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Herbert Read and the Fourth Industrial Revolution: A Visual Arts Curriculum Framework?

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Abstract

A new challenge for art educators in the 21st century has emerged, given the volume of messages on social media conveying new types of exchanges of socio-culturally constructed imagery. Visual arts teachers need to teach *methods of viewing* and apply critical pedagogy, and address socio-cultural issues in particular. Further, we subscribe to the paradigm that big sociocultural ideas, which are interlinked to students' worldviews and conception of self, should be taught in conjunction with visual literacy and critical thinking in order for students 1) to learn how to learn and 2) to express their ideas through visual media.

Within this premise, this book chapter describes a visual arts curriculum framework designed for the digital media era and draws parallel connections to Herbert Read's theoretical *Education Through Art* (1943). The described curriculum strategy is intended to foster communication and collaboration as important skills for the early 21st century. Drawing from Read's educational philosophy, we explain how this curriculum can encourage awareness of unacknowledged cultural influences shaping identities (Keel, 1969, p. 54).

We thus endorse the idea that visual arts education in the 21st century can encourage youth in developing both an awareness to how visual culture is constructed and visual literacy skills needed to express their own personalities. Today's youth can use the new awareness and acquired skills to navigate through the influences of the outside world, i.e. social media.

Keywords: curriculum, Herbert Read, identity, social media, visual culture, 21st century art education

"And since we are concerned, not with the production of that artifact, the scholar, but the organic unit of society, the citizen, we must plan our educational system against the broad outlines of a social background" (Read, 1958, p. 225).

Introduction

Understanding digital visual imagery requires a new type of literacy skills as compared to traditional visual literacy. Today, reality is mediated through images faster and even more regularly. Never before in history have images been in our view as frequently as they are today, a fact which has been accelerated through the ubiquitous presence of social media. That is one reason reading and understanding multiform, constructed visuals proves to be more complicated than before. In communicative approaches to visual arts education, reality is seen as mediated by physical as well as mental or language-based tools and that "overlapping the visual arts, there are mediators such as TV, picture books, illustrated newspapers and journals, comics, advertisements, web pages, computer games, photo, video, film, stage design, etc." (Lindström, 2009, p. 16).

Images can do much more than stimulate a conversation, they can "evoke engagement, openness, receptivity, awareness, connection, emotional responses, empathy/perspective-taking, attitude and behavior change" (Chapman, 2014, p. 470). Viewing artworks can elicit personal and lived experiences as a means to help the viewer interpret and create meaning as they become immersed within the contexts of a visual image (ibid.).

According to Read (1963), the 20th century art historian and philosopher, the arts are fundamental to education, not only for their own sake but also as a means of expression, communication, and imagination. Read believed (1963) that uninhibited expressive growth of the individual comprised the fundamental purpose of education through art and that education should function as a synthesis between our external realities and our internal imagination.

Herbert Read's fundamental ideas on education, expressed initially in his book *Education Through Art* (1943), provide us with a strong foundation upon which to design a visual arts education fostering critical thinking, visual literacy, and self-expression. We perceive that each of these aspects play a fundamental role in 21st century education in helping to cultivate humanity in both the individual and society. Therefore, they comprise the primary focus of our curriculum framework. Stankiewicz (2003, p. 322) claims, "Our students need an art education that goes beyond drawing and painting, beyond technique of formal analysis, toward functional visual literacies that will help them shape and understand the visual cultures in which they live". Further, she says that, "Liberating visual literacies require critical knowledge of images in their cultural and historical contexts, as well as analyses of power relationships underlying their social construction" (ibid.)

In the devastating wake of WWI, post war society awakened to the notion that national cultural artifacts hold intrinsic value steeped in representations of a country's diversity and culture. Valuing art forms such as abstract, expressionism, and other modern forms of art increased as appreciation shifted away from 'high art' themes to conceptual representations and everyday cultural objects (The Art Story, Pop Art). Read (1958, p. 208) concerned with meaning-making activity examined the overall process as how "the individual's desire to record his sense impressions, to clarify his conceptual knowledge, to build up his memory, to construct things which aid his practical activities".

