Lesson Example 10. 1 Instagram and Video Production

Subject: Art/Civics
Level: Junior High School
Country: Greece

Inspired by a twelve-year-old boy's Instagram account, and with his help, Maria taught video production to the class in which he belonged. Coordinated with a whole-school project on the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights Day of December 10, Maria's class made a documentary in which her students read every article of the Declaration.

The boy's Instagram account was called *@asproulis14_offical, asproulis* being Greek for white bear, and it contained a number of stories in which Asproulis is the lead character. The stories of his adventures were created from digital photographs and videos. Conforming to the genre of stop-motion animation, the stories were set in the boy's living room and involved a cast of stuffed toys from his large collection. Some stories were typical of television broadcasts of soccer games with advertisements and interviews with players. One team of players, 'Stuffed Animals', often played against the famous English team of Arsenal.

Maria recognized that the boy was very familiar with framing shots, lighting, composition, and editing, as well techniques to create surprise and establish emotional engagement. And like so many young cultural producers his skills were used in the service of parody.

Wishing to draw upon this boy's interest and obvious ability, and recognizing that her students lived many hours on line, Maria designed a project-driven unit for her junior high school art class that engaged with the Declaration of Human Rights Day. The unit began with a screening of *@asproulis14_offical* videos, with its author describing his process. Maria was again impressed, this time by how able he was in describing how he would produce a specific result. For example, he described the amount and direction of light required for some shots, as well as the need to take multiple photographs to create particular effects.

 The class discussed the stories and then developed their own miniature photographic studio. This consisted of a simple white sheet of paper curled up to form both the floor and background and flanked by reflecting screens on either side. Students brought in their own stuffed teddy bears - every child had managed to obtain one - and readied to make videos. Time was limited so instead of teaching about photographic and video techniques, Maria used the format used by the mentioned above, who, having been told about the project, had already completed it. The bears were placed on the curled paper between the reflecting screens and 'made to talk'. The voice overs consisted of each student reading one article of the Declaration of Human Rights.

Students read articles and were also told, about how people around the world were organizing activities in support of campaigns to prevent human inequality and suffering.

The students took photographs of their teddy bear, recorded and synchronized their voice over, and edited their video. They were helped by a couple of students who, because of their out-of-school

activities on-line, were already familiar with video production.

Additionally, a corkboard was erected onto which Maria encouraged students to post their personal responses to Human Rights Day. As a further prompt for discussion, Maria included a photograph that had been taken by a child who had lived for some time in a refugee camp. The photograph showed the child's teddy bear inside a destroyed building.

Finally, a small exhibition was staged during which the video was screened and discussion ensued over the issues raised. While Maria's intention had been only to raise issues about refugees, other issues were raised by the students. For example, some students disputed whether queer community rights qualified as a legitimate human right. For Maria, one of the important features of the project was that as the students read each of the articles of the Declaration, they were not only embodying an artwork but a crucial lesson in civic education.

Letsiou, M. (2019). 'Me and My Teddy Bear: Students' Online Production Intersects with Art Learning', *Snnyt/Origins*, 2: 1155-1171.

Lesson Example 10.2 Dialogic Pedagogy

Subject: Media Literacy
Level: Grade 4
Country: United States

Three teachers taught a short sequence of lessons that asked students to talk back to advertisements by critically thinking about how they could be influenced by media messages. While keen to develop a critical consciousness, the teachers were aware that too often adult critique of popular culture is viewed by students as finding fault with what they find pleasurable. Thus, they were committed to a dialogic pedagogy, a balancing act that involved guiding critique while acknowledging student's own pleasure.

The teachers were inspired by self-proclaimed guerilla artist Ji Lee, who places word balloons over advertisements in public places; thus, the name of their project, *The Elementary Bubble Project*.

