

ONLINE PLATFORMS FOR LEARNING PAINTING AS A MEANS OF PROMOTING HEALTHY AGING

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Abstract. The present study examines the influence of online learning platforms for painting on healthy aging, highlighting their cognitive, emotional, and social advantages to older adults. With increasing access to digital technology, creative activities such as painting from online tutorials offer a unique advantage to mental exercise, emotional satisfaction, and social engagement in old age. The review scrutinizes various websites, including *YouTube*, *Skillshare*, *Udemy*, and niche sites like *Art Therapy Online*, for their usability, accessibility, and quality of content. The study finds strengths and weaknesses of each site, with ease of use, structure in courses, and opportunities for social interaction being specifically emphasized. In addition, it addresses the therapeutic benefits of painting for the elderly, particularly stress relief, alleviation of anxiety and depression symptoms, and enhancement of cognitive functions. Lastly, this research provides suggestions on selecting the most appropriate platforms for the elderly who wish to engage in creative activities and enhance their overall health and well-being.

Keywords: online learning platforms, healthy aging, painting education, creative engagement, mental health, older adults

JEL Classification: I2

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, scientists across various countries have increasingly focused on the study of the brain and psyche, with the aim of preventing mental diseases and identifying ways to achieve healthy aging. One activity that has proven effective in supporting mental well-being and promoting healthy aging is art. In this paper, we will explore the role of painting – one form of art – as a tool to enhance the mental health of older adults. We will consider not only traditional in-person lessons with instructors but also online platforms that offer similar opportunities. The significance of this research lies in the fact that modern technologies now enable elderly people from around the world to learn painting, which can contribute to their mental and psychological well-being as they age. We aim to support this hypothesis by reviewing scientific studies that highlight the benefits of painting for psycho-emotional health, with research conducted by experts in both Europe and the United States.

MAIN CONTENT

1. Literature Review

Healthy aging involves maintaining cognitive ability and emotional well-being as one ages, achieved by activity, socialization, and mental health. This is significant to aging as it allows individuals to live well, remain positive about themselves, and deal with the challenges of advanced age. Art, particularly painting, plays a significant role in this endeavour. New technologies now enable older people to learn painting online, providing a new means of participating in this art form. Older people, however, tend to struggle with learning to use online spaces. It is thus essential to find easy-to-use platforms with easy-to-use interfaces that can support their learning process.

According to Rowe and Kahn (435-437), healthy aging is linked to maintaining social well-being, physical and mental health. This framework focuses on the contribution of engaging activities, such as art, in maintaining mental health in the aging process. Further, Chung and Lee (2018) assume that online learning platforms possess a unique strength in overcoming physical barriers and social isolation among the elderly. The positive impact of creative activities of creative activities in the aging process have been extensively documented. Additionally, studies by Camic and Chatterjee (67-70) demonstrate the significant role that can play in promoting emotional well-being and cognitive health among older adults. Painting, in particular, has been shown to improve cognitive flexibility and to decelerate cognitive aging. Similarly, Creech et al. (85-97) found that musical and artistic engagement among older adults is significant in cognitive development, further confirming the therapeutic value of creative expression.

Furthermore, Lee, V., et al. (2-19) point out highlight the growing role of digital channels in facilitating cognitive stimulation among older individuals. The internet allows older individuals to access creative channels such as painting at any place, developing both their emotional and cognitive well-being. Although the benefits of online learning channels are clear, older individuals find it difficult to adopt new technologies. Vaportzis et al. (30-39) highlight the challenges that elderly individuals face in accessing online sites, particularly the technological barriers that hinder them from pursuing online courses. To mitigate such barriers, sites for older adults must focus on simplicity and accessibility.

2. Positive Effects of Painting on Healthy Aging

Engaging in art activities such as painting has been proven to have a range of positive effects on older individuals in terms of both their cognitive and physical functions. The act of painting not only enhances brain function but also helps improve emotional well-being, and foster social connections. In the sections below, we explore the numerous benefits of painting for healthy aging, supported by scientific studies.

Cognitive Benefits. One of the biggest benefits of painting for older individuals is its positive effect on cognitive function. Evidence has shown that creative activities like painting can actually stimulate the mind and slow intellectual decline by enhancing memory, mental flexibility and attention. Research presented in *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience* (2015) revealed that creative activity offers neuroplasticity – this capacity of the brain to create new connections and pathways between neural cells – which thus helps maintain cognition and delay the onset of neurodegenerative disorders. Cognitive stimulation by this activity plays an important role in slowing down the brain-deterioration effects of age and maintaining mental sharpness.

Physical Benefits. Besides its cognitive advantages, painting also helps to preserve physical health by improving fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. Such physical abilities are important for older adults to ensure independence and carry out daily activities. The *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity* (2017) published research that highlighted the positive influence fine motor activities have on dexterity: painting works to retain manual ability and physical well-being. For the older adult, this improves the physical aspect needed to carry-on with daily tasks and lessen the chance of falling while increasing independence in movement.

Emotional Health. Painting has many advantages for mental and physical health, but it also has a big impact on emotional health. Painting is one form of creative expression that has been repeatedly shown to help older adults who struggle with stress, anxiety, and depression. For instance, a study that was published in *Art Therapy Online* showed that people who painted for just forty-five minutes saw a significant decrease in the stress hormone cortisol. According to this research, painting may be a useful technique for emotional control, assisting senior citizens in managing stress and encouraging mental calm. Furthermore, the artistic process of painting promotes self-expression, which can boost confidence and give one a feeling of achievement (Jingxuan Hu, et.al. 1-6).

