



Small TLEF Project – Final Report

Report Completion Date: (2017/06/30)

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.1. General Information

Project Title:	Introduction to Digital Art into the Digital Realm		
Principal Investigator:	Christine D’Onofrio		
Report Submitted By:	Christine D’Onofrio		
Project Initiation Date:	May 2015	Project Completion Date:	June 30, 2017

1.2. Project Summary

There have been drastic changes affecting the terrain of learning digital media and imaging for younger generations I currently teach. Theories of learning such as “information storage” have become irrelevant, as the amount of knowledge is growing in accelerated leaps, a computer can do it better, and knowledge is quickly outdated nowadays. On the other side, cognitive learning theories determined learning as a “way of being”. Discoll’s learning theory of “constructivism” suggests that learners create knowledge as they attempt to understand their experiences. But instead of seeing learning as either linear, as empty vessels to fill with knowledge, or as cognitive negotiators actively attempting to create meaning, how could we facilitate learning that utilizes knowledge that occurs in this new place, outside of the self?

Newfound challenges had been revealing themselves in my years teaching Visual Arts 110 Foundation Studio: Digital Visual Arts. I realized these challenges presented an opportunity to understand learning differently, motivating me to engage with surprising, messy, chaotic and even abstract potentials of the new domains of information. The capacity to form connections between sources of information, and thereby create useful information patterns, is required to learn in our new knowledge economy. I was inspired by George Simens idea of “Connectivism” –Connections between disparate ideas and fields that can create new innovations, because quote “decisions are based on rapidly changing new information that alters the landscape” ... “choosing what to learn and the meaning of incoming information is seen through the lens of a shifting reality”.

How can I use the virtual world as metaphor for learning? The class that I flipped, “Visual Arts Digital Foundation” is a large introductory studio course that focuses on how the “machine” influences art making. Through a narration of art history, theory, practice and research, students learn how to read and create Visual Art Works. The weekly course structure is a a one-hour large lecture conducted by myself that is then segmented off into smaller 20 student 3 hour lab sections led by TAs. It is primarily a studio course, therefore students are required to execute artworks to demonstrate their research and critical thought process when working with sources from recording devices, then executed in digital formats, using Adobe Photoshop and Premiere software.

Usually, technical demonstrations were done by TAs in the labs and approached learning how to use these tools as systematic and something to be conquered. This approach used a computer in a one dimensional



way, to continue to just see learners as ‘cognitive processors’ of skill building. There were and still are significant changes going on, such as the fact that learners of the generation I was teaching would move into a variety of possibly unrelated fields over the course of their lifetime, and this should influence how we teach. As well, technology is not an inanimate tool to be learned, but instead is actually altering our brains and how we define and shape thinking. Instead of knowledge input, humans are becoming knowledge management systems, to know how to reach, when to use, how to find, apply and reanimate, ever-changing knowledge. The challenges that would inform the methods that would turn VISA 110 into a ‘blended’ classroom were:

- **Diverse Student Backgrounds**
Students have varied experiences with the programs, therefore there was no way for a TA to deliver technical demonstrations in lab that would work for all students. Some students were new and needed time and repetition and a slower pace, some felt demonstrations took up too much time and were unchallenging because they had previous experience with the software, though not familiar with the concepts of the class.
- **Distractions**
Because many of the contact hours were spent on technical demonstrations, students tended to be pre-occupied with technical skill-building rather than main objectives of the course -which are worth more to them of “how to read and create contemporary artworks that demonstrate an affective, ethical, critical and intelligent approach to the digital medium.” Needed to refocus contact hours towards discussions of the value and role of artistic practice.
- **Student Pride & Decision Making**
Limited contact hours and the time-consuming nature of technical demonstrations only allowed for TA’s to teach one program per project, and in a very specific way. Therefore, many projects *looked* like variations of the same. This doesn’t really work for art making where the subjective and decisions reveal much about agency.
- **Life-Long Learners**
Evolve one-time “skill-building” lessons into life-long learning techniques by developing habits of self-initiated exploration, research and online resource use.
- **Collegiality**
A community setting is missing from digital art-making, therefore needed to cultivate a sense of collegiality which is very important to studio based research and practice.
- **Student Schedules**
A 4 hour/week class at sometimes awkward times became difficult for this generation’s schedule reality, (increased tuition, jobs, etc) thus, flexibility in certain aspects of learning could help out with the scheduling pressures. A flipped classroom would enable me to use reduced contact hours in a more fruitful way, replacing one of the contact hours for unscheduled online learning that they could do on their own time.
- **TA Inconsistency**
Graduate students are admitted into a grad program because of their artistic practice and research and there is no way to deliver technical demonstrations consistently throughout the labs because of the diverse backgrounds. Therefore, a succinct standard of demonstrations was not practiced throughout the different lab sections.
- **Teaching Assistants as a Resource & Fulfillment**
Specialties and research interests of the TA’s were not utilized because of the strong emphasis on technical demonstrations. Teaching Assistants are valuable because of their role as artists and researchers. TA specialties, research and contributions as artists and academic researchers were



under-utilized on basic skill-based teaching. As well, I’m sure that overall TA’s felt unfulfilled with teaching an overwhelming amount of skill based techniques.

