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Model New Media/Video Programs in Arts Education: Case Study Research

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Abstract

As a result of cheaper, accessible, and user-friendly technologies, there is an increasing volume of videos created by children, yet these works often lack excellence. Strong pedagogical practice is important to nurture excellence in video production, but there is scant literature in this area. In this paper, I examine best practices through a case study of three outstanding, diverse Canadian new media/video art programs at the middle and secondary levels in which students consistently gained recognition. I specifically looked at background information on each school, the structure and pedagogical approaches of the programs, and the strengths of each program. Although I found that the three programs had different focuses, curricula, and teaching styles, the programs shared a project/content driven, student-centered curricula, combined with collaboration, and community outreach. The most significant of my findings was a focus on artistic and creative practices as opposed to technological ones to foster outstanding school video programs.

Model New Media/Video Programs in Arts Education: Case Study Research

Teaching video in art classes is a challenge with little literature on the topic, scarce guidance, and insufficient curricula developed. Watts (2008) writes that, "Video, as an art medium, is a new offering in many schools and very limited literature exists addressing student created video and influences for those videos" (p. 4). Just a few decades ago analog video was the common way to teach video, television, and film production in schools. Video hardware cost a slight fortune, the learning curve was extraordinarily high, and resources scarce making it costly, difficult, and impractical to teach in schools. It made sense that few used it and few did. Within the last decade, however, video production for youths in and out of schools has proliferated at an unprecedented rate never before seen. A primary reason for this has been a result of Michael Teener's invention of the firewire which appeared on Apple computers in 1999 (Smith, 2002) enabling easy streaming of digital video onto home and school computers. Another explanation is the invention of economical, accessible, user-friendly programs like iMovie, Movie Maker, and Adobe Premiere Express. At the same time as these great advances in hardware and software were occurring, the dissemination of youths' digital works has altered our contemporary landscape. Youth's productions can be disseminated on sites such as YouTube whose viewing has superseded that of television (Bell & Bull, 2010). Within the first five years of YouTube's existence (founded in 2005) Strangelove (2010) writes it had over 150 million videos hosted. Strangelove further claims that 365,512 videos are uploaded daily, of which seventy-nine percent are produced by users. Researchers call the prolific creation, use, and sharing of digital video and social media a cultural shift (Bell & Bull, 2010; Ivey & Tepper, 2006) and note a development of new emerging educational paradigms (Castro, Sinner, & Grauer, 2010). Achenbach (2004), a newspaper writer, provides a typical response from media specialists indicating a perspective common to technological determinism: specifically this is that technological usage has a direct affect upon people socially and culturally that can cause remarkable transformations within society (Smith & Marx, 1994). This is evident in Achenbach's description that emergent technology is the key change agent that shrinks planets, undermines tyrants, and turns our youths into publishers.

Like Achenbach, Jenkins (2006), an educational technology researcher, takes a similar favorable stance. He makes considerable claims that new technologies create participatory cultures enabling democratization and empowerment of youths, thus liberating them from mass media and corporate control. The emergence of a collective intelligence, Jenkins argues, enables our children to shift from consumers to prosumers—the latter defined as *creators* of digital technologies. Thus, children are empowered enabling their voices to be heard internationally through collaborative, interactive digital social networking sites that have emerged within the last decade. Buckingham (2009a), and Buckingham, Willett, and Pini (2011), state that Jenkins position is incorrect arguing that activity is not agency, prolific output does not necessarily connote excellence, and collective international dissemination

does not inevitably imply impact particularly when the digital output is sadly lacking in imagination, inventiveness, and mastery of the medium. In short, some researchers have found that even though there is far greater youth video production, the quality of video is sadly lacking in quality, originality, and creativity. Indeed youths are more prone to copying, reworking old materials, and utilizing mash-ups extensively (Buckingham, 2009a; Buckingham, Willett & Pini, 2011; Peppler & Kafai, 2007). Bielicky (2008) calls the proliferation of poor quality videos *cultural pollution*. Given this context, *more* does not necessarily mean *better* as the Bauhaus instructors, in another context, aptly pointed out years ago (Films Media Group, 2012).

Cuban (1986) in his seminal work entitled, *Teachers and Machines*, outlines the historic cycle of new technologies from radios to television sets in schools. At first, these new technologies were heralded as the latest, innovative wonders. Many predicted they would radically alter and reshape the educational landscape, but instead ended up gathering dust at the back of classrooms throughout North America. In fact, even today the pattern ensues. Palfrey and Gasser (2008) write that educators have been confused about ways to respond to technology's impact. Many embraced computer hardware and software but wondered how to use them in the classroom and often did not like what students did with them. Much of the technology, as a result, sits unused as educators wonder whether to block or allow usage. What is to be done about this situation particularly in regard to video technologies?

Many researchers argue that excellence in video pedagogy and indeed in the digital landscape as a whole needs to be studied further — teachers need help learning *how* to teach and *what* to teach (Bell & Bull, 2010; Buckingham, 2009b; Buckingham, Willett, & Pini, 2011; Grace & Tobin, 2002; Hobbs, 2006; McLure, 2010; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008; Roland, 2010). Watts (2008) found little curricula development or models related to digital video that integrate art, technology, and video together. In this paper, best practices will be examined a result of a lack of information regarding pedagogical processes in video education. Consequently, it is hoped that by addressing this gap the author will aid in the development of strong pedagogy in video arts education.

The Literature: Existing Studies of Youth's Engagement with Video

Video/film has become a part of our everyday life (Bell & Bull, 2010). We are bombarded with a multitude of moving images. Not only are they seen in traditional mediums, at movie theatres and on television, but also they are seamlessly woven together ubiquitously in computerized texts. Moving images are incorporated into web designs, blogs, and wikis; they are viewed on such sites as Google Video, Vimeo, and TeacherTube, and increasingly are integrated into online newspapers and magazines, blended textbooks, and digital e-books.

