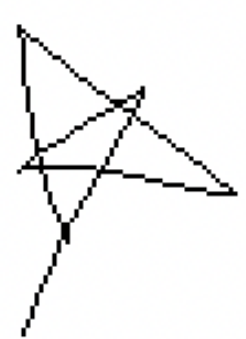
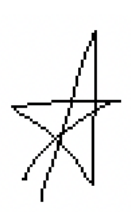


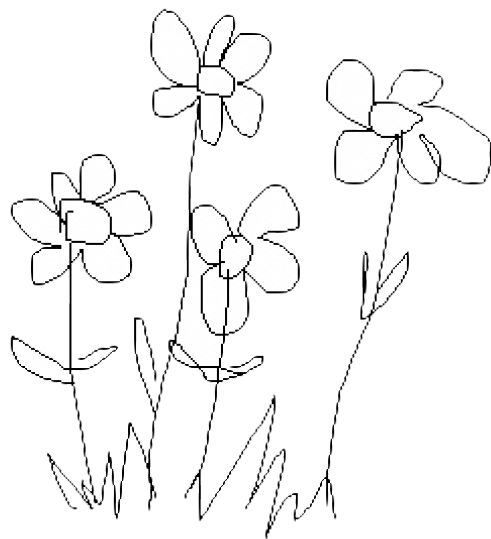
# MAKING SPACE



creative learners  
digital spaces  
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the relationships  
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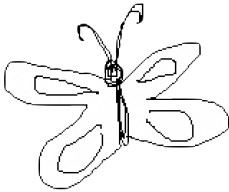


**Making Space  
Creative Learners, Digital Spaces & the Relationships  
Between Them**

**A Thesis**

*Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Master of Arts (MA) Art + Design Education in  
the Department of Teaching & Learning in Art & Design  
at the Rhode Island School of Design*

**By**  
Natalia Spritzer

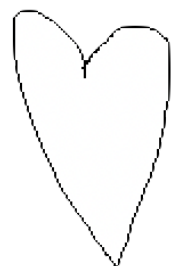


**Approved by  
Advisor**  
Dr. Shana Cinquemani

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**Reader**  
Charlie Cannon

Dedicated to  
Mamãe,  
Papai,  
e Vovó,  
my best teachers



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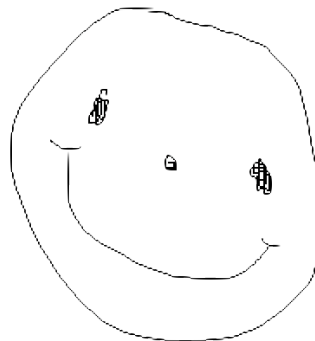
DMUAS Workshop Students

Project Open Door

Mackenzie

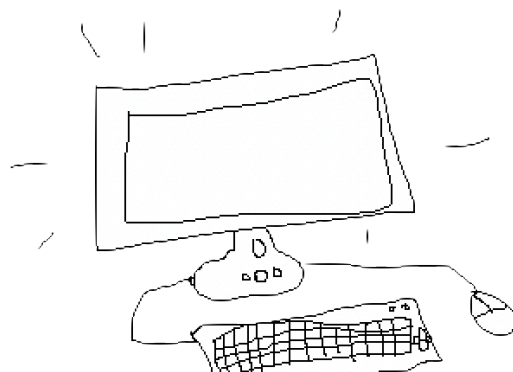
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is an inquiry into the growing prevalence of digital learning environments or digital spaces in order to assess the impact of leveraging these spaces on learners' creative identities. What is being examined in particular are web-folios or personal websites (digital spaces), the interactions that learners have with these environments, and how it infers to the potential of digital space as a medium for a variety of advancements. Through qualitative analysis in the form of observations, interviews, and surveys done throughout a collaborative research workshop, this thesis speculates that digital space can be utilized as a means for providing significant opportunities for individual growth and fostering creative identity. This research also acknowledges the reality of resource disparities within technology and possible means for improvement.



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## **PART I INTRODUCTION: MINI MEMOIR & EARLY THOUGHTS**

Starting off strong, I hated school. My memories of kindergarten to late elementary school remain tinged with feelings of discomfort and anxiety. What I would look forward to the most when I thought about school was finding my corner, start drawing or painting, and mind my own business. Maybe it was my manner of socializing, but I never had many friends. I recall a lot of bullying, which would make my early academic experiences worse. My escape routine from some realities of school, from kindergarten through grade school, became harder and harder to keep up as my means of evasion through creating were constantly being interrupted by inflexible subjects like Math or French. Eventually, I was forced to apply my full attention to these topics in fear of the grading system, disappointing my parents and teachers, rendering me unable to find the trusty corner.

However, as I moved through grades, there seemed to be more of an acceptance and respect towards creativity or flexibility in all subjects. In the fifth grade, I had a technology class oriented towards learning touch typing. The majority of students accomplished this course through an abundance of varying digital games that focused on each letter or section of the keyboard. I was fascinated and excited by the course, enthralled on the days that we had

touch typing; it was the first time that a class outside of Art captivated my attention so aptly. At home, I had access to a computer mainly for typed essays, but I would sneak online to play touch typing games at first before venturing into Neopets, Club Penguin, Poptropica etc. I loved games where the user could design an avatar, and eventually I would start being picky with what MORPGs (multiplayer online games) I would play, my selections were always made based on the art style. The game play itself would be secondary. I started to become more invested in the social aspect of gaming as well, which started my fascination with "chat lands." These particular games placed the user into a position of a designer, you could make your own avatar from scratch and upload it into the game itself. The community that spawned from these "chat lands" would employ artists (who were also players) to make avatars. One could recognize which digital artists made which avatar based on their unique styles. I would dedicate much of my time to researching the artists I liked the most, attempting to copy their styles with pencil and paper and free online drawing platforms. Looking back on my experience in these "chat lands" now, I worry for my younger self who was chatting away with strangers on the internet, crafting stories for our avatars like one would with dolls or toys. This would direct my attention into writing and reading; my favorite books being recommendations from online strangers.

Once I had entered middle school, socializing and making friends went a lot smoother. I started to love school, the teachers would conform to different types of learning and I still remember all of them by name to this day. Creative

assignments were more common at this level, especially in History and English related classes. My middle school provided MacBooks to individual students for their course-load, and we were allowed to take them home now that digital assignment submissions were becoming the norm (this was in 2012) and much of our student resources had transferred to online platforms too. In this digital space, managing my time and completing assignments felt much more streamlined. I had videos and other resources accessible at the click of a mouse for my STEM courses, and I believe that these resources allowed me to perform better in the classes I struggled the most in.

Onto high school, these were the times that built my foundation for my interest in teaching; the majority of my teachers in high school were inspirational mentors. The classes that were taught in high school had many interdisciplinary aspects, which continues to be an academic intrigue that itches my brain the right way. High school provided more insight into the realm of digital art, as an upperclassman I could take up a teacher assisting position. I had weekly Photoshop classes my junior year as a TA. The course concentrated on the differing tools as well as providing other resources beyond Adobe platforms, which was a reflection of the drawing platforms I would use in my early days of discovering access to artistic pockets online. Being a TA or being in an instructional position reinforced my connection to my peer community, and this sentiment pushed me into taking up more teaching positions (swim instructing at the YMCA, interning at the Palo Alto Art Center, summer counseling etc.). This followed through into my undergraduate

studies in Applied Psychology, Education, and Art.

Starting in the summer of 2020, I had one of my first online teaching experiences teaching 3D modeling to varying ages through a Bay Area based company KidzToPros. The company offered a diverse set of online courses through Zoom; additionally, it reinforced some level of educational stimulus for children who were being educated at home during the stay-at-home order. The COVID-19 pandemic stimulated an impending question for me: how can technology and/or our digital tools continue to serve as a positive reinforcer for students and learners?

