Technology: The Driving Force of Globalizing Art Education

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Abstract

Technological advancements have allowed more people to experience the world through travel and communication technologies. Based on new global experiences, people examine their own belief systems and question their “truisms” within their own cultures, and this examination often leads to a change in their world views and beliefs (Tavin & Hausman, 2004) then may result in a formation of new global cultural identities. Art education can help students explore and develop their identities through their artworks. The purpose of this paper is to explore how technology impacts globalization in the practice of visual art education. Technology and an intercultural art curriculum are discussed as tools for exploring identity, global issues, and world cultures and traditions.

Promoting cultural diversity and developing our unique individual identities have been an important topic for arts educators (Steers, 2009). Both national and ethnic arts and traditions need to be preserved and not lost in the process of creating global identities. An intercultural art curriculum can help celebrate and maintain these arts and traditions. Using technology, art curricula can help students understand the world they live in and encourage them to develop their own cultural identities. Authentic learning opportunities in and out of the art classroom must be utilized—travel, exchange programs, and collaboration with students from other cultures—creating a platform for intercultural exchange and understanding (Parks, 2009).

It is suggested that art teachers must learn to utilize new technologies to enrich the student’s experiences and to provide them with ways to connect with other students around the globe. The way that we teach, the tools that we use are changing and the teachers should adapt in order to provide support and guidance for students who are developing their own identities in this increasingly global world.

**Technology: The Driving Force of Globalizing Art Education**

The exact meaning of globalization is hotly debated—particularly in the field of art education. An American economist, Joseph Stiglitz, defines globalization as "the closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world . . . brought about by the enormous reduction of costs of transportation and communication, and the breaking down of artificial barriers to the flows of goods, services, capital, knowledge, and people across borders" (as cited in Dower, 2003, papa. 1).  Stiglitz’s definition of globalization served as a conceptual foundation for this study. While globalization affects all aspects of our lives, this paper will mainly focus on how technology effects the globalization of art education.1Utilizing technology, **c**ontemporary art education has a unique opportunity to explore individual and global cultural identities, enhance the context of global awareness through intercultural studies, examine the impact of technological advances and posit necessary changes.

Globalization affects how we view ourselves, our cultures, and our art.  In Section One, I will examine how globalization affects the development of our cultural identity. This section seeks to answer the following questions: 1. How do advancements in technology affect globalization? 2. What forms and informs cultural identity? 3. How does technology in and out of the art classroom help the student form a more global identity? It is important to maintain your cultural identity while being a responsible global citizen (Desai, 2005) and developing global cultural identity.

Section Two discusses the implication of intercultural studies for the art classroom. Art classes offer students a unique opportunity to study other cultures as well as to explore their own national and ethic cultures. Intercultural research works promote a better understanding of other cultures—their unique customs, traditions, and ultimately, their peoples.  The contemporary educator can utilize technology in classroom instruction, virtual interactions and travel opportunities to enhance globalization in art education.

 Technology in art education is explored in Section Three. Because of more efficient and inexpensive communication and transportation, the world that we live in is changing. The world is getting smaller through technology and travel; people from different countries are becoming more interconnected.  Information is available almost instantly through electronic devices aiding in the investigation and study of other cultures—past and contemporary—as well as current world issues. This section addresses different ways that technology can support globalizing the art classroom.

Throughout this paper, technology is found to be the driving force—the critical factor—for globalizing art education. The importance of reflecting upon one’s own culture and authentic experiences in travel while learning about other cultures will be explored as well as maintaining your cultural identity as part of your global identity.

**Technological Effects of Globalization on Cultural Identity**

Today’s world is increasingly interconnected, through commerce, travel, and media. Technology has advanced to the point that domestic and global travel is within the reach of more people—the cost of travel and the time it takes are lower than ever before. People are traveling and communicating electronically with people from all over the globe. The ease of global tourism and the immense information technologies (books, the Internet, and movies) have created shared images made from cultural traditions worldwide; allowing artists to expand their thinking and to see in new ways (Marshall, 2009). In the art classroom, these global visual images are used to help explore new ideas and ways of thinking.

