

Meaning Making through Digital Art Educational Practices

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Abstract

With the increasing promotion of technological competence and the dramatic influence of digital visual culture in students' lives, how to integrate digital technologies with art teaching has become an urgent task. The integration appears uneasy, problematic. However, the digital world and the visual arts could enjoy a synergistic and productive alliance if its possibilities, complexities and ambiguity can be handled appropriately. (Sweeny, 2004; Wilks, Cutcher & Wilks, 2012) Considering the practical side of this issue, this study aims to investigate how students can better bridge their ideas and art by creating meaningful digital media productions.

As teachers incorporate digital technologies alongside more traditional skills, neither should be seen as the primary part in the curriculum. Art should be taught as a matter of meaning making by focusing on students' creativity and inner depths. Our project, that adopted digital artistic practices integrated with the aesthetic activities referred to in the therapeutic concept of viewing art (de Botton & Armstrong, 2013), was conducted in 2017 as a 7.5-hour inten-

sive course in pre-service teacher education settings. Students appreciated a local artist's sculptures through intuitive and authentic experiences, and completed two writings as individual self-inquiry. As collaborative learning, students worked in groups to generate short films by iPad in a gallery-like classroom.

By using the qualitative research software NVivo to analyze 23 students' writings and short films, we examine that students have made meaningful connections between meaning making and digital artistic practice, images and words, visual metaphors and the diversity of peers' ideas.

Keywords

Meaning making, Digital technologies, Pre-service teacher education, Therapeutic viewpoint.