My own experience with technology during my K-12 schooling has been an overwhelmingly positive one, and the resources that technology provided me only served as a springboard in many interdisciplinary contexts. My digital experience helped assert my identity and my passions as a maker. Cyber or digital spaces have the ability to create inclusive areas, promoting support and visibility for any user. However, there are now negative or controversial associations to online/distance learning or using digital spaces - terms such as "Zoom fatigue" and "screen exhaustion" float around. Exhaustion caused by overwhelming amounts of screen-time may cause dejection and a lack of engagement in young people who have been raised in the digital age. Another issue is settler-colonialist sentiments and algorithms in cyber-spaces. These issues stimulate another question - will the mental well-being of students be impacted in the long-term by online learning, integration, and leveraging of digital spaces? One example of leverage is the gaming industry, an immense case

when it comes to taking up digital space. The gaming industry generates more revenue than the film and music industry combined. The usage of gaming in educational spaces is becoming a dominant component in teaching strategies and curricula. Digital game and creative space implementation could enhance the experience of remote learning, and possibly reconfigure the negative aspects of distance education.

The main idea that will be discussed and addressed in my thesis is the growing prevalence of cyber or digital spaces in human life, specifically focusing on the growth and permeation of these spaces in pedagogical contexts. Another central focus is the relationship between our identity and how that influences what we make as artists. Between these two ideas, there is a physicalized hybridization of the crossover of these topics. This hybridization takes on many different forms. Within my thesis I will analyze one of these forms of new media: Web folio or Portfolio sites.

I am interested in these topics because they convey and physicalize the relationship that we have with our technology and how digital space can be leveraged in further expanding our human selves through art. However, the pandemic has revealed a variety of different issues when it comes to technology; questions of access, settler-colonialist algorithms, Zoom or screen fatigue etc. These issues in the context of my main topics are examples of why leveraging digital spaces to be extensions of our creative selves is important. For example, when it comes to access, addressing this issue within digital spaces and social media platforms

allows for more exposure on the issue to be increased which can lead to active changes in the increase of access to the internet and technological devices. This method of change can be and has been applied to a variety of different societal and political problems with the rise of social media platforms.

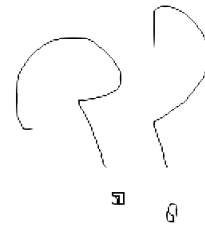
These topics connect to the field of art education at large because they outline or emphasize the importance of artist identity and the notion of taking up space. Art Education is a notoriously underfunded area of study in the majority of public school systems, which further undermines its importance in a young student's development, both academically and personally. Teaching art becomes a luxury as it is continually underfunded. But using free access spaces that are available online in order to implement artistic and creative elements while prioritizing individual student identities can expand the practice of art teaching outside of schools or academic institutions.

## **RESEARCH & SUB QUESTIONS**

My main research question is in what ways does leveraging digital space promote creative identity and self-efficacy? This inquiry will attempt to address how individual student identities are integrated within their art and their personal artistic spaces, and this attempt will also entail what identity and space mean in an artistic or creative context. The main question will also address how space and digital space are defined and how it is comparable to physical space.

This will altogether tie in the relationship that humans have with their digitized modes of being.

Some potential sub questions that connect to my main inquiry are on the topic of agency or autonomy, and how both of these terms come into play when leveraging digital spaces for artistic and personal usage. This question will lead into the researchable or viewable component: the web-folio/portfolio website. I may compare and contrast traditional portfolios to digital portfolios. Additionally, I also want to address how the experience of digital learning and digital learner identity can be further manifested through cyber spaces, while employing digital space as a helpful pedagogical tool for educators and students. This sub-inquiry establishes more strength to the foundation of digital space's impact on students and teachers alike.



**RESEARCH PROJECT & METHODOLOGY: DESIGNING & MAKING UNIQUE ARTIST SPACES, A COLLABORATION WITH PROJECT OPEN DOOR (POD)**

In order to answer my main research inquiry, I will be working in collaboration with POD (Project Open Door) and POD students by hosting and designing a workshop. This workshop will be designed to try and answer my main research question through a qualitative research lens.

I preemptively named this workshop Designing and Making Unique

Artist Spaces or DMUAS. The DMUAS workshop will prompt students to explore and design their own web spaces using the free website builder. Each weekly workshop will focus on different areas and design elements of the website builder that students can use to cultivate and design their spaces, ultimately leading into creating their very own portfolio spaces to showcase their works. Students will also be asked to give feedback and evaluate their designed spaces. Students will be given as much freedom as they want when it comes to their website's designs, however, I will be giving optional prompts that can serve as guides for conscious design. Meaning that students have the option to follow prompts that are dedicated towards emphasizing their experiences and their identities. An example of a guided prompt can be: "using a prized memory or experience, find images and designs that connect or remind you of that memory/experience. Now use these images/designs to construct a page on your website."

Researchers Doren and Millington (2019) describe the benefits of web-building:

In this way, we shifted expectations of what an LP could do—from portfolio as archive or portfolio as showcase—to portfolio as an intimate look inside the way a student or artist thinks, dreams, and orients themselves in their developing practice (p.86).

Because this workshop is a collaboration with students in order to provide a method of growing and cultivating their professional development, some goals for this research alongside the accumulation of evidence is for students to see their growth overtime. Witnessing growth and improvements to skills can help motivate students to continue



their journey as artists, having a non-expiring digital space can help them maintain accountability for their work. Digital portfolios can also help students identify their learning styles, and web-folios can provide tools that facilitate exploration of these learning preferences. Additionally, educators can assess the most productive ways of learning if they take notice of student work in a streamlined way (digital portfolios can efficiently fit student work variety). Web-folios help students capture and reflect on their processes, strengths and weaknesses, and cultivate a space for themselves beyond their student life. Additionally, students have the opportunity to build critical skills that are relevant to many different workforces, and it gives students an opportunity to format themselves to employers as distinct and valuable individuals. In the context of visual art, the portfolio or web-folio provides a direct link to the efficacy of constructing art via technology. The online learning portfolios that are described in Doren and Millington's (2019) study can serve as a strong component in providing a foundation for students as they manifested and developed skills related to finding themes and patterns that prioritize their unique viewpoints and experiences. The act of student finding or investigating can take on physical manifestations through their artistic choices while leveraging their space. When constructing their web-folio sites, students have the capacity to demonstrate unique ways of inserting themselves into space. This is what I am attempting to document as evidence for identity cultivation. The workshop will take place during the Winter and will be fully remote, so students will have the ability to work from home or wherever they choose. The

workshop will take place once a week over the course of five weeks. During each course session, there will be a loose "run of show" or schedule planned out for students, the most structured and lecture-based part of this workshop will be teaching technical design elements on Wix and the rest of time letting students design their web-folios.

Using qualitative research methods, I will be collecting data using questionnaires, surveys, interviews, and observations. This data will appear in a narrative format, and will rely on descriptive accounts from both the instructor (me) and student collaborators. I will be using this qualitative method as a way to establish patterns and meanings. I believe that the data that I will collect will showcase a diverse spectrum of how individualistic and personal the outputs of this research can unfold. Therefore, attempting to see patterns will (hopefully) be facilitated through these methods. The surveys are meant to collect qualitative data and feedback from students mainly about how their experiences are inherently influencing their design choices, how they plan on using their web-folios after the workshop is completed, how does their web-folio compare to their social media accounts, etc. The feedback that students will give back to me will also occur during the workshop itself. I will make sure to ask pointed questions about each student's work and how they think they are progressing as they're constructing their spaces. The surveys will be sent out virtually after each class and will have different answers each week. Depending on the data by the end of the workshop, I will most likely amass the visible patterns into the different categories that connect to the main topic.