As a result of these challenges, I embarked upon the creation of a technical demonstration library that would enact skill-based video demonstrations for Adobe Photoshop and Premiere as well as Audacity. The following is an outline of the module components of the technical demonstration library, each section is introduced with an overview and concluded with extra resources that includes further links, and each module has its own video and accompanied by approximately 4-8 self-assessment quiz questions. As well, in the second phase of the TLEF I incorporated an online peer review activity to cultivate collegiality and a sense of community in the online space.

Technical Demonstration Library Contents:

Module 1: Fundamentals (1 hour total)

- Overview
- 1.0 Welcome
- 1.1 OSX Interface
- 1.2 Digital Workflow and Formatting External Drive
- 1.3 Raster and Vector Graphics
- 1.4 Output and Software
- 1.5 Input
- Extra Resources

Module 2: Photoshop (2 hours total)

- Overview
- 2.0 Introduction to Photoshop
- 2.1 Bits, Bytes, Histogram and Density
- 2.2 Colour Channels
- 2.3 Resolution
- 2.4 Photoshop Workspace
- 2.5 Photoshop Tools
- 2.6 Getting Started
- 2.7 Adjustment Layers
- 2.8 Exporting from Photoshop
- 2.9 Frame by frame GIF
- Extra Resources

Module 3: Advanced Photoshop (1 hour total)

- Overview
- 3.0 Advanced Tools
- 3.1 Subtractive Manipulation
- 3.2 Addition Manipulation
- 3.3 Video to Frame GIF
- Extra Resources

Module 4: Premiere (2 hours total)

- Overview
- 4.0 Introduction to Premiere
- 4.1 Technical Terminology
- 4.2 Video File Formats and Codecs
- 4.3 Premiere Workspace
- 4.4 Getting Started in Premiere
- 4.5 Sequences

- 4.6 Marking Clips for Sequences
- 4.7 Timeline, Tools and Trimming
- 4.8 Exporting from Premiere
- Extra Resources

Module 5: Advanced Premiere (1 hour total)

- Overview
- 5.0 Sequence and Clip Techniques
- 5.1 Fixing Clip Distortions
- 5.2 Effects and Transitions
- 5.3 Audio Techniques
- 5.4 Advanced Audio Techniques
- 5.5 Ken Burns Effect in Premiere
- Extra Resources

Module 6: Audacity (1 ½ hours total)

- Overview
- 6.0 Introduction to Audacity
- 6.1 Sound Terminology and File Types
- 6.2 Audacity Workspace
- 6.3 Getting Started in Audacity
- 6.4 Basic Tools and Effects
- 6.5 The Compressor
- 6.6 Exporting
- Extra Resources

Appendix A: Concepts (1 hour total)

- Overview
- A.1 Layout
- A.2 Chronology
- A.3 Manipulation
- A.4 Basic Design
- Extra Resources

Appendix B: UBC Resources (1 hour total)

- Overview
- B.1 EPortfolio and WordPress
- B.2 Scanners
- B.3 Printing in the Bining Lab
- Extra Resources



References:

Siemens, G. (2005). Connectivism: A learning theory for the digital age. *International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning*, 2(1), 3-10.

1.3. Team Members – (Please fill in the following table and include students, undergraduate or graduate, who participated in your project).

Name	Title/Affiliation	Responsibilities/Roles
Christine D’Onofrio	Instructor	Researched software for both Peer Review & Online Technical Library, Outlines for all videos and the technical resource library as a whole, including phase II revisions brought about by first year beta-testing, student surveys and focus groups, created/found resources and information for all videos including visuals, project managed lists of information needed in each video, appraised videos for edit approx. 3 x each, EdX structure, EdX revisions, Most all “Getting Started” and “Extra Resources” sections, Remade Fundamentals videos as well as all Photoshop but one Photoshop videos (Introductory and Advanced) completely, including new visuals, re-arranged information, sound recording, screen captures, and edited the videos together, All peer critiques (Phase 2) elements, prompts, structure, etc... uploaded all videos, linked to EdX, facilitated through Connect, Wrote most quiz questions, Created “Design” video and workshop,
Silver Burla	Undergraduate Student	1 st year focus groups & office hours, Premiere, Premiere Advanced & Audacity Quiz Questions, contributed to “Getting Started” and “Extra Resources” sections for all Modules, Survey Assessments Results 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd year. Edited most Photoshop, Premiere and Audacity Videos in Phase 1, revised most all Premiere and Audacity videos in Phase 2, and completely re-did all but 3 Premiere and Audacity videos, work included new outline, clarity in content, new visuals, new sound recording, adjusted contact for clarity. Re-edited videos for clarity that he did not re-do. Also created “UBC Facilities” Resources videos.
Shasha Wong	Undergraduate Student	2 nd year maintenance & office hours, contributed to Introductions & Extra Resources on edX, tested quiz questions, Edited Chronology Video, Created Design Video, Inserted “Information” boxes on videos
Anyse Ducharme & Eric Angus	MFA (graduate) Students	Assembled some resources for Photoshop & Premiere videos, recorded videos that went up for first year beta-testing



1.4. Student Impact – Please fill in the following table with **past**, **current**, and **future** courses and sections (e.g. HIST 101, 002, 2017/2018, Sep) that have been/will be impacted by your project, including any courses not included in your original proposal (you may adapt this section to the context of your project as necessary).

