CONCEPTUALIZING LEARNING ISSUES THROUGHOUT THE CREATIVE PROCESS OF DIGITAL STORYTELLING: CASE STUDIES OF THREE LEARNERS’ VIDEO MAKING

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

I believe that digital storytelling through narrative video production is a beneficial practice that translates an individual’s synthesis of human experiences, memories, and aspirations into visual metaphors by means of multi-media tools, combining music, video and still images with an individual’s creative voice. I also maintain that narrative video production has tremendous potential to engage the viewing audience, thus helping both the creators and spectators of the videos to discover the power of creative visual communication. This research involved my own journey towards creating narrative video production and provides a unique insider look at the process as well as cross-discussion with the creative processes of two more individual learners.

This research provides an introduction to the basic practices of digital video production, with an emphasis on the building of narrative, planning of action, and sequencing of imagery, texts, and sound. I considered these practices in relation to each individual’s learning experiences and processes regarding digital video creation. In the literature review, I provide brief overviews of selected discourse from various disciplines about the nature of narrative, telling a story in a digital age, aspects of digital video production, and notions about postmodern art pedagogy as they might apply to narrative digital video pedagogy. I also review varying definitional claims regarding narrative and digital video production as posited by media scholars, art educators, and film critics.

The primary research question of this study focused on identifying the learning issues surrounding the artistic, conceptual, and technical aspects of digital storytelling via the experience of three learners engaged in video making practice. These three case reports shows how the process of making a digital video impacts each of the individuals’
notions of digital storytelling, and how the students in my study uniquely perceived their learning experiences in a classroom setting. Each case has its own set of learning experiences, varied constructions of meaning, particular technology adoptions, and artistic expressions, even while situated in the same course setting. I described how individuals’ knowledge and understanding of digital storytelling grew throughout the semester. I used synthesis and reflection to determine how digital storytelling experiences can be embedded in individual digital stories.

The cross-case discussion integrates the study findings within the framework of my research questions. Based on the cross-case discussion, I generated five important learning issues regarding digital making process, as described above: a) acknowledgement regarding the purpose and meanings of digital video making, b) technical learning issues regarding technology, c) creative process of video making, d) completion and demonstrating craftsmanship, and e) creative tension between storyteller and audience. Together, the three case reports and the cross-case discussions lead to valuable research findings and potential implications in art education.

This study presents empirical evidence identifying the learning issues and strategies of actual learners of digital storytelling, highlighting the complexity of digital video making and reinforcing the significance of learner autonomy. Digital video making can serve as an alternative learning practice to facilitate improvisational, self-regulated, creative, and work-based learning. This understanding of the purpose of amateur digital video production is significant because it allowed the individual learners in this study to enjoy freedom and imaginative space while working with their digital videos, exploring and experimenting in the vast world of digital technology, narrative, and artistic
approaches, instead of trying to adhere to a fixed storyboard, afraid to make mistakes.

Unlike professional films, which are constrained by commercial purposes, digital stories can encompass a broad set of subjects, topics, objectives, content, attitudes, and working strategies. The findings of this study have important implications not only for the areas of media education and art education, but more broadly for learning theories in general.
To my mother and father who always supported and inspired me during this journey
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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Research

My research includes examining how narratives, media components, and art making strategies are actualized in video form, and how people create individual digital stories through process-based writing using digital video making. This research shows both process and productions of building digital narratives through creative inquiry, self-reflection, and video creation. This dissertation uses two main concepts to describe the research topic, digital storytelling; digital technology and storytelling. The research begins at the point of understanding how people tell their stories in the digital era in a digital format. More precisely, this research examines the process of digital storytelling, some issues that individual storytellers confront during that process, and the expressive representations and meanings embedded in digital stories.

Contemporary peoples’ lives are interconnected through the technology of the Internet. Daily life involves reading e-mail from different parts of the world, posting images, writing blogs, and accessing news, weather, and videos through computers and a variety of multi-media communication devices. Technology is everywhere in contemporary society. Ubiquitous learning is also made possible by the omnipresence of digital media (Delacruz, 2009a, b, c). In a world of competing, contradictory and constantly changing images, the dynamic use of digital technology has become more pervasive in our lives, and has transformed the potential for the processing, storage and

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1 According to Munster (2006), digital movement means a “flow of information, technology, cultural and social deployment, potentialities, delimitations and regulations” (p. 13).
transmission of information (Bell, Loader, Pleace & Schuler, 2004; Buckingham & Willett, 2006; Chung, 2009; Parks, 2009). Digital media has changed the ways in which people live, work, and communicate (Buckingham, 2003; Wands, 2007; Keifer-Boyd, 2009). Because of the pervasiveness of these electronic technologies, we are both owned by and drawn into new media and technology (Delacruz, 2009b).

Given the increasing ubiquity of personal media devices such as smart phones, iPods, and digital cameras, many people are now media sophisticates (Buckingham, 2007; Chung, 2009; Delacruz, 2009a,b,c; Keifer-Boyd, 2009). Smart phones with video and audio capabilities are in widespread use, and they allow people to capture visual experiences and information from their environments using handheld devices (Smartphones, portable digital cameras), download them onto computers, and manipulate them using affordable computer software. Many art educators note the importance of the significant changes in the digital age (Kellner, 2000; Delacruz, 2009a,b,c). Scholars consider the artistic implications of these shifts (Chung, 2007; Parks, 2009), along with new art pedagogy with digital media (Chung, 2009; Keifer-Boyd, 2009; Gregory, 1997; Stankiewicz, 2004).

These shifts and accompanying practices enable contemporary learners to create and experience new media making programs and to communicate more easily and more affordably. The burgeoning digital technology, and with it the growing digital culture, have led to the explosive growth of internet-based narrative choices, such as blogs and electronic journals, as well as narrative media such as digital videos. Digital narratives are everywhere today thanks to the electronic medium such as Web pages, television screens, network games, YouTube videos, and social network services (which include
Facebook and Twitter). Given the increasing ubiquity of personal digital media devices, people of different ages and from all stations in life now create digital stories using images, voice, and music. Contemporary students are also able to communicate with each other not only in an oral and written format, but also in a multi-media format. Going through the process of creating and sharing a digital story, contemporary people are able to experience and to reflect on their lives and the world’s events and to articulate meanings, concepts, and issues using the digital medium to implement storytelling.

1.2 Overview and Chapter Organization

This research shows that there are different ways to experience and learn digital storytelling. In profiling three study participants’ digital storytelling processes and their products, I am able to describe each individual’s insights into their own video productions and video making practices.

My research topic in this dissertation is the creation of narrative videos, also known as digital storytelling. This dissertation is a study of conceptual, artistic and technical issues that some learners go through with as they learn to make digital videos. My research examines how three individual learners choose to tell their digital stories, how they engage in the process of digital storytelling, and how their learning experiences and thought processes are embedded in their digital stories. I consider content, function, motivation, techniques, aesthetic qualities\(^2\), processes, and related facets of narrative

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\(^2\) Digital videos are arranged to appeal to our perceptual sensibilities. *Aesthetic qualities* in videos include many aspects such as tonal variations, harmony, juxtaposition, repetition, and movements of multi-modal structures created through sound, lighting, images, text, camera angles and composition (Block, 2001). The term, *aesthetics qualities* in this dissertation will be used to refer to how aspects such as sound, image, text, video and other characteristics of digital videos convey meaning in particular ways in order to appeal to the audience. Aesthetic qualities are also affected by the overall look and visual design of a film such as sets,
video making. Therefore, I seek to illuminate findings about the nature of, the different purposes of, and the significance of, creative student video productions, and the learning/thought processes of digital video making embedded in each digital story. I attend to both form and content, both intention and technical aspects, and critically regard the ways that digital videos are created and viewed.

My research seeks to understand the creation of digital narrative videos as part of a visual meaning-making process, rather than simply in terms of technical media creation. My research is exploratory because substantive studies into the process of video making and the analyzes of the digital video as evidence of the thought processes/learning involved during the video making processes do not yet exist. I also provide some important considerations that certain study participants uncovered while they were learning to tell digital stories. I show the digital storytellers engaging in design, problem-solving, reflective thought processing, and decision-making throughout the process of their digital storytelling. I believe that individuals come up with struggles, issues, ideas and realistic solutions or representations while they create digital stories. Students take a problem and apply it to real-life situations while working on these projects. Digital storytellers learn how to tell digital stories from the process of digital storytelling, and store their new knowledge in their memory, and are able to apply their findings and experiences to their next storytelling attempts.

costumes, light, and color (Prince, 1955). In this regard, aesthetic qualities of digital video productions may refer to certain formal and sensory aspects that might appeal to our sensibilities.
My specific focus in this dissertation looks at meaningful learning processes and
the issues that occur during the creation of narrative videos (also known as digital
storytelling). I describe how the process and experience of making a digital video impacts
each of the individuals’ notions of digital storytelling, and how individuals uniquely
perceive learning experiences in a classroom setting. Each case (study participants) has
its own set of learning experiences, varied constructions of meaning, particular
technology adoptions, and artistic expressions, even while situated in the same course
setting.

This dissertation provides (a) a multi-dimensional conceptual framework that
makes use of multiple disciplinary perspectives that informs our understandings about
digital video storytelling, (b) detailed descriptions of the digital video making processes
and learning experiences of selected learners in the context of constructing digital stories
in a classroom setting, (c) thick descriptions of how these learners told their stories
through digital video; their intended meanings and perspectives about using digital video
to tell these stories; and analysis of and reflections on narrative properties, technical
processes, artistic strategies, and other considerations associated with these individuals’
video-making experiences, and (d) a cross-case analysis of approaches (creative process,
technical considerations, and learning and artistic style) and intentions (goals, notions
about the audience, intended meanings) that students encounter during this digital
storytelling course. Considerations of learning issues that should inform further research
and future teaching practices associated with digital storytelling.
Therefore, Chapter One of this dissertation describes the nature, significance and uniqueness of the research topic. Here I identify specific research questions relating to the learning process and issues surrounding the telling of digital stories. I define important terms, provide an overview of the methodology to be used, and specify the limitations of this research. Chapter Two reviews the relevant research informing my research questions, and conceptualizes the dimensions of digital video making into frameworks for the research. In Chapter Three, I introduce and explain the research design and methodology to be employed. I also introduce the initial conceptual framework from Chapter Two, offering the tools to create meaningful, artistic digital video. In Chapter Four, I carefully illustrate how each study participant (Researcher, Bob, Sara) uniquely perceived his/her learning experiences in the classroom setting, each with his/her own set of learning experiences, constructions of meaning, technology choices, and artistic expressions, even while situated in the same course setting. Through cross-case discussion in Chapter Five, I re-examine the common themes that emerged from the three cases, noting the themes and findings that are most relevant to the study conclusion (Chapter Six). In Chapter Six, I comprehensively conclude and discuss relevant digital video making learning issues to provide implementation for the field after scrutinizing learning theories. I also further refine the initial multi-dimensional conceptual framework through data analysis. Through this refined conceptual framework, I articulate the fundamental aspects of digital video learning and the conceptual structure of digital video making. Here, articulation means the development of a conceptual framework of digital video making and then the development of a video curriculum based on that theoretical
framework. I also offer recommendations for further research and my own reflections from the end of my dissertation journey.

1.3 Significance of the Research

This research is significant for both the fields of media education and art education because in many aspects recent art education and media education have converged (Chung, 2009; Delacruz, 2009a; Keifer-Boyd, 2009, Montgomery 2009). Videos have been a popular medium in media education in terms of educating students about media literacy through critical media interpretation and educating students about the artistic qualities of media through media creation (Kellner, 1998). Yet little systematic research has been conducted on the nature and content of student-made videos that have been created as the result of participation in video classes. Rather much research on video creation has focused primarily on the technical aspects of the videos, or approaches to video creation in terms of subjects and topics such as identity, globalization and multi-cultural issues (Buckingham, 2003, 2007; Buckingham & Willett, 2006). One recent trend in media education has been the proliferation of production of imaginative media art forms because of increasing availability of affordable digital authoring tools. At the same time, media education has experienced a gradual shift away from critiques of media productions such as movies and commercials towards hands-on media production, and away from its English and literacy education roots and towards art education (Buckingham, 2007; Montgomery 2009). A media arts approach in art education claims that creativity and imagination are essential elements of the new media arts, and successful media production should consist of excellence in visual and communicational use of digital technology (Bequette & Brennan, 2008).
Finding a good fit between art education and media education, Delacruz (2009a) observes, “art making, inquiry, and interactive digital media multimedia are naturally inclined toward eclectic, creative, collaborative, and adaptive practices” (p. 16). Taylor and Carpenter (2007) observe that a large proportion of contemporary imagery is generated in digital formats. According to Stankiewicz (2004), digital technology shapes and communicates with visual culture and changes image-making and image-reproduction. Thus, educating students in a systematic manner about digital media creation has become a significant part of art education. In addition, art education should allow students to approach the images in the works of art they create in terms of embracing their socio-cultural context and critical practices (Duncum, 2006; Freedman, 2003; Keifer-boyd, 2009). Freedman (1997, 2003) believes that art education should facilitate the understanding of digital culture through digital visuals, which students can use to analyze the contextual socio-cultural meaning of digital media. Generally, new media education is increasingly being “defined, designed, and taught in K-12 schools not by art teachers” but by media educators, English teachers, and computer teachers (Delacruz, 2009a, p. 16).

Digital storytelling has yet to become the subject of extensive research and theorization to the extent that it should be for the field of art education. I believe that students need to understand both how media can be used to produce meaning, and how media can be used to produce new digital art forms as art. Thus, I explored the possibilities of digital storytelling in art education, and oriented my research to artistic and meaningful narrative video production, even though there were other possible
approaches to communicate using digital technology and many different ways to create
digital media (e.g., graphics, animations, photographs, video).

1.4 Research Question

There is a specific primary question I want to answer, and I also generated
secondary questions for the particular classroom circumstances I would be studying. My
primary research question is:

What issues regarding the artistic, conceptual, and technical aspects of digital
storytelling do three learners have when they learn to create digital stories?

In order to answer this question, I stipulated a conceptual framework, which is my
basis for exploring digital videos created by the subjects in my study. Such a conceptual
framework may also be the basis for exploring effective digital video making pedagogy
more broadly in the field of art education beyond this dissertation.

I looked at what sort of problems the individuals encountered through the creative
process of narrative video production. I examined how in detail how these individuals
composed, revised, manipulated, and edited their digital videos, and how their artistic
strategies, media components, and technical considerations contributed to the aesthetic
qualities and meanings of their video production. Thus, this research is able to offer a
framework for understanding how all of the aspects of meanings, strategies, form,
process, and context interact in digital video making experience. Also, I fully anticipated
that emerging questions, yet to be determined, would direct my investigation as it
unfolded and as I sought to contribute to the development of a new, engaging,
educational and artistic media and art-oriented learning in the field of art education in the
form of digital storytelling.
1.5 A Glimpse of Methodology

A case study methodology serves as a framework in this research to find out how the particular study participants experienced the process of creative narrative digital video making. According to Patton (2002) and Stake (1995), case study is a naturalistic inquiry method, which allows a researcher to investigate the phenomena of interest in a non-manipulated, real-world setting. I used qualitative investigation primarily as an inductive approach involving participant observations, open-ended interviews, and artifact analysis. My primary research subjects were myself and two other focal cases. My research site was a graduate level course focusing on narrative video production at a major Midwestern university. In order to collect data, I engaged in participant observation (Merriam, 1998; Spradley, 1979), case study (Stake, 1995), semi-structured interviews (Johnson, 2002; Merriam, 1998) in-depth interviews (Spradley, 1979) interviews, and artifact analysis (Hodder, 1994; Klenke, 2008).

I collected this case study data from multiple sources, including classroom observation notes, and reflection journals; the other two participants’ electronic journals; interviews with the study participants; all three participants’ video samples, and curricular materials and events. I collected data via participant observation, interviews, and visual and document artifacts. The primary data sources were myself as the researcher, and the two other focal students. The course curriculum was also a source of data, which served as context. I collected observation data during the Fall 2010 semester (from mid-September to early December). Interviews with individual study participants took place throughout the Fall 2011 semester.

A chronological view of my research protocol for collecting and analyzing the data for this project will be helpful in providing an accurate picture of how the research was carried out. First, I set up selection criteria for finding a research site and recruiting study participants. Next, as a participant observer, I enrolled and participated in the focal class, taking observational field notes, keeping a reflective journal and audio-recording selected class sessions. I also collected artifact data from the class website during this time. Before analyzing any of the data, I generated an initial multi-dimensional conceptual framework for digital video making, based on three disciplines invested in digital video, as discussed in Chapter 2: art education, media education, and film study.

Based on my analysis of these data, I wrote up the first case report of this study and generated initial categories for further data analysis. Next, I interviewed the other two focal students, using questions developed from my own autobiographical video making experiences, as well as the literature review. I also collected document artifacts in the form of the two focal students’ journal entries and interview transcripts as well as visual artifacts in the form of the focal students’ video productions. After thoroughly analyzing all the data that I had collected, I wrote up the second and third case reports of this study, and refined the initial (autobiographical) case report. In cross case discussion, I compared across all three cases to identify issues and patterns relevant to answering my
research questions. The details of each step in this process are described thoroughly in Chapter Three.

1.6 Definitions of the Related Terms

Before I introduce the scholarly and professional literature that informs my research, and before I explain my specific research design, I will define the key terms used in this dissertation. Many of the following terms are relatively new in art education discourse, and different scholars have previously used different terms to refer to similar and overlapping concepts. I will consolidate terms that I will use in this dissertation for purposes of clarity, and I will explain how I will use these terms in this dissertation.

1.6.1 Digital technology.

Art education has employed various terms to define new technologies, which in this case refers to digital formats. For example, Delacruz used both terms *electronic technology* (2004), and *new media* (2009a,b); Krug (1998) used the term *new technology*; Bell et al. (2004), Buckingham (2003), and Leu, Ataya, and Coiro (2002) used the term *information and communication technology* (ICT). Many scholars, including Buckingham and Willett (2006), Hubbard and Greh (1991), Stankiewicz (2004), Welther (1989) and Wilson (1986), have also used the term *digital technology* to refer to new digital-format technologies in their research. I will employ the term *digital technology* in this paper to describe different types of emerging electronic technologies used for the communication of information in digital formats.

1.6.2 Film and video.

Film is a sequence of continuous, sequential photographic shots that capture motion with a camera (Berger, 2008; Stinson, 2008), and it is also another term for
movies (Stinson, 2008). Film refers to motion pictures and has been a primary medium for recording and displaying motion pictures in Hollywood (Block, 2001). Nevertheless, *Digital video* is also a medium for recording and displaying sequential motion pictures using digital technology. Since there has been little use of analog video in recent years, video now generally refers to recording systems that make use of digital, as opposed to analog, video (Block, 2001). *Digital video* contains the same elements as film, including appropriate lighting, camera movement, and character development (Berger, 2008; Taylor, 2004). *Digital video* is different from film in the way of capturing and translating light (Block, 2001). *Digital video* technologically differs from film because it is a cheaper, faster and easier medium for capturing, shooting, processing, transmitting and editing moving pictures than is film (Campbell, 2002). However, many filmmakers use the term “film” interchangeably when referring to shooting either digital video or film. *Filming* is a term commonly understood to mean the process of capturing action with a camera (Berger, 2008; deLaurentis, 1987, Stinson, 2008). *Video* is a “default medium of the 21c” (Elwes, 2005, p. 191) and embraces all recent art forms such as “performance, pop-art, photography and digital art” (Rush, 2003, p. 8)

**1.6.3 Digital art.**

*Digital art* most commonly refers to art that is created on computers in digital media. *Digital media* refers to any type of information in a digital format, including computer-generated text, graphics, animation, photographs, sound and video (Taylor & Carpenter, 2007). Not all digitized text data, raw audio and video recordings are considered to be *digital art*. *Digital art* has evolved over time. The term initially referred exclusively to computer-generated art, then it expanded to include multimedia art, and
now it also encompasses film, video, sound art and other hybrid forms (Paul, 2003). Digital art employs “technologies as its very own medium, being produced, stored, and presented exclusively in the digital format and making use of its interactive or participatory features” (Paul, 2003, p. 8). Bell, et al (2004) defines digital art as “the use of digital technology, such as computers, to produce or exhibit art forms whether written, visual, or aural in multimedia hybrid forms” (p. 59). The expanded sense of digital art refers to contemporary art produced using digital technology (Paul, 2003).

1.6.4 Digital generation.

Generation describes the groups of people who share a common history, a set of values, and a common society and culture (Strauss & Howe, 2006). Researchers have referred to the millennial generation, Generation Y and digital generation (Norton & Nussbaum-Beach, 2006; Delacruz, 2009abc). These terms refer to contemporary students who have been exposed to technologies and media such as the Internet and television since childhood. Generation Y refers to the nearly 60 million people in the United States who were born after 1979, the first generation to mature in a world saturated with information networks, digital devices, and the promise of perpetual connectivity (Neuborne & Kerwin, 1999). Some scholars prefer to call this generation the millennial generation because it came of age in the new millennium. They exhibit “the virtue of highlighting their affinity for, and mastery of today’s new technologies and media” (Strauss & Howe, 2006, p. 20). Similarly, digital generation is a term for the new generation that has grown up with digital media, and who apparently live in a different mental world than their parents and teachers, who grew up with broadcast television, radio and mainframe computers (Delacruz, 2009c). Digital generation uses digital
technology and digital media as firmly established second nature, and they participate in local, regional, and global institutional activities and transformations through digital technology (Delacruz, 2009d).

Prensky (2001) describes this new type of students as *digital natives*, meaning that they are members of the digital generation for whom digital technologies have always been available. “Digital natives” refers to the observation that such students are native speakers of the language of digital technology in the era of digital culture. Those who are not digital natives are considered to be digital immigrants, meaning earlier non-technology embedded generations. The *digital generation* has integrated digital culture into their lives in areas such as using the Internet, playing videogames, downloading music onto an iPod, and multitasking with cell phones (Buckingham, 2007; Montgomery, 2009). Further, *digital generation* is connected to participatory democracy as each of these lead to calls for global civil society because cyber space and virtual communities promote the practices of public discussion (Delacruz, c,d). I will employ the term *digital generation* to refer to contemporary K-12 students who have grown up with digital technology.

1.6.5 Multi-literacies.

The term literacy originally meant the ability to read and write. This term is now widely used to describe various kinds of competencies. The New London Group (1996) attempted to explain the multi-faceted abilities that constitute literacy by introducing the notion of *multi-literacies*, which takes into account the dynamic relationships between sound, visuals, spaces and texts, focusing on the importance of simultaneous multi-
modality. *Multi-literacies* can be combined as needed for tasks such as understanding and producing multi-modal media that are use visual forms in different media and in different cultural contexts (Kress, 2000; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003; Unsworth, 2001). I believe that the meanings of multi-literacies can be diverse and intricate, depending on the situation, and to attempt to provide a single definition is not appropriate. Multi-literacies are abilities that allow creators to understand and produce media productions in cultural, digital and visual media environments.

### 1.7 Limitations

1) This study has methodological limitations. I explored and explained my biases and conceptualizations that conceivably influenced my analysis of data. As a qualitative researcher, my interpretation and analysis of data were biased. My data, including interviews, observations, and analyzes are subjective and inferential in nature, from the gathering of the data to the analysis of the data. In addition, I conducted a limited number of focal cases. I collected and analyze the limited amount of data. To strengthen my insights and findings, I flexibly employ theories and findings of selected scholars and professionals in order to attempt to explain my data, and I attempted to triangulate the many different types of data in an inductive manner.

2) Digital visual production takes many different forms, from 2-D computer graphics to 3-D interactive digital media. However, I limited the scope of my research to the creation and sharing of a single form of digital media, specifically *digital video*.

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*Multimodality* refers to the fact that there are no purely visual images; images never appear without words, music, or other sounds. The multi modal nature of imagery is even more evident when considering the forms in which imagery mostly occurs today, on television, at the movies, in print, and on computer screens. Words, music, and sound effects anchor the meaning of images (Duncum, 2010, p. 10).
Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Literature Overview

This dissertation is about telling our stories in the digital age. My focus is on narrative video production, and there are three significant concepts that lead this research: narrative, video/film, and video pedagogy. Before narrowing my discussion to educational aspects of how both the narrative and the video that can enrich visual arts education practice, I will provide brief overviews of selected discourse from various disciplines about the nature of narrative, telling a story in a digital age, aspects of digital video production, and notions about postmodern art pedagogy as they might apply to narrative digital video pedagogy.

2.2 Developing a Theoretical Context for Understanding Narrative

2.2.1 The nature of narrative.

Narrative is inseparable from people (Hardy, 1968; Fisher, 1987; Barthes, 1977). For example, Fisher⁴ (1987) argues that human beings are in essence best conceptualized through the metaphor of man as homo-narrans, and explains that it would be difficult to imagine human life without stories. Fisher has a broad view of the narrative, observing that everything with sequence and meaning is a narrative. According to Fisher and other scholars, people are essentially storytelling animals, and our reason is best appealed to through stories. Barthes⁵ (1977) believes that narrative is like life itself. All human beings have their narratives, enjoyment of which is very often shared by individuals with

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⁴ Walter Fisher is a communication scholar who argues narrative paradigm theory. He asserts that people are essentially storytelling animals and all human reasoning best conveyed through stories.
⁵ Roland Barthes is a French literary theorist, philosopher, critic, and semiotician.
different, even opposing, cultural backgrounds. In this regard, narrative is international, trans-historical, trans-cultural. Hardy⁶ (1968) describes the significance of narrative as follows:

For we dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate, and love by narrative. In order really to live, we make up stories about others, and ourselves about the personal as well as the social past and future. (p. 5)

When people gather together, narrative flourishes. Narratives are found in all human societies, and making up stories is a characteristic of human existence that gives meaning to life. People perform narratives in all facets of their daily lives. They share their experiences, claim identities, interact with each other, navigate the world, and participate in cultural conversations of all sorts. Narratives give meanings to individual life functioning as a form of meaningful communication and as a method of representing self and identity in a socio-cultural context.