A study surveying current efforts to educate student-teachers' use of digital media, found that much of the teaching focus on technological skills associated with how to use digital media and less so on how to critically investigate the media (Salamaa et. al., 2017). This lack of attention towards developing skills to critically evaluate images comes as a detriment. For instance, seeing an image online might seem like a simple undertaking, but what transpires within microseconds between the viewer and the image involves some form of capability to communicate with the visual material in meaningful ways to the person. In 2014 a controversial study was conducted on over 600,000 Facebook users. It concluded that *emotional contagion* or the 'catching' of emotions was prevalent through online social networks (Kramer et. al., 2014). Considering that each individual "reads" images in their own personal way, essential commonalities between individuals in reading images would still be found. However, the intrinsic meaning-making process occurring within each of individual viewer remains unique.

With this in mind, we present a visual arts curriculum framework aimed at teaching 21st century skills yet remain cognizant of the ongoing fourth industrial revolution, which, building upon the digital revolution, blurs boundaries of physical, biological, and digital worlds. We approach this endeavour by taking both educational and visual arts practices into consideration and place the discussion within the Common European Frameworks Reference for Visual Literacy (CEFR-VL, 2016) conceptual framework for visual arts education, because it is the first transnational instrument to refer to in matters regarding teaching and learning of visual literacy.

In collaboration with the European Network for Visual Literacy ENViL, the EU-funded consortium, has created a prototype of the Common European Framework of Reference for Visual Literacy. This undogmatic prototype does not favour disciplinary theory or teaching methodology. Instead, it provides an open, descriptive, and integrative model that combines various national concepts and variety of teaching methods. It systematizes and structures competencies for dealing with images, objects, and signs; operationalizes the main sub-competencies (in reception and production) and where possible, formulates competency levels using scales (Wagner, 2016, p. 64).

ENViL's concept of 'Visual Literacy' has been introduced to include subjects in the visual domain, that are better known as *Bildnerische* (art education) in Austria, Design in Switzerland, or *Kunst* (art)

in many German states. In our framework we make references to original artworks and redesigns created and shared digitally by means of mobile applications. Contextually and content-wise our framework deals specifically with *arts education policy and visual communication*, central themes in a knowledge base of visual arts education, as indicated in the figure created by Lars Lindström below.

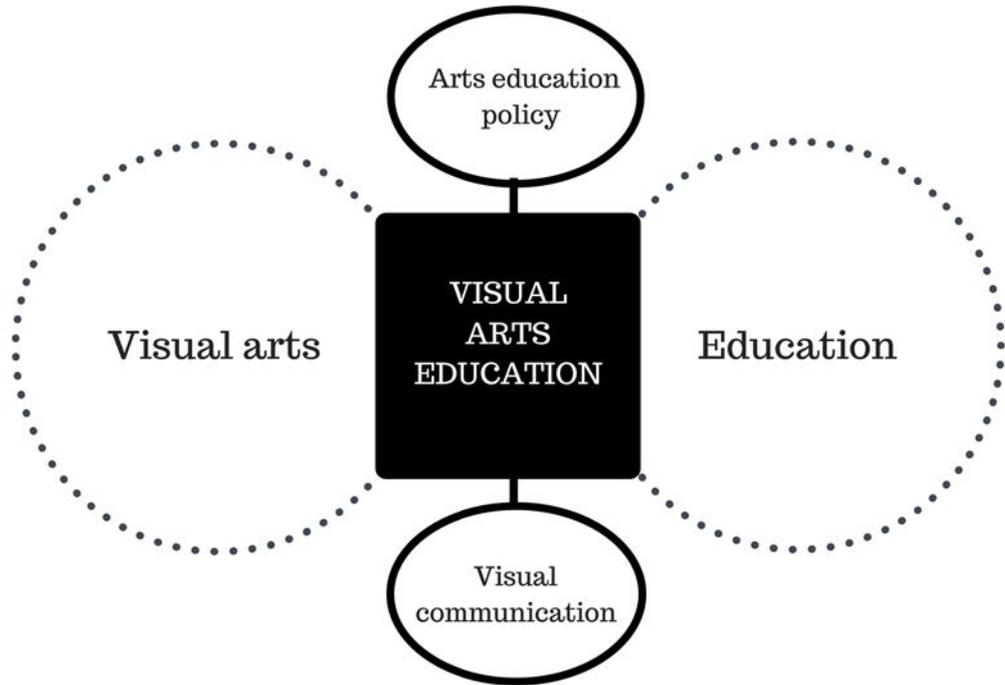


Figure 1: Knowledge base of visual arts education (Lindström, 2009, 17). The figure is based on the diagram published in a book *Nordic Visual Arts Education in Transition. A Research Review*. Swedish Research Council.