Teaching began with a group discussion on advertising and commercialism in mainstream media stimulated by a PowerPoint presentation that asked the following questions: Where do you find advertising? What does the media tell us about beauty and products that we don't necessarily need. Who decides what is advertised and how is it done? The teachers used examples from Ji Lee, though they could have used pictures drawn from the internet with word balloons placed over them using PowerPoint or Photoshop. The examples they used included advertisements for clothing and perfume with comments in the speech bubbles that included critique about how beauty is represented in the media. One of the advertisements featured a heavily made-up woman wearing a bikini top and miniskirt, although it is an advertisement for shoes that are only just visible in the picture. The photograph had been digitally distorted with the woman's head out of proportion with the rest of her exposed, noticeably thin body. The text of the speech bubble read, "I am hideously deformed!" The fourth graders initially found the picture and text difficult to understand. Though discussion, however, they did appear to grasp how the advertisement offered an unrealistic and unhealthy view of beauty.

Another advertisement, this time for a health maintenance company, used an image of a smiling young family. The speech bubble coming from the mouth of the man says, "Why doesn't the government insure our health?" Although this topic was above the heads of most of the students, two students who had recently experienced what having no health care insurance meant to their own families were able to help their peers make connections and so understand the advertisement.

The teachers then provided students with examples of advertising with blank speech bubbles and asked: What could be written in them? One example showed a woman with full make up asleep in her bed, which led students to comment sarcastically on this absurdity, and, in turn, to comment on how women are often objectified. The students referenced back to the picture of the woman advertising the shoe.

By the time students examined further examples on the PowerPoint presentation they appeared aware that advertisements carried messages other than 'buy me,' and they were keen to

try their hand at making their own speech bubbles. Student were provided with blank speech bubbles, glue sticks, and pencils, and unlike a typical writing exercise where students work independently, students worked in groups where they were immediately engaged with each other.

Students read between the lines of the advertisements and their teachers in turn had to read between the lines of the student-made bubbles. The teachers were able to categorise the student responses into three main groups: humor, social critique, and what they called 'pleasure'. Half the class responded with humor. For example, with an advertisement featuring a photograph of the popular singer Shakira the student used a speech bubble that read, "I shook too much in my video and my hips broke." This referenced one of her songs 'Hips Don't Lie' and her agile dancing. The fourth graders found this hilarious.

About a third of the class responded with a social critique. In response to an advertisement for a sugary drink that featured a popular celebrity, the student had blacked out one of the celebrity's teeth and used a speech bubble that read: "Pepsi is no good. It makes your teeth rotten'.

Each example talked back to the primary message of their advertisement by identifying its subtext and offering an alternative point-of-view. Although the level of the social critique was not strong, such responses indicated that even fourth graders do not blindly fall for advertising messages.

A third kind of response appeared to combine both humor and critique which the teachers categorized as 'pleasure' in recognition that students often find pleasure in popular culture texts that adults may not appreciate. An example involved Disney's Cheetah Girls posing with trendy accoutrements such as leopard print dresses and dangling jewelry, and a speech bubble that echoed the Chettah Girls speech patterns 'We SO have good fashion tips!!!'. Was the student sarcastically indicating some distance from their media celebrities, buying into their message, or indicating some ambivalence? Like other examples in this category of response, it remained unclear.

Finally, students displayed their work throughout the room and viewed and discussed the work of their classmates. This drew further insights, some merely humorous or ambiguous, but some also involved critique that demonstrated that fourth graders, given practice and not just a one-off lesson, are capable of becoming media literate.

The teachers admit that at times they may have been too leading and at other times they feared they were not guiding the students to be critical at all, but they were committed to a dialogical pedagogy that offered the students the opportunity to explore their own voice. Concerned to avoid a didactic finger pointing at the media, or to suggest that their students were dupes, they sometimes went along with the students own enjoyment. They concluded that they had not arrived at their destination of critically aware students, but remained committed to walking with their students and learning from them as they go.

Gainer, J.S, Gainer-Valdez, N., Kinard, T. (2009), 'The Elementary Bubble Project; Exploring Critical Media Literacy in a Fourth-Grade Classroom', *The Reading Teacher,* 62 (8): 674-683.

Lesson Example 10.3 Anchoring

Subject: English Language
Level: Year 1
Country: England

A generalist teacher, working with an assistant, used a picture book to in a 'shared reading' class to demonstrate the importance of words to locating the meaning of pictures.

Instead of reading the picture book in the normal way, with pictures and words fully on display for the children to see and read, except for the front cover with the title, she covered up all the words. As she proceeded through the book, turning one page after another, she invited the children to suggest what was happening and what they thought might happen next. What are the characters thinking and feeling, and where is the story set, she asked. What clues are helpful? Is it the facial expressions? She constantly asked, 'How do you know? Why do you say that?' Her intention was to have the students discuss, generate ideas and understand the basics of plot and characterization.