Narratives function in different ways in different areas of human activities. Scholars agree that narratives are forms of meaningful communication, and storytelling is our primary means of comprehending and expressing of our experiences (Abbott, 2002; Fisher, 1987; Polkinghorne, 1988). We tell stories to each other as a means of packaging and sharing experience in cognitively and affectively coherent ways. Telling stories gives special meaning to an individual’s personal identity, history, and surrounding culture.

⁶ Barbara Hardy is a literary theorist, and published essays on life and narrative titled “Towards a poetics of fiction” in 1968, detailing narrative's role in individual lives.
The narrative form is our principal way of understanding and managing events and comprehending and navigating the world (Abbott, 2002). The narrative form, or rather the construction of a narrative, is also a cognitive process that organizes human experiences into temporally meaningful communication. It transforms individual experiences into meaningful communication because our actions and experiences gain meaning through their relationship to one another (Polkinghorne, 1988).

Importantly, a narrative is a representation of reality from a particular perspective, and functions as a method of representing self and identity (Barthes, 1977; Kerby, 1991; Linde, 1993; Ochs & Capps, 1996; Polkinghorne, 1988; Schiffrin, 1996; White, 1981, Delacruz, 2010). Creating a narrative is a way of understanding the self as a whole (Polkinghorne, 1988). Narrative forms elicit self-reflections both retrospectively and prospectively (Kerby, 1991), convey a self/other distinction and the reflexivity of the self (Linde, 1993), and enable people to construe their identities (Barthes, 1977; Delacruz, 2010). Ochs and Capps (1996) focus on narratives as partial representations of personal experience. They claim that the narrative also shapes individual experience. Narratives are “tales that tellers and listeners map onto the telling of personal experiences” (Ochs & Capps, 1996, p. 21). Thus, telling a story is a representation of being in the world (Schiffrin, 1996). Through narratives, we can also explore alternate realities such as dreams and fantasy through narratives (White, 1981).

Narratives function in particular ways in specific cultural contexts. The ways in which we tell our stories reveal aspects of our sense of selves as we exist and seek meaning within our larger cultural contexts (Barthes, 1977; Cruikshank, 1997; Rimmon-Keenan 1983). That is, narratives are a “means of understanding of the self in a cultural
matrix of meanings, beliefs, and practices” (Schiffrin, 1996, p. 194). Bauman (1986) observed that "narrative . . . is not merely a reflection of culture … but is constitutive of social life” (p. 113). According to Barthes (1977), narratives “serve to give cohesion to shared beliefs and to transmit values” in a cultural level. (p. 14). Narrative is the store of a culture’s knowledge (Walter, 1982), builds cultural identity as well as personal identity (Cruikshank, 1997), and is an “act of personal commitment and an act of faith” in a particular culture or society (Schwartz, 1989, p. 42).

Based on scholars discussed thus far, we may conclude that narrative is a primary means of comprehension and expression of human experiences. We tell stories to each other as a way to package and share our thoughts, aspirations, and experiences. Narrative is both a method of communication and a representation of reality from an individual’s particular perspective. Narrative is the method of representing self and identity, not in an exclusive manner, but rather within a cultural matrix of meanings. Narrative is not only a powerful linguistic structure essential for communication but also a way of deepening individuals’ understanding of their personal journey in the context of their culture. In this regard, narrative, functioning as a meaning-making tool, can be beneficially used in the field of art education.

In consideration of the potential of the narrative in art education, I first explore the diverse notions of narrative across varying disciplines, examining different views of the nature of narrative. I am interested to know what aspects make narrative such a powerful meaning-making tool, and which features of narrative can be readily used in digital video pedagogy.
Due to the significance of narrative in human existence, narrative has been long studied in many different disciplines. The concept and characteristics of narrative have successfully traveled to psychology, education, social sciences, and linguistics. Narrative does not fit in any single discipline, it is inherently interdisciplinary. Consequently, my approach to narrative in this dissertation does not suggest any new consensus. Rather, I am more interested in how and why art educators should be interested in narratives. Therefore, I will be selective in introducing art educators to the basic concepts that have been elaborated by linguists, providing definitions of narrative in order to distinguish narrative from non-narrative, and exploring properties/aspects of narrative meaning construction.

2.2.2 Exploring definitions of narrative.

Narrative is one of the most ubiquitous and powerful forms of discourse in human communication (Bruner, 1990). Because narrative has been studied in multiple disciplines and is not the exclusive domain of any particular discipline, my approach to narrative in therefore inherently interdisciplinary. No single definition effectively summarizes the essence of the narrative. I will first provide an overview of selected definitions offered in different disciplines in order to attempt to develop a common consensus regarding the narrative before moving on to discuss diverse aspects/properties of narratives. My exploration is derived from the research of prominent scholars from different disciplines such as psychology (Polkinghorne, 1988; Robinson and Hawpe, 1986), education (Bruner, 1988, 1990; Egan, 1985, 1986, 1997), sociology (Riessman, 1993), and linguistics (Labov, 1972; Labov & Waletzky 1967; Toolan, 1988; Chatman, 1978; Genette, 1980; Rimmon-Kenan, 1983). Their research offers diverse disciplinary lenses that can facilitate one’s understanding of a world. Labov (1972), Genette (1980) and
Toolan (1988) in particular have contributed to shaping my understanding of both the structure and salient aspects of narrative with regard to its application to video-making pedagogy.

The following table (Table 1) shows some recognized definitions of narrative from different disciplines. Across disciplinary lenses and individual scholars’ point of view, we may see from this table that narrative is an inclusive term referring to any spoken or written communication. Although there is considerable disagreement regarding the precise definition of narrative, there are some commonalities worth noting. What these selected scholars share in common is that they see narrative as a distinct form of communication conveying human experiences as a distinct form of communication that has structural features and meanings– meanings that convey cultural values, and meanings that are created, conveyed, and understood within particular cultural contexts.

Table 1

Varying Definitions of Narrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merriam-Webster Dictionary</td>
<td>Narrative is the detailed telling of a story consisting of the sequential unfolding of significant events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford English Dictionary</td>
<td>Narrative is an account of connected events, a story. It is the narrated part of a literary work, as distinct from dialogue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labov &amp; Waletzky (1967, p. 359)</td>
<td>One method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which actually occurred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher (1984, p. 2)</td>
<td>Narrative is the theory of symbolic actions – words and/or deeds – that have sequence and meaning for those who live, create, or interpret them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prince (2003, p. 58)</td>
<td>The representation (as product and process, object and act, structure and structuration) of one or more real or fictive events communicated by one, two, or several narrators to one, two or several narrates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbott (2007, p. 279)</td>
<td>In informal use, narrative is a synonym for story. More technically...a narrative is a) a representation of a structured time-course of particularized events that b) introduces conflict into a story world, conveying what it’s like to live through that disruption, that is the qualia (or felt, awareness) of real or imagined consciousness undergoing the disruptive experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genette (1982, p. 127)</td>
<td>One will define narrative without difficulty as the representation of an event or sequence of events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholes (1981, p. 205)</td>
<td>A narration is the symbolic representation of a sequence of events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onega and Landa (1996, p. 3)</td>
<td>The semiotic representation of a sequence of events, meaningfully connected in a temporal and causal way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohan and Shires (1988, p. 52)</td>
<td>The distinguishing feature of narrative is its linear organization of events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toolan (1988, p. 8)</td>
<td>A narrative is a perceived sequence of non-randomly connected events … from those experiences we humans can learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polkinghorne (1988, p. 13)</td>
<td>Narrative is the fundamental scheme for linking individual human actions and events into interrelated aspects of an understandable composite. Narrative can also refer to the process of making a story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egan (1985, p. 399)</td>
<td>Basic intellectual tool we use in making sense of the world and experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czarniawska (2004, p. 1)</td>
<td>Narrative is normally understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events, chronologically connected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herman (2009, p. 9)</td>
<td>Narrative is a mode of representation that is situated in-must be interpreted in light of – a specific discourse context or occasion for telling.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 1, the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines narrative as the detailed telling of a story consisting of the *sequential unfolding of significant events* (Merriam-Webster, 2007). Scholars further define narrative as a means of delivering information *over time* (Labov, 1972; Jennings, 1996), meaningful communication *with*
sequence (Cohan & Shires, 1988; Fisher, 1987; Toolan, 1988), the presence of a story in the texts (Genette, 1972; Rimmon-Kenan, 1983), “a place where sequence and language, among other things, intersect to form a discursive code” (Scholes, 1981, p. 200), and “the representation of an event or a series of events” (Abbott, 2002, p. 13). Labov\(^7\) (1972) defines narrative as "one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which actually occurred" (p.359) by emphasizing the function of delivering information. For Toolan\(^8\) (1988), “a narrative is a perceived sequence of non-randomly connected events … from those experiences we humans can learn” (p. 8). For Polkinghorne\(^9\) (1988), narrative is the “fundamental scheme for linking individual human actions and events into interrelated aspects of an understandable composite” (p. 13).

Based on these definitions, I stipulate for this dissertation that that (a) narrative describes a progression or sequence of events, but does not merely involve delivering information in the form of sequential events. Rather, narrative is a re-construction and sharing of experience in a particular form. (b) Through varied means or forms–logically, chronologically, perceptually, aesthetically, and emotionally–and across varied media and forms of expression–visual, aural, performative, textual, and conceptual–what is communicated is conveyed purposefully by creators and actors in the teller’s story, and what is conveyed is both communicated to and re-experienced and interpreted by

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7 William Labov is a professor of linguistics in university of Pennsylvania, and is widely regarded as the founder of quantitative sociolinguistics.

8 Michael Toolan is a professor in the Department of English, University of Birmingham. His book, titled “Narrative: a critical linguistic introduction”, builds the bridge between language studies and literary studies.

9 Donald Polkinghorne is a professor of counseling psychology at the University of Southern California.
audiences; and (c) narrative is a form of human communication that is embedded in a cultural context, and (d) a form of communication that humans across cultures employ to convey their experiences and aspirations. This is to say that narrative exists in everyday thought and discourse within and across diverse cultural contexts.

2.2.3 Further exploring aspects of narrative: story and narrative.

Aristotle is thought to be amongst the earliest Western philosophers who described concept of the narrative. In Aristotle’s *Poetics*, narrative is understood as a unified action consisting of three parts, a beginning, middle, and an end, and this definition has been widely accepted as *narrative convention*. Aristotle regarded narrative as a term that was interchangeable with *plot* (Heath, 1996). Aristotle’s classical narrative model shows the story progression through the beginning, climax and the final resolution. This classical narrative model was unchallenged until the 20th century.

Narrative theory became an international subject of study and an interdisciplinary subject after 1960 (Martin10, 1986). Many scholars who address the narrative in their academic discourse reflect the insights and frameworks of their own literary and scholarly traditions. Russian formalists and semioticians such as Propp, and French and American structuralists such as Barthes, Scholes and Culler have attempted to analyze the narrative from their particular disciplinary lenses, researching and describing various aspects of narrative theory (Martin, 1986). The phenomenon of narrative has also been explored using different terminologies: “existential, cognitive, aesthetic, sociological, and technical”… “from broad considerations about the nature of narrative to narrow

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10 Wallace Martin published the book titled “Recent theories of narrative” ranging over the entire spectrum of recent theories of narrative up to 1986.
definitions” (White, 1981, p. 2). However, there is no definitive theory, and no paradigmatic definition of what a narrative actually is, due to the constantly changing and interdisciplinary nature of narrative studies (Abbott, 2002; Fisher, 1987; Labov, 1972; Rimmon-Kenan, 1983; Toolan, 1988; White, 1981).

Chatman\(^\text{11}\) (1978) explained the inclusive concept of narrative in terms of two parts: *story* and *discourse*. Narrative structure should contain “discourse (a form and substance of expression), and story (a form and substance of content)” (Chatman, 1978, p. 23). In Chatman’s approach, the *story* of a narrative is separated from its *discourse*, allowing us to separate the content from its form of expression. In Chatman’s explanation, discourse is the form of the expression of narrative, while content is the story being told. Despite this distinction, those two terms, *story* and *discourse*, are terms that are sometimes interchangeable used with a range of other terms such as *fabula*, *sjuzhet\(^\text{12}\)*, and *text*, all of which indicate *narrative*. *Fabula* is often translated as story, and is the chronological sequence of events referred to by a narrative, and *sjuzhet* is the order of events represented in that narrative (Bal, 1985). According to Toolan (1988), a linguist, there are different terms to indicate narratives that exhibit some degree of equivalences and differences; fabula, sjuzhet, histoire, story, text, narration, and discourse. According to the structuralist Chatman (1978), *Fabula* was used by Bal\(^\text{13}\) (1985) to signify elements of the narrative such as events, actors, objects, time, and place. *Story* as used by Chatman

\(^{11}\) Seymour Chatman is an American film/literary critic, and an emeritus professor at the University of California, Berkeley.

\(^{12}\) Russian Formalists (Propp & Shklovsky) posit narrative as the sjuzhet (the plot) and story as the fabula (the chronology of event). Fabula (usually refers to story) is defined as the chronological sequence of events reconstructed/reported in a narrative work.

\(^{13}\) Mieke Bal is a cultural theorist, critic, and video artist. She is Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (RNAAS) professor.
(1978) is synonymous with fabula (Bal, 1985). Other scholars differ on this point. For example, story is said to be the narrative content of events and characters, while text considers other aspects of narrative such as time, space, characterization, and focalization, as posited by Rimmon-Kenan\(^\text{14}\) (1983). Chatman (1978)’s discourse, Rimmon-Kenan (1983)’s narration and Bal (1985)’s text refer to the importance of one’s point of view. According to Bruner\(^\text{15}\) (1990), a narrative is a composition consisting of “a unique sequence of events, mental states, happenings involving human beings as characters or actors” (p. 43), and that is equivalent to the concept of story, as posited by Rimmon-Kenan (1983). The brief overview above shows that narrative has constituent parts such as events and actors in sequential stories, although there can exist some degrees of equivalences and differences in defining the narrative.

In general, I will utilize the theories and explanations of Rimmon-Kenan (1983) and Bruner (1990) wherever possible, although I will also reference other scholars’ studies as needed. My research concerns neither structural analysis of narrative nor semiotic analysis regarding narrative arising in the field of linguistics, so terminological agreement across disciplines about the precise meanings of narrative is not imperative. I will replace terms such as fabula, sjužet and discourse with story and narrative text, respectively, based on Rimmon-Kenan (1983)’s point of view, in order to avoid confusion.

\(^{14}\) Shlomit Rimmon-Kenan is professor of English and comparative literature at the Hebrew university of Jerusalem.

\(^{15}\) Jerome Seymour Bruner is an American psychologist who has contributed to cognitive psychology and educational theory.
Based on my readings, I stipulate here that *story* reflects the deep meaning of a narrative (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983), although other readings suggest that *story* is both a form and the substance of narrative content (Chatman, 1978). In this study, I will use the term *story* to refer to intended meanings that are used to explain and interpret the narrative text (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983). As I stipulated above, story is what the sequence of events, ideas, and experiences being conveyed *are about*. It is the intended meanings of what is being shared in content. Throughout my review and analysis I will also use the term *narrative* or *narrative text* to refer to the form in which the story is embodied and conveyed. In contemporary discourse, the construct of *text* refers to all kinds of communicative forms such as images, spoken words, performances, written words, music, sound, art forms, and various kinds of cultural productions including newspapers, documents, television shows, websites, etc. Therefore, a *narrative text* is a story told, written and portrayed through a wide range of forms. The story is what a narrative text depicts or conveys. The narrative text itself is the form in which a story is told. Both the *story* and the *text* refer to the same communication, and together they correspond to authors’ intended meanings.

Although I stipulate here that there exist differences between the terms *story* and *narrative text*, when talking to my study participants, I will use these two terms interchangeably, or as synonyms because I expect that my subjects will use these terms this way. It is my impression that many individuals, including individuals who participated in my research and who were students in my research setting do not distinguish between *narrative* and *story*. I expect my participants to use these terms
indistinguishable from one another instead of pondering the varying definitions of these two terms.

2.3 Properties and Structure of Narrative

2.3.1 Typical structure of narrative.

Barthes claimed that all narratives share structural features (Pentland, 1999). There have been attempts to determine the formal structure of narrative using notions such as certain patterns and certain rules of narrative. As mentioned before, Aristotelian’s classical model involves having a beginning, climax, and the final resolution, and general narrative structure involves a certain progression from the beginning to the ending (Heath, 1996). For example, according to Bruner (1988) “what gives the story its unity is the manner in which plight, characters, and consciousness interact to yield a structure that has start, a development, and a sense of ending” (p. 106). Similarly, Gergen and Gergen (1986) state that narrative is in the “temporal order of beginning, middle and end to show connectiveness while at the same time prioritizing significant events” (p. 25). Russian formalist Propp (1968) also emphasized the structure of narrative. Propp (1968) introduced the idea that there should be a certain order in a story. Propp (1968) wrote that narratives progress in the sequential order A->B->C->D->E->F. This sequential order is unalterable and no backtracking is allowed in a well-formed story. For example, only subsequences of an order such as A->D->E->F, or B->C->D->F would be considered to constitute a well-structured story. These structural approaches embody the belief that a structural similarity exists in all oral narratives regardless of their content.

Among narrative structure models, Labov and Waletsky (1967) and Labov (1972) offer an explanation that is both coherent and convincing. Labov’s narrative model is a
general linguistic structural framework based on his analysis of oral discourse in real-life contexts. Labov's linguistic model identifies how fully developed narratives are shaped and addresses the structural similarities of narratives regardless of their content and contexts. Labov is primarily concerned with structure of narrative, although he recognizes that meaning is clearly a part of structure. In Labov’s structural analysis, narratives have a) abstract (summary of the substance of the narrative), b) orientation (time, place, situation, and participants), c) complicating action (sequence of events), d) evaluation (significance and meaning of the action), e) resolution (what finally happened), and f) coda (returns perspective to the present).

Toolan further expands Labov’s structural explanation. According to Toolan (1988), Labov’s six-part structural analysis answers the following questions: a) what is this story about? (abstract), b) who, when, where, what? (orientation), c) then what happened next? (complicating action), d) so what, how/why is it interesting? (evaluation), e) what finally happened? (resolution), f) that is it, I am bridging back to our present situation (coda). These aspects identified by Labov and expanded by Toolan may also be seen as phases that give a logical, chronological, or psychological order to a narrative. Readers will note that these phases attend to both the structure (form, or text) and content (meanings and intentions) of a narrative. Audience evaluative considerations may also be embedded in these considerations. The following explanations further explain aspects of Labov’s model.

a) Abstract summarizes the central action and main point of the narrative. A storyteller uses it at the outset to preempt the questions, what is this about, why is this story being told? Abstract is a statement of the point of the story.
b) Orientation is a background description of where, when, & by whom the events were performed. Orientation sets the scene: who, when, where, and initial situation or activity of the story.

c) Complicating action is the central part of the story proper which answers the question, what happened?

d) Evaluation (importance/purposefulness) addresses the question, so what? A directionless sequence of clauses is not a narrative. Narrative has a point, and it is the prime intention of the narrator to justify the value of the story being told, and to demonstrate why these events are reportable. The narrator offers his own interpretation of events through evaluation.

e) Result/resolution conveys what finally happened that concludes the sequence of events.

f) Coda wraps up the action, and returns the conversation from the time of the narrative to the present. (Labov & Waletzky, 1967)

These structural features make a story plausible and understandable to the audience. For example, after encapsulating the point of the story using an abstract, a narrative continues in order to explain the context of the story, including the who, when and where through orientation. After contextualizing the story, a narrative conveys what happened in some sort of temporal order in the complicating action, and it shows the outcome of what happened, which is the resolution of the story. Through the evaluation of a story, the narrator shows the significance and the point of the story, and the narrator declares that the narrative is over by explaining “that was that or that was it” through coda. Generalized
understandings and strategies such as these can be used to both compose and analyze stories, and the efforts needed to create and understand narratives can be adapted to many forms of narrative, including digital video-making. It may be that key aspects or phases of narrative structure are built into the storytelling form or event intuitively by the teller, and not necessarily preplanned with such a predetermined structure in mind.

2.3.2 Properties of narrative.

Understanding the structural nature of narrative as a genre form is insufficient by itself. Abbott (2002), Barthes (1977), Bruner (1990), Chatman (1981), Pentland (1999), Rimmon-Kenan (1983), and Gennett (1982) all observe that the typical features of narrative often exhibit certain features worth noting. Abbott (2002) observes that the key features of narrative are an event or an action. Bal (1985) finds that the properties of narratives include a) sequential events, b) the amount of time, c) actors and characters, d) locations where events occur, and e) point of view to decide how above properties can be presented in a story. Building primarily on Bruner (1990) and Barthes (1977)’s point of view, Pentland (1999) also identifies the typical aspects of a narrative: a) sequence in time; b) focal actor or actors; c) identifiable narrative voice; d) evaluative frame of reference; and e) other indicators of content and context. I will describe each of these aspects later in this section.

Although there are diverse approaches to articulating the properties/aspects of narratives, narrative theories also share similar notions of what properties/aspects are present in narratives. Adapting ideas posited by scholars such as Chatman (1981), Pentland (1999), Rimmon-Kenan (1983), Frenzocy (1998) and Gennett (1982), I will identify properties/aspects of narrative that can be utilized in a conceptual framework for
narrative video analysis. The properties/aspects of narrative that I will use will include: character/actor, point of view/narrative voice, time/order, canonical frame of reference, scene/setting, and audience perspective. Examining each of these aspects help us understand how stories convey meanings.

2.3.2.1 Character/Actor/Role. Narratives typically concern someone or something answering the question, *who did something of significance?* (Burke, 1945). Characters/actors fulfil this role in narratives. Specific roles are assigned to each character in the story, roles that are carried out through their actions or conversations, Characters may not be fully developed or even identified by name, but, together with sequence, characters provide a thread that ties the events in a narrative together (Pentland, 1999). Characters are not always human, but they typically personify human personalities and aspirations.

Herman (2007) characterizes actors in a story by subject, object, sender, receiver, helper and opponent (p. 13). Greimas (cited in Franzosy, 1998), classifies narrative characters according to what they do, and proposed six basic roles for characters/actors that are found in all narratives: sender/receiver, helper/opponent, and subject/object. These roles are embedded in sets of interrelationships are typically represented in the following way: a) the sender initiates or enables the event; b) the receiver benefits or registers the effects of the event; c) the opponent retards or impedes the event by opposing the subject or by competing with the subject for the object; d) the helper advances the event by supporting or assisting the subject. Toolan (1988) illustrates an example of these six roles. For example, a hero, a young man of lowly origin (subject) attempts to marry a beautiful princess (object). In his quest, friends (helper) help a hero generously, but a wicked uncle of the princess
(opponent) struggles against him. Finally, a super-helper such as God, or someone with magical powers (sender), intervenes, and a hero (receiver) beneficiary achieves success in his quest. Although this model is not universally applicable to all narrative genres, these patterns of characters and roles may inform the construction of oral/written stories as well as digital stories.

2.3.2.2 Point of view and narrative voice. Every story is told from a particular point of view or using a particular voice, and both are important properties of the storyteller’s style that can be used in the construction of narratives. This aspect of the narrative may be referred to as focalization (Genette, 1980), point of view (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983), or narrative voice (Pentland, 1999). This property of narratives answers the questions “Who sees?” and “Who speaks?” (Toolan, 1988). There is a distinction between point of view (who sees) and narrative voice (who speaks). Pentland (1999) explains that narrative voice (who speaks) represents a specific point of view of particular actors in a narrative. A narrative is something that someone in particular tells, so there should always be an identifiable voice doing the narrating. However, the one who perceives is not necessarily the one to tells, and vice versa.

Point of view is narrative perspective, which Genette calls focalization (Toolan, 1988). There are two different types of point of view relevant to the construction of stories—internal or external—and the teller can adopt either viewpoint in her/his story. Uspensky observes (1973) that a teller can structure the events and character of a story through the deliberate adoption of a subjective viewpoint within some particular individual’s consciousness (internal viewpoint), or she/he can tell a story as objectively as possible (external viewpoint). For example, the main character or the narrator who
functions as an omniscient author can tell a story from an internal viewpoint, and a minor character or teller can function as an observer who tells the main character’s story from an external viewpoint. An internal viewpoint may be manifest when the narrator knows as much as the characters in the story. This character filters the information that is then provided to the audience. The narrator who manifests an external viewpoint cannot report the thoughts of other characters, and often knows less than the characters who are found in the external viewpoint. In this case, the narrator acts like a camera lens, in that she/he follows the protagonists' actions and gestures from an outside viewpoint, unable to guess their thoughts (Toolan, 1988). By utilizing properties of narrative such as point of view and narrative voice, the storyteller can make methodological choices to render a story in a particular way.