Next, we examine the reasons why learning to deal with digital visual imagery within visual arts education is vital today by providing the example of heavily visualized social media. This leads to a discussion on how personal identities can be shaped through visual experiences or *observations*. We present the curriculum framework by using a graph (Graph 1.) demonstrating three main components of the curriculum. Lastly, we discuss ways for expanding and integrating this framework into subjects other than visual arts, as a means for achieving a universal practice of education through art.

Social media being richly visualized

YouTube was first launched in 2005, and quickly became one of the most viewed websites on the Internet. Today, YouTube gets over 30 million visitors per day (Donchev, 2017). Videos of all sorts are uploaded to networked social media platforms ranging from Instagram, Pinterest, and LinkedIn. For example, in the application Musical.ly., valued at over 500 million dollars with roughly 80 million registered users, users can lip sync and portray themselves as the “star” in homemade music video clips as well as share.

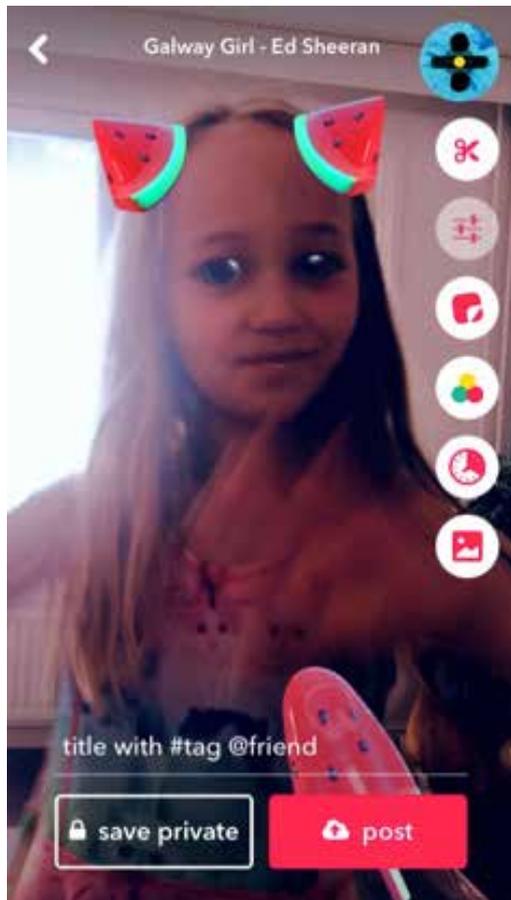


Image 1: Musical.ly now called Tik Tok (video screenshot).

Social media platforms such as Pinterest and Instagram, are geared mainly around visual images as a means of user interface. Videos can be created quickly and embellished with “stickers” and users are given the ability to add or alter specific body parts, for example enlarged eyes (Image 1.). While usage of social media is recommended only for youth over the age of fourteen, many would argue that children under fourteen years old do have accounts allowing access to online social media.

Even though Read’s philosophy on education through art was theorized at a point in history that predates most digital forms of communications mentioned in this essay, the fundamental takeaways from his philosophy transcends technological developments. His foundational message imparts that the purposes of art education, and education in general, help the child achieve an “integrated mode of experience” (Read, 1958, p. 105). This concept that education should seek to help students better understand and recognize correlations between their physical, perceptual, and emotional experiences could not be needed more so than at present. Social media provides many spaces and places in which to form networked identities and in the same time obstructs the ability to clearly define and articulate factors that are influencing how one shapes their own true identity (Sweeny, 2009).

Universal conceptions have dramatically changed from the days of Herbert Read. Ideas that were once thought of as fixed are being disproven or even debunked. The ability to critically analyse the visual information being shared via online social networks requires contemporary students to really think about what they experience and how they truly feel about what they view.

Read claims that “the aim of logical education may be described as the creation, in the individual,

of an ability to integrate experience within a logical conception of the universe, a conception which includes dogmatic concepts of character and morality” (Read, 1958, p. 69). It is the notion regarding specifically character and morality that has made Read (1958) to question: How does an educational system foster, or work towards developing these traits, when they are presented and believed to be dogmatic? His own answer to this resounds in imaginative or aesthetic education, as “the education of those scenes upon which consciousness, and ultimately the intelligence and judgement of the human individual, are based” (Read, 1958, p. 7).

