

slash san francisco

Link to the clip: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUQ23C2ZOxI>

Description of the Project

1. Artist Statement

An interesting dimension of embarking on a collaborative art project is that art, or the artistic process, can have an unlimited amount of interpretations, and the exploration and the result can have a fundamentally different meaning for each artist involved. I may be mistaken, but my feeling is that each of us (Ellis, Mary, Katherine, and Annie) has a unique understanding of what we created. While there is only one product, it is a pretty daunting task to compose one brief comprehensive artist statement.

I see Instagram as an extension of the Polaroid; photo-processing tools that allow for the instantaneous (whether print or post) capture that serve as snapshots of our lives, a visual sliver of our daily realities. With the technology of Instagram, digital filters are applied to photos to make the everyday moments in life all the more 'beautiful'. In this sense, our choice to use Instagram as a primary platform allows this piece to speak to the expansive nature of both visual and literary art. By illustrating different, specific body parts, we are commenting on the small, intricate influences of the human body in the world, but each photo (restricted to its tiny box) also alludes to the rest of a larger, more complete, more complex picture of the person and that person (and their music) in the world.

For me, the lyrics of the song "Step" were not central; it was the different beats and rhythms that moved me. For others, a poetry analysis of the lyrics might be more meaningful. My interpretation of the song is that the "girl" is music itself, and it is interesting then that it was the music, not the words, that mattered the most throughout my artistic process. Ultimately, a project like this is about the emotional and physical process of creation, and it is a bonus that we have come up with a product that we all enjoy.

2. What process did you use to develop your idea?

In order to develop our idea, our group had an informal brainstorming session where we were able to discuss our ideas and bounce different thoughts off each other. Once we decided our media project would use photos, we were able to quickly streamline our ideas into an attainable project that we would be able to create both independently and put the final product together as a group. Since all members of our group had smartphones, we used that as a prompt for how our pictures would look and what style we wanted them to have. Instagram is a very popular photo-sharing program, which allows different filters to distort the image and our group thought instead of decided on a specific theme, we should follow the purpose of Instagram and document 'life' and the images that represent life to us. This led to our idea of capturing fragments of the people we were photographing, and to show only body parts to create our story. The idea for our project came together very quickly as we could throw out ideas and easily build off one another, choosing the song for our project came from listening to our group member's current favorite artist 'Vampire Weekend' and all agreeing it would fit our project perfectly especially considering our theme and beats to the music.

3. What pre-production strategies did you employ?

Our project flowed very organically, as we did not employ a formal pre-production strategy because we liked the fact that our photos were constantly changing and didn't have a set pattern or order to them. Our photos did go through various photo filters from Instagram before we put them onto the computer. Google Docs, email, texts, and Dropbox were used as we worked toward a final product. One strategy we used was to research components of iMovie through instructional Youtube videos so we could optimize our project since we wanted a more advanced product which showed our images to specific beats in the song "Step" by Vampire Weekend so that it had more impact and meaning compared to a generic slideshow setting. The program iMovie served as our storyboard since we were able to edit through it, however, aside from splitting photos into general categories (feet, legs, middle, hands, tops, faces) we did not want to edit the order of our photos too much and to stay within our theme of life being organic, beautiful, and random.

4. How did you assign tasks?

Tasks were divided within our group based on resources and what we needed to get done independently. Each group member was responsible to take photos and maintain within our perimeters of what types of images we were going for, and ended up contributing roughly 70 photos per group member. We were able to manage time and connect with our group through our smart phones and emails where we could ask group members for more photos or receive written contributions from all our members. The most important task that we completed as a group was constantly contributing ideas and staying connected with one another for updates on the direction our project is going or if we had made any changes to our final product. The task of putting the final product together was given to one group member as they had iMovie on their computer and it only required one member, but the rest of the group was able to assist by working on our artistic statement and providing support while they put our images to the beats of our song "Step". Our group managed time very wisely as we worked outside of class to get images of our peers and turned it into a fun project that got a lot of our peers involved and interested in our project, and we were able to send images through our smart-phones and could always stay connected to each other.

5. What approach would you use to assess this activity?

For this assignment, we would want students to be as creative as they wanted to be. During our class discussion, ideas concerning the specific, measurable, objective, and attainable measures of assessment were touched upon, and differing methods of assessment could in fact be used. For the purpose of this question however, with regards to the multimedia nature of the assignment, a teacher may decide that that students use two or more media platforms for editing/presenting, and must incorporate two or more different modalities into their presentation. With collaboration, students would have to decide on their project and show the teacher their plans for equal distribution of work before they could proceed with the project. It would be up to the teacher to use his/her discretion with regards to the fairness of such distribution, and to approve of moving forward in the assignment.

Students would also have to create an artist statement/rationale detailing: a brief explanation of the process of creating the work; what two platforms were used/will be used in the presentation; the two different modalities the work touches upon; a theme they chose for the photos/their inspiration for the photos; and finally, what the significance of the completed piece is to them. There would also be a group assessment, in which students from within the group would confidentially have the opportunity to relay any difficulties they had with the project or with their group members, alongside the aspects of the project that they believe worked very well.

To engage students further and help them to develop guidelines for their own creative work, we would want students to be involved in creating a rubric with these things in mind. We would help them to decide what is important to them, and how marks would be allocated. Through experience we have seen the benefits of including students in creating the rubric, both through the process of their projects and in the final product.

6. What are the greatest challenges in using this approach in a classroom and can they be ameliorated through careful instructional design?

If used in the classroom, the greatest challenges would be making sure every student had access to some sort of technology that would allow them to complete the assignment. This would depend on particular school resources and what was accessible to students if they were to complete the assignment during class. At this time, *most* students either independently or in a group would have access to a smartphone or a similar device that can capture images and free photo-filtering programs. The most important thing to remember when using the approach in the classroom is having clear instructions, yet allowing enough freedom so that students are able to explore ideas and themes they are interested in. A major challenge would be that some students become overwhelmed when they are given too much freedom, so it would be important to do supplemental activities that lead up to the assignment and create a classroom community so that students feel comfortable contributing their ideas and sharing personal photos or exposing issues they find important to them. Through supportive teaching that includes clear instructional design and support for student artistic exploration, our media photo sharing approach would be an excellent tool in the classroom for students to use multimedia to explore, create, and share.

7. What learning opportunities did this activity afford?

The primary goal of this project for our group was to create an artistic representation of a text using multimodal representations. We were able to use the song as a jumping off point for our artistic representation. We used multiple technologies such as our smartphones for capturing pictures, Instagram for editing the pictures, and iMovie for putting our pictures to the beats of the song. In our quest to create an artistic representation, our group also learned to use multiple technologies. As all of the members of our group have limited experience with using different aspects of technology this project provided multiple learning technologies for us, and would also provide multiple learning opportunities for students were they to engage in a similar project. Each group member had varying familiarity with editing pictures on our smartphones and using Instagram and so that was one learning opportunity in exploring the different features. None of our group members had used snap-to-beat feature on iMovie and so we utilized YouTube tutorials to learn how to use this feature. We also learned about online file sharing in sharing our pictures among group members for use in our final project. This activity also afforded learning opportunities in terms of making decisions as to the artistic representation of the text. Firstly deciding to use body parts to represent the song, and then making decisions such as whether or not the order should be random or ordered in some way. This activity allows for learning opportunities for students, as they will be able to explore how to artistically represent a song or a text in ways that allow for creative freedom. As a group we feel that we learned a lot about technology in the process of completing this project and we feel that this would be an excellent learning opportunity for students as well to engage with different technologies as a means to creatively represent a text.