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**THE INKTOBER INITIATIVE – ANNUAL, GLOBAL, AND PERSONAL
SELF-REGULATED LEARNING**

The Inktober initiative, which challenges artists globally to produce daily ink drawings throughout October, is not just an artistic endeavor. It encapsulates significant psychological principles such as commitment, self-regulation, and the effects of digital community interaction on well-being.

While at first glance, Inktober appears as a mere drawing challenge, its underlying facets offer profound insights into the realms of motivation, commitment, self-regulation, and social psychology.

Inktober embodies three pivotal principles that undergird effective learning: Goal Setting, Monitoring and Reflection (Chye, 2023, 108).

The clarity of the challenge – producing 31 drawings in a month – provides a tangible and finite target for participants. As artists navigate through the month, they can observe their progress, noting both strides and stumbling blocks in their artistic journey. At the conclusion, participants have a tangible record of their month-long journey, enabling reflection on techniques mastered, areas needing improvement, and personal growth. Self-regulation is a dialogue with the self (Lindenberg, 2013, 89), not only the discussion while drawing but also afterwards when reviewing the results.

Platforms like Instagram amplify the learning experience, adding layers of accountability, feedback, and social reinforcement. Publicly sharing progress creates a sense of achievement, while the digital community participating provides invaluable critique, suggestions, and praise. The validation from peers, bolsters motivation. Inktober acts as a game, with achievements that are easily acknowledged. (Kinley & Ben-Hur, 2023, 159) gamification is “defined as the application of game design

principles in non-gaming contexts” and these principles work on “the motivational drivers of human behavior in two connected ways: reinforcements and emotions” (Robson et al, 2015, 411). The challenge is achievable but difficult. This offers multifaceted psychological advantages such a testament to evolving skills and following a structured routine.

Sharing via hashtags like #inktober and #inktober2023 transforms the individual experience into a collective journey. Artists from all over the world unite in Inktober.

The vast digital community introduces diverse perspectives and techniques, enriching the participant's artistic and personal repertoire. It is easy to learn from others when the prompt is the same, but the results are different, which leads to new perspectives are presented within a framework.

Each drawing is to be based off a “prompt”, which is one word, which may be interpreted as a noun, verb or adjective. This is where Inktober distinguishes itself by combining regimented prompts with freedom of interpretation. In 2023, the prompts are, in order- Dream, Spiders, Path, Dodge, Map, Golden, Drip, Toad, Bounce, Fortune, Wander, Spicy, Rise, Castle, Dagger, Angel, Demon, Saddle, Plump, Frost, Chairs, Scratchy, Celestial, Shallow, Dangerous, Remove, Beast, Sparkle, Massive, Rush, Fire.

In 2022, the prompts, in order, were Gargoyle, Scurry, Bat, Scallop, Flame, Bouquet, Trip, Match, Nest, Crabby, Eagle, Forget, Kind, Empty, Armadillo, Fowl, Salty, Scrape, Ponytail, Bluff, Bad Dog, Heist, Booger, Fairy, Tempting, Ego, Snack, Camping, Uh-Oh, Gear, Farm.

While the prompts are predefined and posted in advance, their inherent randomness ensures that emphasis is placed on creative expression over mere conformity. The early release of prompts offers artists the flexibility to pre-plan or allow for spontaneous creativity. Despite the defined nature of the prompts, artists enjoy a vast expanse of interpretative freedom, fostering innovation.

The individual is working for themselves and a part of the community with the goal of improving. This Self-regulated learning (SRL) involves cognition, metacognition, behavior, and motivation in a learning process (Zimmerman, 1990, 3).

The iterative steps of goal setting, performance monitoring, and self-reflection are crucial to mastering a skill or content.

Parker's candid acknowledgment of varying daily challenges, especially the mid-month struggle, mirrors the ebbs and flows of commitment and motivation familiar to many. (Parker, 2021, 233) Since he also participates, he speaks from experience.

Inktober reaffirms that constraints can be potent creative catalysts for innovative thinking. It is not only technical skill that is praised but conceptual thinking and humor is also valued.