The teacher has used this activity many times. Sometimes she has the children answer by putting up their hands; at other times, they discuss as a pair, using their 'talk partners'; and at other times they write key words on the whiteboard.

Sometimes the class is broken into three groups. The higher ability children are given copies of the pictures from the book and, working independently, they are required to write their own words to the story. A middle ability group, working with a teacher assistant, are given pictures that have been shuffled out of order and, as group, they undertake guided writing. They compose a series of sentences to accompany the pictures. A third group of lower achieving students are also given the pictures shuffled out of order but they are offered a variety of sentence starters such as 'First of all…' and 'Next…' and 'Finally…' These students work with the teaching assistant to compose sentence to describe what is happening.

In a final session, the teachers bring all the students' efforts together and compare them to the original.

Tod, I. (2013), 'Visual Literacy,' in Metcalfe, J., D. Simpson, I. Todd, I., and M. Toyn, M. (eds), *Thinking Through New Literacies for Primary and Early Years,* 102–116, London: Sage.

Lesson Example 10.4 Making Films

Subject: Film Studies/ Civics
Level: High School
Country: The Netherlands

A team of teachers taught a 10-week media literacy program to 100 newly-arrived migrant students. The program was called 'Media Literacy through Making Media' as part of 'International Transition Classes'.

The students faced a number of problems specific to them as new migrants and thus also to their teachers. Young migrants, especially refugees, are often the subject of negative, stereotypical representations in the media – immature, dependent and dangerous – and they commonly have little choice other than positioning themselves in relation to the stereotypes. News stories commonly privilege images over textual information and do not cover the migrant's their point-of-view, the environment from which they have escaped, or their struggle to arrive in a host country. The students, aged between 16 -18 years, had arrived from many parts of the world's serious trouble spots and many had suffered traumatic experiences.

The program began with a 30-minute video experience in which teachers and students formed a circle and the students were introduced to the basic skills of turning cameras on and off, framing, and adjusting light sources. In pairs, they filmed each other telling something of their own, individual stories. This not only broke the ice, the students learned what it is like to film and also what it is like to be filmed. They learned, for example, not to use exaggerated laugher and to moderate their tone of voice.

Week two began with studying traditional, linear storytelling by examining films for how they typically develop characters, conflicts, and climaxes. What were the student's favorite films? How were they structured? Students mentioned many different kinds of movies, and reflecting their diverse backgrounds, movies from many parts of the world. Given this range, students began to see there were common narrative structures among the media that were reproduced globally. Students created their own storyboards using pictures taken from their smart phones. Each student chose a picture from the archive of images on their phone. These were then lined up with everyone else's to create different whole-class narratives. Scenarios ranged from romantic love to a mafia boss failing to escape from the police.

In week three, students interviewed each other and created a news report. Week four and five saw them creating either a television commercial or a piece of propaganda, as well as a video blog. Some students chose to make a video about their school. After a discussion on fake news some chose to satirize their school by representing bad and angry teachers. Normally these students were the subject of negative media representations; this activity gave them the opportunity not only to enjoy the pleasure of transgression but to feel the power of symbolic possession.

In week six, as an exercise in identity construction, the students created a new social media profile for themselves. In week seven they dealt with privacy issues, cyber bullying, and sexting, by

exploring their own and other's digital footprint. Initially, the students claimed that sexting was a western phenomenon but then some admitted that they deleted their digital history each night so that their parents could not see what they had been watching. They handed over their smartphones to each other to explore which ones seemed private verses ones they did not mind being made public.

In the last few weeks, as an exercise in the use of rhetoric and self-presentation, the students created a video curriculum vitae designed to be used soon as they graduated and sought employment. They drew storyboards, filmed in spaces of their choice, and edited it themselves. Some listed their skill sets straight to camera while one boy described himself with captions and images appropriated from other sources. Still another student represented herself doing what she intended to do in the future as well as conducting an interview with one of the teachers on her character.

Finally, in week ten, the students archived and screened their visual reports to their whole class.