Course	Section	Academic Year	Term (Summer/Fall/Winter)	# Students
VISA 110	002	2015W	Winter	208
VISA 110	002	2016W	Winter	193
VISA 110	227	2016W	Winter	98
VISA 110	001	2017W	Fall	Up to 220
VISA 110	002	2017W	Winter	Up to 160
VISA 110	227	2017W	Winter	Up to 100
2018+ This course is offered in three sections a year for a total of approximately 480 students per year.				

2. PROJECT EVALUATION

2.1. Project Outcomes – Please list the intended outcomes or benefits of the project for students, TAs and/or instructors.

- Refocused class time on theoretical discussions leading to a more complex and nuanced understanding of the role of art and media in society and how to contribute ethically.
- An enhanced understanding of the characteristics of ‘medium specificity’ of still and moving image, including disciplinary awareness of a Visual Arts research approach.
- Increased in-class participation was insightful for TAs to identify and adapt teaching methods based on responses, revealed knowledge as well as challenges of the course material.
- An overall more satisfying teaching experience for TAs as they found ways to engage and articulate their own research into the curriculum.
- Brought awareness to their relationship with technology by making --praxis, in order to critically experience the media and tools they are to philosophically dissect.
- Cultivate collegial community in online spaces for the purpose of artistic practice dialogue.

2.2. Findings – Briefly describe the methods and findings of your project evaluation effort: to what extent were intended project outcomes achieved or not achieved?

A formal assessment of the tools, including student surveys, a TA focus group, and my own reflective analysis were administrated and informed alterations and new goals of the blended classroom. In particular, I will refer to 3 surveys administered in the last 3 iterations of the class.

- **3 hour Not Blended**

This class that did not use the resources or the peer review, and worked just as the class has for the last 8 years, 149 of 189 students responded to the survey.

- **3 hour Blended**

The second survey was for a class that was “flipped” so the online technical demonstrations and



peer review were administered but in-class hours were not yet reduced, therefore it stayed at a 3 hour lab time and is labelled in the graphs, 124 of 193 students responded to the survey.

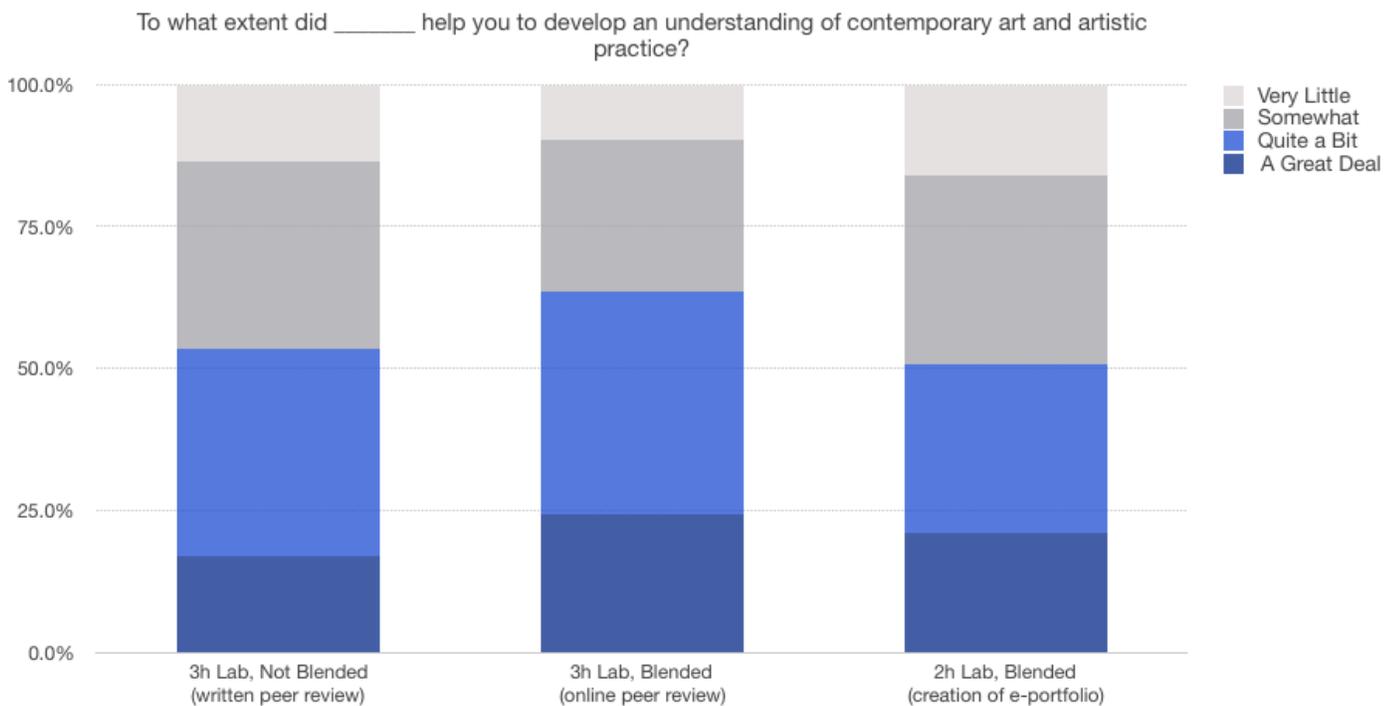
• **2 hour Blended**

The third class that was surveyed was the Media Studies stream in the Co-ordinated Arts Program (CAP) class which did utilize the technical demonstration videos, had been reduced in hours, but did not contain the peer review instead an ePortfolio was part of the curriculum. This is also a smaller section of 100 students of which 81 responded to the survey.