Many writers discuss the benefits of bringing video/film into our schools. Viewing the moving image is a cultural and social process that enables us to communicate, share our ideas, understand, and derive meanings (Buckingham, 2007; Lovett, 2006; Mullen & Rahn, 2010; Pepler, & Kafai, 2007; Sealey, 2008; Willett, 2009a, 2009b). Critically studying video and film promotes comprehension of this visual media, fosters youths' responses to dominant discourses as artistic resistance, develops literacy skills, informs students' theoretical understanding of the image making process, and educates children about the multitude of ways to react and respond to these multimodal works (Spont, 2010). Moreover, *producing videos*, placing cameras into the hands of children, enables youths to conduct child-centered play, explore mundane to exotic and sometimes forbidden subject matter (Grace & Tobin, 2002), share their own personal stories (Lovett, 2006), develop socially, cognitively, and psychologically (Grace & Tobin, 2002), and grow creatively through self-expression and artistic/aesthetic skill development (Watts, 2008).

McLure (2010) discusses that there is a lack of knowledge and more studies are needed to learn about videomaking specifically as a creative artistic practice. Mullen and Rahn (2010) discuss artistic practice in new media to encompass technical savvy, content, communication development, and critical analysis, as well as address skills and knowledge grounded in arts and aesthetic values. Buckingham, Willett, & Pini, (2011) observe that studying video is not just the acquisition of technical knowledge about operating equipment, hardware, and software. Rather, key to video study as an art form is learning about the theoretical language of film, or what they call *film grammar* including key areas such as composition, and framing of shots, to camera movements, angles, and editing implementing semiotic resources including music, lighting and special effects.

Given all these benefits, art educators like Szekely & Bucknam (2012) reason that art educators need to teach video. They make a case that museums have embraced video art; thus, art educators need to as well in order to help students expand the tools of the trade from the paint brush to include other more contemporary ways of critically engaging with art. Others like Mullen and Rahn (2010) concur that given the dominance of the moving image in our culture today many arts educators will naturally want to teach video production as part of their curricula in the early, middle, and senior grades.

A few researchers have addressed video pedagogy outside of the school system. The proliferation of video clubs in Britain led to studies of amateur video production (Buckingham, 2009a, 2009b; Buckingham, Willett, & Pini, 2011; Willet, 2009a, 2009b). Additionally, a few articles were written about the Canadian Gulf Island Film and Television School (Castro & Grauer, 2010; Castro, Sinner & Grauer, 2010; Lin, Castro, Sinner & Grauer, 2011). However, there is scant research in video teaching and learning within schools (Watts,

2008; Wilks, Cutcher & Wilks, 2012). Grace & Tobin (2002) study young videographers claiming that little is known about video pedagogy and children's video production in the early years. They write that with "...the use of video technology rapidly increasing in school systems worldwide, research is needed that can help us understand what happens to students and teachers when cameras are put in students' hands" (Grace & Tobin, 2002, p.196). Watts (2008) highlights the dearth of knowledge in this area at the secondary level and the lack of curricula models to aid teachers. Bell & Bull (2010) state that research about effective pedagogical methods in video is still evolving.

Bell and Bull (2010) and others (Buckingham, 2007, 2009a; Cuban, 2001; Hobbs, 2006; McClure, 2010; Roland, 2010; Watts, 2008) astutely indicate that teaching digital technology well requires effective pedagogy and reflection on strong curricula development, observing that more needs to be written in this area. Palfrey & Gasser (2008) observe that educators have been confused about what to do with technology in their classrooms. Many embraced hardware and software but wondered what to do with these and were dismayed with what learners did with technology. Watts (2008) agrees that teachers too often bring to the classroom outdated ideas, content, and delivery. Wilks, Cutcher and Wilks (2012) write about the integration of digital technologies in classrooms of today. They suggest that in our contemporary art education classrooms educators have fallen short of meeting the full potential for using new media. They will definitely require help and support to develop visions for designing, implementing, and teaching contemporary digital art (Wilks, Cutcher & Wilks, 2012). In the following text, the researcher examines and discusses effective pedagogical practices in three schools within Canada with the intent to inform practitioners of some effective possible ways in which to teach digital technology, particularly in video education.

The Study: Case Study Research

Research Methodology

The research was undertaken in a middle school and two high schools during 2009-2011 in central Canada. The research is framed as a *comparative case study*. Multiple methods of data were collected including participant observation through weekly school visits in the field, and semi-structured and open-ended teacher interviews. (Merriam 1998; Yin, 2003). All interviews were audio-recorded, videotaped, and transcribed verbatim. These transcripts were returned to the interviewees for *member checks* meaning that participants reviewed and revised the texts so that any errors were corrected (Stake, 1995). Also collected were documentation of student video works. Finally, a collection of text based and photographic archival data was carried out including school profiles, newsletters, media information, and digital software and hardware information for purposes of *document review* (Stake, 1995).

Document review entails gathering many differing documents from multiple perspectives, which was used to aid in the analysis. To ensure confidentiality, I assigned pseudonyms for all participants/schools involved in the research.

During the analysis, data was examined systematically in a successive iterative process to reveal themes of *correspondence and patterns* (Stake, 1995; Yin; 2003) so that categories were coded and emerged based on themes which helps strengthen internal validity. *Within case analysis* was undertaken which means that schools were examined as cases having their own unique organizations. Consequently, for each specific school interview transcripts were identified, coded, and organized by themes that emerged pertaining to each individual educational institution (Merriam, 1998). Following this, a *comparative analysis* was used. This technique simply means that schools were compared in terms of themes and theories with each other so that the researcher built categories shared by institutions and teachers enabling themes common to the differing schools to emerge (Merriam, 1998). Employed were (1) data source triangulation to view consistency of phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Stake, 1995) and (2) methodological triangulation (Stake, 1995) using multiple data sources.