Our daily lives are affected by globalization (Marshall, 2009) in how we view ourselves, our cultural identity, and our art. Through the modern technologies of communication and transportation, people are more globally focused—impacted by their global experiences and influenced by other parts of the world.  We are exposed to visual images from all over the world through travel, media, mass communication, and social media.  In a growing number of areas throughout the world, people are changing their views and beliefs through exposure to this visual culture (Tavin & Hausman, 2004).  When you travel the world (virtually or physically) perceptions change and this influences your views and actions (Tavin & Hausman, 2004).  With a trend towards a standardization of the world, it may be hard to find a balance between cultural identity and that of being part of a global community.

            Our cultural identity is defined by our experiences—what and who we relate to, what we believe in.  It includes knowledge, art, laws, morals, and customs that have been assimilated by a person during their lifetime (Tokkulovna, 2013).  As we gain experiences through our continual global connections, we begin to question the norms found within our culture.  When living or traveling abroad we have the unique opportunity to examine our belief system and can realign our ideas and values based on new experiences (Arnold, 2009).

            In today’s world, it is a complicated process to define one’s cultural identity (Song, 2009)—even more so in this rapidly globalized technological world. Anna M. Kindler states that when a child is exposed to various cultures early on in their life it is hard for them to formulate a personal cultural identity because of the vast and diversified cultural environment (as cited in Blocker, 2004).  Feeling that you are without a culture gives a hollow feeling, a feeling of being disconnected with society.2 Below is an excerpt of the text entitled *CULTURAL IDENTITY AND NOTHINGNESS* from a Net art work by YOUNG-HAE CHANG HEAVY INDUSTRIES (a group of two artists):

Cultural identity and nothingness.  Or perhaps we are not.  And that is the theme that we would like to address today.  Who we are, where we live and work, and what we do.  In other words, cultural identity, or perhaps a lack of cultural identity.  Nothing.  People who have no identifiable culture.  People whose culture is a mishmash of odds and ends. (as cited in Song, 2009, p. 120)

This text highlights why it is important that through our art classes, we need to help students explore, connect to, and form a cultural identity.

            Using technological advances, the art educator can help students explore their own cultural identity and that of other cultures through art projects and investigations—having them look to the past and also explore ideas about current issues.  Advanced technology makes it easy to quickly research and find information for use in their projects. Kaul (2012) points out that identity foundation and formation is structured by giving value to different facets of a culture—people’s roots, ethnicity, religion, history, and their cultural and artistic expression (Kaul, 2012).  Art education is a way to continue the tradition of a culture and keep our world cultural diversity.

            Tokkulovna (2013) recognizes the problem of the preservation of cultural identity and notes that globalization can give cultures a chance to grow and change—but, retain unique. How do we maintain our cultural identity and become a global citizen without sacrificing the uniqueness of our cultural identity?  A more global identity is created as we form an identity that is not based solely on a nationality or ethnicity—making sure to keep a sense of the national culture, we do not want to live in a world where everything is culturally the same (Desai, 2005).  Reflecting upon your culture and examining authentic global experiences will help you in the process of creating a more global identity.  Bellengee-Morris and Stuhr discuss how an individual’s identity is made up of personal, national, and global aspects of culture (as cited in Desai, 2005). Obtaining a global identity does not necessarily mean losing the connections to your local or national identity.  Maintaining our cultural diversity and our individual identity should be a concern of arts education (Steers, 2004).  It is critical to strike a balance between our own cultural identity and being part of a global community.

             With this new, more global identity, the arts and traditions of the national and ethnic cultures must be preserved. Traditional dance, the visual arts, and music help form a national identity and culture. Arts education exposes students to the traditional arts of as many cultures as possible (music, visual arts, crafts, dance).  It is imperative for students to explore different cultures so that they understand how to best interact in the world today.  Learning to respect and accept all cultures is vital.