2.3.2.3 Time. Time is the property of narrative that shows the progression of the story from a beginning towards an ending through a sequence of events. According to Pentland (1999), sequence in time refers to the idea that a narrative should include a clear beginning, middle, and end, although Pentland also observes that even fragmentary stories can represent time and sequence. Genette identifies three aspects of temporal manipulation in time in the story: order, duration, and frequency (1982). In terms of time, methodological choices are available for tellers to achieve the expected results by manipulating the order, duration, speed, and frequency of the narrative.

For Genette, duration is the relationship between “the extent of time that events are supposed to have actually taken up, and the amount of text devoted to presenting those same events” (cited in Toolan, 1988, p. 49). Duration can be explained as pace or speed in a story. The teller can speed up or slow down the story with respect to the events
being told. For example, we can summarize someone's entire life in a single sentence, or we can extend the presentations of love scenes or death scenes in a story in order to provide detail. Variations in duration within a narrative show the relative importance assigned to different events in the story.

*Frequency* refers to “how often something happens in story compared with how often it is narrated” (Toolan, 1988, p. 49). Different choices are possible when telling stories that involve matters such as the number of times an event occurs and the number of times it is mentioned in the narrative. For example, storytellers can tell five times what happened five times, can repeat five times what happened once, and can tell once what happened five times.

*Sequence* is closely related to time. Narratives often answer the question of what was done, and that question is often interrelated with the occurrence of a sequence of events or actions. Scholars go so far as to argue that in the absence of an event or an action, a narration can be a “description, an exposition, an argument, a lyric, some combination of these or something else altogether, [but is] not a narrative”. “My dog has fleas is a description of my dog, but it is not a narrative because nothing happens” (Abbot, 2002, p. 13). The *order* of events as they are communicated in a narrative refers to the “relationship between the assumed sequence of events in the story and their actual order of presentation” (Toolan, 1988, p. 49). *Order* is very much interrelated with *sequence*. The *order* of events is frequently rearranged for dramatic effect. For example, in murder mysteries, the corpse is usually found before the killer is revealed. The events preceding the crime, along with the facts that lead to the killer, are presented afterwards. The order in which the events actually occurred does not match the order in which they
are presented in the narrative. As Toolan explains, the story presented in order A B C D E might denote events that actually occurred in order B C D A E, with considerable gaps in their order (1988).

Time is an important property of narratives since it can be used as the organizing device of a story. Understanding and manipulating these three temporal features of narratives (meaning order, duration, and frequency) is worth applying to the construction of digital stories as well as oral/written stories.

2.3.2.4. Happenings (Fiction and Fact). Narratives, then, configure sequential events (happenings) and actions into coherent wholes. A happening (things that happen) becomes a story (meaning) by structuring of the sequential events or actions through linguistic recounts and fabrications. Toolan (1988) observes that a narrative features the seamless interweaving of nature (things that really occurred) and fabrications (things the teller made up or imagined). By this, Toolan means that a storyteller may blur the boundary between fact (nature or what naturally occurs in real life) and fiction (fabrications or reconstruction) by weaving fact and fiction together, and doing so makes for a meaningful story. For example, a novelist intentionally weaves fiction with fact to engage the imagination of the audience and to invent or evoke the details of events that would be meaningless without a story to tie the events together. In presenting the story of *Gone with the wind*, for example, the author reconstructed history by recounting facts about the Civil War. But the author also used fictional characters, events, and actions to fill in the gaps in the facts in creating her narrative. These fictional happenings give her story the appearance of truth by providing relevance and engagement to the audience.
The selected weighting and interweaving of fact and fabrication in are important aspects of the storyteller’s style.

2.3.2.5 Canonical frame of reference/the moral of the story. One of the important properties of narrative is that narrative serves as a framework for moral decision-making. According to Bruner (1990), narrative “mediates between the canonical world of culture and the more idiosyncratic world of belief, desires and hope“ (p. 52). Pentland (1988) introduced the term canonical frame of reference to refer to this aspect, which, for Pentland, means that narrative should be moral in the sense that it should convey a value system that the audience can accept. Narratives carry meaning and cultural value because they implicitly or explicitly encode ethical standards against which the actions of the characters can be judged (Pentland, 1988). When a storyteller constructs narratives, the moral decision-making process involves prioritizing some values over others in order to make the preferred ending arrive through the progress of the selected sequential events. There should be strong support for the selected events and actions in order for them to contribute to a proposed resolution. Canonical/evaluation frame of reference can also convey moral and ethical implications to the audience when the audience is able to identify the nature of conflict, prioritize values, and understand the resolution. Narratives engage the audience to find a suitable ending that supports their cultural values, experiences and feelings, even if the ending might be contrary to cultural traditions and beliefs. Therefore, even without an explicit moral, narratives can embody a sense of what is right and wrong, appropriate or inappropriate.

2.3.2.6 Audience perspective/experience. According to Reissman (1993), a story that is being told to particular people might have taken on a different form if
someone else were the listener (p. 11). Taking the audience perspective into consideration is also an important property to consider when constructing narratives. Each teller will create a story based on the same events in a unique way, and each audience will hear the story differently depending on what experiences and feelings they bring to bear. There can be attempts to bring up the "incompleteness" of narrative for audience interpretation. An important aspect of audience also includes where the story is heard or experienced by the audience. Stories are told in particular place for particular someone. Stories take many forms (books, plays, films, etc) and occur in many settings. They may be performed for particular audience, and their performance may sometimes be multi-modal, involving all sorts of sensory experience.

2.3.2.7 Setting/Scene. An important property of a narrative is setting/scene, which is about when and where a thing was done, and when and where a thing happened. Narrative contains a variety of textual/literary devices that are used to indicate time, place, and the attributes of the characters (Toolan, 1988).

2.3.3 Conclusion and summary.

Thus far, I have reviewed varying definitions of narratives, differentiated important concepts regarding narratives such as narrative text and story, and illustrated some of the most important features of narratives in terms of structure and properties. In conclusion, meaningful storytelling is accomplished by means of narrative text that is structured systemically, economically, and convincingly; that incorporates and effectively conveys facets of time, place, and events in a coherent sequence. Given that sequencing is a central organizing device of story construction, sequence should be well organized with an appropriate flow and pacing, and should move from part to part without
engendering disorientation. Either the object or the characters in a story should provide a thread that ties together the events and happenings in a story. In a story, the teller should convey the information about the characters by means of description and through their actions, speech or thoughts, and by making use of an original voice and perspective in a creative manner. The content also should be systematic and have logical connections so as to best convey the meaning of the story. Narrative stories should carry meaning and cultural values by implicitly and explicitly encoding meaning through the actions of the characters.

2.4 Telling a Quality Story in a Digital Age through Digital Video:

Digital Storytelling

Although the invention of film in the late nineteenth century (the first film was made in 1878) offered new possibilities for reaching mass audiences in terms of telling stories, the narrative aspects of film did not develop immediately because the inventors of film/motion pictures were primarily concerned at first with capturing on film the physical world (Cook, 1996). As a carefully structured artistic form, film became to be used to convey stories. Film can utilize aesthetic components that depend on, and affect, each another (Bordwell & Thompson, 2004). In order to create meaningful stories, filmmakers “gather and organize the information then write a well-structured series of scenes” (Barry, 1997, p. 120). Typically, the story in movies is conveyed as a chain of events in a cause-effect relationship that occur in time and space, create multiple meanings effectively (Cook, 1996; Sobchack & Sobchack, 1987).
Creating movies through filmmaking was not easy in terms of time and money. Film requires expensive equipment and long, drawn-out processes. Increasingly recently common digital technologies allow people to create inexpensively movies in the form of digital videos. Digital technologies that can manipulate audio/visual material have become more affordable, and a new generation can now tell stories using movie materials (audio and visual) that were once considered to be exclusively professional practices. Using digital video, movies can be easily filmed, flexibly cut, can join parts of a shot with ease, can finish the story and save time and money.

2.4.1 What is the digital story?

There have been radical changes in the ways in which narratives are created in the current digital age, and digital media plays an important role in the contemporary life. The burgeoning digital culture and digital technology have led to the explosive growth of internet-based narratives such as blogs and electronic journals, as well as narrative media such as digital videos. Given the increasing ubiquity of personal digital media devices, all kinds of people now create digital narratives or digital stories using images, voice, and music.

Digital stories constitute in certain respects a different kind of communication relationship than oral and written narratives. Digital stories can be distinguished from oral and written stories in terms of their visual aspects and its connection to digital technology (Davis, 2004). A digital story allows for personal and socio-cultural meaning making as does traditional storytelling, but a digital story differs because it always (rather
than sometimes) involves multi-modal\textsuperscript{16} narratives that are embedded in digital technologies.

Many media educators have attempted to define the concept of digital story, a new territory in art education. According to Ohler\textsuperscript{17} (2008), digital storytelling combines two vague, expansive terms: \textit{digital} and \textit{story}. Ohler (2008) described digital story as “personal technology used to combine a number of media into a coherent narrative” (p. 15). Ochs and Capps\textsuperscript{18} (1996) defined digital storytelling as a means of narrative expression such as occurs in the cases of oral and written storytelling. Paul and Fiebich\textsuperscript{19} (2002) state that digital storytelling depicts an important event, person, position, or condition by composing still and moving images, text, sounds, music, and voice narration.

However, Mullen and Wedwick\textsuperscript{20} (2008) claim that digital storytelling is not simply a narrative accompaniment to a set of pictures. The Digital Storytelling Association (2002) defines digital storytelling as “the modern expression of the ancient arts of storytelling … digital stories derive their power through weaving images, music, narrative and voice together, thereby giving deep dimension and vivid color to characters,

\textsuperscript{16} As I previously stated, multi-modal story includes digital text, video, animation, images, audio, and properly-narrated story.
\textsuperscript{17} Jason Ohler is a new media educator, and focuses on literacy, education, technology, and digital storytelling. See \url{www.jasonohler.com} for additional information.
\textsuperscript{18} Elinor Ochs is a linguistic anthropologist, and professor or anthropology at UCLA, and Lisa Capps is a discourse analyst and psychologist.
\textsuperscript{19} Nora Paul and Christina Fiebich run a project of digital storytelling at the university of Minnesota school of journalism and mass communication’s institute for new media studies. \url{http://www.inms.umn.edu/elements} has more information.
\textsuperscript{20} Rebecca Mullen is a middle school language arts teacher at Ransom Grade School, Ransom, Ill. Linda Wedwick is an assistant professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Illinois State University.
digital stories are provocative ways of self-storytelling more than mere technological
tool, and they are “short, personal multimedia tales told from the heart” (p.192). Chung (2006) understands digital storytelling as involving the practice of incorporating digital
text, imagery, video, and audio into the meaningful visual presentation of a computer-
mediated, multimedia story. Chung’s notion is based on his research on digital
storytelling and integrated art education. The Educause Learning Initiative (2007) also
affirms Chung’s notion by defining digital storytelling as “combining narrative with
digital content, including images, sound, and video, to create a short movie, typically
with a strong emotional component” (p. 1).

Lambert (2006) and Teehan (2006) have advocated digital storytelling as a
method of education in the classroom. For example, digital storytelling is a method and a
movement intended to give people a voice through the use of computer tools (Lambert,
2006; Teehan, 2006). Davis (2004) observes that digital storytelling refers to a form of
short story that is presented as a short movie that can be displayed on a television or
computer monitor, or projected onto a screen. Jay (2006) observes that digital stories
are usually short movies two to three minutes in length, which combine images, a
narrated story, and audio. The Educause Learning Initiative (2007) notes that digital

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21 Daniel Meadows is one of the icons of the digital storytelling movement, and an academic staff at Cardiff school of journalism, media and cultural studies. [http://www.photobus.co.uk/](http://www.photobus.co.uk/) has more information.
22 Sheng Kuan Chung is an art education professor and new media scholar at the University of Houston.
23 Joe Lambert founded the Center for Digital Storytelling (formerly the San Francisco Digital Media Center) in 1994.
24 Alan Davis is an associate professor researching on Educational psychology/research methods at University of Colorado.
25 Robyn Jay is a media educator and a member of TAFE NSW International Centre for VET Teaching and Learning.
stories can be created in various video formats, including movies consisting of audio and visual effects and sets of still slides or images with corresponding narration or music. Meadows (2003) observes that short multimedia formats juxtaposed with sound and videos that look like films. Digital stories are in a variety of multi-media formats such as still image slide show, power point presentation, web pages, hyper-text or digital videos. Those visual productions should be appropriately juxtaposed with sound effects such as narrated voice or music and word texts such as titles, captions and subtitles that are certainly a part of digital communication.

Collapsing these varying descriptions, I define digital video storytelling as a recent form of multi-modal storytelling which combines electronic multimedia such as digital text, video, images, audio and a purposefully narrated story, all of which are created and experienced through digital media. I further stipulate digital video storytelling as a relatively easy, accessible and popular form of storytelling related to the film profession but now widely accessible to individuals as producers and storytellers.

People today make substantial use of computers, visual media and digital technology to communicate each other, and digital technology both provides and stimulates new ways of creating stories. In schools, many approaches and pedagogical techniques have been used to facilitate digitalized classrooms and to enrich teaching and learning. There is growing interest in digital storytelling using multi-media in different disciplines. Although a substantial amount of research exists on narrative and digital stories in media education or technology education, teaching and learning technical, artistic and meaningful digital stories through digital videos is relatively new in the field of art education. However, adapting *narrative digital media* for use in the classroom has
become the subject of a small, but growing, body of recent research (Weis, Benmayor, O’Leary & Eynon, 2002). Telling a digital story is a relatively new term and a new idea for many arts educators, but in fact it has been put into practice and researched by media professionals outside of art education at least since the Center for Digital Storytelling was founded in Berkeley, California in 1994 (Lambert, 2002, 2006). Creating digital stories has taken place through the Center for Digital Storytelling in Berkeley, Digital Underground Story Telling of Youth (DUSTY) in Berkeley, and the Visible Knowledge Project at Georgetown University (Davis, 2004). Digital stories have been primarily implemented in the field of media education, and only recently became the subject of research (Chung, 2006, 2007b) on integrated education in K-12 art classrooms. Sheng Kuan Chung is an early pioneer in researching digital video making in K-12 art education settings. According to Chung (2006, 2007b), telling a digital story through narrative video production allows a wide range of engaging and expressive experiences, representations and projects to be presented to contemporary students. My research builds on Chung’s early important work (2006, 2007) in this area.

2.4.2 Understanding digital video.

Video is a medium for recording and displaying sequential motion pictures using digital technology (Berger, 2008; Stinson, 2008). Videos are interactive, participatory, dynamic, and customizable media used to create stories (Paul, 2003, p. 67). Video may also consist of multi-media sound and motion (Roland, 1990). Video images are immediately recorded and accessible, whereas film, like photography, needs to be chemically developed to release images created by exposure to light. Both film and video can now be produced digitally (Bordwell & Thompson, 2003). Although there are
differences impacting video productions such as costs, equipment, technology used, and technical quality (Berger, 2008; Taylor, 2004), digital video shares similar characteristics as print film. These characteristics include motion, duration, tempo, narrative, and animation, because both digital and print film a sequence of continuous photographic shots that capture motion with a camera (Berger, 2008; Stinson, 2008). Digital video also contains other features of film, including appropriate lighting, story development, contexts, camera movement, and character development (Berger, 2008; Taylor, 2004). Both film and digital video are multi-modal, incorporating sound, image, and animation or live action. Both seek to make viewers believe that “the image and the music are so closely intertwined that the image is spurred on by the propulsiveness of the sound, or conversely, that the image sparks activity in the music” (Vernallis, 1998, p. 164). However, digital video differs from film in terms of particular technological aspects. Digital video is a cheaper, faster and an easier medium for capturing, shooting, processing, transmitting and editing moving pictures (Campbell, 2002). However, since video production shares so many similar features with film, and this dissertation is not about technological approaches to digital and analog, I will not dwell on differences here other than to make a few significant observations.

Before 1995, creating videos was usually reserved for media professionals who worked in film or television, and rarely involved non-professionals because it required bulky expensive equipment (such as VHS video cameras), it was difficult to use, and the editing techniques of that era were time-consuming (Lambert, 2006; Ohler, 2008). The development of contemporary digital technologies now enables average people to produce and distribute digital content (Scheit, 2006). “Low cost digital cameras, non-
linear editing software and notebook computers” are creating new opportunities for the production of short digital stories “for publication on the internet” (Meadows, 2003, p. 190). Creating digital narratives became widely possible after the introduction of relatively inexpensive digital technologies such as video cameras, photo editing and video editing software for personal computers during the 1990s (Davis, 2004). Increasing numbers of people without formal technical training of any kind can now create digital stories, generate electronic content effectively combining audio and visual elements, and publish their creations on the Internet (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Lenhart & Madden, 2007; Ogan, 2006; Scheit, 2006). In summary, the evolution of digital technologies has offered educators new prospects for digital video creation in classrooms (Voithofer, 2005).

Although digital stories can be represented in a variety of formats, including linear and nonlinear web pages, digital songs, PowerPoint documents, and digital videos (Paul & Fiebich, 2002), I will limit my focus to narrative digital videos because digital videos are popular medium to convey digital narratives (Davis, 2004; Educause Learning Initiative, 2007; Jay, 2006; Meadows, 2003). For the purpose of this study, my understanding is that digital stories are defined as essentially short videos two to three minutes long that assemble a rich variety of media to support the ideas and emotions in a story, including music or other audio effects, imagery, video, and other electronic elements. Digital videos are not used simply to record real-world events, but can be used a medium for meaningful creative digital storytelling in art education.

2.4.3 Situating digital video in this research.

Art educators should be interested in narrative video not only for purposes of media education but also purposes of art education. As noted in my analysis of the nature
of narrative, people are instinctual storytellers, and people make meanings by telling stories. My perspective is that digital video is a powerful way to tell stories in the digital era. Digital video is a good venue for students to learn how to convey personal experiences and cultural meanings in the form of purposeful artistic stories. As noted in Chapter 1, the significance of digital video is that we can represent ways of exploring, using, and manipulating meaningful stories. Video making is also a creative aesthetic practice, and that can aid the creation of meaningful stories that shape, form and represent both personal experiences and cultural experiences. The purposes for the creation of digital videos vary from culture to culture, but the creation of digital videos remains a way to convey personal values and beliefs. Contemporary students can use digital technologies to transform, and communicate their modes of living in different forms of digital videos. My analysis in the narrative section of this dissertation notes that stories in digital videos can create opportunities in which humans can make sense of our world.

In order for digital stories to be meaningful and believable stories, there should be general considerations regarding the manipulation and integration of audio/visual materials in digital videos. The relationship between audio and visual and how we integrate these elements will be discussed in terms of process, form, and meanings in the next section.

2.5 Conceptualizing Digital Video Making: Telling Artistic/Creative Digital Stories

Digital stories are an interactive, participatory, artistic, and collaborative medium of direct relevance to art education (Meadows, 2003; Chung, 2006). As noted in the previous sections, using digital technologies allows students to create art works that integrate audio and visual materials. Both students and teachers can create artistic and
creative digital stories in digital video form that embodies personal experiences about cultural beliefs and understandings. Creating artistic and creative videos is not simply for entertainment, and can also be used to incorporate contemporary art, popular visual culture, personal experience, and communication in the field of art education.

However, just as not every form of everyday discourse constitutes a meaningful story, not every digital video will necessarily be an artistic and creative digital story. Digital video making pedagogy should educate students about the aesthetic qualities, techniques of narrative picturing, the deliberate process of video making, and meaningful story construction.

In the following discussion, I will present a rationale for video making practices in the art classroom, discuss the connections between formal techniques and meanings in video, and share aspects of post-modern art practices that can be applied to digital video making. I will base this discussion on my analysis of media education, film study, and art education literature, and I will introduce fundamental ideas about creating artistic and creative video productions that embody context, content and meanings. I believe that making artistic digital videos involves understanding of process, form, meaning, and artistic strategies. Terry Barrett’s (2011) observations about making art has inspired me to construct my initial ideas about how to create artistic digital videos. Julia Marshall (2008, 2010) and Olivia Gude (2004) further inform me in terms of post-modern art making strategies. When we explore the expressive and functional possibilities of video making, we should examine the diverse components of digital video making.

According to Barrett (2011), process is “the series of activities and decisions that lead to a finished artifact” (p. 2), meanings are the “expressive content of an artifact and
the artifacts’ inferred implication” (p. 2), and form means “how an artwork is composed structurally according to its intended functional and expressive purposes, which affects its meanings and uses” (p. 2). Utilizing Barrett’s threefold framework (process, meanings, and form) and integrating Marshalls’ and Gude’s conceptions about postmodern art strategies are the final part of the literature review. These postmodern art strategies help to formulate a comprehensive conceptual framework to apply to the problems of video storytelling. This section addresses the question of how stories are as digital video productions.

2.5.1 Common properties of narrative in film/video.

Selected narrative theories and constructs discussed previously in the narrative section inform a conceptual framework for understanding and interpreting narratives, including digital video narratives, in this study. This conceptual framework, along with understandings developed in my review of digital video production concepts and processes, will serve as a preliminary guide in my interviews with my study subjects who have created digital video narratives, and in my analyses of their digital video stories. I anticipate having the opportunity to identify and examine additional aspects of digital video storytelling that emerge in my interviews and analyzes of study participants’ digital video narratives. I have already stipulated the common properties of narrative and narrative in film/video by analyzing selected discourse about narrative. As previously stipulated, important properties/aspects of narrative include: a) teller: point of view/narrative voice, b) subject matter: character/actor, sequential events and actions, setting, c) time and sequence, d) topic/theme: canonical frame of reference, e) audience and context. Through the purposeful manipulation of these properties of narrative,
meanings of story are shaped toward particular ends. Inquiry into each of these aspects informs both creation and understandings of narratives. In the following passage, I build on these concepts, adding additional insights as they apply to digital video storytelling.

2.5.1.1 Teller/Narrator and narrative perspective. A narrative is something that someone in particular tells, so there should always be an identifiable voice doing the narrating. Understanding teller/narrator is understanding who speaks or who tells. Every story is told from a particular point of view or using a particular voice. There is a distinction between point of view (who sees) and narrative voice (who speaks). Point of view is narrative perspective (internal or external), and both of them are relevant to the construction of stories. For example, the main character or the narrator who functions as an omniscient author can tell a story from an internal viewpoint, and a minor character or teller can function as an observer who tells the main character’s story from an external viewpoint. By utilizing properties of narrative such as point of view and narrative voice, the digital video storyteller can make preconceived methodological choices with the technology itself to render a story in a particular way.

2.5.1.2 Subject matter: Actors/Characters, actions/events, setting/scene.

Narratives typically concern someone or something. Subject matter is the representation of people, animals, plants, or places that are depicted in a story. Actors/characters, events, and setting/scene are depicted in a digital video as subject matters. Characters are participants in a story, and they can be any individuals and groups. Specific roles are assigned to each character in the story, roles that are carried out through their actions or conversations. Characters are not always human, but they typically personify human personalities and aspirations.
Narratives, then, configure sequential events (happenings) and actions into coherent wholes. Sequential events are aspects of subject matter but they occur in time. A happening (things that happen) becomes a story (meaning) by structuring of the sequential events or actions through linguistic fabrications. An important property of a narrative is setting/scene, which is about when and where a thing was done, and when and where a thing happened. “When” can refer to the specific time of day and year, and “where” can refer to the physical world in which the characters exist in a story.

2.5.1.3 Time. Time is the property of narrative that shows the progression of the story from a beginning towards an ending through a sequence of events. A fully developed narrative text is often structured in six phases: a) abstract (summary of the substance of the narrative), b) orientation (time, place, situation, and participants), c) complicating action (sequence of events), d) evaluation (significance and meaning of the action), e) resolution (what finally happened), and f) coda (returns perspective to the present). Each of these phases or facets of the structure of a narrative merits inquiry, description, and analysis.

As I introduced in the previous section, Genette identifies three aspects of temporal manipulation in the story: order, duration, and frequency (1982). Order is related to the sequence. Sequence is closely related to time. Narratives often answer the question of what was done, and that question is often interrelated with the occurrence of a sequence of events or actions. The order of events is frequently rearranged for dramatic effect. Duration can be explained as pace or speed in a story. The teller can speed up or slow down the story with respect to the events being told. Manipulating frequency is possible when telling stories that involve matters such as the number of times an event
occurs and the number of times it is mentioned in the narrative. For example, storytellers can tell five times what happened five times, can repeat five times what happened once, and can tell once what happened five times.

Time is also an important property found in new animated or sequential media art forms such as videos. Time means “the continuum of experience in which events actually or apparently take place” (Barrett, 2011, p. 119). According to Barrett (2011), time is an important property of time-based art because it is used to specify the order of events.

Time has two dimensions to consider: duration and tempo. Duration refers to “how long an actual or recorded event lasts or seems to last”, and tempo refers to “the speed at which an activity takes place, or seems to take place” (Barrett, 2011, p. 119). Both duration and tempo are relative terms. Things that “take an hour seem like they take forever while other things that also take an hour may seem to pass in no time at all duration” (Barrett, 2011, p. 120). Tempo can be measured, but tempo can seem to be faster or slower depending on the when the viewer experiences something. Tempo can appear to be slower or faster in relation to something else.