Another tool that I will use are interviews with each student, I will be asking them questions that are designed to account for their unique perceptions and vision for their space. This is also a means to get to know students better in order to establish context for when I use their site spaces as examples. The reason that I will be accumulating student responses is because of the individualistic nature of this research question. There most likely will not be a specific or one determined answer for this topic of inquiry because it relies on the experiences of different people, how students construct and leverage space in order to consciously input their experiences will differ for each person. Additionally, the topic is broad and will need to be further conceptually developed as technology becomes more and more integrative and essential to our ways of learning, teaching, and being. Therefore, a flexible spectrum for documentation will be needed, which is why a qualitative inquiry style will work as the most accommodating method for this type of research.

The workshop content will be a pedagogical research method, while the actual collection of data will be inputted through the inquiry material (interviews and surveys). Practitioner based inquiries are notoriously un-quantifiable, and my research will attempt to "measure" identity building through these digital spaces. The question or concept of artistic identity will have to be defined in cohesion with the research, context and history of identity manifesting through different digital spaces will be addressed alongside the digital portfolio space. This type of research comparison will help establish a better viable link to how identity can display and be cultivated through differing digital spaces,

adding on to the argument that taking up digital space is a fortifier for building and prioritizing the self in all areas.

## **SCOPE & LIMITATIONS**

When it comes to scale and areas of concern, one of the main issues stem from using qualitative methods to document an important component of the research such as identity. Qualitatively documenting identity is an area of concern because it cannot be reduced to one or two simple areas - the research will need to expand on several points that connect to identity development in an artistic context. Consequently this will influence the type and structure of questions that will be asked within the feedback, interviews, and surveys. Another limitation is that the questions themselves may not cover the entire scope of this research topic, and may only concern specific aspects based on the yield of qualitative data from the DMUAS workshop research. These points of concern also encompass the themes of space and web folios. Since the design elements of each student's web spaces will be entirely unique, questions that connect to the building and leveraging of their spaces will have to be generalized.

I have personal connections to this type of research because I have made countless different web folio sites, social media accounts, and like most, spend much of my time on my devices. Touched on in my Introduction, I already have a stance that digital spaces can be leveraged to manifest artistic identity as well as establish passions to reinforce selfhood. I am

biased as a researcher because of my own experience using digital space and technology.

The scope of my thesis research is a small and short term study and will touch on one area of this large topic, the active research will only focus the webfolio as digital space but there will be interconnectedness demonstrated when touching on social media or gaming. Student participants will probably all be about the same age (high schoolers) who are also all living in the same area. Therefore, this research cannot be generalized.

Some ethical considerations to address are displaying work and personal information that connects to individual student identity. Students will have the option to remain anonymous and can also choose to opt out of being addressed in the research.



## **PART II LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **TOPIC 1: DIGITAL LEARNING IMPACT ON LEARNER & IDENTITY**

Online learning or virtual classrooms and spaces have been understudied concepts until recent years, becoming massively more relevant when the COVID-19 pandemic struck and enforced distance between others. Although the reality of distanced learning is a normal circumstance for some students (homeschooled, bed-ridden, health conditions, or neuro-diverse students etc.), it has now become common practice for the majority of schools around the world to rely on technology and virtual classrooms during the 2020 pandemic. However, the reality of a distanced academic environment for all students may continue as common practice due to the onslaught of future emergencies regarding the climate and other diseases, making up for "learning loss" that are a result of days off (snow days, professional development etc). Meaning the downfalls and failures of online learning and virtual classrooms must be re-evaluated and re-conceptualized while channeling and bolstering its successes. I want to investigate how online spaces can be facilitators for expressions of creative identity and how those investigations can be implemented for the future of virtual classrooms and learning. In the next section, I will outline four studies that help to show the ways in which digital space can be a leverageable medium by our identities.

Adilohglu et al. (2021) use six years of investigations

following an international online learning collaboration in their study. This virtual collaboration explored how inclusive virtual teams were managed and shaped through six years of collaborative practice in a virtual setting. The study confirms the viability of technological tools in educational or collaborative spaces, and these benefits are outlined through: team building, connection, etc. Doren & Millington (2019) look into linking visual art and technology, and further investigating the efficacy of this relationship between digital space and art documentation. Liang et al. (2020) explore how the COVID-19 pandemic and how the transition to digital learning interfaces mitigated education. The study provides an analysis into the affects, drawbacks, challenges, and benefits of virtual classrooms. Similarly to Adiloğlu's et al.'s analysis, it is aimed to dispel the notion that online learning or tech mediated learning is isolationist and invokes alienation in students, and that the only way to absorb online content is by simply downloading and reading material and submitting assignments. Through personal narratives of other educators, Dr. Becnel (2019) constructs comprehensive evidence on how online instruction can engage and motivate students, provide opportunities and make the learning space more inclusive.

All four studies provide guidelines for improvements when it comes to virtual learning and using technology to mitigate educational content. Although the studies are focusing on different content being taught or worked upon in virtual spaces (collaborations, art and design, portfolio building), they highlight the relevance of how digital interfaces have changed or informed teaching or collaborating in virtual

learning spaces. In the case of digital learning's impact, all four studies connect to the prevalence of leveraging "space." For example, Adiloğlu et al. (2021) describe our relationships with virtual space, noting that:

Emerging and developing technologies are not only changing our relationship with physical space, they also present challenges with respect to virtual environments, making it possible to depart from the architectural school of thought, which differentiates between physical space. (p. 270)

Because these sources are each researching different variations of space and through differentiating mediums, the findings from these studies give me important context on how to establish what "space" really means. New media has allowed us to approach our relationship with space which then allows us to depart from the architectural school of thought that differentiates between physical space and place (Adiloğlu et al., 2021). Adiloğlu et al. (2021) continues to define space in the context of virtual environments and digital learning as a "philological engagement" (p. 270) between space and multimedia responses, furthering the notion that space-making or creating place is dependent on user response and interactions within new media spaces. Becnel (2019) promotes this concept with the idea of "learning ecosystems" (p. 1) and how learning in different spaces plays an integral part in understanding pedagogical space/place making. This similar idea is also reflected on by Doren et. al (2019) in the context of student portfolios existing within virtual space All four studies target the technical function and efficacy of



technological tools and/or spaces, magnifying these platforms in relation to their abilities on bettering interaction, connection, making, learning etc. The internet is a common component of technology that all four articles either directly or indirectly focus on. Seeing as it facilitates the ability to promote space-making online and connect others through apps in less than seconds, the internet is possibly the most dominant tool in all our educational spaces today. Each source speaks on a transition into an online space, either to host team building or artwork or learning, and judging by the assessments and my own experience as a virtual student- virtual spaces for teaching and learning were an easy transition. Overtime, the drawbacks and challenges that are mentioned in all the articles cited seem to stem from the broad concept of alienation. If there is no physical contact with my team or with my work, is the work I make authentic or am I learning authentically if my learning platforms are distanced? This is a question that I will aim to address in my own investigation. The articles explored build off of their examples and case studies to revitalize the impact that technology has even without the forced component of social distancing, and they compare several means that can increase the connectedness that we feel towards our existence through our technological devices, including how to further and improve the benefits of these means. The four sources do not use the same type of participants (work standing, age, demographic, place etc.) to inform their findings, however, much of what these participants are doing in their virtual spaces can be pedagogically based. As mentioned further by Dr. Becnel (2019),

Although there are always emerging technologies to thrill us with their potential and new frontiers to be explored, the most profound conversations about technology and pedagogy often draw us back to core questions about the nature of education and learning. What is the role of the instructor in the learning process? How do we motivate students to critically and authentically engage with concepts and content we present to them? How can we tell if students are learning? How do we provide meaningful feedback on their progress? How can we make our instruction work for every student? (p. 35).

To summarize, all four articles embody the corpus of some of my main questions and investigations into the virtual learning spaces and its impact on learner identity. Defining what space is in the context of this research will be a partnership inquiry on documenting identity (within the same context).