I will now go through a selection of findings from the quantitative surveys, with graphics demonstrating quantitative results, and reference to the qualitative questions when necessary to reveal relevance or conclusions.

Peer Critiques:

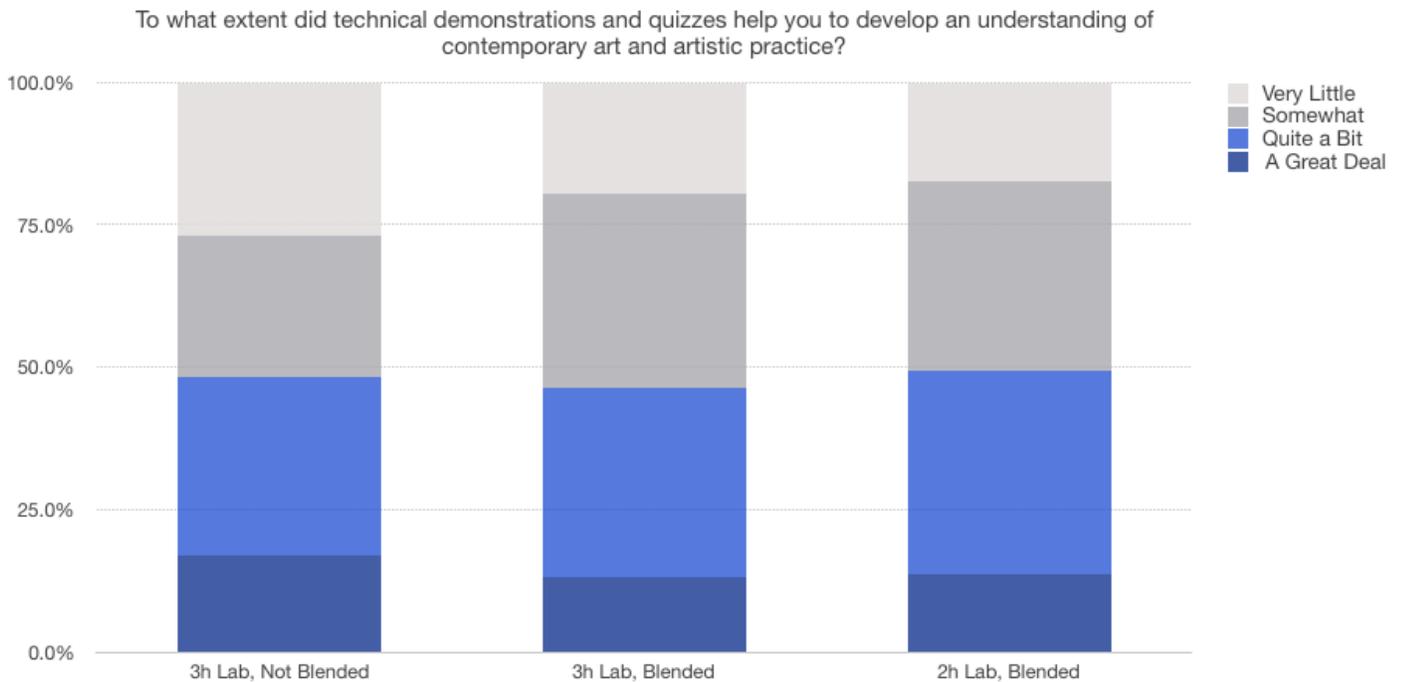
The introduction of online peer critiques before projects were due was a way to cultivate a sense of collegiality in the students to value and seek peer advice. This not only helped in creating a sense of trust in the community of their peers, but also helped to improve project quality before it is due for grading. The results of the online peer critique success demonstrated the **highest difference** between class structures in the quantitative assessments, proving the particular effectiveness of online peer review in this class.





Online Technical Demonstration Resource Library:

A measure of effectiveness was garnered by asking students to what extent did the technical demonstrations and quizzes help students with the major points of the class. While “A Great Deal” and “Quite a Bit” went relatively unchanged, the “Very Little” area was hit most, showing that the gap between those who knew the program and those who did not was not as drastic as in the original course wherein the TA taught technical demonstrations during contact hours.