Identity being formed via virtual communities and networks

The aesthetic education that Read envisions is one that entails engagement of all five senses. Visual literacy, while its development is important, plays but one melody in a symphony of sensorial development. As Read’s theory argues, it is through aesthetic development that the individual can be educated. “Images are ‘visual aids’ to thought” (Read, 1958, p. 52) and our thoughts, particular in regards to our beliefs, goals, and values, are where our personal identities are being shaped (Schwartz et al., 2012, p. 341). Howard Gardner’s *Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1993) posits spatial intelligence as one of fundamental forms of mental processing skills, but alas it is not the only form; bodily-kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, linguistic, and logical are also forms that have been identified. Given the volume of messages on social media conveying new types of exchanges of socio-culturally constructed imagery, young people need skills to produce, receive, and reflect multiform mediated experiences and conceptions.

The problems associated with identity development of youth today is that they are excessively socially constructed beginning at a young age. 56% of children under twelve have a cell phone (Growing wireless). Online social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest make it easy to share visual representations of our lives and experiences. This is a two-way endeavour as not only do we take-in visuals expressed or shared by others, but we also think about and create visuals on social media that are representative of ourselves. Thus, how we come to know ourselves and the world in which we live, is highly influenced by popular forms of visual culture (Tavin, 2003). Multi-literacy is a significant idea in education because the digitization of information enables sharing of ideas and information in a variety of methods (i.e. music, video, text, or visuals). Regardless of how small or irrelevant an image might seem, it is our *direct sensuous enjoyment* of them that begins to shape how we identify with the visual objects of our world (Read, 1958, p. 87).

Definitions of the 21st century skills

The fundamental ideas Read presented in *Education Through Art* are resonant in a world of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), which has been developing over the past fifty years, will essentially result in a fusion between technologies with “physical, digital, and biological spheres” (Schwab, 2017). Easy access to digital technology has created a demand for high speed connectivity and a dependency on its integration into our daily lives. The 21st century skills are being re-negotiated within this context, and as a result, educational priorities are shifting. To enable educating children for a future that will inevitably impact who we collectively are, as human-beings, we must first develop an understanding of ourselves as a society, as individuals and collectively.

More specifically, we will remunerate on the 21st Centuries Framework’s 4 C’s – Communication, Collaboration, Critical thinking, and Creativity as these are skills that form parallel connections with skills the Fourth Industrial Revolution also emphasized. In a study *The Future of Jobs: Employment, Skills, and Workforce Strategy for the Fourth Industrial Revolution* (2016) published by World Economic

Forum complex problem solving, critical thinking as well as soft skills such as emotional intelligence and coordinating with others were all listed in the top 10 skills for 2020. In reality the 21st century skills and the fourth industrial revolution skills do not differ very much; rather the latter is more articulate in terms of cognitive and technical skill sets needed for this world and workforce.

The focus of our chapter will be on critical thinking that is to be found in common between the 21st century skills and the industrial revolution skills. Our curriculum framework works to promote curriculum and instruction methods for achieving this skill as it is defined and emphasised as necessary within both genres and integral for future employability.