Globalization has had an impact on how we make art.  Today’s artists are not simply identified just by their birth country—but, are influenced by other countries/cultures through tourism, mass media and technology, or by living in different cultures (Desai, 2005).  Art emerges from personal experiences, which in today’s world include global experiences.  Artwork can no longer be seen only in terms of a nationality or ethnic culture. Art education gives the student opportunities to use their art to explore different art techniques and ideas from different cultures while they are developing their personal voice.

Desai states that, historically, outside influences due to trade and/or migration can have a profound impact on a society and on the culture’s art practices.  For example, the introduction of beads to Native Americans in the 19th century from Europe created a new art form for these cultures (Desai, 2005).  Advanced technology has ensured that globalization today, through travel and electronic means, has increased the flow of knowledge and an exchange of cultural ideas, traditions, and art that can affect an individual’s (or a nation’s) cultural identity and art.  Art education can highlight examples of how an individual or nation’s art and cultural identities can be influenced by other cultures. Today the global influence is more evident than ever before due to the technological advances in communication and travel.

            Contemporary artist’s works are crossing cultural borders and challenging the idea of being defined on the sole basis of ethnicity or nationality (Desai, 2005).  Today, individuals may grow up and live in many different cultures (Desai, 2005) and this immersion into other cultures, even for a short time, may have a great impact upon their artwork.  Appadurai referred to this as the “global cultural economy” (as cited in Desai, 2005, p. 300).

In response to technological innovations, globalization has affected our cultural identity, but it has afforded an opportunity for us to learn about new and exciting ways to think, live, and create art.  Art education is instrumental in helping students form a more globally aware cultural identity—students are more aware of global issues and are confident in using technology to help learn about and address global issues.

**Working Toward an Intercultural Art Curriculum**

Globalization creates a need for students to understand, work with and have interactions with people from around the world. The arts curriculum must provide opportunities for these interactions to take place. There are two things that art students must understand—globalization and art (Marshall, 2009). Globalization impacts how art is taught. Students must learn about and understand our changing world; learning to understand other cultures and how to interact with people from around the globe. An awareness and understanding of the world’s problems and processes in addition to the study of cultures of the world, are necessary topics of study (Tokkulovna, 2013).

The effects of globalization through advanced technology reaches into the classroom in many ways. Students have direct contact with people of other cultures though relationships built through travel, exchange programs, telecommunications, social media, and migration. Students are engaged in social media (online discussions, social networks, websites, virtual communities, and video gaming) outside of school and are making connections with people all over the world—creating a platform for cross cultural exchange and understanding (Parks, 2009). Students are bombarded daily by visual images from around the world. These visual images and personal contacts affect the student in various ways, helping form and sometimes change their ideas and opinions which affects how they create art. Art educators must utilize cyberspace to help transform their classes into authentic learning experiences that expands the student’s knowledge of the world around them—locally, nationally, and globally.

Intercultural education strives for an understanding of different cultures (Steers, 2009). In the art classroom, the inclusion of art/crafts and issues of different cultures is essential. The more students learn about their own and other culture’s traditions plus current global issues, the more cultural understanding they will have. The technological and global art curriculum raises an awareness of personal, social, and global issues and how they are represented in the past and present art, craft, and design (Steers, 2009). Teacher and student investigations of their own and other’s cultural traditions, belief systems, and values is important for their participation in the changing global society (Bastos, 2009). Student experiences and opinions on global issues should be explored and reflected in their artworks (Tavin & Hausman, 2004). Exposing students to different cultures and to different ways of thinking will have an impact on them, how they interact with others, and on their personal art work. Technology today makes global experiences more accessible to students.