Duration and tempo are important concepts for understanding differences in time in videos. There are four different types of time in time-based media such as videos: actual time, implied time, recorded time, and running time (Barrett, 2011). *Actual time* refers to the duration of a real-time event as measured by a clock, *implied time* refers to the illusion of time and it’s passing. *Recorded time* refers to duration, tempo, and sequence as captured in videos. *Running time* refers the duration of a performance and the duration of an event recorded on a video. Students who engage in the purposeful and
creative manipulation of time will want to consider matters such as how long and at what pace, and can create more dynamic and meaningful art pieces.

2.5.1.4 Topic/Theme/Moral purpose. One of the important properties of narrative is topic and theme, which generally means a big idea. Topic is what the story is about and theme is the message. In narrative video production, the author/artist typically shares a story about something or their response to something. As previously noted, although narrative serves a variety of purposes, an important aspect of the topic and theme is that they are frameworks for moral decision-making. According to Bruner (1990), narrative “mediates between the canonical world of culture and the more idiosyncratic world of belief, desires and hope “ (p. 52). Narrative is moral in the sense that it conveys a value system that the audience can accept. Narratives carry meaning and cultural value because they implicitly or explicitly encode ethical standards against which the actions of the characters can be judged (Pentland, 1988). When a storyteller constructs narratives, the moral decision-making process involves prioritizing some values over others in order to make the preferred ending arrive through the progress of the selected sequential events. There is strong support for the selected events and actions in order for them to contribute to a proposed resolution. Such considerations may be intuitive to the teller’s manner of working, but it also makes good sense to build such considerations into teachings about digital video production with young people.

2.5.1.5 Audience and context. Narratives are stories that convey experiences and aspirations of the storyteller, and where stories are created and where they are viewed and experienced in (context) is important. Stories are assembled, conveyed, and constructed in personal, social, cultural, internal, or external contexts. Contexts are
shaping stories, and influence the meanings or the effects of stories for both storytellers and the audience. The construction, communication, and reception of stories also take place in particular contexts; and these viewing contexts further impact the inferred meanings of the stories. Narratives are products deliberately created by narrators, and narratives are actualized when the audiences encounter and interpret the narratives. Enduring narratives embody stories that not only to convey the teller’s values, they also resonate with audiences. Stories not only convey the cultural values of the tellers, they are conveyed in a matrix of cultural contexts and values that include addressees’ moral frameworks and expectations. Audience expectations are shaped by their own educational contexts, and successful narrations both attend to these audience contexts and/or effectively transcend them. When stories receive audience appreciation across varying cultural contexts, they have the potential to transcend particular cultural contexts and tap into deeper human structures, aspirations, and values.

Taking the audience perspective into consideration is an important property to consider when constructing narratives and such considerations deserve discussion in a teaching situation. Narratives engage the audience to find a suitable ending that supports their cultural values, experiences and feelings, even if the ending might be contrary to cultural traditions and beliefs. Therefore, even without an explicit moral, narratives can embody a sense of what is right and wrong, appropriate or inappropriate. Each teller will create a story based on the same events in a unique way, and each audience will hear the story differently depending on what experiences and feelings they bring to bear. There can be attempts to bring up the "incompleteness" of narrative for audience interpretation.
2.5.2 Three types of media components of film/video.

The concepts presented in the previous section were extrapolated from discourse on narrative and applied to digital video education. A unique aspect of digital video storytelling, however, includes its multi-modal nature. This section therefore reviews what media scholars have identified as specific features of the multi-modal nature of digital video. There are several multi-modal components in digital videos. Understanding media components with artistic considerations is as important as understanding the narrative properties of digital videos in digital video making. There are three main types of media that can be manipulated in video productions; image, sound and text. These are raw materials (media components) of video; students can compose digital videos by mixing and juxtaposing some, or all, of these components in digital videos in order to express their ideas and meanings in artistic form.

2.5.2.1 Images: Moving images and still images. The images can convey diverse aspects of visual qualities. Possible sources of images include still image, digital photos, scanned pictures, images downloaded from the Web, original images, and edited images. Video clips can include recorded videos, downloaded videos and edited videos. Both still and moving images are visual objects in a video. The linkages of images due to the composition of objects in a video are characterized by attributes such as color/lighting, frames/shot, transitions and camera movements.

- Color and light

It is impossible to see color without light, and the idea of color is associated with light. According to Barrett (2011), color is one of the most significant sensations that we experience and has qualities found in works of art. We can see the real world using color
to help us interpret what we see and we use colors symbolically in videos. Students can explore the expressive possibilities of color, and manipulate the intensity of color, (black and white, sepia, chromatic, monochromatic) in the scenes in videos. Understanding the use of cameras for shooting raw footage is the crucial point in teaching the form of video because it contains raw sounds and images that need to be assembled and reassembled throughout the video-making process. The deliberate manipulation and application of light in both shooting and editing stage of video production can produce some aesthetic effects, as can color variations. Lighting includes the use of both artificial sources of light such as lamps and natural sunlight that comes through windows and skylights.

• Still shot and framing technique

A shot is a set up of visuals. Shot generally refers to a “continuous series of images of one action from one camera position in film”, and cut refers to “the immediate change from one shot to another” (Barrett, 2011, p. 119). A shot may be a still or a moving image. Diverse shots create dynamic visuals in videos, and exploring diverse shots is important in visual structure. Different types of shots commonly used in video productions include establishing shot, master shot, wide shot, mid shot, two shot, multiple shot, over the shoulder shot, close-up, and aerial shot (Campbell, 2002). For example, establishing shot generally used to establish a scene's setting or atmosphere, mid shot usually extends (on a person) from the foot to the head, and close-up is usually of the face or a section of the face only, in order to make maximum expression possible. Still shots should be clear, focused, well-lit, and appropriately composed with an appropriate shooting angle (Ohler, 2009).
• Camera movements

Different camera movements can create different types of images. Possible shots as a function of camera movement in K-12 education settings include the *tracking shot* which follows the object, the *panning shot* which moves from side to side, the *tilting shot* which swings up and down, the *zooming shot*, and the *steady shot* (Campbell, 2002). Also there are high camera angle and low camera angle. The high camera is higher than eye level, looking down - this viewpoint can diminish a subject or give a panorama. The low camera is lower than eye level looking up (Meadow, 2003). Teaching camera movements is crucial.

• Transitions and effects

Transition means movement from scene to scene. Transitions are usually created in the editing stage of video production. Transition provides ways to move from image to image without abruptly displaying the next image. Transition makes the story flow more powerful and effective way (Ohler, 2008). Various types of video editing software enable popular and visually intriguing transitions such as dissolves, wipes, circular wipes, and so on. Both iMovie and Window Movie Maker offer visual effects, which operate in the editing stage like transitions except that they happen to a particular still and moving images.

Diverse images and video shots create dynamic visuals in narrative videos, and images should be clear, focused, well-lit, and use appropriate shooting angles in order to convey a particular idea, or they may be unfocused, dimly lit and deliberately ambiguous. Teaching students to shoot with a camera and to collect raw footage involves framing
techniques, angles of view, depth of space, the choice of lens, the height of the camera, and the use of light. Students can also touch up their shots with visual effects like Lens flare, Black and white, Aged film, Fuzzy film through video editing software effects.

2.5.2.2 Sounds. The definition of sound is “a vibratory disturbance capable of being detected by the ear” (Barrett, 2011, p. 138). Sounds add another sensory expressive dimension to digital videos in order to construct meanings. Audio can include voice-over narration, recorded sounds, sounds created artificially on a computer, sounds obtained from the Web, downloaded music, and original music recorded in the real world. The processes of manipulating, juxtaposing, assembling and reassembling sounds will result in the expression of aesthetic qualities during the production stage through the post-production stage. Barrett (2011) explains that sounds can sometimes be constructed accidentally or intentionally. In either case, when the student juxtaposes sounds with images in a video, this juxtaposition expands the possibilities of expressive content of digital video beyond the strictly visual elements.

There are two major types of sounds that may be added to sounds recorded as shots were originally captured in digital videos: voice-overs and soundtracks. Voice-over narratives, rather than music, can be appropriate in some digital stories. Although both voice and music many accompany video footage, voice can add emotional substance and authenticity. Teachers should direct students to not to be too soft, or too gravelly (Lambert, 2002).

Music (soundtrack) can create another complete layer of meaning by adding depth and complexity to the story and images in videos. Ambient sound or appropriate noises can also add complexity to the digital stories (Lambert, 2002). Sound quality is generally
thought to need to be clear and consistently audible throughout the presentation, but ambiguous or barely audible sounds may also be utilized for a particular purpose. Music will often convey rich emotional experiences that might or might not match the story line well. Students should establish a purpose of the particular video footage early on and maintains a clear focus throughout (Meadows, 2003; Miller, 2004; Ohler, 2008). Video editing software also provides a plethora of sound effects such as thunder, applause, traffic sound, and animal sound. Ambient sounds or appropriate noises can also add aesthetic qualities to digital stories.

Through the artistic juxtaposition of images and sounds, aesthetic qualities may be combined. Both voice-overs and music can maximize the intended aesthetic qualities in videos. They can add emotional substance and authenticity. They can also create another complete layer of meaning by adding depth and complexity to the story and images. Sometimes audiences may not understand their intended meanings. Additionally audiences may infer unintended meanings.

2.5.2.3 Words. Words are “representation in writing or printing that communicates a meaning” (Barrett, 2011, p. 138). Words are an important artistic property and they may be a significant means of expression beyond images and sounds. According to Barrett (2011), words can be used as “aesthetic value or to convey information, particularly important in some narrative works of art” (p. 143). The expressive qualities of words can be achieved by manipulating words in different fonts or styles such as boldface, italic, simple, and complex.
2.5.3 Artistic strategies in relation to post-modern art education pedagogy.

A representation is something that stands for something else. Representation can occur in the form of words, images, sounds, or objects (Chandler, 2002). Text, images, tables, audio, animation, videos and interactive components are different categories of representation in digital video. How to use these properties in a creative and artistic way in digital video form is one goal of video making pedagogy in the field of art education. As an art educator, my research interest is digital video making as a creative and artistic art form. I argue here that video productions should be artworks, and that they be artworks that are plausible, meaningful, sophisticated, artistic, and creative in a manner that has value to audiences. As indicated in the introduction and previous sections, digital video as a means of digital story telling is widely used for different purposes, including media education, technology education and language education. What makes the difference between art education and other disciplines are that we represent digital stories in an artistic and creative manner that conveys aesthetic qualities and moral values. For example, written text can be used effectively independently, but combining text with sounds or images can enhance the information in text aesthetically and artistically. Music can be enhanced by juxtaposing it with images. Images can provide more specific information when combined with sounds and texts. Video productions can be used to do more that convey information, and they may tap into and reinforce deeply human values and aspirations. Therefore, when multiple representations are combined and formed, the ways in which representations are combined and juxtaposed are significant both for more effective communication and for artistic, creative, and moral communication.
This dissertation will also introduce representation strategies for digital video making in art education using post-modern art making strategies. Digital video making will be founded on strategies derived from the literatures of contemporary art education and post-modern art. Art educators Julia Marshall (2008, 2010), Terry Barrett (2011), and Olivia Gude (2004) suggest important considerations in relationship to creating and understanding contemporary art. I will use these three scholars’ findings to shape a contemporary artistic framework for digital video storytelling. These artistic strategies have associations and links with each other. They may be combined in varying degrees in a single digital video production, and the video that is constructed can embody meaningful stories with multiple references and possible meanings. Conveying visual experiences in this way can reveal complex underlying meanings. Stories that emerge from raw video footage can project students’ visual depictions into meaningful social commentaries through speculation (Marshall, 2010). Art educators should be aware of multiple art making strategies, and how these strategies interact in videos. Incorporating artistic strategies help students create socially meaningful and compelling video productions that have aesthetic qualities.

The conceptual approaches offered by these three art educators that I find particularly useful to digital video storytelling include *collage/juxtaposition, hybridization, re-formatting/Re-contextualizing, adapting literary devices, appropriation.* These strategies are not offered as fundamental principles, as was the case for the modernist art elements and art principles. Rather they are useful in digital video making because they offer contemporary lenses for understanding art objects, aesthetic experiences and the contemporary art curriculum. They also offer contemporary
conceptual frameworks for digital video pedagogy to enhance the artistic qualities of digital video production.

2.5.3.1 Collage/Juxtapositioning. Collage is “juxtaposing non-coalescent or distinct images” (Marshall, 2008, p. 39). According to Marshall (2008), “visible material images are placed together and their arrangement generates a relationship between them” (p. 39) in collage art. The juxtaposition of images or ideas for the purpose of creating new meanings in art, and their arrangement, creates new concepts and meaning by means of juxtaposition. In video making, a video collage involves more than visual images, and involves a wide range of juxtaposed images, texts and sounds. The details of how we place images texts, and sounds together, assemble them and reassemble to create a wide range of stories can embody a wide range of possibilities. Collage in film production is highly related to two important concepts known in film discourse: montage and mise-en-scene. Theses film concepts are discussed in relation to editing in the following section.

2.5.3.2 Hybridizing. Hybridizing involves incorporating and utilizing various mediums, media, culture, and properties in art pieces. Gude (2004) explains this strategy as hybridity, and Barrett (2011) explains this idea as hybridizing and mixing. According to Barrett (2011), hybridizing refers to the processes and products of mixing, “which articulates two or more disparate elements to engender a new and distinct entity” (p. 214). In post-modern art, artists incorporate various media such as video, sound, and animation into their pieces in order to fully represent and investigate their topics and subjects (Gude, 2004). By using layering and mixing in different mediums, cultures, and representations in pieces, students can explore ways of bringing different cultures together for the purpose of creating a new and more complex entity.
2.5.3.3 Re-formatting/Re-contextualizing. Gude (2004), Marshall (2010), and Barrett (2011) assert the importance of recreating artworks by giving them new contexts and meanings. Reformatting and re-contextualizing involves positioning familiar images in relationship to images, videos, or texts in order to generate meaning in an artwork. Reformatting means recreating a topic by manipulating the topic in a new visual format, which gives topics new contexts and new meanings (Marshall, 2010). According to Marshall (2010), the recontextualizing effect produced by reformatting is amplified when the format imposed is foreign to the subject. Ideas, objects and images from different disciplines can be reformatted in art classrooms (e.g., arranging popular culture characters such as specimens in a natural history exhibit). Throughout the re-contextualization process, students can position “a familiar image in relationship to pictures, symbols, or texts with which it is not usually associated in order to generate meaning in an artwork” (Barrett, 2011, p. 213). In post-modern art, re-arrangement, reformat, or re-contextualization can use unusual juxtaposition such as using dissonance. Although harmony is said to have been important in modern art, lack of harmony or agreement in a work, such as clashing colors, can cause tension (dissonance), and this visual dissonance can create a more effective synthesis (Barrett, 2011). The important aspects of reformatting/re-contextualizing are that video productions do not simply consist of predictable, literal or pleasing visual/auditory elements, but rather involves the creation of concepts. When students pair original images or videos with other images and texts that contextualize their topics and stories, new meanings and values can be generated.
2.5.3.4 Adapting literary devices. According to Barrett (2011), literary theory heavily influences post-modern art, and contemporary artists are increasingly using literary strategies as an effective strategy for digital video making. As a literary device to adapt in the field of art education, Barrett (2011) introduces narrative, metaphors, irony and parody, all of which can be effectively used in digital video making. Marshall (2010) states the importance of metaphor. Metaphor describes the primary subject in terms of a subsidiary subject with which it has a connection (Marshall, 2008, 2010). In a metaphor, two entities have similarities and differences in a remote connection (Marshall, 2010). When we convey the qualities of one thing to another thing in the form of art, we create a metaphor. According to Parsons (2010), much of the meaning of artworks comes through metaphors. Contrary to linguistic metaphors, there can usefully be more than one visual metaphor in a visual image and visual metaphors can be interpreted in a wide range.

According to Barrett (2011), in general, all images are metaphors “because the qualities of the image are attributed to the thing being depicted” (p. 217). In addition, “visual metaphors are open to a wide range of interpretations due to the lack of specificity in their references” (Barrett, 2011, p. 218). Metaphor is an important strategy in video making because it transforms a story into multi-modal forms. Students can convey their ideas and stories in both visual and audio ways by using metaphor making as a means of generating insights and meaning.

Furthermore, students can use ironic images or words to express something contrary to the intended idea, a technique which helps viewers question what they have understood. Parody is a combination of mimicry and exaggeration of other works,
representations, and styles. Students can compose videos that imitate existing productions while acknowledging what they quote or to which they refer (Barrett, 2011).

2.5.3.5 Appropriation. Both Gude (2004) and Barrett (2011) considered appropriation to be an important art making strategy. To appropriate is “to process, borrow, steal, copy, quote, or excerpt images that already exist, made by other artists or available in the public domain and general culture” (Barrett, 2011 p. 211).

Appropriating\textsuperscript{26} is the way of creating from that which already exists. This is a significant challenge to modernist notions of originality, given that remixing, sampling and even copying can be considered to be art-making. For example, photography is a medium based on copying the original object, and can convey different meanings that are the case for looking at the original object. In video making, students can borrow ideas from existing Hollywood movies or pop music videos, excerpt multiple YouTube videos in their work, and recreate their peers’ videos by sampling or remixing.

2.5.4 Process of video making.

Processes of video making are processes of making meaning. According to film and media education literatures (Chung, 2006; Meadows; 2003; Ohler, 2009; Prince, 1955; Sobchack & Sobchack, 1987), there are certain stages (phases) required to complete digital video making. The phases can apply to any type of media production, including both film and video, and the same general concepts work for any medium. Although the media production process varies from producer to producer, from scholar to scholar, three different phases are commonly used in many forms of digital media

\textsuperscript{26} Marcel Duchamp’s 1917 fountain is an example of appropriation that involved making use of an object that already existed (toilet).
productions. I will describe each in detail in terms of how it can be applied to digital video production in high school classrooms. The main stages of media production are:

- Pre-production: Planning, Research, and Storyboarding.
- Production: The actual shooting and recording.
- Post-production: Editing, everything between production and creating the final master copy.

Pre-production includes identifying the topic, conducting research, and planning the production; production involves collecting and developing footage and sound; and post-production involves selecting, merging, adding additional content through editing and finalizing. In each stage, students will make choices that help them develop their stories, and permeate their videos with aesthetic qualities and intended and emergent meanings.

2.5.4.1 Pre-production: Preparation to storyboarding. The creative media process should begin with appropriate preparation. Media production generally begins with demonstrating and teaching the use of software, followed by showing examples of digital stories, and the assignment of tasks (Teehan, 2006). Young digital storytellers in the classroom can use digital technology to create effective, compelling and dynamic visual stories in the manner of traditional oral and written storytelling. Inexpensive and easy-to-use video editing software is essential for digital storytelling implementation in a K-12 educational setting. According to Teehan (2006), the essential tools for digital storytelling are hardware (computer, CD, DVD, Video recorder, Digital camera, Scanner,
Headset, Microphone) and software (PowerPoint\textsuperscript{27}, iMovie\textsuperscript{28}, Movie Maker\textsuperscript{29}). For example, Microsoft Movie Maker and Microsoft Photo Story 3 are available for Windows, and there are excellent tutorials regarding the use of these programs on Microsoft websites. Macintosh users can use a similar program known as iMovie. In addition, hardware and software programs such as Flash MX\textsuperscript{30}, Photoshop\textsuperscript{31}, Dreamweaver\textsuperscript{32}, Illustrator\textsuperscript{33}, and Maya 6\textsuperscript{34} are now available to facilitate the implementation of digital imaging activities. These hardware and software programs are now used in K-12 art education settings.

The creative process begins with the artist/media author’s reflection, brainstorming, and research about the possible topic. According to Barry (1997), both research and planning begin before the actual shooting starts. A significant amount of time and energy is needed for reflection, brainstorming and research during pre-production. Creating a movie is an exercise in model building that involves creating an analogy of some event. An outline of the information, a list of the story points, and a shot list of people, places, and events should be pre-planned. The following questions are useful to initiate, guide and structure the pre-production phase of narrative video making.

\textsuperscript{27} Power point is a presentation program developed by Microsoft. It is part of the Microsoft Office suite.
\textsuperscript{28} iMovie is a proprietary video editing software application which allows Mac, iPod Touch 4th generation and iPhone 4 users to edit their own home movies.
\textsuperscript{29} Windows Movie Maker is a video creating/editing software, featuring such as effects, transitions, titles/credits, audio track, timeline narration, and Auto Movie
\textsuperscript{30} Macromedia Flash MX is a software solution for developing rich Internet content and applications. The video, multimedia, and application development features allow users to create user interfaces, online advertising, e-learning courses, and enterprise application front-ends.
\textsuperscript{31} Adobe Photoshop is a graphic editing program developed and published by Adobe Systems, in order to organize, edit, and enhance photos.
\textsuperscript{32} Adobe Dreamweaver is a web development application.
\textsuperscript{33} Adobe Illustrator software is a comprehensive vector graphics environment with new transparency in gradients and multiple art boards that can be used to explore more efficient ways to design.
I will have them in mind as I analyze my own and study participants’ videos and interviews. These questions will guide my examination and analysis of the videos themselves.

Table 2
Preproduction Considerations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What inspired this topic or subject matter?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is this story about? Why is it important to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does it reflect a personal, social, cultural interest, belief, concern, or question?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the research plan?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are your hesitations, challenges and anxieties about this project? What are the challenges?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would be the timeline/schedule to complete your media production?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What background information will your audience need in order to understand and be interested in this piece?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What would be a particular context for your topic that the audience needs to understand?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How will the topic be inserted into the video, how will it emerge?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would be the outline of your main characters place or role in the piece, their place in the overall narrative, and their relationship to other characters?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What will be the central conflict or issue?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the action sequences and the structure?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is a culminating moment in your video?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the plans for specific locations, camera angles, or lighting?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the target audience’s views and/or biases on this topic? Will your video story support or challenge their views?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will this piece end, and what would you like the ending to accomplish for your audience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will you organize and sequence this digital story?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are metaphor, irony, and literary devices utilized or presented in the video?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What underlying human theme or aspirations the story conveys?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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In Hollywood movie making, pre-production is a significant stage and is used to calculate both the budget and the timeline for the production, along with planning of the essential components of the movie (setting, actor, sound, etc). The professional director should research and plan all aspects about the characters, locations, wardrobe, makeup/hair, sound effects, music, special effects, special equipment, stunts, and extras (Sobchack & Sobchack, 1987). In the classroom, since students will play multiple roles as “researchers, playwrights, designers, media producers” (Chung, 2006, p. 48), students need to plan and research all considerations involved in the creation of digital stories. After the initial research and planning, the author needs to generate a topic and articulate the meanings.

Traditional visual storytellers plot, write, draw, ink, color, and paint, and digital storytelling has its own procedures. Chung (2006), Lambert (2006), and Ohler (2008) state that there are four basic stages involved in the creation of digital stories, which are similar to the stages involved in the creation of traditional visual stories: a) topic exploration, b) scripting and visualizing script, c) storyboarding, and d) production. During the pre-production stage, students explore the topic, structure the story, depict action, and prepare still and moving imagery. In a K-12 school setting, storyboarding plays an important role in a pre-production stage rather than directing and acting preparations, because storyboarding is the primary source of most media production conveying topics. According to Chung (2006), storyboarding involves “planning the sequence of scenes, transitions, and special effects, as well as the interaction of the incorporated media components focused within certain parameters (e.g., time duration, image transitions, special effects, and planning out of types of music, imagery, audio and
video to be used)” (p. 40). I would add to Chung’s observation that storyboarding should also include consideration of the many post-modern or contemporary artistic strategies mentioned in my previous section.

Storyboarding is the sketch or blueprint process of visualizing how a movie, animation, or digital story will look prior to production there are three different writing processes in the pre production phase: a) outlines, b) treatments, c) scripts (Curran, 2004). These writing processes resemble Barry’s (1997) process, but also further elaborate on important considerations in storyboarding. The outline is a working sketch of a particular video that proposes the structure and elements, including the synopsis. It is divided into acts and sequences, and includes information regarding archival footage. The treatment reflects the interests of the audience and mirrors the experience that the audience will have by making the story and progression of events clear and by including details. For example, the shooting treatment serves as the basic guideline for the production. Because treatments include anticipation of the audience, visualization of treatments in advance is important and would be part of the outline in the pre-production stage. Scripts are the way to format the writing before shooting. Each scene will be shown as a unit of action, including characters, situation, time of day, place of action, and purpose of the action. Scripts consist of action and dialogue with character names.

Since there are more story features that can be developed with multi-modal aspects of the video than a written storyboard, storyboarding should be a continuing process from pre-production to production, or even post-production. Developed during the pre-production stage and used throughout the production and post-production stages, a storyboard is used to describe the composition and treatment of a video scene. Further,
students will need to generate and plan a list of varied media sources (still image, music, sound, video) that can be used in their digital stories, and then prepare to collect listed media. Students should consider throughout the process how strategies or facets such as juxtapositioning collage techniques will come into play, and how irony, metaphor, and literary devices will be deployed.