Read inspired visual arts curriculum framework

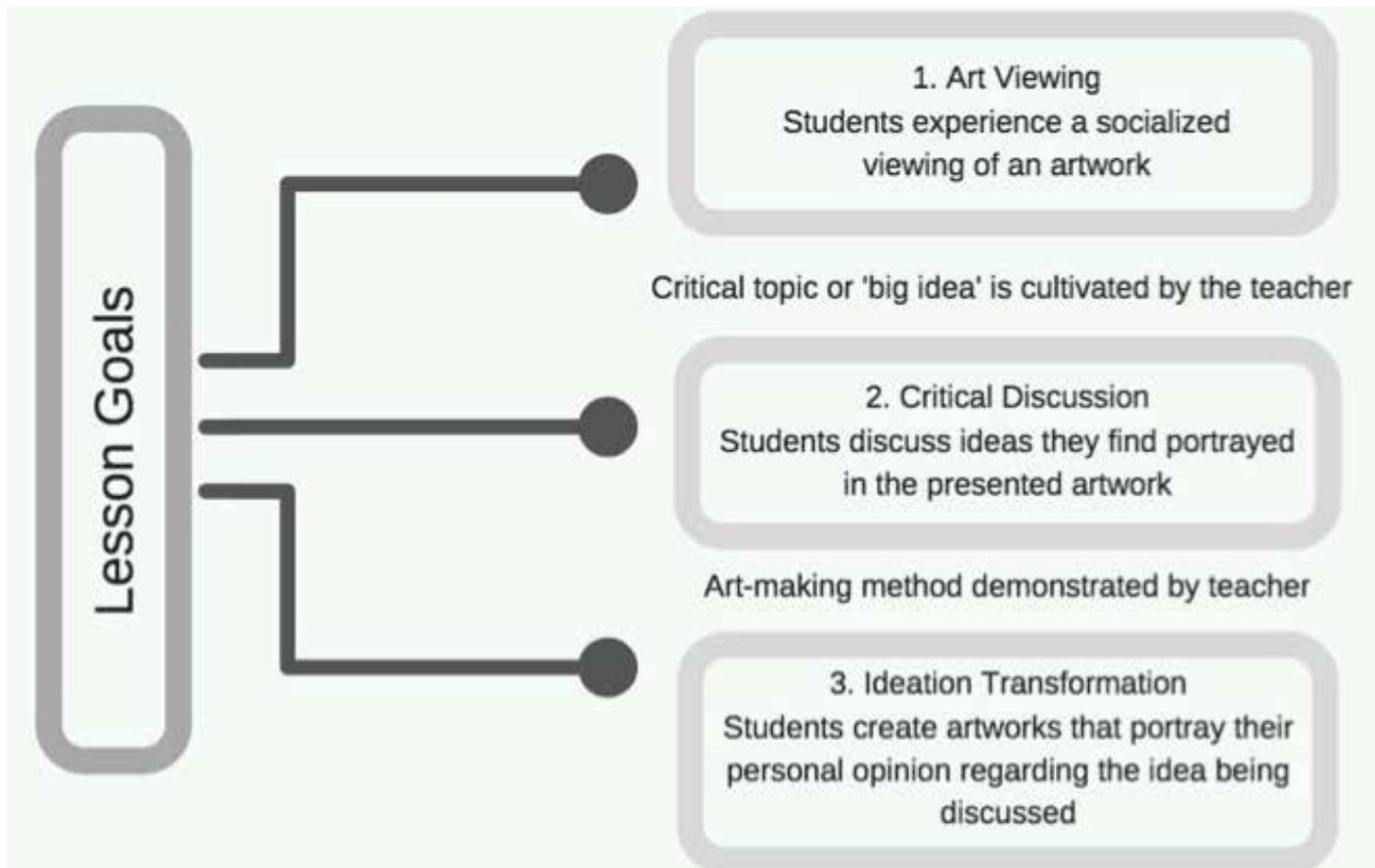
The concept presented here is a practiced-derived theoretical framework comprised of three important elements: 1) Open-ended socialized art viewing or collective viewing of visual material, 2) Discussion, including critical thinking and examination of big ideas or personal and collectively reflecting on ideas that purpose broad questions such as connecting this material to contemporary civic issues, and 3) Art-making that encompasses translating one's personal ideas and opinions that pertain to the big idea or topic of discussion. The last activity we call individual ideation transformation.

In the first phase, viewing art collectively provides opportunities for youth to analyse images and critically interpret their meanings in relation to those of their peers. Recognizing how their peers interpret images will help youth to question views and beliefs that they might otherwise take for granted. In the second phase, public sphere pedagogy provides opportunities for youth to engage critical thinking by collectively viewing images and discussing current civic issues or big ideas evoked by the imagery. Lastly, students practice and refine creative skills required to create new images that convey their shifting personal views and beliefs associated with the topic.

This curriculum aligns with Read's educational philosophy which entails: relating educational subjects to current concepts, fostering the *organic transformation* (Read, 1958) of individual students as they grow and mature, and allowing individual's opportunities to develop their own forms of natural expression (Keel, 1969).

Any lesson plan or learning goal can be built upon the threefold framework described above. It is dynamic in that it can contract or expand to be utilized while designing a single lesson or an entire unit. It is adaptable to curriculum standards in a variety of art forms such as digital, performing, and fine arts (The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016).

