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Global Balance: Creative Geeks and Geeky Artists

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Globalization as the “new world system” (Delacruz, 2009, p. xi) is overflowing with available information to potentially enhance our ability in making connections, near and far. In making connections, educators who aim to balance the irreplaceable skill of making face-to-face real-time connections of the ‘B.C.’ (before computers) era of learning, with the text-Tweet-blog-post-tag and *maybe-leave-a-comment* technology of today’s new participatory cyber world may do well in guiding students in holistic processes that transform information and ideas into useful knowledge and experiences. For artists and art educators, the availability of cyber information to “do-it-yourself...is anything but all-by-yourself” (Castro et al., 2011, p. 49).

Balance: Personal and Broad Connections

The art of finding balance in life is not new. Rooted in centuries-old Chinese philosophy, the idea of yin and yang represent the balance of Confucianism and Taoism (<http://suite101.com/article/confucianism-and-taoism-the-yin-and-yang-of-chinese-religion-a292729>). Today, balancing old with new, traditional with contemporary, formal with informal, local with global, and other seemingly bipolar forces, relies on one’s ability to find his/her own solid and peaceful ground on which to stand. This balancing act has a fluid script that plays out uniquely depending on the variables of characters, setting, and story to be told. What appears to be an invariable and necessary component is the act of making meaningful connections between people, through personal and human experiences that are purposeful, engaging, and productive.

This short story is about finding a balance through learning and sharing the components of art *and* science. Science, as it applies here, is not merely laboratory-and-technically-based; it is also a methodical “investigation of the various subject matter disciplines, not in isolation from each other, but their instrumental use in solving problems” as noted by Gutek’s (2005, p. 6) introduction to John Dewey’s *How To Think*. Investigations of various online sources¹ indicate that artists and art educators connect art and other disciplines in many meaningful ways.

Guidance: Local and Global Efforts

Art educators should aim to guide students in how to learn from visual culture and in how to explore within the context of visual literacy (Lin, 2009). By way of a small observational case study, Lin wrote that art teachers “connect with their students the moments of learning and these

transform learning encounters into preparation for life...human learning involves more than simple machine input and output" (p. 202). Educators and learners must be diligent in investigating different perspectives, local and global. The accompanying annotated bibliography, "Interdisciplinary Sources for Creative Geeks and Geeky Artists" (http://becauseartmatters.weebly.com/uploads/1/6/5/2/16529980/ho_annotbibl.pdf) provides examples that may be used in guiding students with their own search for what connects 'creative' with 'geeky' in the most well-meaning spirit of these yin and yang characteristics.

Art: Practices and Strategies

Anderson's (2009) contemporary focus of "art-for-life" (p. 233) as a curriculum to address skills (closed-ended instruction) and concepts (open-ended expression) in the classroom has the potential of grounding art practices by balancing the acts of *doing* with that of *creating*. Contemporary artists use different creative strategies to navigate the streets of today's art world. Marshall (2009) wrote about strategies that address connectivity: fusion (synthesis), collision (resistance), and hybridization (layering, adapting, repackaging, etc.).

My original mixed media works of art (<http://www.hoyangfineart.com/>) reflect ideas that reference science, culture, and positive mantras. Acrylic paints and mediums have steady permanence and new-age flexibility that allow for explorations with collage and assemblage techniques. My works are hybridized blends of traditional practices with contemporary concepts and materials; multiple strategies, such as fusion, meaning of materials, and layering (Marshall, 2009) provide balance to my personal creativity.

In the context of visual culture and literacy what is available as information should be presented with open-ended guidance, reviewed with critical analysis, and explored with various strategies such that educators and learners, artists and audiences come to understandings that allow for personal growth, positive actions, and balance that provide inner peace.

References

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Endnotes

¹Scoop.it topic “Art and Science for Creative Geeks and Geeky Artists” was created to “Explore why some are right-brain, left-brain, or are we all potentially whole-brain with suppressed/heightened brain-side preferences?” <http://www.scoop.it/t/art-science-for-creative-geeks-and-geeky-artists>