2.5.4.2 Production. Production involves the actual shooting or capturing of all video footage, still images, and sound. In a professional film making production phase, the director plays a main role to visualize each scene as shots taken from different choice of lenses, camera angles, and lighting. The director creates characters in the story by working with the actors and costume designers. In professional video making, thousands of shots are filmed for visualizing performance and movements, and even a simple scene may be shot from many different angles, allowing for creative choices in the editing process (post-production) (Sobchack & Sobchack, 1987; Benyahia, Gaffney, & White, 2009).

In a K-12 education setting, a similar production process would be performed in a simpler way. According to Barry (1997), video production is the visualization process. Once students have done some initial research, generated the topic, established an overall thematic orientation, considered contemporary artistic strategies, and articulated some initial ideas about their approach through storyboarding in pre-production, then shooting and collecting footage begins. Since there will still be a lot of ongoing ideas and stories that can be further developed, students need to organize their thoughts, goals, and plans while collecting footage. A filming log may aid in this process. A filming log, derived from the storyboarding plans is a list of what is to be sought and allows for notations
during the filming. Chung (2006) describes the production stage of his students as follows.

Images, photos, and video are central to a digital story and can be obtained online or in print or by taking digital pictures; students can also produce them with a scanner connected to a computer. Because one of the main goals in creating digital stories is sharing them with a larger population via the Internet, the students either obtained copyright-free material or secured written permission for using copyright-protected material. (p. 43)

Therefore, throughout the digital story production process, students explore diverse topics, create their stories, capture images and sounds, create digital art, and manipulate multi-media such as sound and images in order to create effective and meaningful digital stories. The following possible questions help initiate, guide and structure the production process.
Table 3

Production Considerations

- What do you want to elicit or discover, and what are your intentions?
- Restate your topic and why it is important.
- What is a list of all the shots that you envision producing?
- What material can help create context, add visual variety, or more depth to your subject?
- Think again about locations, lighting, and audio. List all the aspects that need to be assembled, accessed, and/or considered.
- What is the visual representation to describe the narrative structure with the use of key image frames in the sequence?
- Can you plan the audio track(s) and transitions with words, and in relation to images?
- How can you assemble the media elements for your composition considering these choices in relation to the content you are trying to convey?
- Document your shooting and production process.
- How might you re-contextualize a certain elements for particular intended meanings or effects?

In order to collect and create raw footage, learning the basics of audio and video equipment is essential. Students need to learn how to use the hardware and software. When the author starts shooting and collecting footage, ways of visualizing the content to the audience should be both powerful and unarguable because there is no substitute for good footage (Barry, 1997). There are footage sources to create and collect throughout the production phase in a K-12 art education setting. What follows are descriptions of typical kinds of multi-modal media sources to create digital stories (Ohler, 2009).
• Audio: narration\textsuperscript{35}, recorded sounds\textsuperscript{36}, sounds obtained from the Web\textsuperscript{37}, downloaded music\textsuperscript{38}, original music\textsuperscript{39}

• Pictures and images: still image sources are digital photos\textsuperscript{40}, scanned pictures\textsuperscript{41}, images downloaded from the Internet\textsuperscript{42}, original images\textsuperscript{43}, edited images\textsuperscript{44}

• Video: recorded video\textsuperscript{45}, downloaded video\textsuperscript{46}, edited video\textsuperscript{47}

2.5.4.3 Post production. Since video production elements (raw footage, images, sound recordings) will be in raw form by the end of the production phase, students need to edit and finalize all of media components. In the post-production phase, students can finish digital story by composing the story, selecting, assembling, recontextualizing, juxtapositioning, and editing raw footage using video manipulation software (iMovie on the Mac or Movie Maker on the PC), adding aesthetic qualities (visual and audio effects for impact) and editing their material a until a satisfactory final version is composed. It could be said that all of this is essentially a collage process.

According to Barry (1997), post-production is also the stage to organize the structure. As regards footage and creative questions, the author needs to both organize his/her thoughts, goals, and plans, and allow for new creative ideas to emerge in process.

\textsuperscript{35} This refers to performing narration by sitting and speaking into a microphone in order to record one’s voice.
\textsuperscript{36} It refers to recorded sound such as people speaking, natural sounds, mechanical sounds or interesting sounds such as the sound of car traffic by a student.
\textsuperscript{37} It refers to web sound sources that are copyright free.
\textsuperscript{38} Students can download music from a CD, iPod, or the Web that are copyright free.
\textsuperscript{39} Students can create their own music with programs like GarageBand to avoid copyright issues.
\textsuperscript{40} It refers to pictures taken with a digital camera and transferred to the computer.
\textsuperscript{41} Students can scan resources from flat objects to three-dimensional things using cheap scanners.
\textsuperscript{42} Students can download from the web by clicking and saving images.
\textsuperscript{43} Like the music, students can create their own works of digital art to avoid copyright issues.
\textsuperscript{44} Students can crop a picture and adjust its brightness to correct some imperfections in the image.
\textsuperscript{45} Anything that students shot with a video camera can be included.
\textsuperscript{46} Like still images, students can download from the websites such as youtube.
\textsuperscript{47} Students can edit the raw footage for further use.
Carefully structured film includes a beginning that states the topic or asks a question, the middle to the present that includes the information, sets up tensions or questions, and supports the topic. Ending provides closure, resolves the conflict and doubt.

Raw footage should be edited to create meanings in an aesthetic way (Barry, 1997). Aesthetic considerations include attention to perceptual facets that convey emotional qualities and meanings. Irony, satire, moral values, and literary devices play an important role here, and deserve specific attention at this critical stage of production. Aesthetic considerations may include qualities such as dramatic or subtle lighting, color saturations, texture, depth of space, rhythmic movement, degrees of focus, complexities of the images and sounds, etc.

The following things are possible considerations to convey and structure the story in the post-production process.

Table 4

Post-production Considerations

- What kinds of raw footage do you actually have.
- What can I communicate with the raw footage I have?
- Begin assembling the shots you think you want to use.
- If anything essential is missing from the raw material, re-shoot and collect more.
- How does the raw footage can be edited to convey your intent, story, or topic?
- What could be multiple possible narratives in the material?
- What are the criteria what footage to use and what to exclude?
- Evolve the idea. Adjust and improvise on what you captured during the production.
- Write down the impressions of the rough cut or your assembled and edited story.
Table 4 (cont.)

- Show the piece to others in order to get lots of feedback.
- How well does the hybridization or collage process work to convey the intention in this video?
- What re-juxtapositioning of separate elements might I make to strengthen particular meanings?

Post-production mostly refers to editing process. There are two important concepts of meaning creation through editing in traditional filmmaking; *montage* and *mise-en-scene*. Both are similar to Marshall, Gude, and Barrett’s post-modern art making strategies in the previous section. Sobchack and Sobchak (1987) clearly described the meaning of *montage* and *mise-en-scene* in their book, *An introduction to film*. Both of them are ways of creating meaning in the movie. *Montage* refers to the juxtaposition of separate images. *Montage* was borrowed term from the French language by the Russian filmmaker and theorist Sergei Eisensten. According to Sobchack and Sobchak (1987), it is the physical act of editing referring to “cutting and splicing of one piece of film to another” (p. 144). However, *montage* refers to the editing principles of that stress combining images to produce an idea these days, refined and qualified by Eisenstein. *Montage* is the “act or process of producing a composite picture by combining several different pictures or pictorial elements so that they blend with or into one another; a picture so produced” (Sobchack & Sobchack, 1987, p. 144).

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48 *Oxford English Dictionary* defines montage as the process or technique of selecting, editing, and piecing together separate sections of films to form a continuous whole; a sequence or picture resulting from such a process.
Mise-en-scene\textsuperscript{49} is a French theatrical term meaning to put in place (Sobchack & Sobchack, 1987). While montage achieves meaning through the relationship between shots, the juxtaposition of separate images, mise-en-scene achieves meaning through the relationship of things visible within a single shot. Mise-en-scène can refer to placement of characters, props and scenery within a frame, creating the visual weight and movement (Prince, 1955). Since mise-en-scene is looking for the relationships within shots through minimal editing, mise-en-scene filmmakers usually communicate meanings through long single shots rather than short separate shots (Sobchack & Sobchack, 1987). Sobchack and Sobchack (1987) further describe the difference between montage and mise-en-scene. Montage methods let the viewer see the art through the manipulation of the raw footage. Mise-en-scène tries to hide the art in order to present an illusion of reality. For example, “montage style is like a painter’s canvas, a place where pictures are composed; mise-en-scene style is like a window on a world that seems to be taking place spontaneously with the camera simply an objective observer (p. 156). However, the notable thing is that there is no totally montage or mise-en-scene editing movie. Images in the movie can be “found and joined by the camera within one shot (mise-en-scene) or spliced together on an editing table (montage)” (p. 162). I will further incorporate these two concepts with post-modern art making strategies.

\textbf{2.5.4.4 General considerations of editing process.} Editing shapes the whole movie, generating meaning from the relationship of all the aspects and elements of a video making. Editing also creates the composition or structure of video by blending,

\textsuperscript{49} Oxford English Dictionary defines mise-en-scene as the staging of a play; the scenery and properties of a stage production; the stage setting.
juxtapositing, recontextualizing, and hybridizing multi-modal aspect with or into one another. Below are examples of key characteristics of digital stories derived from my analysis of media literature concerning how digital stories should get structured throughout the editing process. Given the multi-modal aspects of digital stories, digital narratives should be designed with the following characteristics in mind; a) coherence, b) harmony, c) rhythm, d) pace, e) flow, f) point of view, g) use of emotion.

- Coherence: Contents and meanings should be systematic and have logical connection in it. Purposefully appropriate amount/use of images, audio, video, text, and image effects are necessary for coherence. The primary consideration should be the intended meaning and power of the story, not the mere or random use of image effects or slide transitions (Chung, 2006).

- Harmony: The structure and relationship of sound and image should be compelling arrangement for a meaningful relationship of elements to the totality of the video. In a video, each cut displays a particular pattern, movement, and disposition of the figures through harmony in the interaction of sound and image. A successful story should achieve a sense of visual-auditory connectedness (Vernallis, 1998).

- Rhythm: rhythm refers to a patterned repetition of a motif at regular or irregular intervals. The appropriate movement and pattern of image and sound, while harmony is a combination that creates balance in both music and image (Vernallis, 1998). Rhythms and harmonies may be smooth and pleasing or deliberately chaotic and disjointed, depending on the makers’ intent and style.
• Pace: pace refers to how music tempo and image transitions proceed and develop in order to convey different emotions. A fast pace conveys strong emotions such as excitement and tension, while a slow pace indicates reflection and relaxation (Chung, 2006).

• Flow: flow refers to how stories move smoothly with continuity. Continuous motion of image and sound such as camera movement and constant auditory and visual motion within the frame allows viewers to experience a simulation of flow. Creating a continuous flow in video is essential both for viewers and producers of video (Vernallis, 1998). I would point out that flow may also be successfully disrupted for dramatic effect.

• Point of view: point of view can be either the attitude or outlook of a narrator or the author. The story can range from personal reflection to objective documentary (Ohler, 2008).

• Use of emotion: Emotional engagement can be involved, objective and detached (Ohler, 2008).

The above considerations are important during the editing stage of production. Throughout the editing process, stories in a movie can thus provide a wide range of meanings to the audience. Editing requires paying attention, reviewing, reflecting, and adjusting. After juxtaposing and mixing images, adding titles, transitions, effects and credits, the video production is done and may be further refined or polished by the end of post-production phase. Students need to export the draft to a transportable format choosing the file size, quality and compression. Exporting is different from saving because exported files can be seen independently of the original software.
2.5.5 Meanings and context of digital video.

In the literature review, I reviewed some of the ways in which meanings are conveyed through the narrative structure with particular emphasis on storytelling. I have saved this final section about meaning for last as a way to further examine and explore the complicated ways that meanings are created, conferred, and understood by audience. This is no way implies that consideration of meaning is least important. Rather it is my intent to leave readers with particular attention to the importance of meaning in video storytelling, and indeed in all art making.

Constructing meanings is an important aspect of all art making. What a digital video is about and what the digital video wants to convey (meanings) should be an ongoing concern in art education, when making a narrative video or any other art form. Students make artistic choices regarding subject matter, story structure and artistic elements, concepts and strategies, and moral purpose and underlying human values. It is useful to differentiate meanings from subject matter. Meanings differ from the subjects of video because what videos depict and what videos means may be different realms. According to Barrett (2011), subject matter refers to objects depicted such as animals, plants, or places depicted in an object, and meanings refer to “expressive content or inferred implications of object” (p. 5). Unlike subject matter, meanings are less direct, and often must be interpreted, deciphered, and further analyzed within a given context. Although subject matter and meanings are different, they correlate in works of art. Manipulating and interpreting subject matter allows the artist to construct meanings in particular ways in his artwork (Barrett, 2011).
Meaning is an elusive term, so I will use the term meanings rather than meaning in this dissertation. According to Barrett (2011), all of the components regarding the making of art, such as form, process, context, and subject matter, interrelate to each other in order to construct meanings.

Having certain types of stories in particular movies can convey four different kinds of meaning to the audience, including a) referential meaning, b) explicit meaning, c) implicit meaning, and d) symptomatic meaning. Referential meaning refers to a concrete plot summary that constitutes the film, explicit meaning is the key statement regarding the overall context of the film, implicit meaning is an abstract statement that conveys the film’s meanings within an overall context, and symptomatic meaning is the meaning conveyed within a way of thinking found in a particular socio-cultural context, during a particular time and a particular space (Bordwell & Thompson, 2004).

As these kinds of meanings suggest, the meanings of digital video depend on varying and overlapping context. Context can vary “where and how an object is placed, to the way the parts of the object relate, to the history and experience of the artist and conditions in the outside world” (Barrett, 2011, p. 22). Barrett (2011) observes that there are multiple types of context in art works: viewing, internal, artist, social, and historical. Considering these multiple contexts is important when constructing meanings both during digital video making and in viewing digital videos. Implications of these considerations for art education are not insignificant. Different contexts can guide

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50 It refers to where and how an artifact is placed for viewing.
51 It refers to the juxtaposition of parts within a whole artifact and the meanings they evoke through proximity to one another.
52 It refers to the life story, experiences, and time influencing an artist’s experience.
53 It refers to the time and place in which an artifact is made.
54 It refers to the artifact in relation to all other artifacts past and present.
and limit students when they seek to create their intended meanings. It is clear that the contexts and meanings of digital videos are imperative during the creative making process, and in audience interpretation. Likewise students can construct meanings by watching digital videos and interpreting them in different types of contexts.

Drawing from Barrett (2011), I will discuss some ways that contexts may be considered.

- Internal context: Internal context refers to “the juxtaposition of parts within a whole artifact and the meanings they evoke through proximity to one another”. Different artistic aspects and narrative properties coexist in digital video as described earlier. The juxtaposition of these properties in a single digital video piece impacts meanings based on how these properties and aspects are placed and how they are understood. Narrative properties include character/actor, time, point of view/narrative voice, sequential events and actions, canonical frame of reference, scene/setting, and audience perspective.

Artistic media includes image, words, video, and sound. Creative artistic elements such as lighting, color, depth of field, focus contemporary art making strategies and constitute another aspects of narrative video production and interpretations. Taken together, these narrative properties, artistic components and elements, and creative contemporary strategies interrelate internal context to convey meanings.

- Artist context: Artist context refers to an artist’s life story, experiences, and time. Digital videos will be grounded in a context of the author/artist. Personal history, experience, feelings, and attitude are rich sources for the creative meaning-making process. In the context of this research, participants are novices in new media making.
They are graduate students from different disciplines such as literature, art education, and communication, and are of different age groups and have different backgrounds. How each participant transforms their personal experiences, beliefs, and values into digital videos will be examined.

- **Viewing context:** Viewing context refers to where and how an artifact is placed for viewing. Barrett (2011) offers the example of the American flag to explain how viewing context in important for understanding meaning. The American flag in a window signifies a positive view of America, placing the same flag on the floor of an art gallery signifies an anti-American statement. This dissertation takes place in a mid-Western university graduate new media course classroom (where), and in the context of a liberal discussion atmosphere among peers (how) rather than a professional new media art class. This viewing context will influence how students convey meanings in their digital videos, and how the audience (class peers) attributes meanings to these digital videos.

- **Social and cultural context:** where and when digital videos are created will add social and cultural context to the meanings of digital videos. This research project analyzes research participants who are in the same classroom at the same time. Although students come from varied backgrounds, they have social and cultural cues that occur in the classroom and each of them want to present.

  I have discussed that digital video making in art education should consider both narrative aspects and art aspects in order to help students create artistic and creative digital stories. Digital video making should involve techniques such as narrative picturing, the deliberate process of video making, understanding the form and meanings
of digital video, artistic strategies and meaningful story making. The expressive and functional possibilities of video making can be achieved when art educators examine the interrelated diverse components of digital video making.

I have argued that making artistic digital videos involves understanding processes, narrative properties and artistic media, and post-modern artistic strategies, all of which help students construct meanings from the beginning through the completion. Digital video should be structured systemically, economically and coherently, and should include a clear structure that represent time, events and sequence in order to create meaningful storytelling. Sequence in a story should be purposefully well organized with an attention to flow and pacing, and should move from part to part with consideration to how a movie conveys either orientation or disorientation. Either the object or the characters in a story should provide a thread that ties together the events and happenings in a story. In a story, the teller should convey the information about the characters by means of description and through their actions, speech or thoughts, and by making use of an original voice and perspective in a creative manner. The content also should be systematic and have logical connections so as to best convey the meaning of the story. Narrative stories should carry meaning and cultural value by implicitly and explicitly encoding meaning through the actions of the characters. Digital stories are works of art, and should be constructed using artistic strategies concerning both form (narrative properties and artistic properties of digital videos) and context.

2.5.6 Conclusion.

I have made analytical distinctions between video making process, artistic strategies of digital video, narrative properties of digital videos, post-modern art making
strategies, and the context and meanings of digital video. I have explained each of these facets in a separate section for practical purposes. It is important to note that different aspects of digital video making merge inseparably at times in a video making pedagogy. Pedagogical principles suggested here are interdependent to each other, and they can be used to construct meaningful communication using digital videos that are also works of art. We will return to these multiple facets, stages, strategies and considerations in chapter 4 in my analysis of interviews and selected digital video productions.

I have also reviewed varying definitional claims regarding narrative and digital video productions as posited by media scholars, art educators and film critics. Boughton (2004) states that students need to know how to construct, select, edit, and present visual images using multiple skills (Boughton’s term is *hybrid practice*) in contemporary art classrooms. I believe there is a need for a more comprehensive digital video-making curriculum as a hybrid practice. I want to provide a framework that can be used as a beginning point for making video making. Video making should be part of an art education curriculum that engages and empowers students. This is based on reviews of a wide range of literature about the technical, theoretical, and artistic perspectives of digital video making.

As I have developed this conceptual framework for creating digital storytelling in the field of art education, and as my data analysis progresses, I anticipate making additions to, and modifications of, this initial tentative conceptual framework. According to Gude (2007), a quality art curriculum enhances students' abilities to engage, to analyze, to apprehend, to make, and to enjoy through the meaning-making process.
Narrative video production is an art form, and using appropriate artistic strategies allows students to express a wide range of meanings that draw upon their personal/social/cultural contexts. Understanding both the form and meanings aspects of narrative video production allows viewers to appreciate videos, and allows creators to create powerful multi-modal stories. Post-modern art making strategies reviewed previously are important concepts in the meaningful construction and creation of digital videos as a contemporary art form. All four aspects – narrative properties, artistic aspects through media components (image, sound, words), artistic strategies, and process - are actually integrated and embedded in each other. I attempted to begin separating them into conceptual categories for analysis and understanding. In an actual digital video making process, these aspects do not occur in isolation from each other, and we are not able to separate them here. As described from the previous section, meanings are different than a story. Story concerns subject matter, events, characters, actions unfolding over time. Meanings are intended, inferred, direct, latent understandings of the human condition that are expressed through the particular contexts of the story being told. Meanings will be examined using four different contexts: viewing, internal, artist, and social-cultural context.

As regards the artistic properties of digital video, color, time, image, video footage, word and sound will be taken into consideration. As regards the narrative properties, character/actor, time, point of view/narrative voice, sequential events and actions, canonical frame of reference, scene/setting, and audience perspective will be taken into consideration. Artistic strategies for creating digital videos involve appropriation, re-formatting/Re-contextualizing, adapting literary devices, collage. These
three facets of digital video production are interrelated and inform each other. For example, a student can choose a template, overlay certain kinds of color schemes and transitions, and juxtapose images with sounds based on how a story unfolds in an artistic manner. Art educators need to educate students about all aspects with respect to digital storytelling, and link all these aspects in ways that create intended meanings in particular digital video productions.
Chapter Three

Methodology

Throughout the intensive period of data collection and data analysis, I had the opportunity to experience multiple perspectives and valuable learning moments, which brought both enjoyment and challenges. Each day began with a catalyst of engagement and ended with reflection. I have long valued the extended work periods available in the digital video making classroom, in which individual learners can explore their own creative and learning processes. While collecting data, I enjoyed getting to know the participants, Bob and Sara, and growing to appreciate their own rhythms on the digital video making journey. By the end of my qualitative data analysis, I was gratified to realize that I had become more conscious of noticing multiple dimensions of individual learning journeys, as well as the digital video medium. To protect the anonymity of the participants, the names used in this study, including those of teachers, schools, and students, are pseudonyms in this research.

3.1 Methodology Overview

I believe that digital storytelling through narrative video production is a beneficial practice that translates an individual’s synthesis of human experiences, memories, and aspirations into visual metaphors by means of multi-media tools, combining music, video and still images with an individual’s creative voice. I also maintain that narrative video production has tremendous potential to engage the viewing audience, thus helping both the creators and spectators of the videos to discover the power of creative visual communication. My initial motivation for undertaking this study was to determine how I could improve and expand art practices in this medium, and how I could then apply that
knowledge to the practice of teaching art through designing and implementing digital video productions.

This research involved my own journey towards creating narrative video production and provides a unique insider look at the process.

My primary research question was:

What issues regarding the artistic, conceptual, and technical aspects of digital storytelling do three learners have when they learn to create digital stories?

In order to answer this question, I looked at what sort of issues the individuals had through the creative process of narrative video production. I examined in detail how these individuals composed, revised, manipulated, and edited digital videos, and how their artistic strategies, media components, and technical considerations contributed to the aesthetic qualities and meanings of their video production. I considered content, function, motivation, techniques, aesthetic qualities, process, and related facets of narrative video making. This research provides an introduction to the basic practices of digital video production, with an emphasis on the building of narrative, planning of action, and sequencing of imagery, texts, and sound. I considered these practices in relation to each individual’s learning experience and learning processes regarding digital video creation. Chapter Three provides a detailed description of the researcher, the study participants, my recruitment processes, data collection, data analysis, and research procedures.

3.2 About the Researcher

This section seeks to help readers understand my research intentions, including how I first became interested in digital storytelling in art education and why I chose
digital video making as my dissertation topic. It is necessary then, to acknowledge events and experiences in my life, which I feel influenced my academic development.

3.2.1 Experiencing rapid digital technology development.

In 1998 I enrolled in college in order to become a teacher majoring in elementary education. In the late 1990s, during the time I was an undergraduate student, I observed how pervasive digital technology was increasingly becoming a technology we depended upon for our daily communication needs. The students of my generation were exposed to a technological atmosphere unavailable only three years before. Instead of hand written papers, professors required students to use MS Word. Colleges and universities began to incorporate courses where students learned to use the internet as a resource and where students created websites and or web pages. To satisfy students’ needs, computer labs emerged almost overnight at colleges and universities. Fortunately, I was part of the generation where personalized technology, in its earlier forms, was quickly adapted into all parts of our lives. However, I remember there was much less data found in virtual space than is currently available. Software for creating web pages and editing graphics were quite complicated and less functional than they are today. In spite of all the problems and issues in using the newer technologies, they became more and more convenient to use. I found it difficult to imagine how college students could write fifteen-page papers by hand, or how people could use the 35 mm film process for photography and not digital cameras.

Digital technology improved rapidly during my college years. By the time I became a teacher, the Internet became an endless ocean filling with information, and a wide variety of software programs became easier to use and more functional. The years
2002 through 2004 I was an elementary school teacher in a classroom where computer and other technologies were integrated into my instruction. My 11 year-old students were members of what many researchers call the ‘digital generation,’ who had been born in a digitized environment, and had been exposed to digital technology from birth. They did their homework using the Internet, and were highly skilled and comfortable using computers. Students were often technologically savvier than many of their teachers, and so, the government offered computer training for teachers who were uncomfortable with technology. I was a young teacher who often wound up helping older teachers who were unfamiliar with computers. Although the elementary school where I worked had a computer lab, this computer lab was usually reserved for computer education courses taught by teachers who specialized in technology. At that time, the school’s computer education usually involved searching for information on the web, understanding computer operating systems, using Excel, learning PowerPoint and practicing MS Word. Computers were primarily used for educational research instead of the production of creative works. However, as a young teacher, I did not want to use computers simply for typing, finding information or for mathematical purposes. I attempted to use simple graphic software programs for drawing and editing pictures with my students whenever the computer lab was available. My students and I were new at using graphic software, and it turned out to be a fun and useful experience in creativity. I remember that a student who did not like art classes said that he enjoyed editing pictures during these activities because it allowed for dramatic changes to manifest instantly. During these computer art experiences I realized that digital technology might be used for the purpose of learning/teaching in art education. I hoped to be able to spend more time learning about,
and exploring, new software programs as a medium used for artistic purposes with my students.