Education in the 21st century requires competence in critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration with others. This framework, as illustrated in Graph 1 below, offers an approach that takes these one step further in that it factors in the fostering of the student's identity, as Read suggests, and decentralizes the teacher lead, top-down, traditional method of instruction. Throughout each lesson as part of a collective, open-ended, socialized, critically engaging exercise, the role of the teacher shifts from that of lecturer to facilitator, encouraging a wonderful variety of students' ideas and voices (Hesser, 2009).



Graph 1: Visual arts education curriculum framework

Visual Literacy: Read's activity of observation

You might recall the last time you visited an art museum you may have witnessed an individual standing alone, looking at the work of art and deeply contemplating. Or, perhaps you visited a museum or art gallery with a friend or loved one, so that you could collaboratively share the experience. If you had to choose between looking at and contemplating art alone or sharing your thoughts and experiences with someone else, which would you prefer? The design for our framework begins in what Read describes as *activity of appreciation* (Read, 1958, p. 208). Art-viewing experiences, particularly as a form of collective social engagement in “which other people address or have addressed to others [him], and generally the individual’s response to values in the world of facts (Read, 1958, p. 208-209)” is what we are emphasizing here, as a fundamentally important component when integrating art-viewing methods (emphasis in original).

Why socialized art viewing? To start with, “Meaning making from a sociocultural perspective highlights language as the primary mediational tool (Vygotsky, 1986), with physical and material aspects of the setting often analysed as context (Steiner, 2015, 28; Goodwin, 2000)”. The relationship between language, object, and thinking has played a central role in our educational development and human development (Well, 2007). “Thinking together” (Mercer, 2002), a practice in which students use both *exploratory* and *cumulative* talk, can help learners positively construct, engage in, and critically consider alternative ways of interpreting meanings (Dawes, Mercer & Wegerif, 2000).

Art viewing methods designed to help encourage students to visually examine and verbalize meanings they discover, both personally and via their peers, can promote *transmediation*, a process

whereby symbolic meanings are transferred from one signification system into that of another (Franco, 2015; Siegel, 1995). More simplistically put, by sharing how we interpret visual symbols to represent some form of meaning (i.e. a cross symbolizes religion), the experience of *cumulatively* and *exploratorily* “thinking together” regarding different personal perspectives, allows participants to critically contemplate alternative meanings (Dawes et al., 2000).

As an example of socialised art viewing and “thinking together” we present a meme below made by a student in a visual arts class. Meme or “(unit) of popular culture that (is) circulated, imitated, and transformed by Internet users, creating a shared cultural experience” (Miltner, 2014; Shifman, 2013, p. 367). Students in Myllytulli lower secondary school in the City of Oulu, Finland, designed memes out of paintings from the era of Finnish Golden Age in art history. The exercise combines creating memes, familiar to students from social media, to learning classical art works. Consequently, the national broadcasting company YLE reported on the visual arts teacher’s innovative lesson plan and questioned whether creating memes from classical art should be considered as sacrilege or funny humour. The interviewed director of Ateneum Art Museum, Susanna Pettersson, commented that good art bears different interpretations (Pietilä, 2017). “Ateneum’s attitude to art vandalism is encouraging in her view. Art does not suffer even if it is brought to the present.” (ibid.)



Image 2: Helene Schjerfbeck: *Wounded Warrior in the Snow* (1880). Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum. Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Yehia Eweis. *When your friend fades you*. Meme made by Ronja Lähdesmäki, 9th grade, Myllytulli school.

Read's chapter on *Unconscious Modes of Integration* elaborates on how education which promotes a "sense of social unity or togetherness" (Read, 1958, p. 197) helps to foster student development through "guided growth, encouraged expansion, tender upbringing, that can secure that life is lived in all its natural creative spontaneity, in all its sensuous, emotional and intellectual fullness" (Read, 1958, p. 202). Curriculum designed to promote art viewing as a practice-based, open ended, and socially engaging environments, replicates the same natural art-viewing process that one might experience when visiting a museum or an art gallery with a friend.

