Reflective Teaching Portfolio
Nancy Eder
Adjunct Assistant Professor
History of Art Department
The Fashion Institute of Technology–The State University of New York
Teaching with Technology Event January 15, 2019

Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy is that I believe all people can benefit from the study of the History of Art. We live in a visual culture and it is important to understand the original context of the images that bombard us every day. Moreover, I teach about cultures that are labeled "non-Western." It is my sincerest belief that it is important to approach culture from a global perspective. Even though I teach about very ancient concepts, I believe that my students can relate to the works of art regardless of their background because human beings all have the same concerns, wishes, desires, and fears. These have not changed over time, nor place!

One of my main goals is to get students to really look at works of art with a discerning eye. I believe that we all can learn what we need to know about an artwork by truly seeing it, looking at what's there, looking at the back of the work of art, really investigating what the work presents to the viewer. Through this we can be led to the further study of the social, political, and religious context of the work. First and foremost, it starts and ends with the work of art. Because this is an integral part of my teaching philosophy, I always include an assignment that requires first hand examinations of works of art.

Benefits and Challenges of a Teaching with Technology

I teach many classes online each semester. I am teaching two sections of East Asian Art and Civilization and one section of the Art and Civilization of India for the Spring 2019 semester. I have been teaching online for several years. One of the benefits of online teaching is that is has allowed me to connect with students from all over the world. One aspect that has been very successful is that the students love watching the videos I provide for them as part of the course. Many students have commented on how it helps with different learning styles.

Ironically, this has also been one of the challenges of teaching online. A couple of times, my YouTube links have been taken offline. Another major challenge is teaching students who are located in the People's Republic of China where Google and YouTube are blocked. It is nearly impossible to take an online class at FIT if you don't have access to Google or YouTube.

Another challenge of teaching online has been developing an assignment that allows for first hand observations of works of art. This has been a fun, interesting, and

rewarding challenge. I have investigated many museums throughout the world and now know places to send students in Italy, India, China, Ohio, etc. On the rare occasion when there was no museum or site close enough for a student to visit, I have devised an assignment using the Bamboo Canvas website. This has been an especially rewarding part of teaching with technology.

During the Spring of 2018, I was able to offer and East Asian art course online for the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. The Bamboo Canvas website provided the basis of the students' paper assignment. It was rewarding to be able to make a connection with students who were in a different state and time zone!

How Using Technology Has Changed My Teaching

Technology has had its benefits and challenges in the classroom as well. I show my in-person classes the same videos I use in my online classes. I also utilize interactives and often look things up on Google when I am lecturing. I believe this shows students a great way to use technology. Some challenges in the classroom have been when I wasn't able to get the sound to work on the computer. This is always a slightly embarrassing scenario; however, it is always quickly resolved by calling Support Services.

Teaching online has affected my in-person classes. Last year, I went paperless in my in-person classrooms. I have all of my PowerPoints, slide lists, links, etc. on Blackboard. I have the students upload their papers to Blackboard, I got this idea from teaching online. It is so much easier than having to collect papers from the students. Now no one is late on the day that papers are due! Another online tool I recently implemented is using the digital syllabus template. I am unsure of how the students feel about this new addition, I do not believe anyone has printed out the syllabus in my in-person class this semester.

Future Goals for Teaching with Technology

I am always reevaluating and revamping my courses. I am currently revitalizing my PowerPoints. My next step will be using Screencast-O-Matic to make them into videos so my online classes can view them. I also need to use VoiceThread. I have taken at least one workshop about it and still shy away from it. It is a really useful tool that I need to take advantage of.

What Does the Future Hold?

This is an exciting time to be an educator. I think there are a lot of possibilities for teaching and learning that will unfold in the near future. I do have some skepticism. Just because we have technology, how will it be useful? As stated earlier, my goal as an Art Historian is to get students to really look at the work of art. Will using technology enhance this or take away from this? I am quite intrigued by the use of Augmented Reality (AR). Seeing examples of AR which overlay the missing

polychrome of artworks is exciting! This really will enhance our understanding of what the works of art originally looked like. Creating Virtual Reality (VR) examples of buildings is also tremendously exciting. This could help bring history alive to so many students. I am anxious for this technology to come down in price and become widely available. I can imagine future assignments which include creating VR environments for works of art.

Lastly, I do believe we will need to find the right balance between experiencing works of art in person and virtually. I truly am excited about being part of that process.