Case Study #1- Description of Granite Public School

Background Information

Built in 1922, Granite Pubic School is a small school of one hundred and ninety-five students, eight teachers, and its program extends from nursery to grade six. It is located in a well-established middle to upper middle class neighborhood. The school is comprised of extremely motivated students and has high parental involvement. Academic emphasis is placed on mathematics and language and the school has a focus on the arts—namely music, visual arts, and dance. At the end of each year, there is a celebration of the arts culminating with a festival celebrating students' artworks and performances. The school's mission is to provide a learning environment enabling all students to develop to their maximum potential in attitudes, skills, and knowledge in order that they may participate meaningfully in a diverse society. A grade five class was studied comprised of twenty-eight students between the ages of ten to eleven. The teacher involved in the program sometimes provides traditional teacher led sessions, while at other times provides student focused individual learning and group learning sessions.

Program Structure and Pedagogical Approach

Beginning about a decade ago, the former school principal decided to ask his teaching staff to collectively focus on an artistic theme on a yearly basis; therefore, all students and teachers became involved. The new principal followed this tradition. In June of 2009, he approached his staff and received consent to adopt a human rights theme in conjunction with the opening

of a major Canadian Museum of Human Rights scheduled to open during 2014 in their city. Consequently, the principal asked teachers to address two questions in their teaching (1) if there are thirty human rights that everyone is supposed to have, why are so many rights still being violated in Canada and around the world, and (2) what can we do to make our world a better place? Ms. Katrine Patterson, the teacher involved in this study, had written a grant for video cameras and was awarded the monies. She decided to ask her students to make video documentaries about key human rights leaders.

Administrators within the board and the school put support in place. The principal favored technology and bought twenty-five Apple notebooks that were placed on travelling carts for all teachers and students to share. Educators had additional support from both art and technology consultants, as well as from a consultant who had expertise in the inquiry learning process. Moreover, the school board provided funds to support several visits from an expert in human rights issues, Enid Lee, who travelled from another major Canadian city well over one thousand miles away to work with teachers within the school.

Working with technology was not a particular strength of Ms. Patterson. At the beginning of the year, she teamed up with the grade six teacher who had a stronger technological background and felt more comfortable in this area. He helped with the production and postproduction processes, which aided Ms. Patterson in an area in which she felt uncomfortable.

In the grade five class, students underwent the preproduction process, (namely preparing to film) by studying the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, adopted by the United Nations. Children proceeded to analyze thirty human rights issues. They then researched and examined heroes within North America who opposed oppression. After being taught *film grammar* in a class based on composition, including different camera shots, and angles, the teacher asked her students to specifically examine individuals who champion human rights issues through studying both their actions and impact upon society. Working in groups of three to four people, at *work stations*, students studied such people as Hannah Taylor in Canada, who at age eight, founded the Ladybug Foundation in 2004 as a registered charitable organization to raise money for the homeless. Other students chose to study Rosa Parks, who during the 1960's civil rights movement in the United States, resisted racial segregation by refusing to give her bus seat to a white person. For this project, students wrote scripts, gathered visual imagery, and used both text and images to aid in making their videos. This led the children into the production process—namely the creation of their documentary. Finally, students experienced the postproduction process through the editing process and screening of their videos in class. All children worked in groups and made their own videos themselves. They were in control of the process from idea conception to the final edit.

Strengths/Best Practices

There are numerous strengths within this arts focused program. Firstly, it was found that the human rights issues drove the program. The school wide focus on human rights offered inspiration to teachers and students. The vision held by the principal was accepted and adopted by teachers and students alike. Secondly, artistic practice infused within this thematic approach guided the program. The focus was on production of videos, and to this end film *grammar* was taught. Thirdly, the teacher constructed daily learning centers and focused on arts based learning by designing a step-by-step process from preproduction to postproduction. Through student-centered inquiry, creative learning ensued—students chose their hero/heroine, created their own questions, explored the overriding theme, wrote their own scripts, gathered imagery, made audio tracks, and integrated these with their own video imagery to create the videos. Fourthly, while studying, students were part of many field trips to such places as local food banks and created their own fundraisers to raise money for the less fortunate in their community. The community played a big role within the school's learning processes. Hence, an obvious focus was that of authentic learning. Lastly, technology did not drive the curriculum. Students used technology to study a theme; however, technology was not used for its own sake. Thus children used digital technologies to support them in their (1) research –gather knowledge, (2) create their final video—art production, and (3) communicate and disseminate –inform their peers. Overall, what was driving Ms. Patterson's student centered inquiry program was the theme, human rights, in which students learned about film grammar and explored content. They also reached out to their community in meaningful ways, and, as noted, technology played a decidedly subsidiary role.

Case Study #2: Description of Applewood Alternative High School

Background Information

Founded in 1969 for at-risk students, Applewood Alternative High School is a small school of two hundred and fifty students, eleven teachers, and a program extending from grades nine to twelve. In 1993, it moved to its present location in a tougher, lower socio-economic area of a central Canadian city. Applewood has a large population of Aboriginal students and there is a strong gender balance between males and females. Administrators call the program essentially an academic one. Applewood's mission is to provide students with the requisite credits in order to obtain a high school diploma. The majority of students are at-risk—they are on the verge of dropping out of schools for a variety of reasons ranging from disillusionment with traditional schools to grappling with personal issues. Many of Applewood's students have expressed that their previous high school or its environment did not fulfill their needs; they felt isolated, alienated, bullied, and or disillusioned. Consequently, they turned to or were sent to Applewood in order to re-engage with the learning process. At Applewood, ongoing student intake occurs throughout the year, and teachers are trained to deal with this difficulty.

