REFLECTIVE TEACHING PORTFOLIO: DITIGAL TECHNOLOGY IN HISTORY OF ART

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INTRODUCTION

PARTICIPATION IN THE SPRING 2017

THE TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

A series of workshops sponsored by the Center for Excellence In Teaching at Fashion Institute of Technology

- Demonstrate greater skills and awareness of teaching with technology methodologies.
- Determine appropriate technologies for the classroom.
- Responsibly integrate technology into teaching.
- Assess self-growth with regard to teaching with technology.

EXPERIENCE WITH ART AND DESIGN STUDENTS

At art and design universities such as the Pratt Institute, Parsons School of Design, and Fashion Institute of Technology, I realized that students indeed learned in many different ways. Some students were highly literate in visual formats while writing was not their forte. Others took the test well but were not so articulate in visual literacy. Many of them have never read a bible to my surprise but only knew a few episodes from it. On the other hand, I also learned that each year students were getting better and better in visual presentations with word and image together.

I have always welcomed technology in my classroom and enthusiastically embraced it in recent years. I encourage collaborative inquiry in my classes. I also do emphasize that learning is a social or communal activity. As I adopt a new mode of technology, I do acknowledge an error or a technical failure that could happen. For example, I learned how to incorporate a hot spot map quiz (you can drop a pin with your mouse on the location of a city or a town on the map; or point to a detail in an art work) in my online course. It took many hours to come up with a right-size image. I shared my trouble with my students and also solicited help from them. In the end, we were all happy with the result. I not only taught them how to learn but also how to invent a tool to learn more effectively. After I adopted this new tool, I noticed an improvement in an essay analyzing an art work. Students paid more attention to various symbols and patterns I asked them to point out in a hot spot quiz.

TEACHING PRACTICES AT FIT

I teach a conservative discipline of art history, yet make effort to incorporate many innovative tools such as the Facebook, Google Classroom, Google Drive, Artstor Digital Library, Timeline of Art History at the Metropolitan Museum, as well as latest features of the Blackboard suite.

I currently teach 2-3 sections of online East Asian Art and Civilization while 2 sections of the same course in a face-to-face class. I also developed a new online course of Korean Art and Civilization. This is the only online course across the entire SUNY campus. Students from other SUNY universities are taking this. Per year I end up teaching at least 6 sections of East Asian art in an online environment and another 4 in the classroom. This amounts to 250-300 students a year. I have been teaching these courses, both online and offline, for three and a half years. When I started teaching an online version, I developed a set of interactive tests (multiple choices, fill-in-the blanks, true/false questions) to supplement a traditional essay test common in most art history courses. My course materials also include a number of interactive video discussions, digital databases, digital image libraries, and online access to a number of museums relevant to her courses.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

How do I think learning occurs?

Students create their own understanding; they do not passively absorb information I provide. Learning is a two-way communication in which students acquire skills to get knowledge relevant to their needs from an experienced guide and in return a teacher is exposed to fresh, sometimes unexpected perspectives of students on materials with which he or she have had considered familiar after many years of research.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

What goals do I have for my students?

My objective in the classroom is to motivate students to learn meanings and contexts of important monuments considered as "works of art" so that they participate in a creative realm of art as keen observers of visual dominion of their past, present and future. By learning that artists and art works have been influenced by historical and social changes of their time, students should realize that their life and work are also going to be affected by their social and philosophical conditions. One of the most important goals I have for students, therefore, is for them to get the greatest benefit from knowledge of cultural history and ability of critical thinking acquired in my class whether or not they pursue a professional career in academia, business, or art-related fields. I believe that students properly trained in my class not only gather minutiae of historical facts but also challenge philosophical premises embedded in different methodologies of art history and express their opinions in proficient writing. Eventually, students learn that art history as a discipline is not an area isolated from their lives and interests. As E. H. Carr said, "History is a dialogue between the past and the present."

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

What do I do to implement my plans/intentions?