Art education helps build respect and understanding between people and work toward the goal of building a sense of a global community (Anderson, 2009). There are many ways that art education can help facilitate this. One way is to involve students in projects with other students across the globe.2 An excellent resource is the International Education and Resource Network (iEARN), a non-profit network that creates a platform for teachers and students from around the world to use technology and collaborate on projects that will help make a difference in the world (Collaborate, n.d.).3 In programs like this that use technology platforms for learning, students work together forming relationships as they share their culture and/or create projects around global issues. Art educators must encourage students to come up with individual solutions to conceptual and design problems that address real global issues and solve real problems (Anderson, 2009). Students that learn about different world views, cultural issues and values, develop respect for other cultures and learn to show empathy and caring for different and diverse people groups while gaining a better understanding of the cultures of the world (Lai, 2012). While working in art and design the “key concepts are creativity, competence, cultural understanding, and critical understanding” (Steers, 2009, p. 320).

Art students today should use their talents to explore how they can increase awareness of critical world issues and to explore issues through their artwork. Using resources on the internet provides ideas and programs that help facilitate exploration of global issues.4The investigation of arts and crafts from different cultures and the hosting of international family nights, where students share what they have learned with the public, are other ways to incorporate global art, topics, and issues. More advanced projects would include students interacting with other students through established programs such as iEARN, through international travel, exchange programs, and service learning projects.

The ease of international travel through globalization is now accessible to both students and teachers. Teachers must make the effort to increase their own knowledge through travel and in-service programs.6 World View is a public service program sponsored by University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, providing information, resources, in-service, educational, and global travel opportunities to prepare teachers with the global knowledge and experience needed to help prepare their students to live in an “interconnected and diverse world” (World View, n.d.). Acquiring experiences in different cultures through international travel provides teachers with authentic information to use as a resource in the classroom. Teaching in other countries is an excellent way to immerse yourself in another country’s culture: being immersed in another culture brings a higher level of understanding than a tourist program or a short study program (Taylor, 2009). The more experiences that you have, the more you are able to present an accurate picture of the world to your students. *School Arts*, a national visual arts magazine, is one of many organizations that provide international travel opportunities centered around the arts for art educators (Travel with School Arts, n.d.). International travel stimulates reflection about culture and creates opportunities to go beyond our own cultural boundaries and create new understandings of the global world (Bastos, 2009).

Intercultural art education seeks an increase in understanding of diverse cultures (Steers, 2009) helping students to cross boundaries and to use “art as a means of effective interpersonal and intercultural communication, a vehicle promoting creativity, or a preferred medium of social awakening to urgent global concerns” (Kindler, 2009, p. 151).

**Technology, Globalization, and the Art Classroom**

The advancements in computers and communication allow almost an immediate access to information and opportunities to learn, to query, and for cross-cultural exchanges (Delacruz, 2009). Technology has profoundly transformed our communication which have in turn influenced our thinking and our actions—people everywhere have the same experiences from virtual mediums of visual culture (Tavin & Hausman, 2004). With the digital age, technology has the ability to allow students and teachers to access up-to-date information. With information immediately available, what occurs in one country can have an impact on the other countries worldwide (Lampert, 2006); what happens globally, impacts our local communities and also the classroom (Delacruz, 2009). A universal culture is being formed; everyone is subjected to the same visual information and data being transmitted world-wide via communication (Duncum, 2001).

Technology can be utilized in the classroom in different ways, one way is through connecting students (or classes) with other students from across the globe to work together, cooperatively on projects. This provides a multitude of educational benefits including expanding the student’s global and cultural awareness—as well as experiencing different opinions and ways of thinking. This tele-collaboration helps students to learn about art in different cultures and can lead to different and new opportunities for creativity (Alawad, 2013). In addition, many students are given opportunities to have experiences with people of other cultures through exchange programs, educational travel, service trips, and email (Lampert, 2006).

Some of the global issues that can be explored in the art classroom are as follows: personal and cultural identities, tolerance, social justice, human rights, diversity, sustainable resources, interdependence, values, migration, exploitation of oceans, and environmental issues. While studying global issues, it is necessary for the students to engage critical thinking and creative inquiry. “Inquiry based art curricula enhance critical thinking skills and dispositions” (Lampert, 2006).