During the time I taught in a Korean elementary classroom I completed my master’s program in fine art education for elementary schools in Korea. After completing this degree, I came to the United States to obtain another master’s degree in Harvard’s “Arts in Education” program. There I became more interested in ways that the newer technologies could be used in creating art and how the aesthetic experiences might be more meaningful to students. After finishing at Harvard, I was convinced that digital art making would be a topic I could investigate further and possibly use for my doctoral research requirements.

Before beginning my Ph.D. journey at the University of Illinois, I taught preservice teacher education students at my undergraduate college in Korea for one year. Although I believed that the college’s curriculum should have been developing and evolving to incorporate newer technologies and more current research, it was evident that little real change had occurred in the art education courses I was responsible for teaching. Technology-related courses were usually found in the field of media education or in technology education, and so there were no technology classes offered in the art education curriculum. Although art education seeks to improve artistic sensibilities and aesthetic qualities through practices based in digital technology, the art students still believed that artistic practices involving digital technology were exceedingly complicated and were designated for media professionals. During the time I taught these art classes, I wondered how the educational perspectives in media education, technology education
and art education might learn from each other through the adoption of more expansive views regarding the use of digital technology.

**3.2.2 Becoming a researcher who is interested in digital storytelling.**

I returned to the United States to attend the University of Illinois enrolled in the in art education doctoral program. As a doctoral student, I was concerned with facilitating artistic practices through the use of digital technology. I was also more concerned with the value of creating art productions than with art appreciation. Integral to this was my interest in uncovering thoughts, feelings and stories through artistic practices.

Although I am thousands of miles from Korea, digital technology allows me to connect with my friends and relatives in Korea and other parts of the globe, using e-mail, Facebook, and the many other digital ways of sharing found on the Internet. These activities located on the Internet accelerated my growth in the use of the available technologies. For instance, an influential experience during my dissertation journey occurred when I used SNS websites and YouTube. SNS websites and video sharing websites such as YouTube provided opportunities to watch, and be amazed by, digital videos produced by ordinary people. They did not have the production quality of movies produced by the experts in Hollywood, but were nevertheless powerful and unique. As recently as five years ago, creating and sharing digital videos were activities reserved for media professionals. It is now the case where high school students, and even elementary school students, can create digital videos and share their stories. Amateurs can now readily become video authors by using the various digital technologies. Contemplating my past experiences with digital technology and the influence on my own ideas of art creation, I now see digital video creations from a new perspective. From this new
perspective, I see my previous technology-related teaching and learning experiences as steps in the development of my interest in the educational uses of digital videos.

Digital video making is my research topic, and I want to affirm the educational potentialities of digital storytelling through digital video making. The construction of digital video productions can be both inspiring and challenging. Different people have different viewpoints regarding how to look at, shoot, and construct meanings. As in other art mediums, when using digital technology each individual’s mind works in a uniquely individual manner, creating uniquely powerful multimedia stories. I expanded my definition of what it means to create digital videos as a means of sharing digital stories. I decided to also explore how digital storytelling facilitates the creation of meaningful content and aesthetic art production. I see digital videos as meaningful aesthetic objects rather than as objects that only require technical skills to create. I integrate my previous education, art and digital experiences and research interests as I conduct this research. By commencing this research on digital storytelling, I hope to be contributing to the adoption and integration of digital technology into art education.

3.3 Research Site Information: Digital Video Making Classroom

According to Stake (1995), the case is “a specific, a complex, functioning thing” as well as “a bounded system, drawing attention to it as an object rather than a process,” (p. 2). Merriam (1998) asserted that the selection of the case is crucial: “the single most defining thing of case study research lies in delimiting the object of study, the case” (p. 27).

Since determining the selection criteria is essential in choosing the people or site to be studied (Merriam, 1998). I narrowed down my research site options using several
criteria. Research sites had to: (a) be available during the proposed data collection period; (b) involve study participants whose participation in my research project was voluntary; and (c) involve a narrative video production curriculum in an intensive and competent manner.

Offered by a university located in the Midwestern United States, the digital video-making course in this study was one of several video production courses for graduate students from various disciplines across campus, for whom newer media technology may have been unfamiliar territory. Since this is a fifteen-week course, the goal is not for students to become professional Hollywood filmmakers. Rather, this class was designed to foster creative art making or creative writing through simple digital movie making tools such as smart phones, digital cameras, digital camcorders, iMovie, Windows Movie Maker, and Final Cut Pro.

The instructor of the course, John, held a master’s degree in photography and identified himself as a visual artist and writer. John was an initial designer of the digital video production course and had been developing it since 2005. The course format evolved over time, rather than remaining fixed to its initial version; over the course of seven years, John worked with many teaching assistants, each of whom contributed to the curriculum of the course.
Table 5

Basic Structure of the Course (Recreated from the Course Website)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1-5</td>
<td>Module 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some basics and introductions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mac laptops, electronic journals, camcorders, iMovie. Literacy, visual literacy, semiotics (remember, basic). Thinking, creating, making. Seeing, hearing, paying attention. Video as a language for expression and communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 6-9</td>
<td>Module 02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video as a research tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Researching and exploring, hunting and gathering. The art of the interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making direct contact with your subject. Improvisation (being prepared, but thinking on your feet) and rehearsal (rough cuts and multiple drafts).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rehearsing effective creative video production: pre-production (reflecting, brainstorming, conceptualizing, proposals, storyboards, shot lists), production (logging raw footage, paper edits, rough cuts), and post-production (critique, analysis, more reflection, finding an audience).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 10-15</td>
<td>Module 03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This I believe Manifestos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-reflection and self-knowledge. Transforming the personal into the social. Using your values as a compass to identify a subject. Engaging the world, and ideas that matter. Becoming a sophisticated media author: using everything you have learned about video to make a visual argument that is clear, compelling, and memorable. Becoming a sophisticated media consumer: reflecting on, and analyzing how, we read and digest media everyday.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This class had its own website, rich with information regarding the history of the course, as well as its outline, syllabus, curriculum, instructor information, and a gallery for video examples. Students taking the course could search for information regarding the basic content, structure, and relevant information of this course. In addition, each student was required to keep an electronic journal via the blogging service of his/her choice, in which the students could publish their course assignments, including journals,
storyboards, and videos. The students’ journals were linked to the class website and were accessible to the instructor and all the students in the class, so they could communicate and share their productions throughout the semester. Thus, the course website and electronic journals functioned as individual constructive learning tools as well as socially communicative tools for the students, supporting idea generation and providing students with different perspectives about their course assignments. Access to individual electronic journals especially served as a good external source for students to counter-check the validity of their learning experiences.

As we can see from the table 4, this class consists of three different modules focusing on different objectives and activities in a semester. In Module 1, students were asked to create a one-minute video exploring everyday rituals. For this project, students were not asked to convey a narrative story; rather they were asked to focus on awakening visual-auditory senses, exploring reflective moments of their daily lives, and experimenting with the repetition and ordering of images with their cameras and editing software. In Module 2, students were asked to select a person or topic from their daily lives that they wanted to research. The topic had to be intriguing enough to inspire a three- to five-minute documentary. For this project, students conducted the interviews with their subjects, rehearsed their rough cuts to get peer feedback, and then showed their final project to the viewers (their classmates). Module 3 was designed to identify a social issue with strong ties to the students’ values and inspiring manifestos. Students were required to tell their manifestos in module 3. Students were expected to build on the learning experiences previously explored and rehearsed in the first two modules, creating another three- to five-minute digital story.
I chose this course for my site because of its use of digital video-making to explore the challenges of thinking creatively and critically, while also exploring the pleasures and perils of composing and communicating ideas that matter. Students in the class were expected to learn how to take an idea and develop it into a meaningful digital visual story using their theoretical knowledge and practical experience, and engage in the processes of shot selection and editing while producing creative and enjoyable visual media. The students were asked to apply their knowledge through writing, planning and producing short narrative video productions. Although the course description for this class did not directly indicate that digital narrative creation was an integral part of the course, I considered this site to be a reasonable location for my research because this course involved teaching and learning the characteristics of digital stories in a creative, critical, and reflective manner.

3.4 Recruitment and Research Participants

In order to recruit the other two participants, I filed the appropriate forms with the Human Subjects Research Institutional Review Board (IRB) at my university and contacted the instructor of the focal course, John, via email in order to inquire about the class schedule and the content of the course. The instructor gave approval both for my participation in the course and my use of the course as the site for this research, but he asked me to wait until the course was over to interview the focal students. With the instructor’s approval, I introduced my study to the students in class and asked for volunteer participants. I described the purpose of the research, the observation times, and the interview process, after which I distributed consent forms to the students who volunteered to participate, as well as to the teacher participant, in accordance with IRB
requirements. I notified students that four students volunteered to participate in my study, and I invited two of them to be participants at the end of the semester. I chose these two students with an eye toward maintaining some variety among all three participants (including the researcher), in terms of background, age, gender, and style of video making. There were three participants in this study: the researcher, as a participant observer enrolled in the digital video production course, and two additional focal students (Bob and Sara) enrolled in the same course at the same time.

Table 6
Research Participant Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Researcher (JiYeon)</th>
<th>Bob</th>
<th>Sara</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age and Gender</td>
<td>Early 30s, Female</td>
<td>Late 50s, Male</td>
<td>Mid 20s, Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first participant was the researcher, myself, a Korean/Asian woman with background in Art education. I was new to the art of digital video making, although I was comfortable with digital technology. The first focal student chosen was Bob, a white American male in his late 50s with an interdisciplinary background in technology, art, and music. The other focal student was Sara, a white American female painter in her mid-20s who was exploring her artistic ability through digital video making in the focal class. Not only were these participants representative of different backgrounds, age groups, genders, and video making styles, but also the video projects they created during the semester were intriguing to me. In addition, these students were positive about my research, and they were available for interviews the following semester.

3.5 Collecting Data From Multiple Sources

I collected data that were created by myself and students who signed the IRB forms. Data from focal study participants provided rich information that can be used to describe visual narrative processes. Based on the essence of grounded theory by Glaser and Strauss (1967), I continuously moved between data collection and data analysis. I collected this case study data from multiple sources, including classroom observation notes, and reflection journals; the other two participants’ electronic journals; interviews with the study participants; all three participants’ video samples, and curricular materials and events. I collected data via participant observation, interviews, and visual and document artifacts. The visual artifacts consisted of copies of all three participants’ video productions and the course instructional resources. Document artifacts included curriculum descriptions, course website, and transcripts of selected class activity. Figure 1 details the data collection timeline.
I used qualitative investigation primarily as an inductive approach involving participant observations, open-ended interviews, and artifact analysis. Research took place from September, 2010 through December, 2011. Participant observation was conducted from September, 2010 until December, 2010. I generated the initial conceptual framework to understand the dimensions of video making based on the relevant literature and my participant observation from January 2011 until June 2011. Informed by participant observation and the initial conceptual framework, I conducted interviews, collected video samples, and analyzed the collected data thoroughly.

### 3.5.1 Participant Observation.

This research journey started with a semester-long experience of the researcher’s participant observation data and video samples through the researcher’s reflective journals and field notes, which sharpened my focus on digital storytelling learning. In all, my observation file consisted of my reflective journal and class field notes. The reflective
journal entries included references to my own ongoing autobiographical video making process, as well as comments and observations related to course activities.

3.5.1.1 Learning through participant observation. According to Spradley (1980), the participant observer needs to engage in activities appropriate to the case and observe the activities, people, interactions and physical aspects of the case. After setting up selection criteria for finding the research site and recruiting study participants, I did participant observation and actively participated in all class activities and took observational field notes as a participant observer. This class met once a week for 15 weeks from September 2010 until December 2010. The periods of personal observation about my own video making took place over the course of about fifteen weeks, for three hours per week, totaling approximately fifty hours. I initially adopted a participant observation approach in order to fully articulate the interactions and dynamics that were embedded in the narrative video-making process.

I decided to use participant observation because the researcher herself is the most important instrument in autobiographic qualitative inquiry (Maxwell, 2005). My personal experiences served as primary data that used as the basis for further analysis and investigation. In participant observation, a researcher should be aware that she/he will be engaging in multiple roles and relationships which evolve over time, and new issues may arise over the course of the study as a result (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). I was both researcher and a participant in this study, and I fully experienced the process of narrative video production. My learning experience in this video-making course included examination of literature, media, and productions as a researcher as well as knowledge obtained during the process of media production as a research participant over the course
of the entire semester. Although too much involvement of the researcher in her case can be problematic (Bresler, 1996), the influence of the researcher’s previous experience on her perception of the cases is inevitable, whether she takes participant or non-participant methods (Bresler, 1996; Bogdan, & Biklen, 2007).

I also explored both the theory and practice of narrative video production in order to create digital videos in a creative and reflective manner. Many qualitative researchers (Bogdan, & Biklen, 2007; Maxwell, 2005; Spradley, 1980) have cited activities such as watching, chatting, experiencing, comparing and contrasting in a reflective and critical way as effective ways to collect data. I watched and experienced that Students shared their other students’ learning process through rough-cut rehearsal, peer and instructor feedback on works-in-progress, and successive and incremental refinement during the class sessions.

Regarding specifically my own video creation process, I used an observation method based on noticing and recording, in order to understand how I was developing narratives in video making. I described and interpreted how the course objectives, interactions among students, course activities, and conversations impacted my work as a video producer. Therefore, I fully experienced and participated all class activities. Throughout the Fall 2010 semester, as a full credit student in this course, I learned how to construct narrative video productions aesthetically, reflectively and technically. I kept reflective journals along with field notes and absorbed benefits of each week’s activity and readings.

3.5.1.2 Reflection of participant observation. My experiences are not representative of all of the students in the general video making class. Overall, I had long
enjoyed the demonstration of my own creative process through digital storytelling. I enjoyed being a learner and playing a researcher in this collaborative learning class. However, it was a challenging experience, because I needed to be careful to be reflective throughout the semester. Through participant observation, my objective was to capture a sense of the perspectives of the participants in the class. Therefore, I attended every class session and carefully documented and audio-recorded: a) class interactions of the study participants, b) the class activity of each student, c) the times of observation, d) any purposes associated with the behavior of the study participants, and e) students’ emotions. I took notes and kept a dated electronic journal, including the space and the furniture arrangement; behaviors and events as they unfolded; what I did and when; and my feelings, hunches, questions, and commentary about everything I noted. These examples are elaborated in case report 1 in Chapter 3.

I usually worked to be creative and interpretive in my reflections as well as my video making, and I learned to appreciate my colleagues’ digital video making journeys. I experienced hands-on practice in the planning, acquisition and manipulation of sound, and video with an emphasis on preproduction planning for the purpose of achieving a desired communication goal. I reflected upon my own creative process, and took notes. Throughout a semester, I created my video pieces and observed that students in this class worked with audio and visual media, including live and edited videos. Individual learners in this class were able to brainstorm and pursue numerous projects in the same setting. I watched how my classmates explored their video making journeys, put it through their own filter, and processed their experiences in their own way. Acknowledging variations helped me to cherish the essence of the digital video making experience.
Through the participant observation process, my views on digital video making changed dramatically. Digital video making is not elaborating a certain story with advanced digital technologies. It is demonstrating individual creative thought process and expressions. Some of the experiences that altered my views were: going through the class curriculum as a participant as well as a researcher, meditating on my own creative process of video making, viewing other learners being unique and individualized in their video creations, and hearing and sharing other learners’ creative video samples in class.

3.5.2 Generating multi-dimensional conceptual frameworks.

A conceptual framework is described as a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation (Reichel & Ramey, 1987). To ground my own research, I aimed to present a conceptual framework that would relate media education, art education, and film theory with the digital storytelling process. Conceptual frameworks need to be developed in the early stages of a study, since they guide participant interviews as well as data analysis. This section reflects my thoughts about why my conceptual framework was constructed and how it was useful as a research tool in my particular study. The objective of the present section, however, is not to develop a comprehensive framework. The contribution of this section is to introduce a framework for the systematic description of video samples, to be used in the interview design.

3.5.2.1 Stipulating a multi-dimensional conceptual framework. In order to understand the complexity of digital video and its creative process, I began by consulting the literature to frame the key elements in understanding digital video making, after conducting participant observation. The bodies of literature surrounding contemporary
education, filmmaking, art education, and digital storytelling in Chapter Two constructed my knowledge. In order to provide sufficient guidelines for my research, I developed a framework juxtaposing the key dimensions of digital video making. This was a significant step forward in organizing my thinking and interpretation. As a tool for my doctoral research, this conceptual framework also provided reference points back to the literature, assisted me in making meaning of my data, and provided a structured approach for communicating my findings. After collecting a large and varied set of dimensions from the literature, I prioritized, classified, and grouped key elements together. The full list that emerged was previously discussed in detail in Chapter Two. I conceptualized four dimensions in order to easily understand and apply the framework to actual digital storytelling.

The process of deriving the framework provided a broad scope for conceptualizing my research and helped me link interpretations and data so that deeper understandings could be revealed. Procedurally, I approached my data analysis with an open mind but acknowledged my sensitivity towards the data clearly demonstrating issues and concepts, which were highlighted in the conceptual framework.

3.5.2.2 Presenting multi-dimensional conceptual framework: Accordingly, I developed the following conceptual framework (See Table 7) that identifies key dimensions of video making experiences embedded within creative process of digital video making. The framework is developed around four spheres linking together a number of concepts. This framework was conceptually aligned with the methodology and literature driving the research so it provided appropriate backbone for this
dissertation. Once the data analysis was completed, this framework is modified to improve the clarity and suitability.

Table 7

Multi-dimensional Conceptual Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process of digital video making</th>
<th>Properties of Narrative in Film/Video</th>
<th>Media Components of Film/Video</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Pre-production: Planning, Research, and Storyboarding.</td>
<td>• Teller: point of view/narrative voice</td>
<td>• Images: Moving images and still images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Production: The actual shooting and recording.</td>
<td>• Subject Matter: character/actor, sequential events and actions, setting</td>
<td>color and light, still shot and framing technique, camera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Post-production: Editing, Formatting, Exporting, Publishing (everything between production and publishing the final master copy)</td>
<td>• Time and Sequence</td>
<td>movements, depth of field, point of view, focus, transitions and effects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Sounds: Voice-over narration, recorded sounds, sounds created artificially on a computer, sounds obtained from the Web, downloaded music, and original music recorded in the real world, Pace and Tone
• Words/Texts: The expressive qualities of words can be achieved by manipulating words in different fonts or styles. (font color, font face, pace and tone, boldface, italic, simple, and complex)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-modern and Contemporary Art Practices and Strategies</th>
<th>Collage/Juxtaposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hybridization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Re-formatting/Re-contextualizing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adapting literary devices (Metaphor, Symbolism, Parody/Irony, Narrative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appropriation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Representation (Style, degrees of realism and abstraction)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5.3 Interviews with Bob and Sara.

Interview data constituted a large portion of the research data, along with my participant observation and my analysis of research participants’ video productions. Although the initial data for this case study was derived from the researcher (myself), I conducted two more case studies on two focal students, in order to better investigate my research questions. I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with the two other focal students after they had completed the course. I described and analyzed the two additional participants’ interviews and their video productions. These two cases were not ancillary; rather, all three cases were primary cases contributing to answering the research questions in this dissertation.

I conducted three interviews with Bob and Sara, for a total of six interviews. Individual interviews lasted approximately one hour, so the total amount of time spent interviewing each student was approximately three hours. In accordance with IRB regulations, I asked each interview participant on audiotape for their permission to record and transcribe their answers. After collecting their interview consent forms, I also assured them that their identities would be confidential. Both Bob and Sara were informed that they had the right to refuse to answer any questions they did not want to answer. They were also informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Both Bob and Sara were interviewed when they were available. (Bob: Aug, 20, 2011, Oct, 15, 2011, Nov, 3, 2011; Sara: Aug, 22, 2011, Oct, 20, 2011, Nov, 1, 2011)

3.5.3.1 Sharing and Communicating with Bob and Sara. Interviews were an important source of data in this research, functioning as purposeful conversations between the researcher and the participants (Morgan, 1997; Stake, 1995; Patton, 2002) to
elicit information and illustrate the context of the participants (Spradley, 1979). The initial interviews were for the purpose of understanding the backgrounds of the students and their perceptions about art and technology. I contacted Bob and Sara to do the participant interviews, and I explained the research purpose, scheduled interview times, and conducted and recorded face to face interviews. Patton (2002) explains that qualitative research interviews can “capture how those being interviewed view their world, to learn their terminology and judgment, and to capture the complexities of their individual perceptions and experiences” (p. 348). I asked both of them to share their interests and their for the projects that they had completed in the course. I began with general questions about class activities and moved on to more specific questions about their videos, in an attempt to uncover the individual learner’s learning issues during the video making practices from the perspective of the learners, and do so in their own words.

My principal methods of interviewing involved semi-structured and naturalistic in-depth interviews. The largest part of the semi-structured interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time (Merriam, 1998). Usually specific information is desired from all the respondents, in which case there is a highly structured section to the interview. I developed interview questions for the research participants that emerged from the researcher’s autobiographical video making experiences as well as the literature review. Initial categories and themes regarding digital video making learning issues from the participant observation data analysis allowed me to generate sample questions. Because I had specific research questions that I wanted to explore, I had a preliminary set
of questions (see Table 8).

Table 8

Sample Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Follow-up questions</th>
<th>Research interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What does art, technology mean to you?</td>
<td>How did you learn technology? What are your art related experiences? Can you introduce yourself briefly?</td>
<td>Learner’s background Understandings about art and technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did you take this class?</td>
<td>What did you hear about this class before taking it? Why did you decide to take the this class? Do you have any movie-making or digital technology related background?</td>
<td>Motivations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is this video project about?</td>
<td>Why did you choose this issue/topic/idea? How does it reflect a personal interest, belief, concern, or question? Is there a statement you wish to make? What are your hesitations, challenges and anxieties about this project? What inspired your topic or subject matter? What did you want to elicit or discover in this video, what were your intentions?</td>
<td>Narrative properties of digital video Motivations Research and Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was your creative process of digital video making?</td>
<td>Can you share your storyboard templates? Are there particular shots that you feel particularly excited about? How did you composite and form this piece? How are you feeling about the project so far? What have you learned? Can you review and reflect your visualization process? Are there any particular ideas or plans that have shifted from original plan? How do you decide what footage to use and what to exclude? What are your criteria? Why were you making particular choices?</td>
<td>Reflection on their videos Decision-making process Creative process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Table 8 (cont.)</td>
<td>Table 8 (cont.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you describe how the piece unfolded?</td>
<td>What are your thoughts about specific locations, camera angles, or lighting? What types of messages did you try to convey in your artwork?</td>
<td>Meanings of digital video Values of digital video Purposes of digital video Reflection on their videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What types of footage/images did you use to communicate your message? How are all visual aspects and audio assembled, accessed, and/or considered in this particular piece? Can you describe the narrative structure in the sequence? Can you summarize and describe the piece in your own words?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were you communicating clearly to your audience?</td>
<td>What did you consider regarding audience when making this project? Why were your original intentions? What did you try to achieve in the projects What were the audience responses to the projects and How did you feel about the students’ learning outcomes? What kind of changes might you make next time?</td>
<td>Student understanding of the relationship between filmmakers and audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did you learn from this class and How did you experience the course?</td>
<td>Could you describe your own creative process and working strategies to create your videos developed throughout the semester? How did you go through the course and course assignment? Please share your reflection about the class curriculum, peer interaction, and the instructor How did your digital video-making journey begin, progress and end throughout the semester? What was the most difficult thing when you were doing the projects? Do you think things you have learned from this class will be helpful in your future?</td>
<td>Learning experiences with digital video making Individual learning experiences in a same setting Understandings and implications of digital video making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What were your working strategies during video making?</td>
<td>How did you begin assembling the shots you wanted to use? How did you trim clips, audio, and transitions? How did you use editing software? What are you thoughts about how the raw footage can be edited to convey your intent? What would be the uniqueness of your digital stories?</td>
<td>Reflections on their learning outcomes Craftsmanship Artistic practices and Strategies Techniques</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Initially, I gathered information about the participants’ backgrounds and their perceptions about art and technology. I asked them to talk about their interests and expectations regarding the projects they had completed in the course. In addition, I asked each student specific questions about their learning experiences and creative processes during their video production.

As the interview process progressed, emerging issues and questions were identified and pursued, depending on the responses of individual participants. Each subsequent interview was conducted based on the previous interview responses of my participants. Therefore, in-depth interviews were good complementary data to semi-structured interviews in my study. An in-depth interview “aims to explore the contextual boundaries of that experience or perception, to uncover what is usually hidden from ordinary view or reflection or to penetrate to more reflective understandings about the nature of that experience” (Johnson, 2002, p. 106). In this type of interview, either all of the questions are more flexibly worded, or the interview is a mix of more and less structured questions. I also asked follow-up questions to elicit in-depth information from the interviewees. This approach encouraged participants to share their unique individualized learning experiences and creative processes.