## **TOPIC 2: DIGITAL IDENTITY & DIGITAL SELF EXPRESSION**

As it is noted in "Glitch Feminism" by Legacy Russell (2020), the artist Juliana Huxtable is mentioned to leverage the Internet and other technology in order to cultivate and claim their identity as transgender all within a conservative setting. With their identity blooming through the solitude and control that the Internet provided, Huxtable's identity and self expression was facilitated. Explained further,

As her art practice expanded, Huxtable's engagement with various digital platforms- chat rooms, blogs, social media, and beyond- increased the visibility of both her visual and written work, creating the opportunity for it to circulate both within and beyond the contemporary art world (Russell, 2020, p. 78).

"Glitch Feminism" emphasizes the usage of online and cyber spaces as the catalyst for exploration, or "online, I sought to become a fugitive from the mainstream, unwilling to accept its limited definition of bodies like my own'" (Russell, 2020, p.14). This notion and phenomena of leveraging digital planes for self-expression and identity-building has had more conceptual development in the era of increased distanced and online learning. Connecting this idea of "building" and "leveraging" the relationship between space and identity from Russell's text, Deh, et al. (2018) explains further, "On the Internet, this connection is defined through creating and designing the user interface, influencing the user experience" (p.102). There are endless platforms in digitized landscapes that facilitate user building and creating - makers that equip digital mediums are prime examples of outputted content from creating and designing through different platforms or interfaces. It is hypothesized by Deh, et al. (2018), that personal platform construction serves as a "co-construction of oneself", "The relation between online and offline identities, according to Belk, is actually the key to defining oneself in digital time, which would in the psychological terms be co construction of oneself" (p. 106). Furthermore, personally constructing (or self expressing) a

virtual or digital identity reinforces the real or offline identity, which connects into how Russell's (2020) idea of digital reinforcement of identity can be a transformative and healthy practice.

Deh, et al. (2018) defines identity through the perspective of personality psychology,

Identity is an experience of the essential consistency and continuity of the self in time and space, as well as observations and acknowledgments of existence by others. The construction of identity is based on personal experience as well as on the perception of recognition of the same by the social environment (p.102).

This identity concept is preserved in both reality and digital reality due to digitized landscapes adapting a variety of social frameworks and the quintessence of a society. Although there are many differences between reality and digital reality, digital identities can still maintain integrity and authenticity online. Furthermore, if one is to define digital identity, inherently the question of how the identity is acquired through its environment arises. Deh, et al. (2018) emphasizes:

In the process of establishing the definition of digital space, the Pasi Väliäho hypothesis is used, which reveals the need for binding/joining visual representations with material hosts – that is, materiality that supports subjectivity and provokes an emotional reaction. On the Internet, this connection is defined through creating and

designing the user interface, influencing the user experience (p. 103).

Another piece of literature by researcher Darvin (2015) connects to the idea of digital spaces providing support for identity construction emphasized by Deh, et al. (2018). Darvin states "Online spaces have become increasingly important arenas for the development of social identities. The networks in these spaces are constructed through technology and the imagined collectives that emerge from interacting in these spaces" (Darvin, 2016). Although Darvin's literature focuses specifically on the literacy and language learning through digital space, they adopt similar ideas to Deh, et al., particularly in how the construction of identity is based in performance and practices within space, transporting their pre-established elements or social roles (hobbies, name, affiliations) and authenticating them further through more through the digital experience. Additionally, the research from both sources highlights that inequalities and injustices are able to transcend into digital spheres as well.

In relation with both works by Deh, et al. (2018) and Davin (2016), researchers Costa & Torres (2011) tie in the topic of digital identity and web technologies. Specifically, how these web technologies cultivate social presences to improve professional and academic profiles. The authors note that "Cyberspace mediates interactivity and convenes human presence. Moreover, it provides exposure and new forms of community engagement. All of this is beneficial to the knowledge worker" (Costa & Torres, 2011, p.8). Costa & Torres expand on how digital identity can be manifested as a mix for socio-professional congregations, and how these identities can

be perceived as "open or closed." Meaning that identities in cyberspace are shareable and visualized content that are at the mercy of other people's perception. This exposes some skepticism on whether interactive cyberspaces meant to foster identities and congregations are perceivable as authentic or fake.

Tying in all these key ideas about digital identity and digital space from the researchers above, author Skiba (2005) focuses the topic of cyberspaces into artistic and creative e-portfolios or web-folios,

Students are no longer mere recipients of information; rather, they construct meaning from information and transform it to knowledge. Faculty, no longer mere disseminators of information, are guides who facilitate student learning. E-portfolios promote the concept of lifelong learning and allow for both formative and summative self evaluations (p. 2).

The implementation of digital portfolios as a means for cultivating student knowledge and independent learning has become a fundamental part of being an artist today. Although this notion was brand new during this paper's publication in 2005, the benefits of using these web tools for this type of learner support had already been perceived and noticed in its early stages.

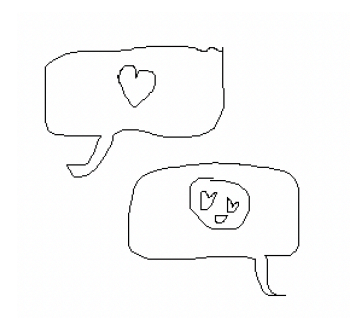
In summary, all the literature discussed in part two of this literature review highlights the intertwined relationship between digital identity and digital space. Through digital interaction and creative cultivation of our "real" selves,

digital space functions as an instrumental medium. The internet serves as a new space for learning and self-presentation, and it is important for learners of all ages to use the web as a space for self-cultivation and growth. Taking up space asserts one's presence in the world; confidence in this assertion is furthered by having a place to share, connect, create, and document. Although taking up physical space outside of online spheres is not guaranteed, there is infinite real estate within cyberspaces. However, all five pieces of research and literature additionally highlight some negative and even dangerous aspects of using cyberspace. The question of authenticity is addressed in all five works, however I would like to argue that the genuine use of digital spaces for personal growth and self-expression can rarely be categorized as inauthentic simply due to where it is being hosted. Genuine interactivity with the medium of cyberspace can rarely be disputed as inauthentic. To push this argument further, the construction of the "preferred self" can be implemented through cyberspaces in a more facilitated and less obstructed capacity in comparison to physical space. As it is concluded by Deh, et al. (2018):

From all of the above, it can be concluded that participation in digital space significantly influences the construction of identity and alters the experience of *self*, first of all at the psychological level, building 'bridges' from the *real self* to the *ideal self*, via the *preferred self*, where the possibility of losing the *real self* and the basic authenticity becomes a new risk, which is a matter of special importance for each individual, but also for the system as a whole (p.

109).

To further conclude, there are many stories that I have personally witnessed of POC and LGBTQ+ digital users cultivating a sense of self and presence when their physical realities are restrictive and hostile. The connections, creativity, and knowledge that are preserved through inclusive digital communities and platforms have the capacity to save and support lives.





## PART III RESEARCH DESCRIPTION & FINDINGS

### DESIGNING AND MAKING UNIQUE ARTIST SPACES (DMUAS) WORKSHOP

The research that was done for this thesis inquiry came in the form of a virtual workshop and as a collaboration with Project Open Door. Throughout five weeks, the workshop cohort would meet once over Zoom every week for three hours. As described and disclaimed on the workshop's "syllabus" website (<https://natalinhas.wixsite.com/my-site-1>), as well as during the first workshop's meeting, "This workshop's aim is to investigate, curate, and design virtual space through our unique artistic identities" (DMUAS website). Students were prompted to create and design a space using Wix's web development software, curating the space to host their artwork and inherently, their individual experiences. As it is noted in the "About the Research" section of the syllabus website: "This workshop is primarily meant to provide students with a space and agency (ownership) over the work they make" (DMUAS website). For student privacy and safety, all student names who consented to having their work and responses documented in this paper will be redacted.