Educators cope with the large gaps in student learning in which students often miss months of school on an ongoing basis. Applewood prides itself on a personalized atmosphere and nurturing environment that has individualized programming. Both the teachers and educational assistants involved in the program teach in a student-focused manner giving individualized help to their students meeting one-on-one with them. Classes are small enabling personalized instruction to be easily facilitated. The foundation of the program is to meet the needs of the individual student. Given the problems these at-risk students face, Applewood has nevertheless established a strong reputation for its new media program. It is known for its productions in video locally, nationally, and internationally and has consistently won a number of awards throughout the last decade. On an ongoing basis, students at Applewood submit videos to festivals, competitions, and screenings. In this research, grade ten to twelve classes were examined and approximately twenty students were involved in this study.

Program Structure and Pedagogical Approach

Mr. Smith, the video/film teacher at Applewood, was hired in the early 1990s. The video program emerged from a special program called *Intersession*, begun in the mid 1990s, in which the school was shut down for two weeks (between the first and second semester) and students enrolled in newly developed innovative, creative courses, that were not part of the standard curricula. These courses were intensive and students obtained one credit. As a result of this special opportunity, Mr. Smith collaborated with another teacher to make a movie making course using older, linear, analog technologies that were laborious to use as editors had to proceed step-by-step to edit through the course of a given tape in a predetermined sequence. This course lasted for five years during which he built upon each successive year's experience. It was during this time that Mr. Smith met Donald, who was working in the area of film/video as an educational assistant in another school within the same board. During the late 1990s, Mr. Smith and Donald switched over to Mac computers and nonlinear, digital firewire editing. In 1999, funding at Applewood was decreasing, enrollment was declining, and the administrators were asked to redefine the school. As a result of the success of the movie making *Intersession* course, Mr. Smith was given the support to develop a full-fledged video program. Moreover, in 2003 he was able to move Donald into Applewood so they could work as a team building the program. From the beginning, Mr. Smith began applying for grants from places like The Network of Innovative Schools and Industry Canada. He was successful and to this day regularly finances the cameras and computer hardware and software through this strategy as board cutbacks have occurred.

Mr. Smith handles the artistic, creative side, and Donald handles the technical side of the video/new media program. At Applewood's school board, the role of Educational Assistant, like Donald, is usually to work with students who have specialized needs. This was not the

case at Applewood. During my visits to Mr. Smith's classroom, I observed that Donald acts like another teacher with a specialization in technology, and that students seek help from him for technical needs. Mr. Smith and Donald work as a team complementing each other well. The program became successful and quickly expanded from grades nine through to twelve.

The program focus is fostering self-expression and artistic expression. Students control all the video production themselves, thus enabling authentic learning based on students' own personal experiences. They choose their topics, they select the material to write about, they film, and edit. In grade ten, it is expected that to complete the course each student will create (1) a picture story, (2) a short video exploring a film genre from drama to comedy, (3) a video exploring mood or a subject, (4) shoot a scene involving two people, (5) a documentary, (6) a community based themed video, (7) and an independent study project of the student's own choice. In addition, the teenagers are expected to create their own webpage on the Applewood website and post their videos. At grade eleven and twelve curricula is less specific—students design and create projects from a range of genres while incorporating advanced technologies into their work. They are expected to focus on the technical and creative components of video production, and to this end they are asked to take full responsibility for all aspects of production from casting and securing location shoots, to partnering with outside organizations. A few feature length videos have been undertaken, and these were inspired by the feature length productions produced at Orangeville Collegiate Institute, which I will talk about in the following section. Applewood places an equal focus on production and film/theory in all their video/film courses.



Video 1. One example of a feature length film at Applewood Alternative High School which is the trailer for, “Of Mice and Men,” modified and rewritten to take into account First Nation content. This film won international awards in film competitions. The genre is drama. The video is available to the international public using Web 2.0 and is posted by students and their teachers.

Strengths/Best Practices

At Applewood, videography engages youths, is highly motivating, and keeps these at-risk teenagers engaged in the learning process. This is the program's strength. What contributes to the program's success? Firstly, Mr. Smith's focus on high quality creative productions is key. Students are motivated and take pride in their final digital artworks. The program's success is due to its emphasis on the artistic practice, which is highly valued within the video program. Mr. Smith graduated from an arts program; therefore, he fosters student creativity and uniqueness. Thus, the approach to technology is not driven by technology but rather driven by creative content.

Secondly, student-centered classrooms contribute to the program's success and is a result of both student driven content and the program's structure. When given assignments, such as creating a video without words, teenagers control the content, which is not imposed from above by teachers. Moreover, as a result of the emphasis on student-centered learning youths are more engaged. Mr. Smith and Donald allow their pupils to choose themes, content, and video production plans for their video productions. Additionally, students are given a large degree of autonomy—there is very little teaching in which Mr. Smith or Donald are the *sage on the stage*. Individualized private discussions are normal in their classroom. Youths are given independence while at the same time they can seek theoretical, creative or technical help from Mr. Smith or Donald. I observed teenagers working collaboratively in groups. Sometimes they are small ventures comprised of a few people working on a short video. At other times, teenagers in grade ten, eleven, and twelve levels work together on a feature film. In the latter case, the nature of the production at the school is similar to that of a feature film. On both large video projects where students work as a large multi-aged group and on more individualized small production units all students are given autonomy. Teenagers are given guidelines by teachers such as genres, styles and they work within these deciding on the theme, characters, plot, production, and editing methods.