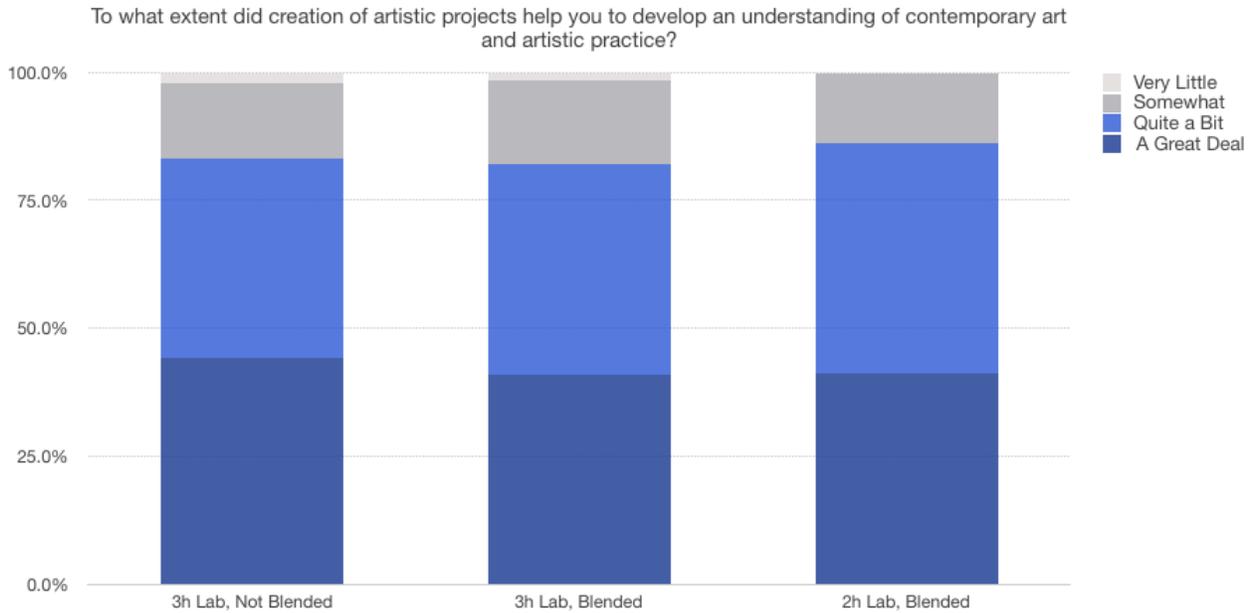


In the **3 hour Not Blended** qualitative assessment, when students were asked if there was “anything they wished to add that would help make the course more successful” there was a total of 40 different students (of total 149 who answered the survey) that commented in some way about the Teaching Assistant abilities to teach the technical components of the programs, 5 students directly naming examples of teaching assistant technical abilities being weak or confusing in specific instances. As this is one of the major motivators for the TLEF, I felt this is significant evidence of how problematic Teaching Assistant abilities were to the teaching of these specific skills. The **3 hour Blended class**, which utilized the technical demonstration video library had a total of 5 comments (out of 124 students who answered the survey) who made comments regarding the quality of the videos, though these were not directly at the demonstration quality. There were also still 5 comments made towards the lack of preparedness of TA’s that may relate to the TA comments of the classroom that was not yet blended. As well, I gained insight to exact details of how to improve the new class structure, as 6 different students commented on the lack of lab access time and the **2 hour blended** class also had 8 comments in regards to lab time for doing the video work. As a result, starting in Fall 2017, the TA’s and I will be holding two, 1-hour workshop lab times on top of open lab times every week to help students that feel they need one-on-one help, as a personal tutorial time.



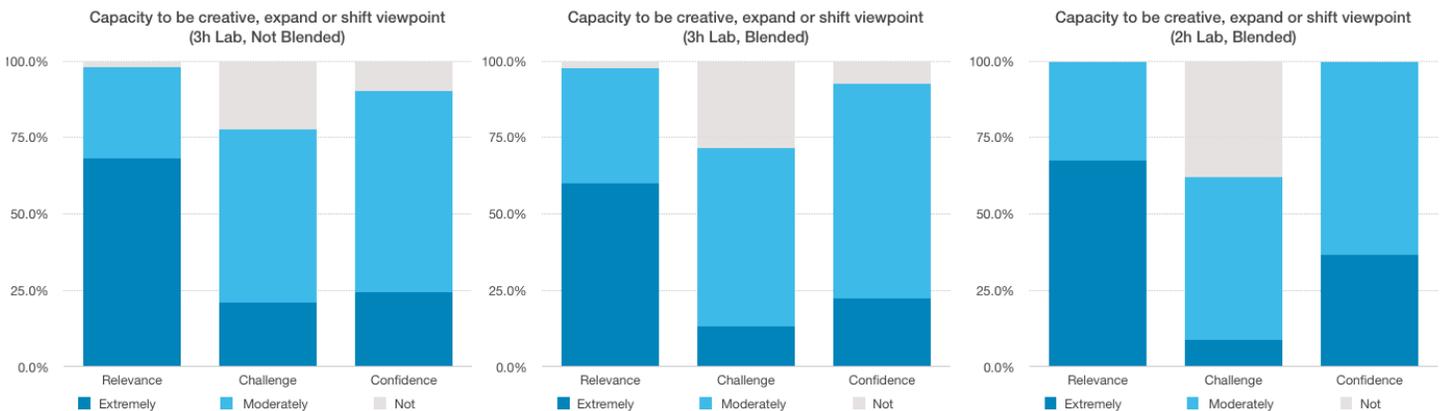
Artistic Practice as Research:

In a hope to re-align the focus of the class for students to understand how praxis is a form of research in studio disciplines it was important to measure the effects of the main component of the course to see if attitudes changed by way of the skill-based component delivery. While not significantly different, you will see a slight raise in the understanding of contemporary art and artistic practice by way of developing, praxis and creation.