*SESSION I*  
*1/13/22*

**WELCOME !**



Designing & Making Unique Artist Spaces  
*aka*  
Webfolio Design  
<https://natalinhas.wixsite.com/my-site-1>

**figure 1**  
(a screen capture  
of the first DMUAS  
workshop session's  
welcome page.)

The beginnings of our sessions always started off with icebreakers. The presentation format that I would use allowed students to interact with the slides themselves, enabling students to drag in images, links and writings. Icebreakers were designated spaces for students to bring in their interests, hobbies and experiences. Students related to each other, enjoyed each other's inputs, and gave praise (mostly within the confines of the Zoom chat log). This was a vital factor in creating a safe and comfortable space for students to freely express themselves without judgment.



figure 2.1 (a screen capture of one of the session's icebreakers, this session's icebreaker asked "use a photo to describe your favorite childhood activity").



figure 2.2 (a screen capture of one of the session's icebreakers, this screen capture displays a student's answer to the question, "who is your favorite artist?".)

**figure 2.3** (a screen capture of workshop session 2's icebreaker responses, answering the question "upload a photo that best describes your personality".)

SESSION 2  
1/20/22

# I. Icebreakers

## UPLOAD A PHOTO THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR PERSONALITY

Ash: I'm just always looking at people with a "what are you talking about" face



Juana (because I'm always in school)



Isabella (because I'm always looking at people)



**figure 2.4** (a screen capture of workshop session 3's icebreaker responses, answering the question "post a picture of your favorite artist (can be a musical artist, visual artist etc.) and why you like them".)

SESSION 3  
1/27/22

# I. Icebreakers

POST A PIC OF YOUR FAVORITE ARTIST (CAN BE MUSICAL ARTIST, VISUAL ARTIST ETC.) & WHY YOU LIKE THEM



(MARS:P)  
@SESAMEFRUIT!!



Ayla. The sparks brothers, they make super cool music



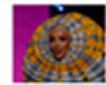
Source: youtube. songs are just a vibe and I just love her style and the way her music videos look



Ash: @abdillustrates



Est g - Marques



Doja cat - Natalia



Lauren, David Bowie



Olivia - Melanie Martinez is super beautiful



Katrina, she is funky, which is the combo of fun and kinky in my opinion. I like them and their music



Victor C. - Sam Yang because I really like his art style.

**figure 2.5** (a screen capture of workshop session 5's responses, answering the question "share a photo of art you love".)

SESSION 5  
2/10/22

# I. Icebreakers

## SHARE A PHOTO OF ART YOU LOVE

Hina of ART was a Swedish intersection, her art was all about spirituality and she was a pioneer of abstract art. ARTA



Hina: Do the Sun  
https://www.instagram.com/hina.art/ for the art studio. Her work is more on the abstract side



Ash: I've always been really inspired by Thomas Chabot work, his always end up putting his work as an answer for questions like these (he's the artist behind death note)



Mar: as first an artist can make up the game. Her work is... I like it because it's a game. I like her style



Mar: oh there's not something about the painting that is beautiful and the amount of detail and the way it's done. I just love the way it's done and the colors in it



Ash: This is a drawing by Hina (Hina, it's her art and it's just so amazing)



Katrina - these parts are art and I would like a pair



Victor: though I can't draw there when I make the scenery of all sorts and I love the way this person draws their (I love Courtney)



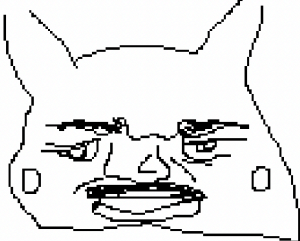
During our sessions, I would use a presentation format to deliver material that was meant to inspire and motivate students. Although I was teaching basic design elements, what I considered to be the most valuable asset from these presentations was inspirational content from other artists. The type of artists that served as examples were a diverse variety - some artists had traditional practices and used their websites to promote their paintings, however many of the artists shown were engaged in some kind of digital medium. Many of the artists shown had backgrounds in User Experience and User Interactivity design, others were photographers and some were graphic novelists who were using their sites to host their graphic novels. Therefore, the "teaching period" became more like a critique session.

**SESSION 5**  
**2/10/22**



**IV. Showcase + Critique**

**figure 3** (a screen capture of workshop session 5's critique and showcasing moment.)



The cultivated list of artists' websites exposed many different elements of design and user engagement to students. For example, the navigational tools that would allow users to move around a site were all very different, consistent with the rest of the website's theme and uniquely stylized. It also gave students an organizational framework on how to categorize what they wanted to exhibit in their spaces. When looking at other artists, we would discuss elements of the site that we liked or disliked, what was working and what was not working, and how we as viewers were engaging with the artists' curated spaces. This critique session served as a means to tie in student opinion into their own design choices, to use other artists as examples rather than prompts, as well as to intermingle their unique sense of style with their inspirations.

During "studio time" I would conduct five minute interviews with students who had consented to these interviews. After the end of each session, surveys would be sent out to students that posed questions aimed at understanding their technological uses and how or if their usage of tech intermingled with their sense of self in cohesion with their art. The purpose of these interviews was to engage students in addressing their own experiences with digital tools, in addition to correlating that experience with their artistic skills. The interview questions breached the topic of identity-making, and whether they believed that who they were had been impacted by their interactions with digital spaces and tools.

It is my personal belief that the resounding success that came

from this workshop was due to this particular group of students. These young people stayed engaged and excited with the material, they were all devoted to their unique crafts and were willing to devote their time (despite being tired after a full day of school) in implementing their artistic talents through a new medium that they were not altogether familiar with. I am beyond grateful for their compassionate approach to learning as well as their engagement despite the workshop being in a virtual modality, in this way, this research process felt very much like a collaborative effort which was what I was aiming towards. Some of the students were unfamiliar with web design and development, some even identified that there was a lack of confidence in using these tools. Based on the overarching response given from students at the end of the workshop, confidence in leveraging these digital tools and digital spaces was instilled and showcased through the web spaces that they had designed. This was one of the main outcomes that I was hoping that students would gain from this workshop: confidence and harnessing this new but prevalent skill. As it is stated in the "Aftermath" section of the DMUAS website,

Professionally speaking, web-building or web-design is a relevant skill, as well as having a space to showcase your work easily and efficiently to anyone and everyone [...] Student web-folios are meant to serve as an extension of self, both personally and professionally (DMUAS website).

In order to compare pre and post workshop sentiments regarding leveraging digital space for creative self-efficacy, this next section will analyze responses given in

the order of the workshop's progression of five weeks.

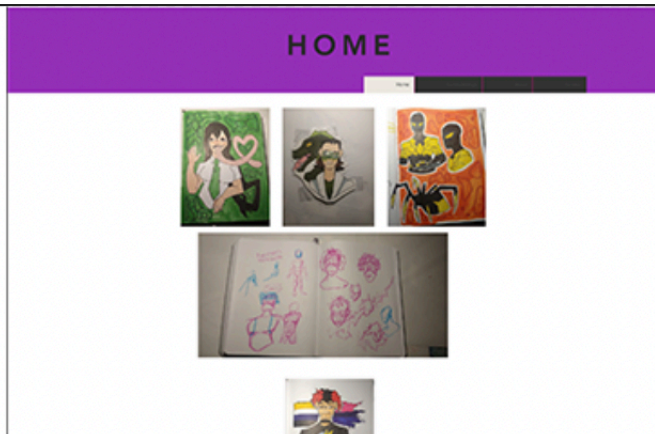


figure 4.1 (a screen capture of a student's webfolio homepage, displaying their chosen works of art.)



figure 4.2 (a screen capture of a student's webfolio "about me" page, displaying a descriptive paragraph and a featured work of art.)