By restricting the medium to ink, artists focus on essentials and decluttering the mind. The concentration required means that inking is not merely artistic but deeply therapeutic. The precision demanded by ink instills a heightened sense of mindfulness, anchoring artists to the present moment, because mistakes are permanent and not erasable. (Jover et al, 2016)

Self-regulated learning is composed of the person drawing by themselves, but secondly in communicating with others on the internet. During Inktober, people navigate between long-term aspirations to improve their skill and immediate artistic expressions expressed in the drawings themselves.

Each drawing is a daily task that breaks up the month-long marathon. This involves time management and periodic gratification through these daily micro-achievements (Petrillo, 2015, 6755). Successfully navigating through the challenge amplifies self-worth, leaving behind a material testament that can be reviewed in later years.

The brain's reward circuitry is intricately tied to the repetition of behaviors. Stemming from Duhigg's 'loop' model (Duhigg, 2016), the Inktober challenge can be visualized as a loop. The daily prompt acts as a cue, drawing as the routine, and the satisfaction from completion or feedback as the reward.

The brain's capacity to transform a series of actions into an automated routine, or "chunking," is central to habit formation (Fridland, 2019, 759). Repeated engagement in Inktober can streamline the drawing process into a reflexive habit, minimizing resistance and enhancing efficiency. Excessive self-criticism is avoided

since Inktober serves as an incubator of positive affirmation, celebrating progress over perfection. The focus is on the benefits of learning.

The benefit of the digital age is that even solitary endeavors like drawing become collective experiences (Bozkurt et al, 2023, 76). Technology allows artists, otherwise isolated, to participate communally, drawing insights and comparisons from peers.

The verbal nature of the challenge and the multifaceted nature of prompts (noun, verb, adjective) adds layers to the challenge, offering artists latitude in interpretation and expression.

The digital medium, particularly platforms like Instagram, amplifies the emotional quotient of achievement. The cascade of 'likes' serves not merely as affirmation but as fuel for persistence. Participants not only share their artwork but also partake in a communal narrative of growth and exploration. digital realm empowers artists from traditionally isolated regions, such as Ukraine, to connect with global audiences.

The ingrained techniques and problem-solving approaches in Inktober equip artists for analogous challenges in future endeavors. The global artistic consortium facilitates exchanges on technique, creativity, and interpretative perspectives. Creativity is no longer an isolated endeavor. It is molded by individual predispositions, societal influences, and tangible manifestations (Abdelfattah, 2022, 119)

Inktober is part of 'internet creativity', with memes and amateur content exemplify the raw essence of creativity, appealing to the mass audience rather than only polished professional drawings, simple works also are celebrated (Ying et al, 2023).

With each drawing, participants build upon their existing repository, culminating in a steady evolution from rudimentary sketches to sophisticated artistry. Artists hone their skills in a systematic accumulation of techniques and insights.

Inktober compels participants to journey beyond their comfort zones (Irimiás, 2022), catalyzing unconventional thinking to meet daily challenges. The specific prompts consolidate focus, allowing for deeper exploration.

Shared prompts allow participants the opportunity not just to contrast final products but also to discern diverse creative processes. Traits such as curiosity and open-mindedness, though sometimes at odds with established norms, are wellsprings of deep cognitive and artistic capacities (Barrett, 2023). These are also the goals of Inktober. Participants can choose the criteria that they want to judge their work by.

The act of seeing transcends physiological processing. It encompasses mental organization, interpretation, and understanding of visual stimuli (Faul et al, 2023, 1670). Moving beyond linear cognitive pathways, fostering lateral thinking can catalyze innovative solutions and diverse perspectives (Crawford, 2022).

The role of body knowledge in guiding our unconscious actions, driving tasks without overt awareness, and possibly influencing the emergence of self-awareness and identity. the body's knowledge is unconscious and implicit contrasting against traditional conscious awareness.(Norgaard, 2023, 630)

Inktober is a hybrid self-regulated learning - an active process where learners set goals, monitor their performance, and reflect on outcomes - intertwines with a commitment to artistry.

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