What occurs in an instance where a group of students, from a variety of socio-cultural backgrounds, are encouraged to share or express their emotional interpretations of an image, is an opening of the 'mental floodgate' so that new ideas can be welcomed into consideration. Thus, looking at and collectively discussing an image provides "an integrated mode of experience" (Read, 1958, p. 105) and the activity in which our curriculum framework begins.

Critical Discussion: Read's activity of appreciation

Connecting the content of the image being collectively experienced to relevant civic issues, comprises the second phase in our conceptual framework for curriculum design. Socialization, according to Vygotsky's theory, is the soil in which our logical thinking grows (Beliavsky, 2006). "Language proves crucial in categorizing the many objects, elements, and entities in the world" (Gardner, 1993, p. 69). Our perceptions of an artwork are as unique to ourselves as our own fingerprint. And, it is for this very reason that sharing our perceptions and interpretations of artworks with others, can be a powerful tool in shifting the 'views' of others (Chapman et. al., 2014, p. 470) as well as our own.

Socially experiencing works of art is a practice of empathetic engagement on multiple levels and a step in direction towards promoting moral development. As works of art are examined, our own prior knowledge and meanings associated with it as a means of interpreting its meanings are called upon. Sharing one's perceptions aloud with co-viewers requires a person to articulate impressions verbally. Further, viewers are presented with an opportunity to empathize and feel similar feelings to one another. (Batson, 2009, p. 7.) Socially sharing in an environment open to personal opinions allows the participants to listen to, and learn from one another (Chapman et. al., 2013). As part of our framework socialized art-viewing is important as a first step because it evokes the critical thinking abilities of participants, a form of mental warm-up before they begin working in the second part of the framework, civic connection.

Connecting the content of the image collectively experienced to relevant civic issues, or rather big ideas comprises the second step in our conceptual framework for curriculum design. Using the same images observed in step one, students discuss the big idea that they see visually referenced within the image.

For example, the meme above based on the painting titled *Wounded Warrior in the Snow*, would be presented to the students who would first engage the image using art viewing exercises preferably designed to elicit critical thinking and context transfer (Housen, 2001). Following the viewing exercise, the teacher cultivates a discussion that links to the big idea that relates to either the artist's intentions, an issue or topic the students have discovered while viewing the image, or the teacher could possibly suggest something predetermined. In the instance of the *Wounded Warrior in the Snow* the big idea could be related to depression or loneliness; feelings of being left out or not fitting in. While the image or work of art remains a prevalent part of the discussion the focus of the conversation shifts from being one that is directed specifically at the image to more of a group discussion resembling *dialogical education* (Shor & Freire, 1987) through which critical pedagogy can be utilized. In much the same

way that Shor and Freire point out in their definition of classroom discussions, the fundamental role of the teacher is not to “didactically lecture” or “impose treachery voice” but rather to engage with the students in such a way as to allow the “the sealing together of the teacher and the students in the joint act of knowing and re-knowing the object of study (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 13-14)”.

This process of engaging students in critical dialogue associated with big ideas must first be determined by thoroughly studying the individual students, the classroom dynamic, and socialization practices as a means for teacher to determine what sort of issues “are the best entry points for critical transformation” (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 28). Shor and Freire view education as an aesthetic development process in much the same way Read does. The disruption of visual and dialogical practices in today’s educational settings is essential to achieve an education that provides students with their own sense of “human individuality” (Read, 1958, p. 7).

Step two of the framework employs educators to facilitate and maintain discussions, comprised of the ideology, beliefs, mental observations, and opinions of their students in relation to the big idea being explored. This could prove to be a difficult task in that students’ attitudes and opinions can differ drastically from one another, resulting in heated and emotional reactions depending on the issue at hand. That is why the presence of the image alike a piece of text, music, play, or other artefact as an object present at which students can direct their discussion to, could be used as a pedagogical tool to deflect and avert what some students might otherwise perceive as personally offensive. In the end, the second step of the framework is essential towards developing students’ 21st century skills in communication and collaboration such as “listening effectively to decipher meaning, including knowledge, values, attitudes and intentions” as well as “demonstrate the ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse team” (P21, 2017).

Ideation Transformation: Read’s activity of self-expression

The third and final component of our framework is comprised of encouraging students freely express the attitudes, opinions, and beliefs they have unravelled and discussed regarding the big idea in step two. According to Read, self-expression cannot be taught and any attempt to intervene on the educator’s part would only produce aversive results (Read, 1958, p. 209). The act of expression, in Read’s view, is an act of socialization intended to affect others (Read, 1958).

