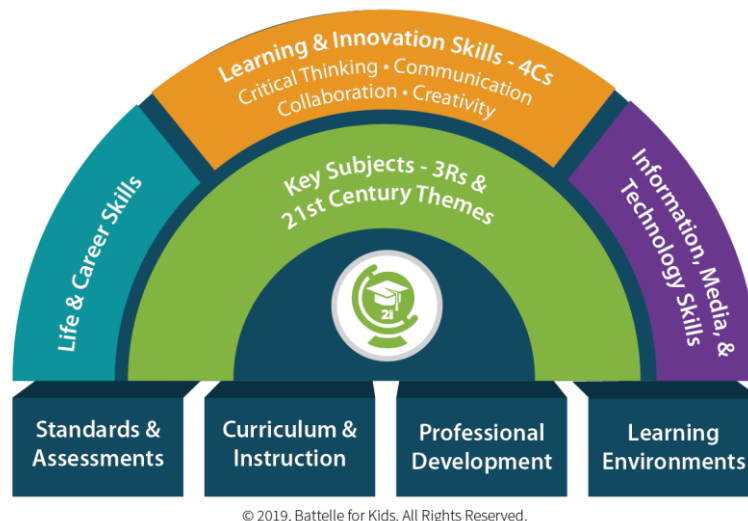
The method used is a literature study in which the writer uses various sources of references both derived from the results of

research and the results of other writer's thoughts that were formulated by the author. So that presents a new concept in writing this article.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Shifting the Learning Paradigm in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Changes in the mindset of humans in the 21st century demand a big change in aspects of national education. Making a big change in education in Indonesia is not easy, because education in Indonesia is an education system that includes 30 million students, 200 thousand educational institutions, and 4 million educators, spread throughout Indonesia. Although the challenges are so big, this change is a must that must be done so as not to be left behind by changing times and technological advances. As a guide for the success of the changes that will be made, P21 (Partnership for 21st Century Learning) has developed a learning framework in the 21st century that requires students to have skills, knowledge and abilities in the fields of technology, media and information, learning and innovation skills as well as life and life skills. career. This framework also describes the skills, knowledge and expertise that need to be mastered so that students can be successful in life and work.



**Figure 1.** Learning Framework in the 21st Century

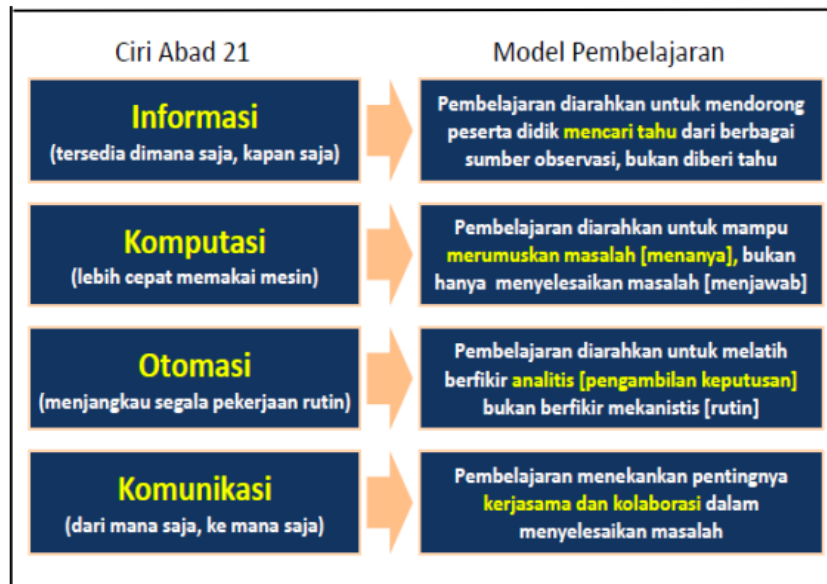
Source: <https://www.battelleforkids.org/>

In line with this, the Ministry of Education and Culture formulated that the 21st century learning paradigm emphasizes the ability of students to find out from various sources,

formulate problems, think analytically and collaborate and collaborate in solving problems (Ministry of Education and Culture Research and Development, 2013). The explanation of the

21st century learning framework according to (BSNP, 2010) some of the abilities that are expected to be possessed by students are as follows: (a) Critical-Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills, (b) Ability communicate and cooperate (Communication and Collaboration Skills), (c) Ability to create and update (Creativity and Innovation Skills), (d)

Information and communication technology literacy (Information and Communications Technology Literacy), (e) Contextual learning skills ) and (f) Information and media literacy skills, able to understand and use various communication media to convey various ideas and carry out collaborative activities and interactions with various parties.



**Figure 2.** Shifting the Learning Paradigm in the 21st Century  
Source : Kemdikbud (2013)

To face learning in the 21st century, everyone must have critical thinking skills, knowledge and skills of digital literacy, information literacy, media literacy and mastering information and communication technology (Frydenberg & Andone, 2011).