(1) Reading primary and secondary sources along with critical theory

Students in survey courses are encouraged to read pertinent passages in the Bible, lives of saints, Vasari's biography of artists, and other primary documents available in source books of art history. Advanced students are required to read primary sources and become familiar with the literature of distinguished art historians. I also introduce classical scholarship of the early 20th century along with some more provocative hypotheses in order to discuss the assumptions and intellectual tendencies underlying these suggestions. This is especially effective way of teaching historiography as well as art history in the periods such as the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. I pay special attention to comprehension of major concepts of critical theory or primary sources by giving a surprise quiz and having students write an in-class commentary on reading assignments.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

(2) Understanding historical backgrounds

Students must recognize that the historical and social context in which works of art were created and used is important to understand the artistic world. Art reflected the thoughts, the religious or philosophical ideas, or even the controversies of their civilizations; students need to realize that art and artists were a most important part of intellectual movements, and most certainly reflected them. After a few years of teaching, I realize that American students are often not as adept at European history and more often than not they may not have a good sense of historical periods older than 1800. I also make effort to relate European art to non-Western traditions using maps, diagrams, and timeline tables. At the same time, I frequently draw parallels to some of the art patronage and decision-making processes involving art projects in contemporary society such as the rebuilding of the World Trade Center of New York City and the Athenian rebuilding of the Parthenon.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

(3) Carefully designed assignments with emphasis on proficient writing

The first written assignment is designed to make students realize there are works of art that can appeal to their experience and personality. Students then begin to learn various elements that influence the creation of works, such as the status of the artist, the social and religious traditions, materials, period styles, and historical significance. A major portion of classroom time is used to discuss images of diverse works of art — the finest work as well as the less refined so they can begin to develop a discerning eye for quality and eventually a taste of connoisseurship. For a second paper, students may have some tools to discover that artworks contain more profound elements than figurative motifs and recognizable subject matters and write a more sophisticated paper with proper terms and historical contexts. By offering this educational experience with first-hand observations of works of art in museums, they are able to savor the intricate nature of artworks as aesthetic objects and as symbols of past civilizations. At the same time, I consider it my obligation to enhance students' writing ability. I invite a creative writing professor to give a short lesson or require students to edit their papers with a writing center. Results show that students try harder when I arrange an across-the-curriculum program of writing.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

(4) Fastidious assessment of assignments

In order to effectively communicate with students, it is important to spell out my expectations for students. I provide a precise guideline for a course policy, leaning objectives, goals, assignments, paper assessments, and a reading list in my syllabus. I usually give two exams, one paper, occasional oral presentations for both small and large projects, and sometimes a take-home exam for advanced students. For each of these requirements, I give detailed comments and provide rubrics with points divided for numerous criteria. Enthusiastic yet disciplined evaluation of assignments enables students to significantly improve their oral and written communication skills.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

(5) Course materials incorporated with digital technology and databases

When I teach courses on the ancient civilizations and the art of pre-modern Europe, I love to present materials using modern technology. This is not only relevant to the scope of my teaching encompassing visual culture of several thousand years ago, if not hundreds, but also appealing to most students. I cite websites and CD-ROMs of illuminated manuscript facsimiles as well as interactive programs of medieval architecture while all of my presentations are uploaded at the Blackboard or its equivalent program. Films and novels related to particular periods are often discussed and available on reserve at the library. I also give a tutorial session, often in collaboration with a reference librarian, of bibliographic database search JSTOR, ARTSTOR, BHA (Bibliography of History of Art). I do not think databases will replace a painstaking practice of perusing footnotes to look for more sources, students should be able to acquire information literacy with proper guidance in courses like art history filled with details, often obscure and arcane.

TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY

A SUCCESSFUL CASE

I gave a lesson on history of Goryeo celadon in my survey of Korean Art and Civilization. Celadon porcelain is rare, exquisite, and sophisticated. In order to contextualize the unique value of celadon porcelain, I compared it with contemporary porcelain of China, Japan, and Western Europe. Instead of stating that "this porcelain is unique in color and production," I simply showed comparable exampled and let students lead the discussion. Even though reproduced images do not replace the actual works of surviving celadon porcelain, students indeed understood why Goryeo celadon is unique, rare, and most refined. Examples of surviving works via digital databases at various museums and video documentaries were better than thousands of spoken words in the lecture. Effective demonstration with technological support could enhance student-centered learning.

TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY

A CHALLENGING CASE

Tombs and funerary works of art from ancient China are difficult to teach. Or colossal tombs of the Kofun period in Japan were also hard to explain to my students. I repeated the content I read and analyzed from historical books, but still I could not deliver the implication of these funerary projects. I have not overcome these challenges yet. One of the reasons would be that I have not visited these sites in person. Due to its "funerary" context, documentaries and other supporting materials for interactive learning are scarce. This is an ongoing challenge.

REFLECTIONS ON DIGITAL ART HISTORY

Art history always needed reproduced images as integral elements of in-depth research. Art museums are now leading players of teaching with technology. When I was in college in the 1990s, we were studying with 3.5 mm slides. When I started teaching around 1999, digital photography and presentation software gradually became a mainstream tool. In the last fifteen years, the development in reproduced images are so spectacular that I am now learning a tool for Virtual Reality. Due to the nature of my discipline, technology should be embraced and celebrated. I am proud that I am an early adaptor. I also share my experience of learning new tools with my students. Then they will be effective users of technology.

FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE VERSUS TECHNOLOGY

I always tell my students that seeing art works in person would be most fundamental. No other technological tools cannot replace that. Nonetheless, technological innovations should be welcomed and praised. With visualization tools, students can learn how to "visualize" their understanding of an old period or a lost art work. The more I get acquainted with data visualization tools, the more I pay attention to effective demonstration of a historical synopsis of a period or an art work. Ongoing education is crucial for my development to become a successful instructor providing an optimal learning environment. Audio-visual tools are also crucial for students with various types of learning styles and disabilities.

PLANS TO TEACH WITH TECHNOLOGY

SPATIAL EXPERIENCE THROUGH VIRTUAL REALITY

I am now looking for an interactive learning tool for students to explore space. A VR demonstration offered by CET was very promising for me. With a 3D-interactive tool, students can explore inside tombs by looking up and down. Or a scale of colossal statues or buildings could be constructed in a VR setting. Students can "experience" a visit to Chartres Cathedral circa 1300, for example. I also developed a website called the Bamboo Canvas (http://bamboocanvas.org) to teach diverse techniques of materials and techniques of Asian arts and crafts with short video documentaries. I see that the learning outcome from this resource is significantly improved. After attending this technology certificate program, I would like to incorporate more tools such as library resources or image databases.

PLANS TO TEACH WITH TECHNOLOGY

APPROACHES TO STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING

Students are more engaged because they are not passive listeners. They are operators of these tools. They can select a topic and delve into research if they like to know specific elements. As students are excited about the tool itself, I can invite them to talk more about "their" personal experience. During the conversation, however, I can guide them to focus more on a historical event or a political change relevant to the discussion of our learning in that particular period or country. For me, it is a facilitating tool, not the ultimate goal because I teach a discipline of history. If I know an instructor teaching software development, this type of experience focusing on the content in my class could generate a meaningful conversation about how to modify certain features within a technological tool for a different discipline.

PLANS TO TEACH WITH TECHNOLOGY

RECEPIENT OF SUNY INNOVATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY GRANT (IITG)

Because I am involved with Asian Studies minor in the School of Liberal Arts, I have paid close attention to courses developed and taught by my colleagues in Asian Studies. I am now developing a new website to be part of her Asian art courses. The Bamboo Canvas will include documentaries and video links to demonstrate how to practice techniques of Asian art and design. My students inspired me to focus more on ecological environments of artistic materials frequently used in Asian art. To make this learning more accessible to art and design students, I wanted to collect visual presentations in the form of video files and documentaries instead of a long narrative in text. I will also incorporate assessment tools with learning materials so that I can monitor progress. I was fortunate to receive a tier-one grant from SUNY IITG in 2016-2017 and will renew this support in 2017-2018 with a tier-three grant. I will expand the current website of the Bamboo Canvas with new tools for visualization of data.

PLANS TO TEACH WITH TECHNOLOGY

INTERNATIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY WITH SUNY COIL PROGRAM

In 2016-2017 I was one of the first instructors trained in the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), an international education opportunity of SUNY. I taught a COIL module in my new course, Asian American Art and Design in the fall 2016. My research partner and I created a Facebook page for this project; supervised collaborative assignments of students from FIT and from Universidad del Caribe in Cancun, Mexico; and presented multimedia lessons to both campuses. In the spring 2017, I partnered with a professor at Tianjin Normal University (TJNU) and with a professor at Osaka Kansai University. Because China did not approve any Google products, my partner and I had to use the Blackboard and non-Google chatting apps. I had a two-hour video conference with my students at FIT and Chinese students at TJNU using Skype for our final presentations. Teaching with technology is crucial in facilitating international learning with colleges outside the United States. I will explore more tools for video conferencing and data sharing for my international partners.

PLANS TO TEACH WITH TECHNOLOGY

ASSESSMENT

I always run a statistical survey as well as receive written essays in my class. I devise an essay question to see whether students grasped a specific lesson in a new technological resource I bring in. For example, students had to write an essay analyzing an art work they chose at a museum's digital database after watching a documentary on the Bamboo Canvas. Students finally understood why good-quality paper composed of mulberry fibers is critical to the development of colorful painting of the Kano School in Japan. In addition to that, I also talk to random students whenever I can. Most students have expressed an enthusiasm for learning when I incorporate new tools.