Chapter 97
Public Art, Digital Technology, and Building Teacher Capacity

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ABSTRACT

Visual Art teachers of K-6 students are required to look at innovative ways to deliver and explore the elements of arts through creating and responding learning activities. They are also required to consider how digital technology can support these areas. This chapter presents an Australian project that invited 10 primary school visual art teachers to consider how they could integrate digital technology such as an interactive whiteboard and mobile devices while exploring an inquiry topic of public art. Narrative case studies are presented that highlight the teacher voice. Each narrative focuses on the building of capacity to meaningfully engage with digital technology while exploring visual art. The narratives provide insight into gaps in how some primary teachers engage with digital technology in the classroom, that is focusing more on the tuning in and evaluation stages of an inquiry unit.

INTRODUCTION

The possibilities of how arts education can increase the quality of education by engendering a range of cross-cutting skills and abilities and raising student motivation and active participation in class is reiterated by the United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Conference on Arts Education and subsequent Road Map for Arts Education (UNESCO, 2006). Specifically, the Road Map for Arts Education emphasizes the considerations of technology stating that observing the development of information and communication technologies (ICT) in all areas of societies and economies highlight the potential they represent for enhancing Arts Education; and thus encourages and promotes the development of art practices through digital media.

Technology can serve as an essential platform for collaboration among art teachers and between artists and other educators. An understanding of technology is central to a young person's preparedness for life in modern society, in which technology play a significant role. This understanding also empowers individuals to participate appropriately in understanding the impact technology has on their lives,

and how it contributes significantly to the personal, social, professional and cultural lives of everyone (Groundwater-Smith, Ewing & Le Cornu, 2007; Tapscott, 1998; Thomson, et al., 2010). Building students' capacity to engage with technology in the arts classroom supports the development of young peoples' understanding of personal, social and global contexts. Building capacity also scaffolds the understanding of technology in different contexts (Key & Stillman, 2009; Thomson, *et al.*, 2010).

Further more, the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, 2008) reiterates, curriculum should be designed to develop successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens. The declaration, which sets the direction for Australian schooling for the next 10 years, acknowledges that rapid and continuing advances in ICT are changing the ways people share, use, develop and process information. In the digital age that is currently present, young people need to be highly skilled in the use of ICT. In Australia, the Digital Education Revolution (DER) Strategy (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010) introduced in July 2009 is a national approach to implement systemic change to increase the level of ICT proficiency for teachers and school leaders. This project reiterates teachers and school leaders require access to rich online learning resources, world class technology curriculum and ICT professional development. According to the DER, 21st century schools require 21st century programs and educators capable of using 21st century resources and strategies for learning, and the vision is to empower teachers and school leaders to integrate ICT in education. This empowerment is to improve school effectiveness and provide students with the skills required for further education, training and to live and work in a digital world. The Australian Governments share the objective of raising overall attainment is so that all Australian school students acquire the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in society.

While there are political policies that address the need to integrate digital technology, so too do teacher professional standards and curriculum documentation. There are pressures for teachers to be "conversant in so-called twenty-first-century skills, grounded primarily in the ability to use digital technologies for pedagogical purposes" (Bullock, 2013, p.103). Not only is this push emerging from government curriculum documents but also teaching capabilities framed by policy documents addressing teaching standards. Utilising digital technologies in learning and teaching is a clear expectation of curriculum polices in Australia. With the Australian Curriculum (intended for children in primary school (children aged 5 to 12 years) and secondary school (children aged 13 to 18 years of age across all states and territories) prominent in this mix and to be implemented nationally in 2015, their rationale for technology integration is underpinned by the statements that "technologies enrich and impact on the lives of people and societies globally…[and that] all students benefit form learning about and working with traditional, contemporary and emerging technologies that shape the world we live in" (ACARA, 2013, p.1).

Underpinning these specific graduate standards connected to technology is an integration of how technology can meet these as well as all other standards. There is a strong presence for teachers to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of current and potential use of digital resources and tools. Explicitly teachers are required to demonstrate how they use technology to support teaching and learning, curriculum development, assessment, reporting to students and parents/carers, for achievement record keeping, as well as for professional development and communication with key stakeholders while also addressing the diverse needs of learners through learner-centered approaches. Teachers are also called upon to:

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