Social Engagement. Another important component of healthy ageing is social interaction, and painting is a great way to promote social ties. Older adults can interact with people who have similar interests through online platforms that have community features like forums, live classes, and group challenges. This interaction promotes a sense of belonging and lessens feelings of isolation, which are common concerns for many seniors. Because they offer chances for emotional support, encouragement, and shared experiences, social connections are crucial for preserving mental health. Older adults can maintain their involvement and build lasting relationships by taking part in painting communities, which has a major positive impact on their general wellbeing.

3. Review of Existing Online Platforms

The primary benefit of online education is that users are able to connect at any time and from any location, view lessons whenever it is convenient for them, and learn at their own pace. By providing flexible access to resources and encouraging self-paced learning, digital platforms and AI tools have the potential to improve educational experiences, claims Hîrbu (46–48). Additionally, online resources are crucial in addressing loneliness, especially for older people who are less socially active. These platforms offer a different way to communicate, like chat rooms and forums, where users can engage with others who share their interests and build a sense of community.

Despite these advantages, the main disadvantage of online learning is the technological barrier. Older adults, in particular, often find it difficult to master modern technologies. As highlighted by previous author (50), the unfamiliarity with digital tools can make online platforms and AI tools feel challenging and overwhelming for many. This technological gap can hinder the effective use of these platforms by older generations.

4. Analysis of Popular Platforms

Within our study, we analysed five well-known platforms for learning painting: Udemy, Skillshare, YouTube, Domestika, and Craftsby. Based on a comparison of several key criteria we selected the best platform for each aspect. The figure below was created within our study, summarising the findings about the five different platforms.

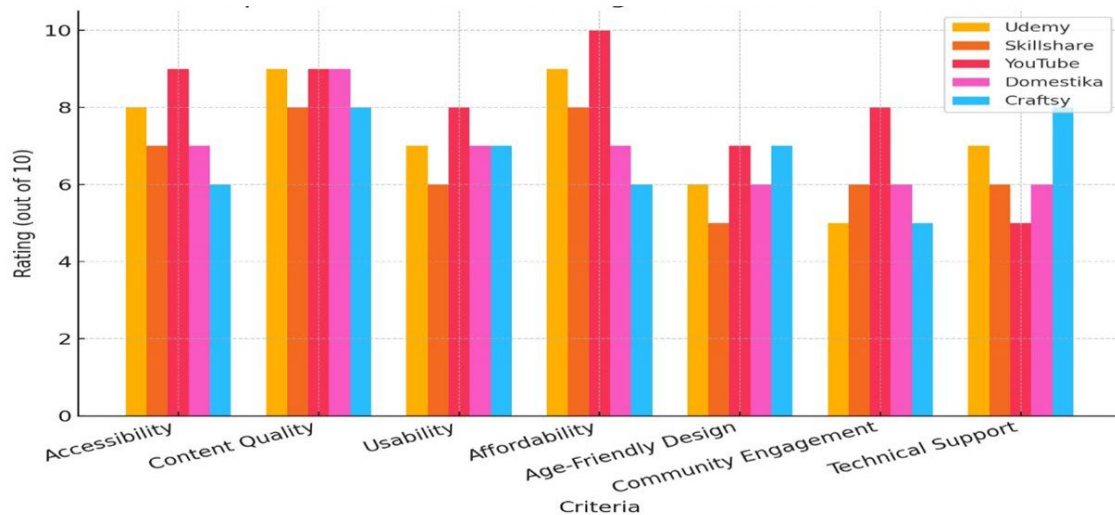


Figure 1 Comparison of online painting platforms for older adults.

Source: Data based on internal analysis conducted within the study.

According to the Fig. 1, *YouTube* is the best platform for *Accessibility* and *Affordability* and *Community Engagement*, offering free access, ease of use, and interactive features like forums. *Udemy* and *Domestika* excel in *Content Quality* and *Structured Learning*, providing high-quality courses that cater to various skill levels. *Skillshare* stands out for its *Community Engagement*, with interactive features and forums that foster a strong sense of community. *Craftsy* was highlighted in the comparison for the specific categories like *Technical Support*, and remains a user-friendly platform for seniors. This analysis highlights the strengths of each platform, helping users choose the best option based on their wishes and needs.

5. How to Choose the Best Platform

When selecting a painting learning platform, especially for older people, there are different aspects to be considered so that the platform satisfies the needs and preferences of the user. Based on the comparison of the platforms, the following are some of the key considerations:

- ✓ Search for websites with senior-friendly interfaces and easy navigation.
- ✓ Prioritize platforms with features of community that allow interaction and feedback.
- ✓ Utilize platforms that offer formal lessons and sequential learning progressions.

CONCLUSION

Overall, new-age technologies have created new ways to learn painting, providing access to online courses, virtual workshops, and imaginative art-making resources. These online sources enhance the learning process, making it possible for older adults to master various techniques of painting. Painting is not only enhancing imagination but also relaxing, having a positive impact on emotional well-being. Furthermore, such activity continues to build the nervous system, enhances concentration, and enhances memory. Therefore, either through traditional or modern technologies, painting is an effective tool for personal development and healthy aging.

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