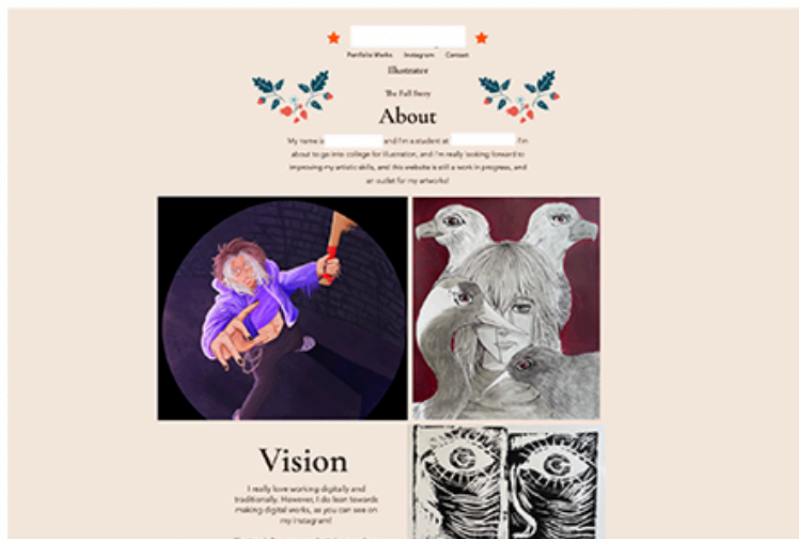
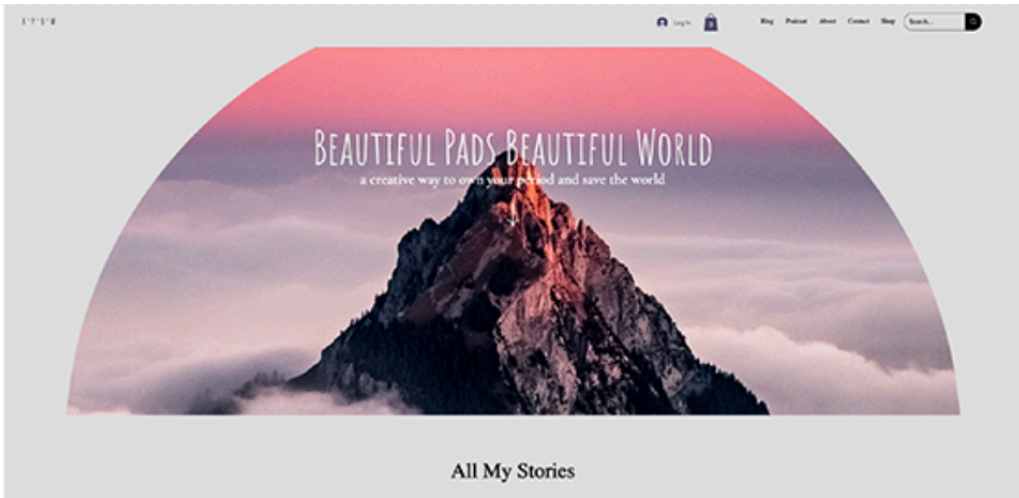
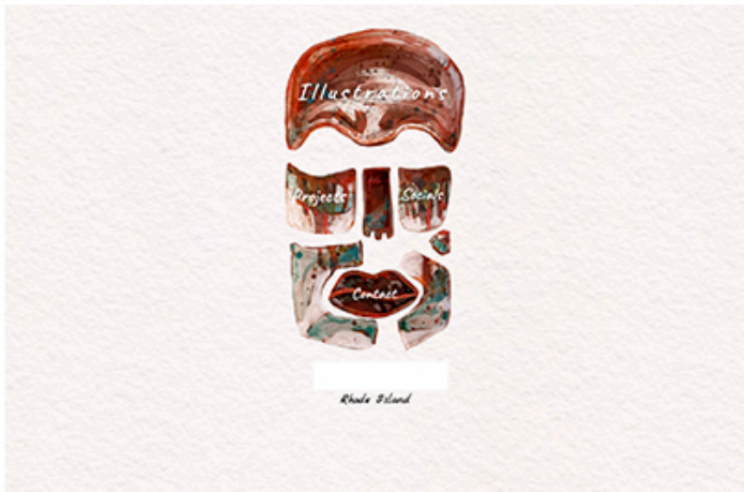


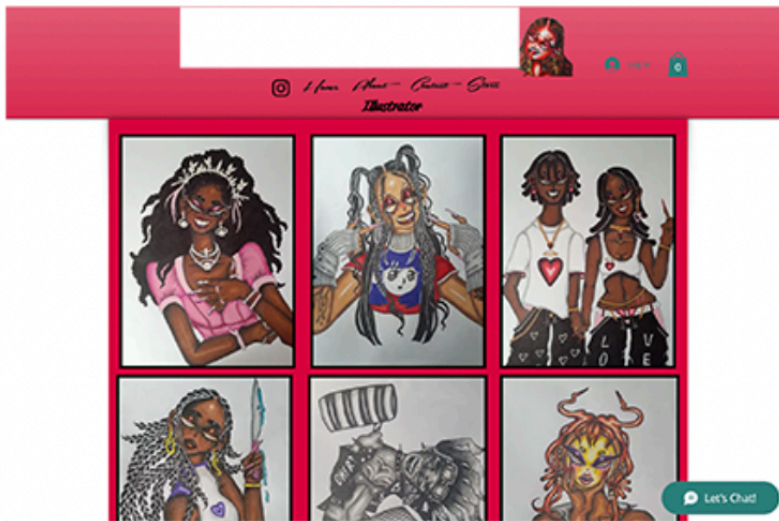
figure 4.3 a screen capture of a student's webfolio's "about me" page where their works of art as well as their vision or artist statement is displayed.



**figure 4.4** (a screen capture of a student's webfolio homepage.)



**figure 4.5** (a screen capture of a student's webfolio welcome page, utilizing their artwork to integrate a navigational tool for their site.)



**figure 4.6** (a screen capture of a student's portfolio page that displays many of their artworks, this student implemented a business front to her portfolio site to sell print versions of her art work.)



## **Research Findings**

### **1. Leveraging Digital Spaces Promotes Self-Efficacy & Empowerment**

The main inquiry that this thesis focuses on is whether or not leveraging digital space is conducive to promoting creative identity and self-expression. Within the span of five, three hour workshop sessions, it can be determined that self-efficacy and empowerment were observably outputted. Not only is this concurred in survey and interview responses by the workshop students, but it can be seen plainly in their curated web-spaces. Each student's digital space was self-promoting and a space to exhibit their work.

Within the first session's survey, I asked "Depending on how you define "digital space" (social media, gaming, doing research etc.) do you think you've claimed, taken up or existed in digital space before? If so, how?" (Survey Session 1, 1/13/2022). The answers were surprisingly varied, however the majority of students said that they claimed or existed in digital space through social media platforms, the most popular one being Instagram. One student asserted, "Yes, I'd say having a social media account, commenting, uploading work, interacting online, I'd say I've 'existed in a digital space'" (Student R, Survey Session 1, 1/13/2022). However, there are responses that state the opposite: "I don't think I have ever taken up or existed in digital space because I was never really into posting on social media or anything online" (Student C, Survey Session 1, 1/13/2022). The first survey was meant to establish a first impression of digital

space usage by students. It was determined that every student had used the Internet daily, and seven out of ten students had some form of social media presence. It was also determined that all students had adopted the Internet as an important source for their various art practices. In addition, for the students who had a social media presence, their art was highlighted as their most consistent content. Meaning the majority of students were already performing self-promoting tactics and leveraging their digital space (in this case, Instagram accounts) by posting their artwork. However, all students who used social media asserted that their claim or leverage of digital space did not extend past the confines of these social media platforms. This lack of promotional extension was probably due to many factors, but grounded the reasoning behind student answers when asked "What are you most excited about?" (Survey Session 1, 1/13/2022).