With this particularly vulnerable population of students, the media literacy program offered the opportunity to reimagine their identity as powerful and worthy. The students, literally, not only metaphorically, revisioned how they saw themselves as well as how they wished to be seen by others. It helped to familiarize them with the norms of their adopted homeland, and, also, it served the utilitarian function of helping them obtain employment.

Leurs, K., Omerović, E., Bruinenberg, H., and Sprenger, S. (2018), 'Critical Media Literacy through Making Media: A Key to Participation for Young Migrants?' *Communications,* 43 (3): 427–450

Example Lesson 10.5 Video Editing

Subject: Media Arts
Level: Year 3
Country: Australia

Using the video editing software iMovie, a teacher managed to incorporate the first four of the five key concepts of the Australian Media Arts curriculum though just one basic activity, namely video editing. The key concepts of the curriculum incorporated were technical language, a sense of audience, representation, and technology. The only concept not covered was media institutions. And as described below, the lesson was also an exemplar of media arts pedagogy.

Four MacBook laptops were made available during the hour-long lessons. In the first week, only four students were taken through the learning experience. The following week, these students were employed as mentors for four new students, a process that was repeated until every class member had experienced two of these sessions, once as a novice and once as a mentor. The first lesson involved four stages: introducing the iMovie interface; selecting key sequences of video footage and adding them to the timeline; applying video effects, transitions and titles; and sharing the results. To avoid the difficulties of loading material, the teacher provided previously uploaded footage shot from around their school grounds. The footage of the school was chosen because, being familiar and local, it was meaningful to the students.

Learning about the iMovie interface lasted for just fifteen minutes. Students were asked to turn on the computers and launch the software, and once the program was running, the students clicked the play button to make each of the video clips play in the viewer. The teacher described these as 'little movies', with the suggestion that they were going to use these little movies to make their own good movie'. Avoiding the use of technical jargon, she explained that the students needed to move these little movies from the 'bottom section' to the 'top section' of the interface. She then showed the students how to play a small section of a moving image clip explaining that to include it in the 'good movie' they needed to select it and drag it to the top section. She carefully demonstrated this process as the group looked at her laptop screen, and she answered questions and repeated the process as required. At this point, the teacher introduced the term 'clip' to describe the small movie and asked the students to use their own laptops to select and add four clips to the top section. The students were allowed to experiment with this process and the teacher only intervened when students needed help. This part of the lesson was play-based, not the kind of lock-step process used in some kinds of technology education. Instead of having to replicate the teacher's demonstration, students were free to choose whichever clips they preferred and to experiment. They were excited to be making movies and itching to get their hands on the laptops. Initially some students had trouble dragging and dropping clips, but with individual help they quickly learned.

The teacher now focused on production and concepts. Introducing the term *timeline*, she asked the students to consider the length of the clips they had added to their 'good movie'. She pointed to a clip on her own timeline that was thirty-six seconds long and asked the students to close their eyes and quietly count to thirty-six. Was the clip too long or too short? Everyone said it appeared to be

very long. The teacher pointed out that many clips on television are five seconds in duration and some even shorter. The students were then shown how to shorten their clips.

The students then further experimented by changing the colour saturation, adjusting the clip speed, slowing it down and speeding it up, reversing the motion, and adding x-ray effects. With expressions of joy, they were highly engaged.

Peer-mentoring began as the students pooled their collective knowledge to get better results. Realizing that the clips were malleable, and also with the sudden desire to show their videos to others, they began to alter their clips to communicate a message to an audience. As they chatted enthusiastically among themselves, it was evident to the teacher that the students were drawing upon their previously acquired knowledge of storytelling and representation. They linked their own creative process with their understanding of pictorial codes and conventions; for example, they noted that black-and-white images were associated with history and, from a storytelling perspective, also time travel.

Then the teacher demonstrated how to add transitions between their clips and titles to the movie as a whole. She deliberately used the terms *transitions* and *titles*, terms that the students almost immediately began using themselves. The students were again allowed to experiment, this time by adding different transitions and titles. Adding titles made the clips appear more professional and students wanted to show them to an audience. Could they burn their movie on a DVD so they could be put on 'the big screen?' The teacher agreed that they could, and she also asked them to consider what they particularly liked about each video. Although the students tended to be critical of their own videos, they were quite supportive about each other's work.