Thirdly, learning is achieved through personally meaningful work in which teenagers explore topics of meaning to themselves. The postproduction process, in which they submit works to festivals, screenings, exhibitions, and the school website, enables the work to reach a larger audience. Video submissions at this school are many, and students hope to achieve awards at festivals, exhibitions, and screenings. They often achieve success and acclaim; they win. This drives student motivation and encourages them to strive for greater achievements.

Fourthly, the program has continuously built a strong relationship with the wider film community.

Liaisons have been established with local community film groups that are firmly maintained from year to year. It is handy that film institutions, and there are many in this film rich city,

are located near Applewood. Students take workshops at these specialized institutions, and professionals, such as editors, directors, actors, camera people, and foley artists, work with the students on productions financed through special grants Mr. Smith writes. Throughout the school year, students work with professional filmmakers in their film studios, and these artists visit the school as speakers and to work with students. They also act as a mentor teaming up with an individual student in the area the student is eager to study more intensively.

Finally, Mr. Smith teaches about theoretical, technical, and creative video/film concepts and techniques. Overall, he has a strong vision that video production can be creative, students can produce superb quality works, and that this is possible even with students who are at-risk. He is passionate about film and video and believes this can enhance learning, engage students, make them like learning, and ultimately be successful. Indeed, many have been successful pursuing a professional career in film and video once they have graduated from Applewood.

In summary, there are many reasons for outstanding practice at Applewood including superb productions, emphasis on the creative process, student-centered and authentic learning, community involvement, and a strong educational vision.

Case Study #3: Description of Orangeville Collegiate Institute

Background Information

Orangeville Collegiate Institute extends from grade nine to grade twelve for their French Immersion Program and from grades ten to twelve for its English Program. It also offers the *Advanced Placement (AP) Program*. It was built in 1974 and is located in a middle class burgeoning suburb within the outskirts of a prairie city in central Canada. The school has seventy teachers, thirty-five educational assistants and nine hundred and sixty students. Students have diverse multicultural backgrounds and there is gender balance within the school. Orangeville Collegiate has a mission to provide an academically challenging environment fostering critical thinking, decision-making skills, social responsibility, and student self worth. It is known within the local community for its outstanding sports and video programs. Pertaining to the latter, students consistently win awards at the local, national, and international level for their videos and have gained recognition for their outstanding productions. Youths involved in video create a screening of their works for their relatives and the school community at the end of each semester. At this school, I studied the grade ten to twelve classes in video production.

Program Structure and Pedagogical Approach

Mr. Jamie Foster, the video teacher, was trained in art education and came to Orangeville Collegiate Institute initially when the video program was merely extracurricular. Prior to

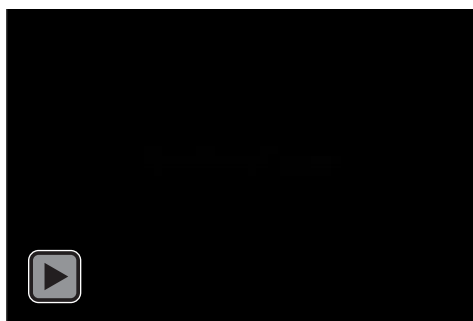
working at Orangeville, Mr. Foster had established two other video programs—one in a middle school and the other at a high school. He was awarded the *Prime Minister's Award for Excellence* in 2001 while working at the middle school. At this school, he had an extremely supportive principal, and so when the principal moved to Orangeville Collegiate, Mr. Foster soon followed in 2005.

Early on at Orangeville, Jamie discussed that his board was curious to see the way in which he would develop his video/film program, so they procured enough money to put together a film lab for him complete with sixteen computers. Jamie would often rent high-end camera equipment from professional filmmaking stores. Over the years, he applied for a number of grants to buy equipment and pay professionals to give workshops and work with the students. At last count, approximately one-hundred and thirty thousand dollars had been raised. Mr. Foster initially learned alongside his students during professional visits.

Since early in his career, Mr. Foster has teamed up with people. In fact, at the middle school he had worked closely with Sam Christo, an Educational Assistant who later acquired his teacher qualifications. Following this, at Orangeville Mr. Christo was hired as a teacher specializing in science and geography and was swiftly brought on board the video/film program in 2007. Mr. Christo has always been interested in film; he worked in the filmmaking industry as an administrator prior to becoming a teacher. Together, they teach the video/film program which covers film theory, practice, history, and aesthetics. They often appear in each other's classes, participate in each other's class discussions, and co-teach seamlessly. Mr. Foster is the obvious program leader having the expertise in both the technological and the artistic, creative side of the program. He has the program vision. Mr. Christo acts as a supportive teacher dealing with an expanding program and eager students. They consult with each other continuously regarding curricula, equipment purchases, and the smooth running of the program. Both educators change their teaching approaches from teacher focused to student centered in their classes.

Mr. Foster, who covers media literacy, theory, technical issues, film history, and production, as well as development of artistic skills, designs the courses. There are two programming streams: *Filmmaking* and *Independent Film*. Initially, Mr. Foster worked with four computers in the *Independent Film* course stream for grades ten to twelve. The following year, he quickly expanded the program to include grades ten, eleven, and twelve classes called *Filmmaking I, II, III*. Often students signed up simultaneously for the *Independent Film* and *Filmmaking* streams. I observed that during all the filmmaking courses students' worked in groups on a collaborative basis.

The *Filmmaking* courses are scaffolded carefully—*Filmmaking I* leads to *II* and *III* building upon students' skills, knowledge, and practical experiences.