Since the purpose of interviews in qualitative case studies is “not to get simple yes and no answers but a description of an episode, a linkage, an explanation” (Stake, 1995, p. 64), I also asked the students specific questions about their learning experiences and creative processes during their expectations video productions. I sought answers about how they created videos, how they conveyed stories visually through the use of digital technology, and how they were engaged during the video making process. I also asked
both Bob and Sara to explain their videos scene by scene as we watched them together, including music, texts, transitions and visuals, the shooting process, the difficulties they encountered, their original plans, and what they wanted to achieve. These interviews served as narrative descriptions of the participants’ work, which I could analyze to gain a better understanding about their narrative video making. I sought information about how they constructed their videos, what kinds of learning issues they went through, why they chose certain topics, styles, and working strategies, and how they visually represented their ideas in video format.

The interview data was supported by my participant observations and their video making samples. When the interviews were complete, my transcript file included the six interview transcripts, three with each of the two selected research participants, totaling approximately seven hours, as well as transcriptions of three selected class activities. I also collected copies of their video samples and journal entries.

Sharing and communicating with Bob and Sara allowed me to make meaningful connections between their creative processes and their videos. As my explorations spilled over into the interviews, I found myself on the path to observing the thought processes and learning issues embedded in each video. As our video learning stories emerged, reflecting our values, unique experiences became clear. Through the wonder, meditation, and reflection involved in the interview process, I was able to look into the different facets of each individual’s learning experiences.

3.5.3.2 Challenges and enjoyment of interviewing. It is important that interviewees feel comfortable, safe, and valued, rather than feeling like mere sources of
information. According to Spradley (1979), the researcher has opportunity to listen and show non-judgmental interest. The researcher also needs to repeat explanations about the interview and its purpose. The researcher should not probe informants, but instead needs to understand what informants say. Throughout the participant observation, I was able to build trust with the other two participants when we shared our videos as classmates. Since cooperation is based on mutual trust, I tried to allow the free flow of information without concern for mistakes.

As stated above, I conducted the interviews after the class had ended, as the course instructor had requested; I also needed to spend a semester building the conceptual framework. Since I conducted the interviews almost a semester after the class had ended, the research participants sometimes did not recall their experiences clearly or answer my questions in detail. I tried to take Bob and Sara through the course chronologically, by maintaining an eye-level point of view as we passed through the course together. I believed that the interviewer would be able to recall details more carefully in this way. I found the interview process to be challenging. Since interviews require a combination of skills, confidence, time, access, and support with live people, I was troubled when any one aspect was lacking, and I had to be extra attentive to the interviewees. Sometimes I couldn’t hear their descriptive answers to my questions, and sometimes the interviewees described unique ideas that were hard to grasp. At such moments, I speculated doubt and uncertainty of their answers by bringing my own reflective journey together. I heard the stories of my interviewees and integrated them into my own reflective journey. I started this research with my story, and my story was interwoven with Bob’s and Sara’s stories, with whom I felt fortunate to share stories. When I commenced the interviews, I
wanted to prove their relevant video making learning issues comparing to mine. At the close of interviews, I acknowledged that Bob and Sara were great digital storytellers who benefited from their unique creative processes and synthesized their own learning issues at this particular class.

3.5.4 Artifacts.

In addition to observation and interviews, I collected artifact data for this research project. The collection of artifact data includes documents, web content, and visual artifacts, and is a primary part of this qualitative research project (Hodder, 1994). Hodder (1994) argues that artifacts are “the intended and unintended residues of human activity, [and] give alternative insights into the ways in which people perceive and fashion their lives” (p. 304). Artistic creative video productions were a significant source of visual artifact data in this research project because art making is a “combination of intuition, subjectivity, and objectivity, which leads to insight and understanding” (Klenke, 2008, p. 261). Klenke (2008) emphasized the importance of visual artifacts in research as a complement to the document data. According to Wartrin (1999), visual data “seizes the fullness of the lived experience by describing, interpreting, creating, reconstituting, and revealing meaning” (p. 261, as cited in Klenke, 2008).

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55 Creative digital videos have become an art form, thanks in large part to Nam June Paik, whose work centered around the re-contextualization of digital media (http://www.paikstudios.com). Nam June Paik said, “The real issue is not to make another scientific toy, but how to humanize the technology and the electronic medium ... and also, stimulate viewers' fantasy to look for the new, imaginative and humanist ways of using technology” (Paik and Charlotte, 1978, p. 129). The medium of video within the field of Media Arts emphasizes interdisciplinary approaches to video-making as an art form as part of a larger investigation of moving image art (Hall & Fifer, 1990; Hanhardt, 1990; Paul, 2003). Since video art is shaped both by technological developments and the aesthetic influences of film, performance, sculpture, painting, installation, and musical composition, video art has a distinctive artistic quality (Hanhardt, 1990).
I only collected and analyzed only those videos that were created by two selected students who signed the IRB forms and took this course. I interviewed and transcribed the content of selected videos into descriptive text for data analysis purposes, when needed. Copies of the instructional materials used for the projects were used as resources for illustrating the site for this case study.

The video samples from all three focal study participants collected for this project provided rich information that could be used to understand visual narrative processes and individual’s learning experiences and issues. By the end of my data collection period, my artifact data included the student participants’ journal entries, relevant information from the class website, and copies of the video productions created by all three participants during the class.

These visual and document artifacts are pertinent to this research. They examined how digital storytelling occur from the viewpoints of actual digital storytelling beginners, using my own autobiographical documentation as data. They provided rich information that could be used to understand visual narrative processes and individual’s learning experiences and issues.

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

3.6.1 Process of data analysis.

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003), “By data analysis, we mean the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to enable you to come up with findings” (p. 147). Initially, I followed the basic data analysis procedures provided by Marshall and Rossman: a) organizing data, b) generating categories and themes, c) offering interpretations through
analytic memos, d) searching for alternative understandings, and f) writing the report to present the study (2006, p. 152). Since I collected many different kinds of raw data through the use of multiple methods, systematic data analysis was required. Using my main research question to inform this conceptual framework, I analyzed my field observation notes, interview transcripts, the participants’ personal reflective journals, and copies of visual artifacts collected during the course of this study. My conceptual framework functioned as both a guide and a checklist during my investigation into how the characteristics of digital storytelling get accomplished.

This section details how I organized and coded the data, as well as how I wrote up the theory and established trustworthiness. I analyzed the research data as follows (see Table 6): 1) analyzing autobiographical data and generating initial categories, 2) analyzing research participants’ data and refining categories, 3) coding and interpreting data, and 4) writing the theory. Throughout the data analysis process, I adapted constant comparison as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in order to code and subsequently compare codes to find consistencies and differences, always comparing new information to existing information. Thus, in this study, the processes of data coding and data analysis occurred almost simultaneously.
Table 9

Data Analysis Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Analyzing autobiographical data, generating initial categories, and writing up Case Report 1</td>
<td>Participant observation data: field notes, electronic journal, reflective journals, video productions, curriculum descriptions, course website</td>
<td>Video Production analysis informed by multi-dimensional conceptual framework and researcher’s interpretation Constant comparison (Glaser and Strauss 1967)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Analyzing research participants’ data and refining categories</td>
<td>Participants’ journals, interview transcripts, video productions</td>
<td>Video Production analysis informed by multi-dimensional conceptual framework, interviews, and researcher’s analysis Data sorting and categorizing (Bernard and Ryan 2010) Grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Coding and Interpreting data</td>
<td>Initial Case report 1, data from all three cases, coding book</td>
<td>Data sorting, categorizing, creation of coding book (Bernard and Ryan 2010) Constant comparison by Glaser and Strauss (1967)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Writing the theory, analyzing across cases</td>
<td>Initial Case report 1, Three case’s categorized data, Coding book, Coded data</td>
<td>Establishing trustworthiness by Lincoln and Guba (1981)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.6.2 Data organization and coding.

I analyzed all of the artifacts as thoroughly as possible, first reviewing scholarly thoughts about both the narrative and video creation in the literature review, and then attempting to understand how the characteristics of narrative video making, learning
issues of digital storytelling, and the video making process overlapped and interacted in each participant’s digital video making experience. Based on Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) constant comparison method, I started analyzing data as soon they were collected and then compared the analysis of one set of data with another.

3.6.2.1 Forming initial categories. First, I organized and analyzed the researcher’s participant observation data and videos. In this initial analysis, I attempted to recall relevant data from the class, including the physical setting, activities, my reflection, formal and informal interactions, and nonverbal communication, in a descriptive and reflective manner. This means that I attempted to recapture a sense of the classroom situation as a lived experience, including actions and conversations, in an accurate and detailed manner. I strived to reflect on initial and emergent questions and ideas in an insightful and informal manner. After thoroughly reviewing the autobiographical data, I examined my data for indicators of the categories identified. I reviewed all my data in order to gain a sense of regularities and patterns (Bogdan & Birken, 2003). Table 10, below shows the initial categories generated regarding the learning issues of digital video making.
Table 10
Initial Categories Based on Autobiographical Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology-related affordance</td>
<td>Technology issues regarding camera usability, compatibility, and limitations; as well as editing software usability, compatibility, and limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative process</td>
<td>Issues in time management, establishing priorities, and planning and improvising at the preproduction, production, and postproduction stages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video productions</td>
<td>Issues with story presentation, media components, artistic strategies, and the narrative properties of digital video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Pros and cons of peer feedback; issues associated with the creator’s intentions and expectations of the audience, as well as the creative tension between the filmmaker and audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners and learning experience</td>
<td>Issues associated with the course curriculum, atmosphere, and assignments; learner satisfaction; the role of the teacher; storyboarding; learners’ backgrounds; learners’ notions about art, technology, and video making; and learners’ reflections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on these initial categories, I developed interview questions and conducted interviews with the other two research participants. Due to the nature of the in-depth interviews, my questions were used to elicit responses and emerging stories, not for coding purposes. During the interview process, I discovered that the interviewees had answers to more questions than I was asking; that their answers sometimes confirmed the themes in my autobiographical data; and that they provided deep insights that I had previously not noticed. I transcribed the data and subjected it to open coding as it was collected. Emergent insights and categories from the preliminary data analysis guided my further data analysis.
3.6.2.2 Refining categories and coding. As data accumulated, I further analyzed both the new data from the research participants and the previous data from the participant researcher to refine the initial categories. These coding categories helped me sort the large quantity of data and became the theoretical scheme for explaining the similarities and differences in the collected data. Initially, concepts revealed in the data were assigned to the categories formulated from the researcher’s case report (as shown in Table 9). As I further read and reviewed the data, I looked for key issues and recurrent ideas that could become new categories. I noted these categories, attempting to describe and account for the issues and ideas in my data. During this process, several ideas, concepts, and terms emerged in addition to my initial coding structure. I removed irrelevant categories and integrated the details of the relevant data into an outline of interrelated categories (Bogdan & Birklen, 2003; Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). I tried to make sure that preliminary findings remained constant as further data was collected, and I integrated categories and their properties into core categories. I used the core categories not only to organize the raw data into meaningful patterns but also to create connections between categories. As the research progressed, I compared codes to find consistencies and differences that revealed emerging categories. I reviewed the categories as further data was collected, so as to ensure that the categories continued to represent the data. I divided the written data and organized it into further categories if they contributed to an understanding of the digital storytelling learning process and experience. Table 11, below, shows the resulting core categories and codes that comprised my codebook, which I used as a framework for analyzing and interpreting the data.
I decided to use multiple aspects of digital storytelling learning, including a) the purpose and meaning of digital video making, b) the individual creative process, c) technological learning issues, d) craftsmanship and satisfaction, and e) the creative tension between storyteller and audience as the major categories into which to organize the data.
I manipulated the textual data by cutting and sorting, as described by Bernard and Ryan (2010):

After the initial pawing and marking of text, cutting and sorting involves identifying quotes or expressions that seem somehow important and then arranging the quotes into piles of things that go together. (p. 63)

I cut and pasted the textual data, labeling its source and location. During the process I constantly asked the following questions: What is actually happening here?; What is this data about?; What category does this incident fit into?; and What properties does this category have? I rearranged all of my data into the five categories, constantly attempting to classify specific words, phrases, sentences, or whole paragraphs from the data and keeping track of emerging insights and use of methods.

3.6.3 Writing up the theory.

Writing up the theory for this dissertation consisted of two stages: writing the case reports and then comparing and contrasting the cases. First, I produced three different case reports: one of my own case as the participant researcher, and one of each of the other two selected learners. These case reports comprise Chapter 4, and they provide a detailed description of the setting in which the three different cases occurred and include analyses from multiple sources, including the researcher’s field notes, interviews, classroom observations, and copies of participants’ video productions. The case reports include extensive data based on the participants’ and researcher’s hands-on experiences. Each case report offers a brief informational background, a description of how the case subject experienced the video making process, and an analysis of each video created by the case subject.
The video analysis was based on the conceptual framework of digital video making created by the researcher in Chapter 2, considering aesthetic qualities in both the form and meaning of the video content. Thus, the videos were analyzed in terms of narrative, video-making process, and aesthetic strategies. These video analyses explain the uniqueness of individualized digital storytelling and also provide descriptions of each subject’s individual digital video learning experiences. They also explain how artistic strategies, media components, and technical considerations contributed to the aesthetic qualities and meanings of the video productions. In profiling the three study participants’ digital storytelling processes and their products, I was able to describe each individual’s insights into his/her own video productions and video making practices and then was able to consider the resulting impact on the teaching of narrative video production.

To protect the anonymity of the participants, the names used in this study, including those of teachers, schools, and students, are pseudonyms. Other personal identification information, such as age and education level, were indicated only where they seemed highly relevant to the data. For ease of reference, the pseudonyms of the interviewees and the interview transcript number were inserted at the end of each verbatim passage. For example, the notation (Bob, Interview 1) refers to a passage excerpted from the transcript of my first interview with Bob. Since I made week-long reflective journal entries over the course of the semester, a notation of (Journal, Week, 9) refers to a passage excerpted from the researcher’s reflective journal. Because the study participants only kept brief notes regarding their class activity, I referenced them as journal entries. (Bob, Journal) refers to a passage excerpted from Bob’s notes.
In sum, I made connections in my own video-making experience and interviews, and those connections contributed to the construction of framework for analyzing the data from the other two study participants. With the help of interview analysis, I was able to access the other learner’s experiences in the same educational setting of digital storytelling and make further connections among our three cases. Each case report offered a brief informational background of each case, a description of how each case subject experiences the video making process, and an analysis of each video created by each of the case subjects. Each video analysis was based on the conceptual framework of digital video making created by a researcher in Chapter 2, considering both aesthetic qualities in the forms and meanings of the video content. Thus, three different video analyzes described the narrative in each video, the process of the making of each video, and the aesthetic strategies used in creating each video. These video analyzes explained the uniqueness of individualized digital storytelling and also provided descriptions of each subject’s individual digital video learning experiences. It also explained how artistic strategies, media components, and technical considerations contributed to the aesthetic qualities and meanings of video production. In profiling three study participants’ digital storytelling processes and their products, I was able to describe each individual’s insights into their own video productions and video making practices and then was able to consider the teaching of narrative video productions.

Further analysis of these reports took the form of cross-case analysis. A cross-case analysis enables a researcher to “enhance generalizability” and “deepen understanding and explanation” across multiple cases (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 173). First, I made connections in my own video-making experience and interviews, and those
connections contributed to the construction of framework for analyzing the data from the other two study participants. With the help of interview analysis, I was able to access the other learners’ experiences in the same educational setting and make further connections among our three cases. The three case reports provided information about how the process of making a digital video impacted each participant’s notions of digital storytelling, and how the students in my study uniquely perceived their learning experiences in a classroom setting. Throughout the cross-case analysis, I identified similarities and differences across all three cases. Even though the participants’ backgrounds and interests differed from each other, an enthusiasm for telling meaningful stories through digital videos transcended those differences.

3.6.4 Establishing trustworthiness.

To address and establish trustworthiness, I performed data collection and analysis simultaneously, as described above, which can ensure trustworthiness by encouraging emergent insights and interpretation (Maxwell 2005).

3.6.4.1 Credibility. I also employed two techniques described by Lincoln and Guba (1985): prolonged engagement and member checking. Prolonged engagement entails spending sufficient time in the research setting to fully grasp the focal phenomenon as well as develop trust with the research participants (Lincoln & Guba 1985). I did participant observation for a semester and collected data over the course of one year, so I was able to spend adequate time observing the setting, experiencing the course, interacting with the research participants, and building rapport with the two focal research participants. When the research participants feel confident that their participation will not be used against them, that their identities will remain anonymous,
and that their answers will be honored, they are more likely to provide candid data for analysis.

Member checking allowed me to verify the accuracy of my research as well as to elaborate on this dissertation. I performed member checking during and after the writing process, in order to maintain constant contact with the study participants. For member checking purposes, each interviewee was given access to the transcripts of his/her interview to confirm his/her own statements. I also shared some of my interpretations from the written case reports with the participants in order to verify them.

3.6.4.2 Dependability. To ensure dependability, I initially created a conceptual framework as a research tool for both data collection and data analysis. I documented the research process throughout data collection and data analysis. After analyzing the three learners’ unique learning experiences, I revisited each case’s data and further interpreted it through cross-case discussion. I connected the issues that emerged from the cross-case discussion to meaningful learning theories, as well as finalizing the digital video making conceptual framework in Chapter Six.

3.6.4.3 Transferability and generalization. I analyzed three learners’ unique learning experiences, and utilized cross-case discussion to answer my research question, from which I was able to illuminate possible emergent learning issues embedded in the creative video making processes shared by the three learners. These generalized issues are further described along with findings in Chapter Six.

3.6.5 Summary.

The goal of the data analysis was to explore the manner in which the characteristics of and approaches to digital storytelling appear in the student videos
created in my research site. To accomplish this goal, I fractured the data and organized it into categories according to key concepts. I then coded the data in order to facilitate data comparison and analysis of the key concepts. When I was engaged in writing the reports, I attempted to connect the data into a meaningful coherent whole with explanatory power, and to develop the most appropriate interpretation of the data I had gathered. When I reported on the selected learners’ video making experiences, I anticipated finding some significant features of digital storytelling or learning issues that might ordinarily go unnoticed. I tried not to adhere strictly to predetermined ideas, but rather added to, or subtracted from, my initial understanding of the video making experience based on my own learning through participant observation.

3.7 Limitations and Validity

There are at least three potential threats to the validity of this qualitative research due to the nature of the limitations of this research technique.

1. Maxwell (1996) indicates that the accuracy and completeness of participant interviews could be a legitimate validity threat. I will maintain contact with the students and the teacher participant in order to verify the accuracy of information. Member check procedures will be conducted during the research process and after the research has been concluded will allow for valid data analysis.

2. I will collect and analyze only a limited amount of data because my sample consists of only one teacher and his two classes. In an attempt to remedy this problem, I will flexibly adapt relevant scholarly findings and theories in order to more
fully explain the data, and I will attempt to reflect on the many different types of data in an inductive fashion

3. My interpretation and analysis of qualitative research data will certainly be biased. I will attempt to explore and explain my own aesthetic orientation, my conceptualizations and interests that influence my analysis and interpretation of data.

4. I will attempt to observe data “as a whole to look at and listen to its overtones and subtleties to trust your feelings and impressions and go through the evidence with specific questions” (Klenke, 2008, p. 270). Colliers (2002) argued that visual analysis is a complex process. I will keep in mind that visual analysis requires careful and methodological checking and double-checking.
Chapter Four

Three Case Reports: Three Learner’s Video Making Stories

I chose a graduate-level digital video production course for my study because of its use of digital video-making as a vehicle for exploring the challenges of thinking creatively and critically, while also exploring the pleasures of composing and communicating ideas. To introduce the unique characteristics the research site and illustrate the reflective experiences of the students, I will first outline the basic structure of the course, followed by three vignettes of class sessions. Next, I will describe the video-making experience of the three research participants, discuss their learning processes, and analyze their video projects in the form of a case report.

4.1 Site Description: Course Curriculum

On the first day of class, the instructor circled the classroom, asking students’ names and capturing their answers on video with his iPhone. Then he transferred these short clips to his MacBook, where he edited them down into a one-minute video using iMovie software. Within ten minutes, he was showing the class the short movie of our introductions. This short introductory activity was indicative of the tone of the class, which the course website described as “fun, engaging, and exciting.” This class was not merely about the technical aspects of learning how to shoot and edit digital video. Its aim was clear in its website description:

This is not a filmmaking class where you can indulge your fantasies of making music videos, or get college credit for making silly movies with your roommates. This is a course where you will use video to explore the challenges of thinking creatively and critically, while exploring the pleasures and perils of composing and communicating ideas that matter. (Course website)
This course is based on a self-teaching process appropriate to the unique features of digital video making. Shooting and editing inside the classroom for a limited time is not a realistic way to make an effective film. The creative process involved in editing itself requires a lot of time; in addition, students naturally want to shoot footage of materials relevant to their projects outside the classroom. Therefore, in-class activities focused on sharing, discussing, setting goals, disseminating information, and inquiry to guide the students’ video making processes. Outside the classroom, students were expected to explore their own projects based on reflection and inspiration from the class. Since informative resources as well as the video-making technology were already posted on the website, little time was devoted to teaching the steps or techniques of digital technology. I would note that this is an art school expectation common to colleges and universities. Students were expected to teach themselves how to use the editing software, electronic journals, digital cameras, and digital camcorders with the help of online resources.

The description of the course found on the course website states that this course is an advanced composition course designed to engage students in a comprehensive exploration of creative inquiry, self-reflection, social engagement, and media production. The course website shows that this course is about “directed writings, in concert with video production projects, allow students to experience an integrated process of thinking, creating, and problem solving”. Although the course description for this class does not directly indicate that digital narrative creation was an integral part of the course, I considered this site to be a reasonable location for my research because this course
involved teaching and learning the characteristics of digital stories in a creative, critical, and reflective manner.

4.2 The Learning Atmosphere: Relaxed and Collaborative

Here I share three different vignettes of the setting described above, allowing the reader to sense how the class unfolded, how the students interacted, and how students experienced the course. Vignette One is a typical class session in this course, intended to illustrate the overall atmosphere of the course. Vignettes Two and Three are excerpts of selected course activity transcripts.

4.2.1 Vignette One (A typical class period).

Tables were arranged in a horseshoe, facing the big screen on the right side of the classroom. Eight graduate students, six women and two men ranging in age from mid-twenties to late fifties, sat working individually. I was the only Asian; the others were white Americans. Upon entering the room, I saw Sara, one of my research participants, working on her Mac, while Michael, another participant, was working on his PC. We were required bring our own equipment, so we could install video editing software to learn from. Alex, another participant in my research, turned from his laptop screen to watch Michael’s video. Anna, a classmate, turned to me and asked where she could charge her laptop. I told her that she could use the multi-tap on the small tables around the periphery, so she rolled her bag over and took out her brand new netbook. I noticed that Sara was exporting her video project to YouTube, since today was the rehearsal day for the rough cut. John, the instructor, came in, and we talked casually about what we had done for this project, and what kind of issues we had encountered. Anna mentioned that
she had had some technological issues transferring her video footage to her laptop, and she asked both the instructor and Bob, the most technologically competent member of the class, if they could help her out. John turned off the lights and played two professional media artists’ sample videos on the screen. Then he opened up a discussion, during which we shared our findings and questions about the sample videos. Next, we began our “show and tell session.” Bob handed the instructor his USB flash drive so that the instructor could project Bob’s video on the screen. Bob briefly explained what he wanted to convey through his video, and he played it for us. In silence, we were immersed in his short digital story for three minutes, and then John asked Bob if he had any particular questions for his classmates. We all shared our comments and reviews of Bob’s video for about twenty minutes, after which Bob returned to his table and turned the floor over to Sara. Sara had uploaded her video to YouTube, so she opened the link to her video on the instructor’s laptop, and we went through the same procedures of watching and then discussing her rough-cut together.

4.2.2 Vignette Two (recreated from the transcript of a class discussion).

Instructor: You showed us your piece last time we met. Has it undergone change? Do you want to show it again? Do you want to take a pass and…it’s totally up to you.

Student A: I didn’t make changes. I looked at it and decided not to. The only change I did make was I made, um, a change in the credits.

Instructor: Okay. Great. Okay. So…um, why don’t we sort of put you at the back of the queue and if we have time, if you’d like to show it again….Bob, as I recall, I gave you a pass on completing another iteration of your project, but we did sort of leave that possibility open for you, so what have you done?
Student B: I have not. I started to work on it. What I did was, I emailed my, ah…[actress] to ask her to do it. And so she had some suggestions, so I started integrating them, but I just ran out of time.

Instructor: So you don’t have anything you want to show us?

Student B: No.

Instructor: That’s fine. So I think what I’ll do is, I’ll focus on the rest of you and I’m going to try to—I’ve my phone, so I’ll turn my timer on, and I’m going to try sort of keep us at twenty-minute segments to everybody, in the interest of time management, and um, then we’ll see where we are, and at the end, if you two would love to just show your pieces again for our viewing pleasure a second time, we can do that. But, um, back to the other six of you. Who wants to get us started?

Student B: But, also, if we have time, I would—I could show mine again, because of what I’m planning on doing to revise it.

Instructor: Okay, we’ll do that.