The second session was the first session that I held interviews during "studio time," and the interview questions for Session 2 were aimed at further constructing an introductory overview of the Internet's role within the context of students' manifestation or forging of creative identity. When asked "Do you think you'd be a different person if you hadn't had access to the Internet?" (Session 2, Interview 1, 1/20/2022), one response stuck out, "Yeah, because the internet allowed me to express myself to a wider audience, I think I would be different if I wasn't able to do that" (Student S, Interview 1, 1/20/2022). When it came to discussing the influence of internet usage on their art practice, the synonymy of art practice and identity were

intermingled within student answers. The majority of the students were using the Internet for their art-making practices, and when questioned about the importance of digital spaces ("Do you think making space for oneself in a digital landscape (social media, web folio, gaming) is important? Why or Why not?"), one answer generally encapsulated the rest:

"I feel that it is extremely important. For someone like me, who struggles with social settings and has bad anxiety, art is a lot of people's way of coping with difficult things. So creating a space whether it is digital or physical is important. With the current times, a digital space is quite convenient, and it can probably help you reach your goal quicker" (Student S, Survey 2, Session 2).

In addition, when asked "Do you think schools should prioritize the type of content you're learning/doing from the workshop?", 62.5% of the answer from the responses were "Yes", and the rest (37.5%) was "Maybe" (seeing as this was the second session, students may have given a "Maybe" due to uncertainty for the rest of the content).

In the third session, the survey questions were directed at uncovering the prevalence and importance of creative communities that had been pre-established by the students. This is a theme that has been consistent throughout the workshop, students addressing these communities as one of their primary support groups, "Social media is where I post all of my work, I have a big community of supporters on there" (Student S, Interview 3, 1/27/2022). Students also

stated that their online communities served as a means for socializing and connecting through their art, "Yes, going online and posting art, meeting people, creating community and having big supporters" (Student L, Interview 3, 1/27/2022). The web-folios themselves were created and then connected to students' pre-existing social media accounts, for those accounts already had a following or a community in place. Linking the sites to student social media accounts could be considered a more professional step and extension in leveraging more online spaces.

In the fourth session of the workshop, the topic of interview and surveys was geared towards exploration of self. This exploration was in partnership with mediums such as digital space and student art-making practices, and how these mediums facilitated the empowerment or development of their identities. Questions that addressed identity placement or identity transcendence during the fourth session further revealed that the majority of students rely on the internet as a tool for creative processes and potential. When questioned about digital space's potential for empowerment, students gave affirming answers,

"I do believe it's empowering because it's something just about anyone can do. No matter what you're trying to make other people aware of, it's so important to claim a digital space in this day and age because literally everyone is connected to the internet at all times. It'll really amplify your voice" (Student R, Survey 4, Session 4, 2/3/2022).

The fourth session's survey and interviews revealed this theme of amplification through digital media, whether it be through their social media accounts or other forms of digital space, students felt that they were "unpacking" themselves: "[...] I also feel as though virtual identities can also be a space to tap into parts of yourself you maybe haven't really unpacked yet" (Student R, Survey 4, Session 4, 2/3/2022).

In the last session's wrap up survey, students were asked on how the workshop impacted them. Some key words were "confidence" and "inspired." When asked if students felt able and confident to design a digital space and make it their own, students answered positively: "I think that I was able to make my own digital space because I had the creative freedom to make my digital space 'me' and that was great" (Student C, Survey 5, Session 5, 2/10/2022). Within the final interview, the questions were directed at students' personal experience as creators and artists, and it seems as though interview respondents felt validated through the workshop's content: "It's [the workshop experience] definitely made me feel like I can take command of my digital space more. I have more control over my online presence" (Student W, Interview 5, Session 5, 2/10/2022).

**SESSION 5**  
2/10/22

**WE MADE IT!**



Designing & Making Unique Artist Spaces  
aka  
Webfolio Design  
<https://natalinhas.wixsite.com/my-site-1>

**figure 5** (a screen capture of the last workshop's welcome slide.)

The overall feedback that I received from students' workshop experience confirmed that when leveraging digital space through personal artistic practice, experiences, and passions, the space and the process of curating that space allowed students to promote and empower themselves.

## **2. Virtual Modality Offers Accommodation**

When considering modality for the workshop, it was imperative that students would have comfort and accessibility to the workshop's content. Choosing between an in person modality versus a virtual one was an easy decision due to the workshop's curriculum being entirely focused on digital space. Additionally, the workshop's scheduled time was right after school for most students, which meant that they could go straight home and be in a comfortable space. I would like to acknowledge however, that this workshop's content may not be accessible for many students due to the need for a laptop and access to the internet. When considering resources or barriers, instructing this particular workshop will need flexibility. More on Resource Disparities will be acknowledged in section VI. When establishing this modality, I was aware that some prospective students might be turned away because of "Zoom Fatigue" or simply fatigue in general. However, what I did not entirely consider was that some prospective students would be better accommodated when a virtual modality is offered. Although the hazards of COVID-19 during Winter of 2022 were prevalent, many of the students felt better accommodated by the modality because of social anxiety and fear of judgment. Keeping

cameras off while engaging with workshop content with the chat log and trackpads offered a form of respite.

I wanted to bring this particular topic to attention in the context of Research Findings because it is interconnected to what is theorized about remote learning and how it can be accommodating for many different people. Even within a small five-week long workshop, students expressed gratitude that they could participate in the workshop in a remote setting. It attests to the flexibility that virtual modality can provide.

### **3. The Internet is a Creative Conducive**

A theme that was notable within the workshop was that students were stating that their creative processes were a collaboration between their interests and what they could leverage out of the internet. One student called it a “meshing” of their ideas and of the inspiration that he found online into one. When asking students about a time or experience they had used the internet successfully, one student’s answer was “my entire art career.” Seeing as this generation of learners have easy and early access to the internet, its creative capacities should further be analyzed and rendered more accessible.



#### **4. The Positive Impact of Digital Creative Communities**

Another prevalent theme that was noticed in this workshop research was the impact of online creative communities. These digital communities held notable differences than their physical counterparts, especially when it came to maintaining these communities, one student noted: "A digital community is definitely easier to maintain and way more accessible for people but, I think in person classes/community space is irreplaceable and it really valuable" (Student H, Survey 3, Session 3, 1/27/2022). The online creative communities that the students belonged to where described as being key foundations for support, "I post all my visual work on social media, I have a big community of supporters on there" (Student S, Interview 2, Session 2, 2/3/2022). Many of the students also affirmed that without the internet or digital devices, they would be different people, "the internet allowed me to express myself and show myself to a wider audience, I think I would be different if I wasn't able to do that" (Student S, Interview 2, Session 2, 2/3/2022). From the answers and feedback from workshop students, the positive impact that digital creative communities hold for them has been a source of support and motivation to maintain themselves as creators and unique individuals.

#### **5. Virtual Identities Help Reinforce "Real" Identities**

The questions that were aimed at addressing identity in particular were delivered in a specific order; first I



wanted to make sure that all students valued their capabilities and therefore their identities as creators. All students who answered the question "Do you think your creative identity is important?" implicated that their creative identities were important if not the most important parts of themselves as people:

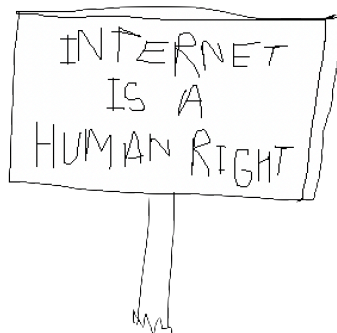
"I believe that creative identity is one of the most important things that make up a person. Without creativity, I feel like people would be extremely boring, and so would the world around us. Creative identity is the glue that holds the world together, and I can't say that it's not important by any means" (Student R, Survey 4, Session 4, 2/3/2022).

The second question addressed the validity of virtual or digital identity, and whether it serves as a reinforcer for their "real" identities. All students who answered the question indicated that yes, there was an authentic integer in their virtual identities, and this integer served as a reinforcer for their authentic selves. To connect their practice through their digital platforms meant that they were using the medium of digital space to better authenticate their identities as creators as well as individuals.