Because of new technologies, borders seem to collapse and people of all walks of life from different parts of the world are brought together to interact and respond to various issues (Parks, 2009). Understanding globalization and how to use the technology of online digital media is a “critical aspect of art education” (Parks, 2009, p. 193). Globalization (especially utilizing Internet technologies) can disrupt the typical association culture has long had with location; this affects the way in which we identify ourselves, our cultural identity (Chung, 2009).

The teacher’s role has been drastically and radically changed by technology (Alawad, 2013). According to Duncum (2001), teachers need to engage with the global culture, engage their own cultural heritage, embrace the complexity of global culture, utilize their classrooms as discussion sites for global issues, and critique the global culture (Duncum, 2001). Because of globalization, educators are more aware of the visual environment and classroom study should be comprised of subjects and themes that encompass their students’ visual experiences (Tavin & Hausman, 2004).

Delacruz (2009) believes that a new and important global civil society is coming about because of the new emerging technologies (Delacruz, 2009). Much of our work in art education today relies on and utilizes new technologies; shaping creative expression, experiences, and how we teach (Delacruz, 2009).

**Conclusion**

With advancement in technology, the influence of globalization is felt by everyone everywhere. Through migration and the ease of transportation and communication, we have become a global society. Living in a society where our global experiences help define our cultural identity, we may question our established cultural norms and reevaluate our belief systems. This causes us to form a more global cultural identity.

Since technology is the driving force of globalization, it impacts how art is taught. By using technology, students have opportunities to learn in an intercultural environment. There they can explore national or ethic cultures, diverse world cultures and traditions, and global issues (Steers, 2009). While working in a more global classroom, students can work cooperatively with students or classes in other countries. Connecting through technology, students can develop relationships with students from other cultures by participating in exchange programs and by travel.  As students work with, understand, and interact with people from all cultures there is a need to understand and respond to global issues.

Globalization affects how we must prepare our students to live in this global world. Technology is critically important in this endeavor. It is essential that art education change to include more technology so that students are can become prepared global citizens.  Art educators can use technology to challenge students to produce art that reflect an understanding of contemporary global issues.

More research is needed to answer the following questions: 1. How can educators help students become global citizens in classrooms with limited access to technology/resources? 2. What programs and strategies can be developed to help teachers currently in the classroom become more technologically proficient? Teachers must be trained and have experience with using technology innovatively (Mayo, 2007). 3. Is there a need for research and development of a resource guide for student and teacher travel opportunities/programs?

Implications of this paper for the field of art education are numerous. Art education can use technology to help create interculturally aware global citizens in the following ways:

* Contemporary art education must include technology in a curriculum that recognizes the importance of the students’ national/ethnic culture and helps to develop their global identity. Defining cultural identities may be difficult to do (Song, 2009); art is a way to help identify and develop cultural identity—blending the traditions from the past with new global and visual experiences.  Globalization can give cultures a chance to grow and change—but remain unique (Tokkulovna, 2013). Our experiences define our cultural identity and impacted by our global relationships and exposure to other cultures, we may question our previously established cultural norms—reevaluating our belief systems.  This leads to changing our views and the formation of a unique global identity. Globalization impacts how art is taught.  While working toward an intercultural art curriculum, we can help preserve art and traditions of national and ethnic cultures as well as increase exposure to the art and traditions of other cultures.
* Art education curriculum can include exchange programs and travel. Global travel is now more possible and less expensive through advancements in technology. Connecting through technology, students can develop relationships with students from other cultures. An intercultural art education seeks to increase an understanding of diverse cultures (Steers, 2009). The art curriculum must include traditional and contemporary arts/crafts, current global issues, and opportunities to connect with students globally. As students work with, understand, and interact with people from all cultures there is a need to understand and respond to global issues. Through migration and the ease of transportation and communication we have become a global society.
* Technology, through advanced communications and social media, has a dramatic impact on how we access information (Delacruz, 2009) in art education.  Information is immediately available and most queries can be answered quickly in this information age (Lampert, 2006). In art education this may be used for research and also to inform student artwork.  Students are able to participate in international art events and to teleconference with other students worldwide. Events that occur in one area of the world can immediately affect all other parts of the world and impact students—including their artwork.