Video 2. Ode und Leer. This video is done by a grade 12 student at Orangeville Collegiate Institute in the *Filmmaking III* class. The genre is an experimental video in which the student uses both English and French speech. The film was screened internationally. The video is available to the international public using Web 2.0 and is posted by students and their teachers.

In *Filmmaking I: Digital Filmmaking*, students study silent, action, and documentary films as well as commercial advertisements. *Filmmaking II* has a focus on animation in which pupils study traditional, stop motion, matte techniques, digital Flash animations, as well as rotoscoping. By the end of the course, they are expected to produce five diverse animations. *Filmmaking III* has a focus on film appreciation, awareness, and production. At this level, teenagers are expected to keep a journal, produce written assignments, take tests, study film history, and conduct theoretical analysis about film structures. By the end of this course, students will have produced (1) an experimental film, (2) a narrative film with a strong story structure, and another (3) short film of the students' choice. What students learn in *Filmmaking* at all grades enables them to contribute to the feature film in the *Independent Film* courses.

The other stream of study, *Independent Film* for grades ten, eleven, and twelve allows students from each grade to work with one another on feature film productions. Experience, skills, knowledge, and talent are factors in the roles for which students are selected. Rather than split students into grades, Mr. Foster divides them into three groups: (1) *Production* (including director, actors), (2) *Crew Members* (budget, crew call planning, locations, props, set design, dressing, make-up, insurance, transportation and food), and (3) *Technical* (camera, lighting, and sound). At the grade twelve level, three students head each section and are thus

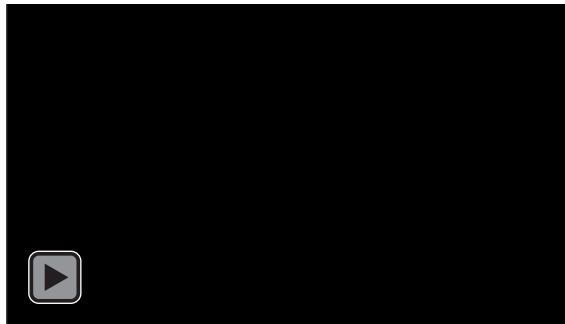
given a great deal of responsibility. In the past, Mr. Foster has sometimes written the scripts; however, lately students have been the sole writers under his guidance. Shooting occurs during school, at night, on weekends, and on film shoots both far away from and on the campus of Orangeville Collegiate. The course is designed like a Hollywood film crew with advanced technology that is expensive and sophisticated. Mr. Foster has argued with Hollywood directors in specialized online film sites with people involved in the film industry such as film directors, film camera operators about whether high school student should be handling such cameras as the *Red* digital cinema camera (a high-end and extremely expensive video camera) that Mr. Foster has his students use. Some directors working within the professional field are against it, he explains, but Mr. Foster expressed the viewpoint that he believes it is important for students to develop skills working with this high-end technology. Out of this class, feature films are produced. He states,

...The one thing that has never been appreciated is how much new ground we were breaking. We were making feature films with children you know and I searched, I scoured the Internet to find other people who were doing it...but no schools were doing this and just to show you how far this permeated, the University of Texas ... has a feature film program where students make a feature film. Okay, so Robert Rodriguez who did *Spy Kids*, he was helping the University of Texas, and one of them was down in the south there, then set up a program that ...is exactly what I've been doing for ten years. (R. Foster, personal communication, June 11, 2011)

Strengths/Best Practices

At Orangeville Collegiate, the Filmmaking Program is broad and has a focus on video covering production and history, aesthetics and theory. One of the obvious strengths of the program is the two-tiered approach: the *Independent Film* stream has a focus on the production of a feature length film, and the *Filmmaking* stream is designed for students to learn filmmaking theory and skills. This enables the offering of a detailed, extensive, diverse video program in which material learned in the *Filmmaking I, II, and III* classes can be connected to and utilized in the *Independent Film* courses. A second strength is the emphasis on artistic creation in video production. Mr. Foster graduated from an arts education background and as such infuses his teaching with artistic, creative purpose. It is embodied in his project construction—allowing students to select their own theme, and promoting student's personal interpretation in the production. Thus again, emphasis is placed on learning that is personal and promotes self-expression. Student centered learning is at the heart of the teaching approach—students choose an issue, write the script and/or storyboard, and pursue their production until the video is completed and ready for screening. A third strength is the fact that digital technology is not driving the film program. Instead, the driving factors are creativity, personal expression, and learning how to collaborate. Students are asked in every

project undertaken to make personally meaningful work. Again, technology takes a subsidiary role to that of art. Mr. Foster's aim is for students to learn about creative production in order to teach children to be leaders, to pursue excellence, to cooperate with each other, to be organized, and to work as (what he terms) a family, because he observes, making videos is mostly done in groups. Additionally, a fourth strength is that the community is at the heart of the program. Students post their works on websites. Also student video work is constantly submitted to international, national, and local filmmaking festivals, competitions and screenings. Mr. Foster not only submits students' works to student festivals but also to professional ones. Moreover, in this program the use of social media is used extensively and highly motivates students. Web 2.0 in this school is used constantly. Teachers and students regularly post, for example, videos to YouTube, and this school has an extensive, complex YouTube site of its own. One student, Sam, had over two and a half million viewers watch his YouTube video between December 2011 and December 2012. This garnered a lot of media attention including Sam being interviewed on radio and television news shows.



Video 3. The little Drummer Boy. This video is done by a grade 11 student, Sam, at Orangeville Collegiate Institute. The genre is a music video. The video is available to the international public using Web 2.0 and is posted by students and their teachers.

Like Mr. Smith at Applewood Alternative High School, Mr. Foster and Mr. Christo at Orangeville Collegiate, stress quality and set high standards for their students. Student motivation is high—youths take pride in their achievements, awards, community recognition, and the positive attention they receive as result. It is evident that, although Mr. Foster is demanding and exacting, he is also passionate about film. It is obvious that his students respond to his enthusiasm. Again, like Applewood, there are students who have continued to study film and become professional filmmakers.