The lesson concluded with the teacher telling the four students that next week they would be helping her teach a new group of students how to use the software.

The following week the original four appeared to enjoy playing the role of teacher, although they had to be reminded not to take over or to skip ahead to do 'the cool stuff', but to show and explain along the way.

This lesson includes the basic elements of typical Media Arts pedagogy. It included scaffolded experimentation and play-based learning and training a core group of experts to train others. The lesson introduced the language of media arts, used relevant technology, drew upon students' knowledge of representation, and elicited an awareness of audience.

Dezuanni, M. and Levido, A. (2011). 'Year 3 Media Arts: Teaching the Key Concepts through Video Editing [online]', *Screen Education,* 62: 40–46.

Lesson Example 10.6 YouTube and Video Production

Subject: Art
Level: Middle School
Country: United States

Sherri drew upon her middle school students' knowledge and use of YouTube to teach a nine-week unit on video production. The unit was mandatory and with some low achieving students her work was cut out. The project involved producing three to five minute documentaries on subjects of their own choice.

Students were paired according to their interests, which included cutting, the war on terror, peer pressure, and bullying. Sherri instructed them to search out information on their topic from a range of diverse sources, including the library, the internet, and family and friends. Nonmatter their personal views, they were to present multiple points of view on their chosen topic. Further, they were to write reflective journals and to consider copyright laws regarding fair use, an important issue since they would be downloading various kinds of media content for use in their videos. They could also use their own drawings and the animations they had produced in a previous semester.

The two students who chose as their topic the war-on-terror worked diligently though with different motives. One was eager to celebrate the sacrifice soldiers were making while the other student wanted to show how the war was effecting the United States more generally. They began by watching YouTube videos for footage on the war, but also they researched still images that both protested against and argued for the war. They conducted interviews with their classmates as well as downloading news footage of soldiers in combat. In making their video, they combined each of these sources. While one of the students was deeply committed to conducting the war, he valiantly tried to include both sides. Having finished the video, he commented, 'It's not about putting a bunch of clips together; to get the message across, I had to listen over and over and edit it'.

Another pair of students tackled students cutting themselves. Initially their motivation was merely to show that some students in their school were self-injuring but as they researched their focus shifted to both trying to prevent it and having their friends who cut better understand themselves. They too turned to YouTube for material. Their video begins with a voice over reading a poem of an anonymous student who had cut herself. This is followed by a narrative of symbolic images of cutting found online, manipulated with Photoshop and synchronized to soft background music. Several interviews with students who cut themselves were included although intercut with other images to protect privacy. Rather than show cutting itself, the students shared stories and the feelings of those interviewed. They experimented with angle-of-view and framing, and inspired by watching YouTube videos, they shot and several times reshot.

Another pair of students dealt with anorexia, again drawing on YouTube for inspiration. These two students learned how easy it is to manipulate photographs with editing programs and how frequently they are used in the fashion industry.

Each pair of students drew upon YouTube, watching both professional and amateur videos. Based on their own practice in making videos, they were able to identify the editing software used as well as the use of effects, fonts and transitions. The extent to which students appropriated professional pictures from YouTube and elsewhere raised the issue of copyright. Students complained that fair-use guidelines were confusing, and that strict compliance with what they understood were the rules was restricting. Nevertheless, they acknowledged that 'stealing' was wrong. Sherri thought that by making their own video helped them to realize the importance of respecting intellectual property. Overall, Sherri felt confident that her students learned not only some degree of technical proficiency, but also to appreciate something of how complex visual communication and meaning construction can be. In this way, her students became active participants in their multi-modal world.

Lin, C-C., and Polaniecki, S. (2009). 'From Media Consumption to Media Production: Applications of YouTube in an Eight Grade Video Documentary Project', *Journal of Visual Literacy*, 28 (1): 92–107.

Picture Pedagogy Online Resources – Lesson Examples

Lesson Example 10.7 Criticality versus Critical Discourse

Subject: Media Education
Level: Middle School
Country: United States

Hong-An, at the time a doctoral student, facilitated a workshop with seven self-selected sixth grade students as part of an afterschool program in a local library. The workshop, called Minecraft Modification, ran over five weeks with two hours per session.