### Art Learning in the Reality of Life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

In its development, art goes hand in hand with human civilization, in harmony with the movement of ideas of globalization, globalism and global turn. The paradigm shift in art education in the 21st century is marked by quite concrete characters such as art learning that blends in with life. This change is like restoring the function of art in the era of traditional art, where art is a part of people's lives. Sturken and Cartwright (2001) argue that in today's postmodern culture, the line between the conceptions of high culture and low culture has blurred because the distinction between fine art and popular culture has been eroded. Duncum (2014) avoids the distinction between high and low culture and offers many ways to imagine

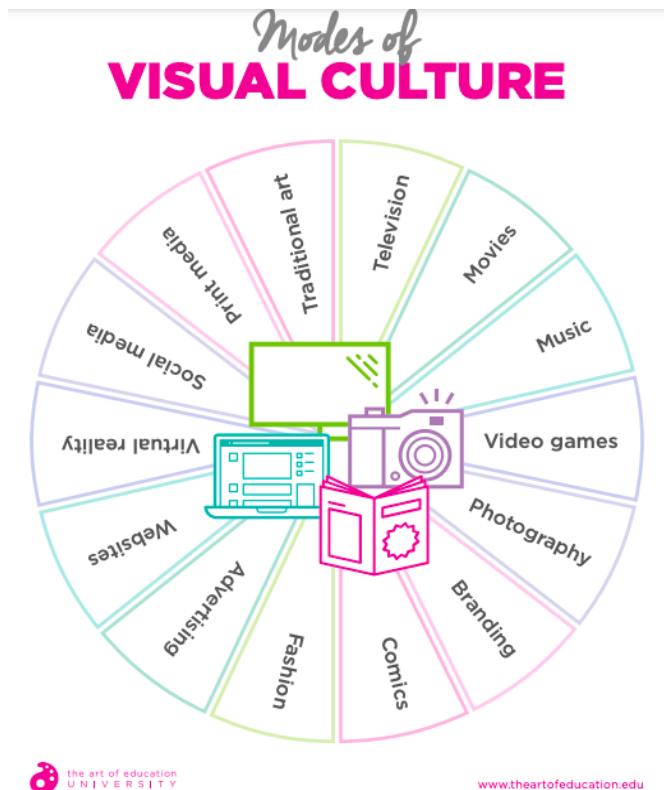
premodern art as popular culture. Walker and Chaplin (1997) argue that "many theorists think that the aesthetic dimension of art is distinctive because it distinguishes artistic objects from non-art objects and from mass culture". To counter this view, the researchers point out that "aesthetic qualities too" are found. in media not generally classified as fine arts—for example, advertising, design and television". Chapman (2003) draws on the blurred line between fine art and popular culture, and includes mass art under the definition of art as it is "descendants of more traditional art forms. ," created by those trained as artists, and using formal techniques and tools. Under the umbrella of visual culture, Chapman defines mass art as "images, artifacts, environments, and events" created under conditions in which they are mass-produced and circulated. en masse in a consumer-driven economy where companies aim to make a profit and is a pervasive part of popular culture. With the turn of the twenty-first century, many researchers (such as Carpenter & Tavin, 2010: Duncum, 2001, 2009; Freedman 2000, 2001; Tavin, 2000, 2003) recognize visual culture as

an art as well as a part of popular culture. With these ideas in mind, practicing arts educators are encouraged and challenged to understand that the realm of content in their curriculum has expanded, from an initial focus on traditional art and culture, to include artifacts that comprise existing popular visual culture. at the moment.

### Visual Culture Art Education: Why, What and How

Visual Culture Art Education (VCAE)

emerged as an (inter)disciplinary field of study and practice in arts education. Often, this is seen as a contemporary pedagogical practice that champions the integration of visual culture into the classroom. In some cases, VCAE is defined as a way to incorporate popular culture and mass media into the arts curriculum as a way to increase relevance to students' everyday lives. Some examples of popular culture today are games, fashion trends, and social media.



**Figure 3.** Models of Visual Culture  
Source : <https://theartofeducation.edu/>

With the inclusion of visual culture in the curriculum, it is hoped that it can be a means to develop higher order thinking skills that can assist students in the ability to navigate the series of images they see everyday that can be used to shape them inside and outside the classroom. Visual culture usually does not only examine visual messages, but also examines the culture of origin or place, the history of art and visual imagery, technological advances that affect the visual forms displayed, and questions about how beautiful it is or its aesthetic value.

### Visual Culture Art Education Approach in Classroom Learning

Visual culture is any image that informs and shapes our perception of the world. But what

exactly is the definition of visual culture, Georgetown University refers to from Eilean Hooper-Greenhill's book *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* defines visual culture as the way we engage in seeing. It was stated that "Visual culture is related to the social theory of visibility, with a focus on questions about what is seen, who sees what, how to see it, knowing, and interrelated forces. What ultimately occurs is critical thinking and internalization in students which starts from the act of seeing images or objects that are external (outside themselves) and internal thought processes. In other words, visual culture has to do with how we allow images to influence us.

In addition, Chris Jenks, author of *Visual Culture*, points out that "What we see and

the material we see is not just a natural ability to see but is closely related to how the image influences the viewer's thinking. This thinking is influenced by the culture of the people who construct their knowledge, and their desire system. In other words, seeing is perception. So, why is visual culture important to my students, and how can I teach it? We live in a world where the field of art is being built and redefined as our culture advances. Visual culture is a living art form that is changing before our eyes and having an influence in our daily lives.

Using visual culture would be an approach to making art relevant to all students. For example, we can discuss why global brands like Coca-Cola have very different approaches to advertising in different countries and regions of the world. Encourage students to think critically about what they see and how it determines or affects their behavior. Try a lesson in which students design a Coke ad with specific countries and markets in mind. They need to research their market and find out what speaks to the people who live there. Then, they need to figure out the best way to visually communicate with them. So it is important to encourage students in learning to look carefully and disassemble the ideas presented in the picture. Practicing these skills will make them smarter visual consumers.

## CONCLUSION

Although critical understanding in the development of visual literacy is the main goal of VCAE, in the implementation of visual culture it is also necessary to pay attention to the opportunities for students to be able to express themselves. Art education with a visual culture approach, become a process of seeing, making and criticizing as a form of symbiosis, critical understanding and empowerment as the best way to develop through an emphasis on image-making where students have the freedom to explore meaning for themselves. Through learning visual culture, students learn to think critically about how the work is made and the intraaesthetic aspects that build it, so that it aims to encourage critical reflection, appreciation, and internalization in thinking.

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