Program Commonalities

There are five major similarities between Granite, Applewood, and Orangeville schools pertaining to the following: (1) the project/content driven student-centered curricula, (2) collaboration, (3) the outreach to the community at large, (4) the major role art plays in each program, and (5) the minor role technology plays in the schools, acting in a secondary role to that of the artistic process.

Researchers have found that many educators are confused with just how to teach using technology (Buckingham, 2007; Lin, Castro, & Grauer, 2011; Roland, 2010). The challenge is to decide *how* we teach (Mullen & Rahn, 2010; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008). Firstly, I found that all teachers involved in this study based their teaching on student-centered, project-driven, inquiry-models. This correlates with the literature—many researchers advocate for this approach (Beach & Bertram, 2005; Bielicky, 2008; Choi & Piro, 2009; Jenkins, 2009; Lin, Castro, Sinner, & Grauer, 2011; Prensky, 2010). Using this approach, students become involved in researching, problem solving, creating, critically examining, communicating, and utilizing multimodal expression both on an individual and collaborative basis. Through this inquiry based student centered model, authentic learning is constructed by connecting the learning to students' own personal interests and concerns. Many researchers support this view (Castro, Sinner, & Grauer, 2010; Lin, Castro, Sinner, & Grauer, 2011; Prensky, 2010; Watts, 2008). Jenkins (2009) postulates that students do their best work when they address subject matter that is interesting to them personally. Taking this further, Prensky (2010) believes that teachers should tap into what motivates students by finding out their passion concerning an idea and allowing them to pursue this in the class. He states, "...whatever is learned through the motivation of passion is rarely if ever forgotten" (Prensky, 2010, p.4). In this study, it was found that teachers would set parameters around project-driven curriculum whether it be in the case of Ms. Patterson who asked students to deal with human rights issues, or the other teachers who often asked students to work within genres creating their own themes at the secondary level. Setting some boundaries without limiting students' choice allowed authentic learning.

Secondly, collaboration is key in the schools and there are two types: student-to student, and teacher-to-teacher. I observed that all teachers foster student collaboration. Indeed researchers corroborate on the major role that collaboration is given in regard to teaching art and digital technologies (Betts, 2008; Castro & Grauer, 2010; Castro, Sinner, & Grauer, 2010; Jenkins, 2009; Lin, Castro, Sinner, & Grauer, 2011; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008). Specifically in regard to videomaking, Buckingham (2007) writes that it is a shared interactive knowledge of "social norms and cultural conventions ... the social, collaborative nature of cultural learning, production and expression" (p. 47). Additionally, it was observed that all the lead teachers at the three schools, Ms. Patterson, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Foster ended up collaborating with

another teacher in order to strengthen their particular video programs. I have found no literature in video pedagogy about this type of collaboration between teachers. In the case of Ms. Patterson and Mr. Smith, they sought another teacher to work with who had extensive experience in an area they believed needed strengthening—technology. They believed the program could benefit from having someone who was comfortable with, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic about technology. In the case of Mr. Foster, however, he had expertise in both the art and technology aspects of video/film. Thus, he selected someone who could work with him as a team member in order to deal with the expansion of the program, which he could no longer handle on his own. All teachers teamed with another educator who could offer necessary support to run the video program well.

Thirdly, building community connections was a common aspect of all three schools. Of note is the role community plays in the financial support at the three schools—every one of the teachers sought and received grants to build their program. Common in all three schools were guest speakers, students visiting professional work sites, special workshops, and asking professionals to mentor youths. A significant aspect was the dissemination of video works through school websites, video festivals, school screenings, and film screenings throughout the world. Orangeville Collegiate Institute was the exception, however, in regard to the planned utilization of Web 2.0 to enable student videos to reach mass audiences. Buffington (2008) discusses Web 2.0's potential as a dynamic, community building, cooperative, content sharing, participatory digital environment. It is evident that Mr. Foster is exploring its potential. Disseminating videos to a real world audience is key (Prensky, 2010). The issue of dissemination of media is changing through such sites as YouTube. Jenkins (2009) claims that students are “finding themselves in situations that no one would have anticipated a decade or two ago. Their writing is much more open to the public and can have more far-reaching consequences” (p. 25). In the case of Mr. Foster, he is taking advantage of Web 2.0's dissemination capabilities.

Fourthly, teaching video without art and aesthetics makes the quality of learning and video production far inferior. Technology at the exclusion of art—and indeed without the foundation of art—is too often how video classes are being taught today. Watts (2008) writes that many educators emphasize technology in video production and the skills necessary to produce videos almost to the exclusion of the message, aesthetics, and critical inquiry. In a recent study in the United States, Hobbs, (2006) claims that few educators use video for creative ventures. The seminal British media researcher, David Buckingham (2007) concurs with this author claiming he is dismayed by Britain's pedagogical approach to technology which he observes is, on the whole, misguided. He advocates that we turn to arts education as a model wherein students use media/technology for self-expression and the promotion of creativity in the integration of information communication technologies (ICT). Gouzouasis (2006) argues

that technology must be informed by the arts—that art should provide meaning for digital artworks. He writes,

Without the contribution of the knowledge of visual and performing artists, new media content appears lifeless and their applications, abjectly meaningless save for a purely mechanistic function, are incapable of transforming the human spirit... an arts infused new media context, therefore, it is the sensibility of the art educator whose careful design engages artistic endeavor. Leaving such matters solely to ICT instruction where the arts are invisible suggests that good practice is ignored (Gouzouasis, 2006, p. 3).