## **6. Resource Disparities**

It would be amiss of this thesis work to not include the technological resource disparities that are present in the majority of communities. From the workshop student circles, resources beyond software and hardware were addressed. Within their in person circles (school, family, friends

etc.), there seemed to be a lack of acknowledgement for students who made art and varying content. In other words, the workshop students did not feel "seen" as serious creators. However, the students all said that they found supportive visibility from others mainly through the internet and digital spaces (which reaffirms the prevalence of online creative communities). When it comes to physical resources, it has been determined that 27,611,736 households do not have internet connection in the United States (Federal Communications Commission). According to Statista, as of February 2019, 74% of the American population owned a desktop or laptop computer. Even within a country that spearheads technological advancements, there are mass technological disparities in the United States. In the places where these disparities occur, educational resources as a whole are generally lacking in funds and support.



## **PART IV CONCLUSIONS**

In this section, the three initial questions will be addressed and informed by the research findings. These non-exhaustive answers to the questions highlight opportunities and advancements that cyberspaces facilitate for users who are engaging in art; these advancements pertain to users' experiencing a more fulfilling psychological, academic, and career evolution.

### **A. In what ways does leveraging digital space promote creative identity and self-efficacy?**

Digital space has become a multi-faceted and flexible medium for creative self-expression. This 21st century medium promotes creativity and self-efficacy in a variety of different ways, but mainly, through its accessibility and convenience. When considering social media as a sub-medium to employing digital space, social platforms are manageable and easily accessible. The workshop students' usage of social media platforms became conducive for their artworks and developing a sense of belonging to a larger and attainable creative communities (a user mass interested, interacting, and participating in art), allowing students to have the ability to share and build a like-minded faction within these different social and digital spaces. Bridging students' social media accounts to their webfolio websites facilitated connectivity from their personal and professional sites to their pre-established digital communities who were consistent sources of support. Support for students who are pursuing art

is not as readily available within their in-person niches as it is online (this lack of support was mentioned by students in the workshop when asked if they had any ideas on bettering digital learning), support as a whole is a vital component to a learner's development. The potential for like-minded communal support is why digital space is a promotional medium when one leverages it to their creative advancement. This self-promotional cycle fortifies creative students, which allows them to feel supported and confident in their creative endeavors and development.

Another observed way that digital space was leveraged was space-claiming for students' creative work, whether it be their small businesses or digital comics; curating and claiming a space for these students' creative content facilitated their self-promotion and efficacy. One of the DMUAS workshop's main goals was to teach students how to design and personalize their own spaces even after the workshop had ended; this is because their web-spaces are meant to evolve alongside themselves and their art practice. Teaching students web-building and other design related tools increased their confidence when it came to promoting themselves online, furthering the concept that their claimed digital spaces were living extensions of themselves. It became clearer to students that their "real" artistic selves are inspiration for their digital spaces, in other words, students were manifesting their digital identities within the context of their artistic practice as well as their other passions.

## **B. How does agency come into play when leveraging digital spaces for artistic and personal usage?**

When leveraging these cyber spaces through personal art practices, agency is implemented for the artists because they are establishing an extension of themselves to thrive in through the context of their art. Agency in this case can be defined by user's ownership and decision-making when it comes to their art as well as how they evolve in cohesion with their art practices. Additionally, agency can be strengthened through digital space-making, which becomes an empowering tool for advancing and incubating an individual's creative evolution. Agency has been synonymous with leverage in this research; art practices are conduits for self-expression and have been used for centuries to establish the exertion of one's power, thoughts and emotions. Artistic abilities are an artist's way of strengthening their agency, however, showcasing or storing artwork for the long term is conventionally complicated. Digital space and webfolios have become an accessible and convenient way to preserve artwork, this is particularly important when maintaining artist agencies. Artists can cultivate a timeline of their creative development with a non-expiring digital space, this rectifies losing past work and gives the artist a means to preserve their personal growth. This is especially important for young artists, particularly those who are not able to acquire physical resources and space in order to promote themselves (a notorious problem within art spaces and contemporary art education). Additionally, digital space safeguards artistic evolution due to its non-expiring composition.

Another way that agency is promoted by leveraging digital spaces is through the pillar mechanics and assets of social media platforms. Artists and creators have gravitated towards social media en masse because of its marketing and connecting foundations. Through their personal social media spaces, artists can further their agency by sharing their creative processes, belonging to a network of other artists as well as developing a following. When forming a creative network, artists are exposed to new opportunities that can strengthen their work and themselves, this can lead to expanding new thoughts that bridge into unique ideas and new experiences. These new ideas and experiences are vital for prospering creatively, which is interconnected with an artist's agency.

**c. How can cyber spaces be further employed as a helpful pedagogical tool for educators and learners?**

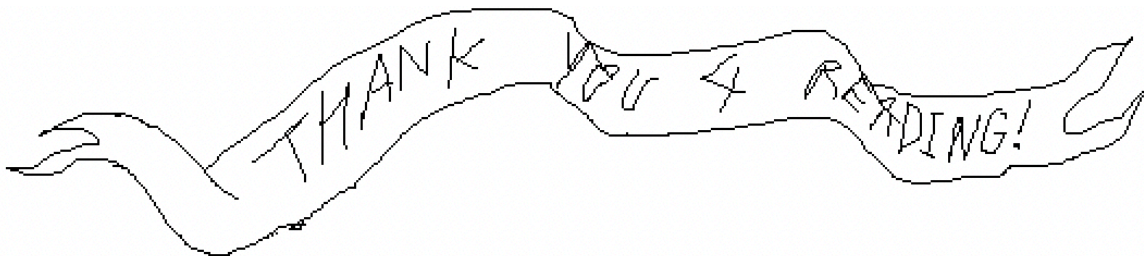
It is important to acknowledge that the experiences that stem from digital learning and digital learner identity are all unique and dependent on what learners and educators are seeking. Therefore, it is important that the manifestation of digital space as an effective pedagogical tool can accommodate different identities and learning experiences. Along with a focus on an intensely collaborative and engaging curriculum that highlights the assets of cyberspace, learning how to leverage a digital learning space will aid in confidence building and promote a digital learner's identity. Leveraging these spaces takes a level of creativity and personalization (especially for non-conventional learning styles), although the experience of learning online does not have to be art

related, adopting creative methods of learning can facilitate cyberspaces becoming helpful pedagogical tools and better digital learning experiences. Some of these methods are critique style lectures where all learners are encouraged to participate, collaborative storytelling and discussion, improvisation and exploration. There are a variety of learning softwares online that facilitate these methods of creative learning, one of the most helpful components that the majority of these softwares implement is the ability to share a document or file in order to ease live collaboration. This asset can become an essential and a visual conglomerate when it is done online (some examples of these softwares include Miro, Google Drive, Mural, Figma etc). Visuality and collaborative design is complementary to effective learning, especially since most learners need visuals to understand complicated concepts. Another component stemming from virtual spaces is critique and insight, being online allows feedback to stem from a wider range of diversities, allowing art to reach different artistic niches and communities. Broadening artistic access through digital spaces cultivates a culture of accessibility and acceptance. Another positive facet that digital space offers is bettering cultural sensitivity as well as facing barriers instilled by single stories and implicit biases. Additionally, the amount of resources available through the internet are almost limitless.

## CLOSING THOUGHTS

Another way that cyberspaces can be better implemented as pedagogical tools is through space-claiming, when students are encouraged to create their own spaces in the context of what they are learning, there are more personal connections associated with the learning material. Digital spaces can preserve these types of materials and allow students to engage creatively with their learning; softwares that are conduits for creative engagement are plentiful and can greatly aid the experience of digital learning without overwhelming learners and educators.

The opportunities for advancement that technology provides is not unaccompanied with a revelation of resource disparities. Access to broadband Internet connectivity and technological devices is a luxury for a vast amount of the global population. I hope that this research can provide more incentive to view the internet and hardware as a contemporary human right, seeing as the Internet is a source for infinite creativity and opportunities.





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