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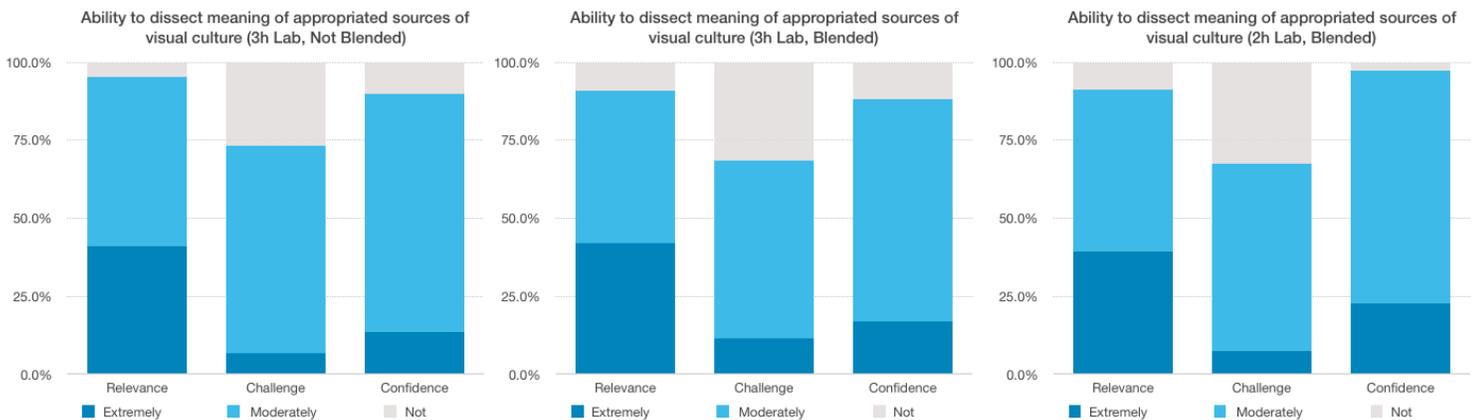
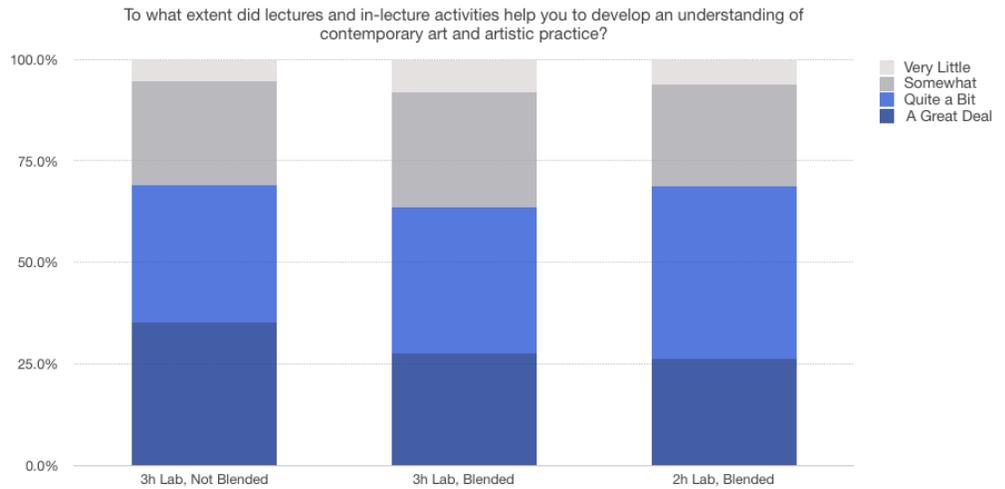
This result was further enhanced when asked of their impression of the relevance of creativity, capacity to be creative and new confidence to be creative after the course. The qualitative survey showed that the blended classrooms felt less anxious will the challenges of these components, and generated a higher *extremely* and *moderately* self-assessment in the **Confidence** category, which indicates that they do have a higher confidence in their creative skills because of the structure of the class.



Contact Hour Activities:

With a renewed focus on contact hours, I started to initiate further activities for both lecture and lab times. The change was not as I had hoped, and over the summer I have been writing/creating more informed lesson plans for the Teaching Assistants to use for the 2017 iterations of the class. I am also integrating

the use of TopHat for the lectures, so that I can facilitate active learning in the large lecture. As well, I noticed in the comments (& results of survey) that students in the 2-hour lab felt that in-lab workshops were more useful than the 3-hour lab, and that much of the 3-hour lab students felt that the activities were much too long. I do think going down to a 2-hour lab for all sections of the class will eliminate this feeling of being stuck in class for a 3-hour lab when they wished to complete their online homework. I do feel that the reduction in hours will also help to alleviate this sense of tedium as well as my renewed lesson plans.

