Arts Integration

Integrating Media Arts

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Endeavor STEM Teaching Certificate Project

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The Media Arts, recognized as its own artistic discipline, encompasses the 21st Century skills and technologies which are vital to today's youth. According to Dain Olsen (2016), Media Arts Writing Chair (NCCAS), media arts "encompasses digital arts + interconnectivity across all aesthetic, artistic and academic elements, forms, contents, disciplines, and domains for the purposes of learning and creating… Media arts products include: photography, graphics, music, videos, animations, motion graphics, web design, interactive apps and game design; 3D products, architecture and environments; radio, TV, internet broadcasting; virtual and augmented reality, and virtual worlds" (p. 1). My students' lives are submerged in technology and media communications. Digital media has become the language of today's youth; by employing it in the classroom, students are empowered to communicate utilizing their own voice.

In 2002, I graduated with a BFA in Communications Design from Pratt Institute; my passions include photography, graphics, editing, and all forms of design. Although the technology changes from day-to-day, it remains one of my primary sources of communication. When I began teaching, *traditional* methods were still encouraged by administration. However, there has been a significant transformation in education since that time, particularly when it comes to arts integration. I find that students are willing to investigate more when creating an art project and are prepared to accept failure throughout their experimentation. The arts provide a space where students feel confident to try new things. Media Art has become "a way for current curriculum objectives to connect to youth culture and actively engage them in learning while preparing youth with critical 21st century learning skills that extend beyond traditional types of literacy…because media arts draws heavily on youth's existing interest in new media, it can

potentially be an effective way to enhance the connection between school and out-of-school learning" (Peppler, 2010, pg. 2119).

According to a 2017 study at Yale University entitled *Plugged In: How Media Attract and Affect Youth*, it is noted that "children and teens spend more time with media than they do at school" (Valkenburg & Piotrowski, 2017, pg. 1). Since students commit so much of their daily lives to this platform, I believe it is the responsibility of educators to ensure they use this medium in a safe, productive manner that grasps their attention. Integrating media art has limitless potential; digital platforms may be used in-lieu of traditional learning and presentation methods for students to communicate ideas and demonstrate comprehension of course material.

In my current classes, students have created virtual reality adaptations of historical events, coded a choose-your-own-adventure digital story based on Hugh Everett's Many Worlds Interpretation Theory, and utilized micrographs of their own fingerprints, skin cells, and hair to create large-scale, abstract artworks which they displayed and installed in our gallery. These activities integrate technology, art, literacy, science, math, and even history and engineering. As I consider this new lesson to modify, I plan to substitute the traditional summative assessment with a media-art based activity. In my Earth Science class, students are expected to be able to observe weather variables, transfer these observations onto a weather station model, and interpret the local weather forecast. In the past, students prepared a traditional presentation based on the data they collected and the station model they created. In this STEM integrated lesson, students will utilize computer simulations to support their understanding, collect and organize data using observations and measurement tools, produce a station model, and create their own weather forecast. Students will write their own storyboard and film and edit their own footage. Instead

of standing in front of class with a tri-fold board, we will view their videos on the projection screen.

In previous courses, students have created original videos with great success. It is my hope that this lesson will provide the same learning experience. This activity will incorporate the required content they must learn with a familiar, enjoyable media format. "All students enjoy making connections; they are more successful when they link learning with pleasure" (Wynn & Harris, 2012, pg. 43).

References

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