



Title of Research Project: Using Digital Technology in a Visual Art context in the Post-Primary Education; A European Investigation.

Researcher: Maria O Donovan



Contact Details: mariaodonovan84@gmail.com

Relevant key words: Visual Art; Creativity; Technology; Digital Media Technology Integration; Teacher Experience; 21st Century Skills

Summary:

The classroom teacher is a catalyst of knowledge and a key person who puts the teaching processes and methodologies into practice. Immersion in a media-rich environment can lead students to learn and understand in different ways; therefore, teachers need to develop creative approaches and find new methods, solutions, and practices to grab their students' attention. However, the competencies and the skills of teachers in this digital age is a changeable category.

Taking a qualitative grounded theory approach, twelve teachers of Visual Art from twelve different European countries were interviewed allowing for the examination of how newer digital art forms are being integrated alongside established art practices. These interviews were designed to explore several variables that may affect the engagement of teachers and students with the subject. The researcher developed a framework to understand how the variables in this study connect.

The aim of this study was to explore the integration and extent of digital technology use and new media practices in the post-primary subject Visual Art and was underpinned by the following research questions:

- How are the aspects of digital technology and new media practice evident in each location?
- What aspects of digital technology and new media do teachers discuss and attribute their instructional decisions to when analysing their interactions with students during the teaching and learning of Visual Art?
- What aspects of digital technology and new media are identified as having an impact on teaching and learning in Visual Art?
- What approaches to integrate digital technology and new media are taken in the teaching and learning experience to ensure students are at the heart of the experience rather than being spectators in a post-primary classroom environment.

The study paints a picture of the arrangement and relationships of the key attributes within visual art curriculum, creativity, and technology, with prominence on teacher motivation, teacher expectation, teacher experience and learner performance. It is noted that changing the status and value of visual art and culture within our schools is a big issue, almost more so than curriculum design. It is established that some schools in Europe are 'technology richer', due to available funding and schools' individual programmes and policies concerning technology usage. However, no common or set requirements currently exist regarding technology usage in European schools, nor even within schools in each individual country. It is confirmed that the learning space and the learning community are critical factors in the Visual Art classroom, and we need learning spaces that foster connection between traditional art practices and new media rather than compartmentalisation. However, this research reveals that several potential roadblocks exist. Differences in values, access, infrastructure, language, support, and confidence currently prevent successful integration of both traditional and contemporary practice areas in the Visual Art classroom.

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