It is essential that art education change to include technology and thus prepare students to take their places in the world as global citizens.  Art educators need to use an intercultural approach to guide students in the production of global experiences and artwork. Using technology, students can develop artwork that demonstrates their understanding of contemporary global issues and reflects their identity.

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Endnotes

1. The “meaning and significance of globalization can be extended far beyond the marketplace and economic conditions to include how we think about virtually all areas of human exchange in our lives, including visual culture and art education” (Tavin & Hausman, 2004, p. 47).
2. More research is needed on the topic of loss of identity for specific groups that are in jeopardy of losing their national and/or ethnic cultural identity: former career military dependents (upon their aging out of the military community), migration, the undocumented Mexican immigrant population that were brought to the United States as young children, refugees, and immigrants. Strategies need to be investigated in art education that can help these populations connect with their cultural and ethnic identities and with the culture in which they currently live.
3. Examples of art related learning experiences through IEARN have been:
   * Talking Kites All Over the World: A tradition of flying kites with personal and group images of our dreams for a better world, in the footsteps of J. Korczak
   * Beauty of the Beasts: An international wildlife art and poetry exchange
   * Holiday Card Exchange: Classrooms explain their holiday traditions by sending cards to their partners around the world
   * Calligraphy: The art of producing decorative handwriting or lettering with a pen or brush
   * Electronic school magazine project: Cultural and educational e-school magazine
   * Get to Know Others; An educational endeavor to give students the chance to learn about their own culture as well as other cultures
   * Global Art a Sense of Caring: an exchange of digital photos/artwork and writing on the theme of caring
   * International Intercultural Mural Exchange (IIME): two schools of distant countries learn interactively and create one big mural by drawing halves of a canvas to express their collaborative learning in a visual way
   * Local History Project: Sharing the history of our home places which can also include the history of our families, descriptions of traditions, country cuisine and folklore
   * My Identity Your Identity: Sharing of traditional celebrations, the famous monuments, and landmarks in their countries
   * My Name Around the World: Research, find and send information about own name answering different questions connecting with own name, students create different visualizations of name: posters, handicraft, drawing, etc., creation of blogs and the sharing information about name and photos
   * One Day in the Life: Sharing of photographs with caption of daily life and discuss it with partner students in another country
   * Origami: Art therapy and how ORIGAMI works
   * Wall of Names: Support of student self-expression using various artistic devices helping to convey the origin and meaning of names of different countries and teaches students to cherish intercultural exchanges
   * Youth Can: Sharing of interests and projects about protecting the environment in their communities and collaborating with students in other areas doing the same
4. Internet resources for globalizing the curriculum
   * *Pinwheels for Peace* project (www.pinwheelsforpeace.com)
   * *Peace Pole* *Project* (http://www.peacepoleproject.org/)
   * *Peace One Day* activities (http://www.peaceoneday.org/)
   * *The Students Rebuild Water Challenge (*http://studentsrebuild.org/find-challenge/water-challenge)
5. Additional resources for other student intercultural projects or experiences:
   * 100 People: A World Portrait (http://100people.org/)
   * Global Kids (http://www.globalkids.org/#/about-global-kids)
6. Additional resources for teacher intercultural travel experiences or in-service opportunities:
   * Asia for Educators (<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/>)
   * Heifer International for Educators (<http://www.heifereducation.org/>)
   * Asian Society (http://asiasociety.org/education)
   * Oracle ThinkQuest (<http://www.thinkquest.org/en/>)
   * TeachGlobalEd.net (<http://www.coe.ohio-state.edu/globaled/home.cfm>)
   * Asia Society Partnership for Global Learning (<http://www.asiasociety.org/education/pgl/>)
   * Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program (<http://www.fulbrightexchanges.org/>)
   * NAFSA: Association of International Educators ([http://www.nafsa.org](http://www.nafsa.org/))
   * Partnership for 21st Century Skills (<http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/>)
   * The Edge English Institute (also known as The Edge Institute) (<http://www.TEEI.org>)