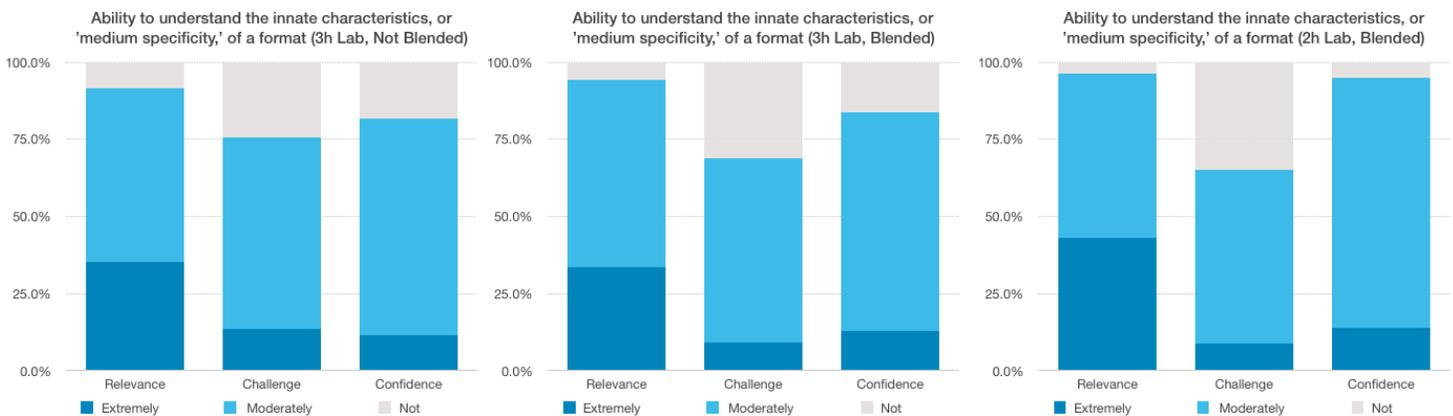


However, if we take a particular example of course content on “appropriation” that was further activated in the refocused contact hours of the blended classroom, you will see that the **confidence** category of the blended classrooms is higher, leading me to believe that while there was very little change in the first question above, this more detailed question that actually applies the in class lesson to specific content, (appropriation) we can then see significant growth in the confidence level for the blended classroom. Nonetheless, I have been working throughout the spring to cultivate new lesson plans for the TA’s and plan to incorporate TopHat active learning techniques into my lectures to further utilize the class time.



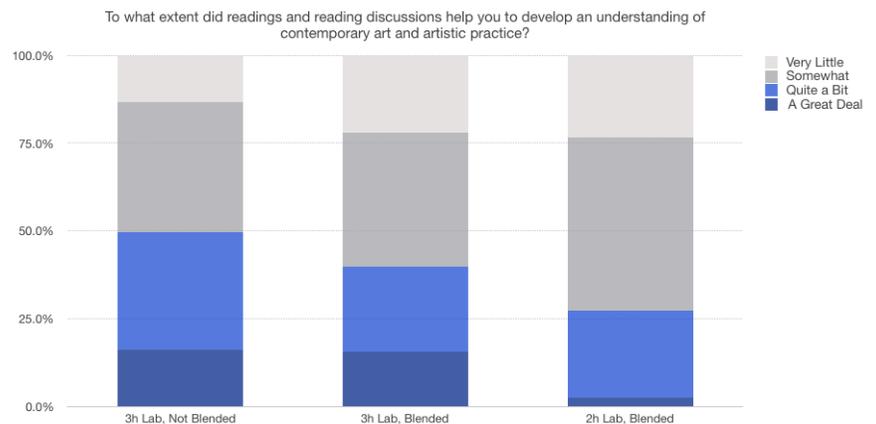
Medium Specificity:

When asked to understand the relevance of the characteristics of a medium to the message of a work, students in the blended classroom found this to be more *relevant* than the class that was not blended. They also found it to be less challenging to approach and felt more confident about their abilities to understand and utilize this knowledge. This is a rather difficult concept for a first year student to dissect as subject matter and content makes us gullible to interpretation. I feel that this is a significant improvement as understanding the characteristics of medium, especially digital art, is important to the ethic of making meaning through a specific medium, in light of Marshall McLuhan’s very important catch phrase --*the medium is the message*.



TA Focus Group:

I conducted a voluntary focus group of qualitative information during the summer with 5 of the 9 Teaching Assistants who taught the class. All but one of the Teaching Assistants who attended the focus group had taught both versions of the class, therefore the responses were quite comparative. The most significant changes in the use of class time that Teaching Assistants felt had a positive effect was the increased class time for public critiques, a very important part of the discipline of the Visual Arts. In contrast to the results of student surveys, Teaching Assistants felt that readings and reading discussions in class were much more complex and in-depth, particularly in the 2hour blended class. This is at odds with the student feedback, which makes me speculate whether some of the survey results were more about enjoyment, ease or popularity rather than insight into difficult topics. I hope to identify new strategies and techniques for reading discussions for students to see relevance to the class topics. Finally, the Teaching Assistants





expressed an overall greater sense of fulfillment in teaching the class and the types of conversations they were having with students.

Personal Observations:

My own observations focused mainly on student growth, in comparing previous iterations of the course with the three pilot ‘blended’ versions of the course, shows that a focus on certain self-initiated learning components can expand the gap between higher and lower grades. I plan to address this with the introduction of formal due dates for certain components, as well incorporating time-management and self-learning techniques into the curriculum, so as to demonstrate to students how self-initiated learning can be cultivated. As well, student feedback indicates there are still a select few students who require one-on-one technical help using the programs. In the next iteration of the course I plan to facilitate weekly technical workshops to supplement the online resource curriculum. The weekly sessions will be focusing on particular components of skill-based learning in the same order as the resource, and allow for extra lab time with technical guidance as students apply their skills while creating their projects. On a more administrative/managerial side, Teaching Assistants are more enthusiastic about teaching the course and there are more Teaching Assistants able to teach the course, therefore the department is able to support graduate students in our program.

