The Visual Arts and the i-Generation
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Introduction

How do Students Benefit and Integrate their Learning from Art and Computers in Education Courses and Their Use of Digital Technology in Other Areas of Life?

Research Objectives:
The purpose of this research study was to investigate how students benefit and integrate their learning from their art and use of digital technology in other areas of life.

The guiding questions for this study were:
1. Do the art education courses assist students in their digital world?
2. Do the professors in the art and computers in education courses assist the students in making connections between the two disciplines?

Methodological Approach

This study utilized a participatory action research approach. A constant comparative approach was used to identify patterns, themes, and categories of analysis that emerged out of the data. The students survey data was exported into MS Excel in order to statistically analyze the Likert-scale questions and thematically code the open-ended question responses. A constant comparative approach was used to identify patterns, themes, and categories of analysis that emerged out of the data. The students survey data was exported into MS Excel in order to statistically analyze the Likert-scale questions and thematically code the open-ended question responses.

Theoretical Framework

They have been called the i-Generation, Generation Y, Millennials, Speeders, Generation X, 21st Century Learners, and Digital Natives. Whatever the label, the students we see in our post-secondary courses are coming to us with different skills, experiences and expectations. They are an informed and knowledgeable generation due to Internet and other e-technologies...But are they verbally and visually literate?
The focus of this study was on visual literacy.

Discussion

The results from the data suggest that the majority of students use digital devices on a daily basis, can decide if a website has good or weak design, and believe that they experience art in everyday life.

Less than half of the students surveyed believe that they have a good understanding of digital design, have the ability to create good digital images, or see any connection between the art and computers in education courses.

Scholarly Significance of the Study

A review of the literature supports visual literacy and visual arts education for pre-service education students but in practice the professors and lab instructors responsible for the educational technology courses do not always have the background expertise in visual literacy and art education and therefore are less able to assist students in creating digital images that are original and well designed.

The authors of this study recommended that art education professors and lab instructors incorporate the use of digital technologies in their courses in order to assist students in making the connection regarding aesthetic judgment and the use of digital images.

References