Hong-An had previously taught workshops that focused exclusively on the technical skills of playing video games, but having noticed disturbing issues embedded in the games, such as sexism and racism, she now wanted to encourage a critical consciousness among her young participants. She was to learn the difference between age-appropriate criticality and the analytical framework of critical discourse. Her workshop experience points to limitations of critical pedagogy that are often overlooked.

The overriding goal was for participants to redesign the multiplayer game Minecraft in a way that was, for her, politically correct, that is, devoid of the sexism that she identified as embedded in the game. Her first prompt in this direction was to ask why some players, like themselves, loved Minecraft and similar games, but others did not. She also asked why people who made modifications to the games, or mods, made different kinds of mods. The participants' answers were varied but in her view shallow: better,' 'safer', 'easier', 'friendlier', and 'more efficient'. She then asked why certain video game titles might not be friendly and to whom. Again, answers appeared legitimate but shallow: motion sickness; and a preference for different kinds of themes, characters, and stories. To elicit the kind of socially critical answers she was attempting to elicit, she screened a video called *Damsel in Distress: Part 2 - Tropes vs Women in Video Games*. (Available on YouTube). The host of the video critiqued the narrative pattern of damsels in distress or non-player characters. In response one boy commented, 'I never thought of this. I guess that's kinda sad'. However, like him, none of the other students provided deeper reflections that related to their personal experience about these critiques; they merely agreed without further comment. Furthermore, even upon recognizing that there were no playable female characters in Minecraft, participants did not incorporate such understanding in the alternative mods they went on later to make.

Hong-An realized that, as an adult, while she had grasped patriarchal-based norms being pervasive and not limited to gaming practices, her young middle schoolers had not yet done so. She alone had named the internalised norms by which females were supposed to abide. Her middle school students were being socialized and disciplined into these norms, but they were yet to understand these norms as a coherent set of directives for disciplining their personal actions. They simply did not identify their personal experience as conforming to these norms and values. Moreover, perhaps in seeing the way women were treated in video games as sad, or similar, participants were only behaving in a way designed to agree with her as an authority figure. However, while participants did not develop critiques of Minecraft in terms of gender, some participants developed critiques of Minecraft in terms of the societal expectations and disciplining of them as minors. Students noted that Minecraft was marketed to younger players like themselves; it

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represented an open-ended world without a strong narrative arc. They perceived Minecraft to be, like other games marketed to them, what they called 'neutral' in tone. They understood that a thematic difference existed between the types of games deemed suitable for them and the types of games rated as inappropriate for them. There was no rendering of violence or criminality in games designed for older people. Minecraft could be played violently with users destroying/killing each other, but it was not an essential part of the game.

They perceived this divide as a means to structure the ways they were supposed to interact and play, which aligned with and embodied the imbalanced power relationships that shaped their lives every day. And they complained it was unjust. Why couldn't they play the older games they knew about? They also noted various discrepancies related to the rating system for games. As one participant noted, 'Why is Minecraft [rated] PG but that's R… we can kill [people] in both of them'. In the mods they produced, they drew upon video game titles that were often marketed toward adults.

Hong-An speculated that their mods could have been acting as a rite of passage for young boys where they were mimicking the way their adult role-models played. Or were they challenging their conditions as children through mimicking adult play? They appeared to recognize, transcend, and transgress social expectations in terms of age. Unlike their understandings of gender, they appeared well versed in the power relations embedded in norms and values around age and maturity. As individuals who had often been corrected and regulated based on their classification as children, they were keenly aware of the social conventions that differentiate norms of childhood versus adulthood.

Contrary to the norms and values of gender that Hong-An had been keen to focus on, participants had already fully internalized age-related expected behaviors. They were fully able to name the various norms that shaped their behavior, although they were also moving to challenge these conventions based on their questions about the rationale of these values.

Hong-An learned not to conflate criticality with analytical knowledge about social issues that did not yet align with students' personal experiences. And she recommends that others should not do so. At the same time, this does not mean she thought that students' views on social issues should go unchallenged.

Wu, H. (in-press). 'The Dilemma of "Teaching" Criticality: Reflections on a Developmental Perspective of Critical Consciousness among Youth with Digital Games', *The International Journal of Arts Education,* 17 (2).