As a result of my findings, I will sustain a blended classroom model in future iterations of the course. However, I aim to further develop active teaching strategies in both the large lecture, and in labs, so as to better utilize class time for more nuanced learning and discussions. This will be incorporated into further Teaching Assistant training as well to help TA’s conduct proper group work and active learning strategies into their class, as well as their own research interests as a way to work as an example to students. I also plan on administrating outside class time technical workshops for students who need extra one-on-one help with the programs. Finally, I plan to further utilize peer review as a pedagogical strategy as the benefits from my findings were quite substantial.

2.3. Dissemination – Please provide a list of scholarly activities (e.g. publications, presentations, invited talks, etc.) in which you or anyone from your team have or intend to disseminate the outcomes of this project.

National Conferences:

- I presented a paper titled **From Skill-Building to Creative Research: Flexible Learning in Foundation Digital Arts Studio** at the 2016 Universities Art Association Conference in Montreal last October as part of the Art in Higher Education Sessions.

At UBC:

- On June 28th 2017 I was a presenter on a panel for “Student Peer Assessment: Best Practices and Practical Ideas for Implementation” session at Centre for Teaching and Learning and Technology, UBC where I ran a table discussion on **Activating Online Social Habits to Cultivate Academic Collegiality**.



- I have facilitated 4 workshops over the last 2 years on Integrating Flexible Learning using EdX at the Centre for Teaching and Learning Technology at UBC, the most recent workshop also included ComPAIR peer review.
- Poster presentation on the project **Introduction to Digital Art into the Digital Realm** at the 2017 TLEF Showcase for the Centre for Teaching and Learning Technology, UBC on May 4th 2017.
- Published interview on the Centre for Teaching and Learning Technology website titled **Interview: Christine D’Onofrio in Visual Art uses edX and Connect to revitalize course content and change student learning** and am currently in the process of contributing another interview about my use of ComPAIR for Peer Review.

3. **TEACHING PRACTICES** – Please indicate if your teaching practices or those of others have changed as a result of your project. If so, in what ways?

The most significant change is how I am thinking about in-class time. In past years teaching the class I have dedicated many contact hours to skill-based learning, and assigned homework that would develop sensitivity for visuals to apply when making their own projects. The flipped classroom has changed the purpose of contact hours, and also structure of assessments, therefore I participated in a Course Design Intensive at CTLT, UBC in June of 2017 to realign project and evaluation strategies to represent the new focus of the class. As a result, I have fully re-developed the course curriculum, and will introduce new active learning techniques via TopHat in the lecture component. As of September 2017 the lab component will be fully “flipped” taking up two hours instead of three, and I have developed an entirely new lesson plan strategy for the TA’s to practice in their lab hours. I have inserted various smaller projects, at the request of students in the survey assessment comments, which also fully develop an understanding of each of the realigned course outcomes. The larger projects for the course and content topics, (appropriation, medium specificity) have stayed much the same because of course and facility limitations and requirements of being a first year digital course, but with an increase in media literacy development, especially relevant to appropriation and digital media. The media literacy development will be activated with the new smaller projects.

The next revelatory change was the way in which I was using Teaching Assistants as resources, and the types of interactions facilitated with students. As mentioned, further development into lab time curriculum and active learning strategies will further enhance knowledge retention and analysis for when it needs to be applied in larger projects. Teaching Assistants are learning how access different learning techniques, facilitate and work within them towards becoming better teachers for their own futures.

I have met with Sally Hermansen from Geography, and more recently John Vigna from Creative Writing, about my experience using EdX, peer critique, making videos, and the overall agenda of ‘flipping’ the class and creating resources for skill-based learning. In my own department the studio administrator and I have talked about the benefits of an online resource for safety demonstrations in the lab, particularly the print and sculpture labs, as a way to ensure access to information and specialty testing is part of the overall lab facility use.



4. PROJECT SUSTAINMENT – *Please describe the sustainment strategy for the project components. How will your work be sustained and/or potentially expanded (e.g. over the next five years)?*

Much of the resources have been created in a way that will allow them to be sustainable and applied in various ways to various curriculum purposes and teaching strategies. However, the actual programs, Premiere and Photoshop by Adobe, do have a reputation of changing. For the most part, being at an introductory level, I hope the video tutorials will be relevant to the base skills, but I do acknowledge that there will be times where I will have to re-edit, re-record, re-dub audio, in order to make changes in videos that acknowledge changes in the software program edition changes.

I wish to activate the resources by way of department-wide access. The technical video library would be useful to upper-level digital Visual Arts classes, such as VISA 210, 241, 310 and 311. They would also be helpful to other mediums, such as printmaking and painting, or to Art History students that need to adjust images for presentations.

I foresee a further expansion of this project to include vector-based software, of which we do not currently teach in the Visual Arts department. Particularly I would like to one day consider creating a suite of demonstration videos for Adobe InDesign, Illustrator and After Effects. This would allow for another image-making structure to become a part of the curriculum, and can have effects in upper-level sculpture, print and moving image courses, as well as introduce design strategies of vector-based imaging to outside departments, for example design type activities to Sauder School of Business students, or virtual reality imaging for computer science students, or towards interactive journalism techniques for media studies students. However, as vector based imaging knowledge is rarer than raster based imaging knowledge in the Visual Arts, I would have to figure out a way to make the videos at an adequate level to be productive to student learning, and would therefore need proficient users to help in creating them.