I found that all three teachers in this study approached the teaching of videography with an arts education framework. Even though at Granite Public School the teacher is a generalist educator, she has a genuine interest in visual arts and has been taking additional courses in visual arts education at the graduate level. As a result, she has infused an arts education approach in her teaching. Additionally, Ms. Patterson had a further impetus to teach from an arts focused approach—her school has a focus on the arts. Both Mr. Foster and Mr. Smith obtained an undergraduate degree in the arts and specialized in arts education at a Faculty of Education. These faculties have staff within Canadian universities trained so that they teach future educators from Kindergarten to grade 12 within both public and private schools. Mr. Smith and Mr. Foster both integrate art within the curriculum and structure video projects in a similar manner to teaching traditional art forms. In order to promote students' imaginations and self-expression, all the teachers involved in this study utilized a pedagogical approach that is project and content driven. This correlates to Choi and Piro (2009) who write that, "Digitally based instruction in the arts, including the use of state-of-the-art technology, supports the advancement of free and creative expression as well as reflection, and is essential" (p. 32).

Lastly, all the teachers involved in this study shared a common approach to integrating technology within their curricula. Rather than telling their learners to look at an iMovie book, for example, and proceed through it page by page to learn about video, they began with a project and asked students to explore an idea using art and aesthetics as a foundation. All the teachers proceeded to use the technology to help in the creation, communication, and dissemination of the moving image. Technology was not used for its own sake; it did not drive the curricula but took on a secondary role to that of pursuing an artistic idea to fruition.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There are dissimilarities found between schools. It is interesting to note that the focus of the school's program in video and the way the video was taught varied widely between the three schools studied. Watt's (2008) points out that video production is not straightforward nor is it

formulaic, and the results of this study corroborate this point of view. At Granite Public School, human rights issues drive the program, and the school wide focus on these issues offered inspiration to teachers and students. Ms. Patterson integrated videography within a variety of subjects typical of a grade five curricula using student *work stations* as a model wherein students conducted group projects together. In contrast, at Applewood the focus is on at-risk students and retaining youths in the educational system. As such, the teaching approach is far more flexible and open-ended in which teachers address large gaps in student learning as a result of attendance issues. The program is focused on the individual student and the classes are largely conducted as informal studio art workshops. Orangeville Collegiate Institute is also dissimilar from the other two schools having a focus on developing a well-rounded human being who is exposed intensively to a highly structured academic program with formal classes and workshops often given in video production involving a two-tiered approach: one for Hollywood style productions and the other to promote small group or individual filmmaking. Thus, even though at the basis of each program was project/content driven with a student-centered curricula, the teaching styles varied. This corroborates with Cuban's (2001) findings that there is no one teaching style when teachers integrate technology within their classes—styles vary from school to school, from teacher to teacher, and indeed from class to class depending on the teachers' intentions and student needs. Cuban notes that a teacher can often change his/her teaching style within one class. Thus, the program focus and teacher's pedagogical approaches vary in response to specific school mandates, educators' aims, and student needs. In line with Watts' (2008) conclusions, at the present time educators may have to find their own content and references, target explicit outcomes, and interpret existing curricula. In reality, they may even have to write their own curriculum if it is not developed within their state or province and given the present situation this may be highly likely. Wilks, Cutcher & Wilks (2012) recently advised that the "reality is that in many art classrooms the possibilities have not yet been embraced. Art educators will need assistance to develop a vision for planning and interpretation of ICT in their curricula" (p. 64). The three school models discussed are examples of some possibilities.

The emphasis at all three schools is on building students' technical, aesthetic, literacy, and communication skills in relation to personalized student-centered content. In the case of Orangeville Collegiate Institute, attention is also placed on studying film/video history, specifically building students' film knowledge and critical analytical skills. Thus, all teachers involved in this study avoided a "point and shoot" teaching approach—namely to teach video merely by placing cameras in students hands. Watt (2008) states that media production is not uncomplicated, easy, and clear-cut; nor is it prescribed, methodic, and rigid. It is not merely a matter of pointing the camera to record. Freedman (2003) admonishes teachers who take this technician approach and advise them to take responsibility to guide students to a more critical practice. All educators who were involved in this study were informed by scaffolded learning

processes meaning that they built upon students' knowledge and skill development from lesson to lesson. Youths learned about the basics of film theory from developing skills and knowledge in researching, creating, and communicating, to disseminating artistic videos, while dealing with and developing competences in multimodal literacy.

It was found that Ms. Patterson, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Foster have developed a vision that student video production can be artistic, creative, of superb quality, and that this is possible with all students—even those who are at-risk. Based on the findings of this study it is recommended that educators teach using varied teaching styles and structure a video program that is project/content driven with student-centered curricula that fosters collaboration between students and collaboration between teachers. Effective supportive teacher-to-teacher collaborative partnerships help to foster strong programs. Planning an extensive dialogue with the community on an international, national and local level is key for a variety of reasons including dissemination and recognition of student works, fiscal support, the professional training of students, and added in-service training for teachers for the purpose of the acquisition of further filmmaking skills, content sharing, and knowledge acquisition. Lastly, even though there is a deep connection between conceptual intention, aesthetic production, and technical possibilities (Mullen & Rahn, 2010) it is important in a video program for technology to take a backseat to art. The primary role in teaching video is given to art. This enables students to strive for aesthetic vision, creative and artistic practice, and imaginative digital video. Merely teaching technology without an emphasis on art in a video class makes video production hollow and bereft of artistic merit. Consequently, student artistic learning lacks and leads to unimaginative uninspired video artworks. Thus, in outstanding digital video practices, it is key that students' skills and knowledge are grounded in aesthetic values and the arts.

Notes

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