Today socialization has been digitally expanded in our lives making the importance of teaching students self-expression when engaging socially in digital media. Social media has changed the ways interconnected individuals form identities and interact with one another as well as how individuals engage with sociocultural issues (Sweeny, 2009, p. 201). Helping students understand that identities are shaped and formed as a collaborative process with the world around us (CNRS, 2014) aligns with what Read would hope to achieve with the theory he presented in *Education Through Art*.

Multimodal education or multi-literacy education are methods of meaning making which utilize an interaction between a variety of different expressive modes (Duncum, 2004). Using a wide range of methods of meaning making in digital social media, not exclusive only visual imagery, allows youth to create and communicate with each other in diverse ways.



Image 3: Albert Edelfelt: Boys Playing on the Shore (1884). Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum, Collection Ahlström. Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Hannu Aaltonen. Meme made by Teresa Pakkala, 9th grade, Myllytulli school.

The image above represents another meme created by a 9th grade student in a visual arts class in Myllytulli school. The original painting by Albert Edelfelt *Boys Playing on the Shore* is voted by Finns to be Finland's most outstanding work of art based on a survey with around 9400 respondents (Blencowe, 2013). The small wooden toy sailboat depicted in the original oil painting is replaced with a plastic *Crocs* shoe in the meme.

Creating a digital representation of the image the student artist was able to change the toy sailboat to a *Crocs* shoe, which are a popular choice of summer shoe for many Finns. The visual connotation of the shoe plays to mainstream Finland's popular culture and reiterates our message here; our personal identities and self-expression are being shaped and formed by the surrounding world with its cultures around us.

Discussion

"Who are you?" said the Caterpillar. This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, 'I-I hardly know, sir, just at present – at least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.'" (Carroll, 2004, p. 55).

Students also in the 21st century need educational curriculum that is able to acknowledge them as continuously developing individuals. Read, in his ideological perception of education is timeless and speaks to all generations, because in his view education is not only about a subject or mastery of a

particular skill. Read's first and foremost educational duty lies in educating the individual, or at least challenging students to critically examine all that they are being educated to believe.

Presented in this chapter is a theoretical framework intended to help guide educators, from any discipline, as they integrate artistic methods with imagery into their curriculum while keeping individuality in mind. As the research that supports this curriculum framework is predominantly theoretical, we invite educators from diversity of subject matters and age groups to further pursue an active role in regards to examining the effectiveness and pedagogical applicability of the framework. The applications of this strategy by different subject teachers can be quite simple. For instance, a science teacher teaching about DNA could first have the students extract DNA in the lab. Following the exercise, the students could critically discuss why this process could be good or bad for human and society. The self-expression component of the lesson would allow the students to share their thoughts, ideas, and opinions on the subject through some form of social or artistic expression being written, verbal, abstract, digital, or other kind.

At present, the current socio-cultural landscapes and influences from even greater distances – and also those that predated digitization – are becoming visible as quickly as one access to the Internet. As the digitization of our lives and the Internet of things (IoT) are being developed, the traditional social-cultural influences of the past are expanding in both numbers and reach. Read suggests that the “development of the child should be conceived as a progressive enlargement of its social group, first the family, then the kindergarten, then the successive classes of the primary school (Read, 1958, p. 222-223)”. We need to help our students rise with the current of *their* time and encourage them contribute to the world *they* know and live in.

As bell hooks mentioned in *Art on my Mind: Visual Politics* (1995), many people view identities as being fixed and rooted within us. Unchangeable, dwelling within, waiting to be discovered, identities are predetermined, many would postulate. It is important to note here that when we refer to identity we mean the belief systems, ideology, and qualities of a person that are shaped and influenced by social factors. It would be impossible to take social-cultural influences out of a person's identity development. Nevertheless, what might help is teaching students to create a balance between looking internally and shaping ideas aligning with personal perspective, versus taking in ideas and opinions that are so animatedly suggested through digital social media. The critical thought processes needed in order to make informed and clear critiques of social-cultural influences are lacking in our education system (Yanklowitz, 2017). Challenging students to engage in controversial discussions or issues that they are uncertain about, helps them develop epistemologically (Kuhn et al., 2000).

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