4.2.3 Vignette Three (recreated from the transcript of a peer review session).

*Student A is the presenter

Student A: I don’t know. I really—that—I sent you guys that clip of skating, and it’s the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen in my life. But, um…I—so, I started using just clips of him, and I wanted to include the audio, but then, ah…there were weird spots where someone was, like, creaking on a bench or something. It just sounded bad. And then it actually—it was too jarring to go from scenes that did not involve him, um, at all—the silence—I don’t know. It didn’t…this isn’t what I wanted, but the silence wasn’t good, either. So I just kind of left it in there. So I actually put a clean track of the song itself. So, like, I can’t really ever show this, because it’s copyrighted. But, um…

Student B: That is the song he dances to in the video you shared with us, right?

Student A: Yeah.

Student C: Is it still the most beautiful thing that you’ve ever seen, if you watched it without the sound?

Student A: [pause] I don’t know.
Student D: Why did you decide to put the silence where—where it was?

Student A: Um…I guess because—I think the way the track runs, um, it builds in so many places to the—to cut it off completely, it was just—I’m not good enough at audio editing to, um…either tone it down—and actually, I did tone it down, but it didn’t work. Um…but then, since—I guess I just felt comfortable with it, because the song itself ended. And so I was okay with then—I don’t know. It just—it happened—that was almost an accident, I guess, because I wasn’t done with the audio of my own voice. And it was like, well, I mean…yeah, I don’t know. It just—I guess as I was going with it, that seemed comfortable to me, but the actual cutting in and out of his clips was not comfortable.

Student D: Hm.

Student E: Well, it made me very emotional.

Student A: That’s why I didn’t—that’s another reason I didn’t want to use the—

Student E: Well, I liked the video—

Student B: Yeah, I don’t think it’s a bad thing. I think—

Student E: Yeah, I think that’s a very good thing. Like, it really—I actually enjoyed the music. Um, I thought there were moments when it could have been a little bit softer so I could have heard your voice a little bit more. Um, but…I mean, it really did really—like, the whole piece—the images and your text and the music definitely made and evoked emotion in me. Like, I felt I was going to cry. So, yeah.

Instructor: But wait. Isn’t that the author manipulating you? And isn’t that evil?

Student C: No. Thanks. But it’s not that simple.

Student A: I mean, yeah. I can say that I think it still may be the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen, but…it does—there is something to him skating to that particular track that makes a difference. Yeah, but—I guess so. I was annoyed with the rest of the images that he used, but that’s not in the film, obviously.

Student F: I just want to say that I totally agree. I liked the music. I didn’t think that it took away from anything. I mean, I think it just depends on who you’re showing it to this time.
Student A: That’s true. Who you’re showing it to? You wouldn’t show it to a group of punk rock people. That music.

Student C: Maybe. It’s pretty.

Student B: And how long was that?

Student A: Five minutes and forty-one seconds.

Student B: Okay.

Student A: Felt a lot longer.

Student F: I don’t think so.

Student A: I felt like just from a—sort of a—well, I felt like the single skater skating could have stood alone. And I think, um…particularly because he’s by himself and because…we have a voice that’s sort of guiding us through ideas, um…I wanted him to be the one skating when there was no music, because I felt like when the group was skating with no music…there was a little discontinuity in the sense that we should know that music is what keeps them together, whereas for him, he’s so graceful, that the music added, but it didn’t seem necessary. So that’s my two cents about that.

Student C: I just—the amazing thing about relating to composition is I feel exactly the opposite. I was so glad when there was music playing for him, because it had this…his interrelationship was—I mean, I’m formulating it now, because I was just watching what was happening, but his relationship was to the music, and their relationship was to each other, and also to this text, which is about the relationship of people to sport.

Student A: That’s why I did it.

Student C: Yeah, I thought—I really loved when it was silent in those moments, because, um—and again, I liked the music in there, it’s just moments in which we can’t quite hear your voice, and I’m sure—whatever it was, but that decision really grabbed me. I was grateful for it.

Instructor: I have a question for all of you. I’d like you to talk about your thoughts and responses to the cutaways to the sky shots.

As we can see in these three vignettes, most of the class time was sharing and discussing about videos. Having only eight people created an intimate atmosphere, and
most of the time, we had two-way conversations. Throughout the discussions, peer review, or our daily lives, what we saw around us influenced our video productions. Throughout the semester, I watched how my classmates explored their video making journeys, put it through their own filter, and processed their experiences in their own way. This course was unique in its open structure and how the instructor interacted with us, which allowed the students to relax and engage in learning about video making, just as the course description had advertised: “This course is meant to be fun, engaging, and exciting.” The instructor wanted us to be motivated to create digital stories out of our own inspiration and self-teaching, rather than pushing us to create videos in a structured curriculum.

Over the course of the semester, students were encouraged to experiment just for the experience, an opportunity that was not necessarily available in other classes. Sara, one of the two selected participants of this study, told me that she enjoyed “how, to some degree, there was a lot of leeway for people to do whatever they were interested in and kind of go their own paths” (Sara, Interview 2). She further explained that she did not think that she would have enjoyed the class equally if it had been taught by another instructor or with a different curriculum. Bob, the other selected participant of this study, shared the same notion about the class assignments and the instructor. Although he didn’t learn any particular skills in this class, he learned an attitude and a way of digital video making from his interactions with classmates, and especially from the instructor. This class was fun and relaxing for Bob, since the instructor emphasized improvisational moments and individual discovery.
All of the students in this class started at different beginning points with different backgrounds, different technology levels, different approaches to creating digital video, and different interests. Having individual plans and interests to pursue during the semester, we boarded the train for a digital storytelling journey; each student’s train was headed wherever that individual wanted to go. The three learners who participated this study went through the course in their own unique ways, and experienced different learning issues along the way. In the next sections, three different case reports illustrate how each of the three selected learners experienced learning about digital video making.

4.3 Case One: Exploring and Creating Digital Storytelling

4.3.1 Profile: The researcher, JiYeon.

As a Korean woman in her early thirties and as the researcher having experience teaching as an elementary school teacher and as an instructor of art education to pre-service teachers, I can state that I have always been enthusiastic about creative art production. During my college years, I learned many different art practices including oil painting, Korean traditional painting, acrylic painting, calligraphy, and pottery making. Although I did not reach the levels of skills that professional and technical artists reach in courses designated for art major students, I was able to enjoy many different art disciplines as learning experiences. Since I was learning and practicing these different disciplines in art, I was not able to become fully equipped in every discipline and was not able to become fully skillful in all art practices. Purchasing the needed materials and tools for my own aesthetic pleasure was expensive, especially for non-art major people like me. Personally, what I truly enjoyed was the process of art making. Creating something was more of an aesthetic experience to me, rather than appreciating others’ art pieces,
even when some of my final art pieces were not satisfactory to me.

I could not clearly describe why I was more involved in the art making rather than art appreciation. However, one thing was clear - I loved and continue to love the evolution of my thoughts during this process. The thought evolution usually followed a given process; I would have an initial idea, and then I would fully visualize how this idea would actualize through my hand. I would re-envision the image as I worked on the piece and/or as the materials or the tools forced the vision to change. This art making process of visualizing and revising my project half-filled me with joy and the other half with frustration, sometimes simultaneously. Many times my idea was changed because I lacked technical skills, had insufficient resources, or because of new emerging ideas. I began to understand that it was impossible for me to start anew each time a new or a better idea became dominant during the art making process. This could be overwhelming at times. Giving up what I had already created, with all of the time and effort I had already spent in realizing my idea was difficult for me to do. When I think of the irony in my enjoying evolving ideas and at the same time being fearful of starting over on my art project, I was fortunate to get any art making knowledge let alone art making through advanced digital technology.

During my undergraduate college years, there was a boom in technology courses, and I found myself becoming more and more interested in new technology and its benefits. I enjoyed working with personal computers, digital cameras, and camcorders. A basic understanding of MS office and OS was a requirement in technology education courses. Besides the technology education courses, there was also a small number of computer graphic courses students could take. Ten years previously, I had dropped out of
a computer graphic course because the programs being used, Dream Weaver and
Director-X, were too complicated for a novice to digital media like me to grasp in the
length of time of a course. The graphic software was too complicated. Understanding
how to use every function the program was designed to do and what the course included
was too much for me to manage. It is important to note that the Dream Weaver program
is used in creating personal web pages, and Director-X for making short animations. This
computer graphic course had more of a focus on learning the technological functions of
each program rather than in using the programs to create media art pieces. I was more
interested in creating art.

Although I am a person who enjoyed learning to use digital technology and who
benefited from newer technology, my introduction with digital media making was
chaotic. I spent a lot of time taking notes and memorizing the technical features of each
program. When I ran the software to create my own work, I got so many error messages
from the software it frustrated and eventually stopped my attempts at working with the
programs. There were other more user-friendly software programs developed after
programs like Dream Weaver were developed, allowing me to create products more
easily but they were clumsy and weren’t the higher quality pieces I imagined they would
be, I couldn’t understand the more advanced software, which would have allowed me to
create more advanced products.

This first exposure to digital media courses left me feeling negatively toward
using them in fine art practices. I did not try to use more than simple and basic software
for a very long time after this first attempt at creating art through digital media.
4.3.2 Motivating to take the video-making course.

In a period of rapid development in digital technology, Facebook and other social networking services launched in 2004 and YouTube launched in 2005. These sites became active world-wide in only a year or so. When I came to United States for my doctoral study in 2006, I was exposed to and received the full benefits from those new types of digital technology. What came to be special to me, a doctoral student who is interested in art-making and who is an active user of both video sharing and social networking websites, were the thousands of non-professional, user-created videos on the Internet. There are all kinds of digital videos on the Internet, all with different purposes, meanings, and target audiences. Many of the user-created videos were basic home videos involving family events uploaded without any editing process. There were also many educational purposed videos providing make-up lessons, or other lessons including various instruments, sports, as well as school subjects. These were also videos showing various scenery and landmarks for travel guide purposes, and personal videos sharing the creators’ music, art and writing. Not all videos caught my eye, however. I was interested in certain videos that showed the use of thorough editing. For example, there was a video created entirely by using excerpts from existing movies and commercials. The user created a complete new storyline by remixing and rematching video clips from many famous scenes and movies. There were also interesting user-created music videos where recreating, borrowing or twisting stories and scenes of U.S., Korean, or Japanese movies created sometimes funny and often strange new videos. What amazed me was as well as being amused by these creations, these videos were not only created by adults who understood the use of these new media lessons, but were also created by children or
youth. Since I did not actively investigate the video creators’ education or other background information, I couldn’t be sure how they were creating their digital video pieces and sharing them. However, noticing that amateurs were able to create amazing digital video pieces gave me a fresh motive to re-think using video making as an art making practice. Since there were not many video-making classes in the formal educational settings, I found video-making classes being offered by technology camps, museums and cultural centers from time to time. I had opportunities to visit these video making sessions in a high school, a technology camp, and a museum for last three years. Diverse programs in using video software were offered even to pre-school aged children, which meant that there were many user-friendly and high-functional video-making software programs now available that were not available when I had attempted my first digital media making class several years ago. The important insights from my experiences are, a) a student who takes a video making course might enjoy and achieve the goal, which is to create a short digital story, b) there were more males than females enrolled in the classes I observed, and c) digital video making software programs today are easier to use, more efficient, and have higher functions than the ones from just five years ago, even if they are freeware.

Affirming my research interest as digital video making, I decided to take a digital video making course to enjoy the opportunity to perform art-making in a video format as well as researching the new-media art making course for my dissertation. I had a number of ambitions before taking the course (my research site) that included: (1) getting back into a digital media making course that I had dropped due to frustration, (2) fully experiencing the process of video making, both in constructing the idea and making art,
(3) being an amateur media author by learning video-making techniques and practices, and (4) reflecting my own and my colleagues’ learning experiences in providing curricular and pedagogical considerations for video making curriculum.

4.3.3 Experiencing evolution of ideas in taking the course.

This section will describe how my knowledge and understanding of digital storytelling through the course assignments grew based on my reflective journal entries. These reflective journal entries included personal reflections from my own video-making experiences and comments about each week’s assignments and observations. I will expand illustrations of certain key ideas emerging from the corresponding analysis of these journal entries. These experiences and reflections formed the basis for questions on the other two study participants’ digital stories and later the cross-case interpretation of the differences and similarities with my own experiences. These journal documentations are taken from the first day of the class and end before the final project.

4.3.3.1 Stepping into video making (Module 1). Although I had a clear purpose in taking the digital video making course, including experiencing digital video making, creating narrative video pieces, and researching my dissertation topic, new media making was a somewhat overwhelming idea to me. The first day of class, my journal entry showed how I was worrying about what might happen in this course.

This course is very special to me. I registered for this course three times and dropped twice. I am very interested in youth’s video making and narrative video production, but new media making experience is a somewhat overwhelming experience to me. I haven’t had video making experience. Although I have created home videos, that was not narrative video making. I am not good at shooting video clips. Also, I felt that I became less and less creative while pursuing my doctoral degree. Besides the technology, language is another stress. I am more comfortable with captions when I watch TV. Creating and appreciating a new media writing class sounds very stressful as a non-native
[English speaking] student. With these excuses, I couldn’t take this class easily. After deciding that this class was my doctoral research site, I registered for this class. (Journal. 1)

In the first course activity for the video making course was called, “10 things I saw today” and I found that I enjoyed it. I was able to either write about ten things I noticed each day or shoot a video of ten things I noticed that captured the moments. I choose the later option. Since I had an iPhone with great still and video camera options, I initially decided to practice my shooting techniques during this activity. However, this practice turned out to be more than just practicing my technological skills in how to capture the scene or how to change the camera angles.

While doing the first homework assignment, (‘10 things I saw today’) I realized how little I use my eyes, and how much I didn’t pay attention to the things surrounding me. I had to try really hard to pay attention to what happened around me. I did not usually look around me while I was walking down the street. I was usually thinking about problems or projects or listening to music, which isolated me from things happening around me. It was a new experience to pay attention to the small happenings so that I only did it during travel, not in my ordinary life. Also I noticed that camera was interesting tool and the photos an interesting medium. It created meaning and gave meaning to the objects in the photo. When I stood up for 10 seconds to shoot the flowers’ movement with the wind, I could clearly and carefully observe the flowers and the wind. I haven’t spent time shooting or observing ordinarily simple activity such as trees and flowers movement. Just 10 seconds or 20 seconds with them gave them special meaning and assigned stories to them. These experiences were a happy surprise to me. I could not explain those moments except for the happy surprise. I realized that so many little things are meaningful and beautiful. This made me feel comfortable in this class, and to want to create something soon. (Journal, Week 2)

As I described in my reflective journal written each week after taking each class, the practice of noticing the small events catching my interest became a happy surprise and an eye-opening experience for me. It became immediately clear that I haven’t been fully using my eyes and ears to view activity in my daily life. I also noticed that my eyes and ears were only fully functional when I was travelling somewhere, and it made me
take notice of small meaningful happenings in order to capture these small meanings in a picture, to share a story, to write about or to keep these more complete meanings in my travel memory. I discovered that things happened when it seemed like nothing was happening when I used the “10 things I saw today” activity daily. The trees and flowers were shaken by the wind, and their shadows mimicked their intricate dance. The winds would sometimes moan, and the clouds caused me to use my imagination as I created interesting scenes with their shapes and movement. These moments looked different through my eyes than through my camera lens. Since I only captured the short moments (less than 10 seconds), I tried as best as I could to shoot the most pleasing moments with the best angles to convey my feelings at the moment the picture was taken. Thus, my first experiences in getting acquainted with shooting scenes by video camera helped me cultivate the habit of taking notice of the small things found in the subject I was shooting and to capture those moments to share those particular, pleasing moments. I was able to intentionally cultivate habit-forming awareness and gratitude to capture catchy images and sounds around me for three weeks, and this practice enabled me to extend my repertoire of more meaningful stories from my daily life. These practices and experiences were readily available because of my handy, high quality and portable digital camera on my smart-phone. If I had to check out the camcorders from the equipment desk each time I wanted to take a shot, I would have missed many moments that I wanted to capture. Since I was able to carry a camera around with me everyday, I could collect a wide range of video clips and I became comfortable and capable of using my camera.

4.3.3.2 Process of discovery (Module 2). This course required me to create three different digital videos. One of them was the final video project that will be
analyzed in the following section. After taking some time to practice cultivating my senses and capturing the scenes, the next step in creating a digital story was editing the raw video footage from my random collection using video editing software. The first project was creating a one-minute story, and the second one was creating a three-minute long story based on an interview of someone. The instructor asked us to create a story in a very limited amount of time, and to have fun and take risks at the same time.

I use a Mac book for this class. iMovie is the default and free video editing software program for the Mac users. PC users among my classmates are using Windows Movie Maker for their video editing. What surprised me is that iMovie is extremely easy to understand and navigate. I didn’t encounter technological issues along the way of the editing process. However, it was a big challenge to make the video only one minute in length. There are so many stories going on in my head. I collected more than 20 raw footage videos, and the total length of video these clips could be more than 20 minutes. I have had to cut it down again and again. This process was the toughest. I could create more than 10 different kinds of stories with my raw video data. After carefully reviewing my video clips, a story jumped into my head. I dragged some parts of each video clip for my project, arranged the order, and rearranged the order. Sometimes I felt the need of better shots, but I decided to fully use my existing video clips rather than shooting more. Editing is all about the decision-making process. Since this is my first video project, I tried not to be so structural. I did not think concisely about the storyline, rather, I played with my video clips and sound clips. Further, I did not consider aesthetic qualities or story structures for this video. This experience is fully meaningful as a digital technology exploration. (Journal, Week 4)

As I stated in my reflective journal, to squeeze my raw video clips into a one-minute story, and to select and arrange scenes from among a lot of raw footage in order to create a meaningful story was my main struggle in creating my first digital story. I had a rough idea about how this piece would begin and how it would end, and played with video clips under the one requirement, creating a one-minute video. I randomly explored all color and transition effects, and I added background music and sound files to my videos. I did not try to juxtapose images to sound for the coherence of the storyline in this
stage. I enjoyed the opportunity to play with the options available with the video editing software and my camera.

However, the second video project required more than creating a one-minute creative digital story through free exploration. The second video assignment was to make a three to five minute narrative video production based on interviews with a particular person. I needed to make direct contact with my subject in real time and in person. I needed plenty of planning time to brainstorm about the topic, select the subject, design the storyline, prepare for the interview, and list the interview questions to show my video theme. This interview based narrative video production was to be more intentional about what I wanted to communicate through it, and more sophisticated in its story structure.

The following excerpt is from my reflective journal written during the pre-production stage. This pre-planning journal entry shows how I intentionally planned the second project for the both a structured and an appealing digital story.

PERSONAL: Starting doctoral studies at UIUC, I mainly interact with international doctoral students since we share so many common issues. Research has become a very important part of my daily life, and other international students who inspire me, help me forget the loneliness and isolation from being a foreigner. When I browse what to document and research, this topic kept coming up. I want to make something that is meaningful to me. I don’t want to contact complete strangers for my video project. What inspired me is my friend’s Facebook post. She stated that being labelled a foreigner makes her tired. After reading the post, I felt “oh..that is what I feel, what my friends feel always”. My criteria in selecting a topic is, (1) familiarity, (2) meaningfulness, (3) accessibility. So my topic is one international Ph.D student who is just like me. She is in the music department (Voice performance). I might also include other subjects from other disciplines. This is my 5th year of grad school. I have seen so many Korean students who are studying. They came here to pursue their dreams and their goals. But living as a foreign student is not easy. We have many concerns and issues in our story. This is why I decided to make a story about us.

WORKING STATEMENT/HYPOTHESIS: When I decided the storyline of this
video, I was thinking that this story should be meaningful for the audience and me. When I have personal conversations with my friends (usually international students), we usually share how much the life here is unfamiliar to us, how much loneliness we feel, how much we miss our family and friends in Korea, and how tough study in a non-native language is. However, I don’t want to make this video to show, “ok, we have tough life,” nor to bring sympathy, “oh, their life is so tough.” I just want to illustrate the diverse aspects of the international students’ life in Champaign-Urbana. I am also thinking of extending my topic to zoom in on “study abroad”.

RESEARCH: My initial target subjects were three doctoral students from Computer Science, East Asian Cultural Studies, and Music. After observing three subjects, I feel that three different people in a 3-5 min video would be too difficult to accomplish. I decide to go with a Voice Performance major student. She did her undergrad work in a top Korean university. She is from Seoul, the capital of Korea, and is a Christian. Other than that, I don’t know how the music department is different from my department. (I am not familiar with the music major courses or requirements). I don’t know why she decided to study abroad. I don’t know how her life is here. I don’t even know how she sings a song. Actually, I don’t know about her except that she is Korean and she is majoring in voice performance and is Christian. Since this is a very short three-minute clip, I would like to get most of the data based on our interview. I browsed music department websites for pre-research.

ANXIETIES: Initial contact with each subject was tough for me. I am not familiar with asking to record their faces or in asking them to share their stories. I am afraid of hearing “NO,” since some of them would be uncomfortable with interviews or shooting. I was also afraid with how to structure my story to reveal the multiple aspects of a single person. There were a lot of ways to zoom in on a particular person’s life. Since my subject is almost a professional singer who performs opera, musicals, or her own recitals, I might make a documentary for illuminating her as a young artist. I also could focus on her struggles to survive here as a foreign student. I am not sure what aspects of her identity she would like to show/share in my video. Since my initial plan is to show her as an international doctoral student, this video might show her personal image. I don’t know whether she would like it or not. Further, this topic can be very sensitive, because some students might have experiences here which might be offensive to some people (ei: Visa issues, the immigration process at the airport). I don’t want to make strong social statements here because my subject might not want to say these things. I want to convey the true story in a neutral way. Also language is a struggle for me. Voice-Over in Documentary seems important, and rich interviews are important. I don’t know how to show/notice subtle nuisances because English is not my first language. There are so many struggles and anxieties here.
TOPIC: Have you considered studying abroad? It is a life-changing experience and one of the most rewarding things anyone can do. There are a lot of international students studying in the USA. My focus is the Korean students who are number two proportion of the international student population in the USA. Living in a foreign country has drawbacks as well as advantages. It can be concluded that a people's mother country will always have a special place in their hearts, but we are studying and living here to pursue our dreams/goals. (Journal, Week, 5)

The previous two assignments (10 things I saw today and the first video assignment), I concentrated on me as a video-maker, and my exploration and practice with the camera and video making software. I was concerned with how to fully utilize the visual and sound effects offered by iMovie for my video. I was also concerned with how to reasonably select or reject the raw video clips for the one-minute video. When I began the second video project, I spent a lot of time to planning and researching. If the first video project was about how I communicated with the world around me, the second project was how I could share the third person’s voice and story through my perspective. Editing process was a lot more sophisticated and structured since I became experienced during module 1 activity. The more I knew, learn, and sense, I became more picky in the editing stage.

I look at splitting the screen, and I tried all of those different things. With this one, I just felt like going from one to the other directly. So I don’t know if that would make a difference, or if the transitions needed to be smoother… and then the music, I had a question about the music also. I worked on it for hours, trying to find the right, pictures and the right music and the right, fonts. And I don’t know why, but when I watch movies, I felt they showed a certain harmony. I really like it. I felt like it fit with the overall mood of the piece. (Journal, Week 6)
I created and re-created designs of my video that would allow me to construct a narrative in a digital video format that would deal with the issues I was concerned with. In spite of careful planning, I faced new struggles to become a digital storyteller, and my reflective journal after the second project shows my concern.

My second video was a narrative video based on interviews. I had a significant amount of time and energy to brainstorm and research what to make for my second video. I decide to make a video about a Korean/International doctoral student since his/her life would be very familiar and I would understand the subject. My initial story structure was (a) showing the statistics of international students studying at UIUC, (b) introducing one doctoral student, (c) showing one’s academic life at school, (d) showing one’s personal life, and (e) wrapping up the story.

Before deciding on the specific person as my video subject, I had some time to observe three doctoral students in different disciplines (Computer Science, East Asian studies, and Voice). I choose the student majoring in voice in the music department for the purpose of entertainment as well as avoiding any troubles. I was worried about making a boring digital story if I had a series of shots of working with a computer (CS student). Or I was worried about violating portrait rights if I took shots of the student majoring in East Asian studies teaching a Korean class since her students might not want to be in my video. I took a shot of my subject’s daily and academic life. I interviewed with her to share her story as a student, a singer and an international student. Since I didn’t know what she would answer about in my interview, my initial story plan had limitations.

After all the shooting was done, I had two hours of video clips, and I needed to make a 5-minute video. It was the most difficult part - to make the editing cuts of my first video project. Further I needed to visualize the international student’s story in a powerful and unarguable way. The whole process of finding good footage and organizing my subject’s and my thoughts was really difficult. I was surprised by how much time I needed for a five minute video. Creating the five-minute video needed a lot of time and effort. I tried to change the way of creating videos from the first video as much as I could. In the first video, I didn’t research or plan a lot. I collected the raw footage from everywhere. However, I collected footage to articulate my topic at the time. Like doing a collage, I organized the structure throughout the editing process. I didn’t allow for any happy surprises. I created my video based on my topic like I would structure a writing assignment. The Video making process is like research writing. I have to find a topic, research about my topic, and create a piece about it. (Journal, Week 7)
As I described in my reflective journal week 5 and week 7, four noteworthy issues naturally emerged during the process of my second video making experience. I faced issues regarding: (a) audience, (b) legalities, (c) intentional editing, and (d) planning or improvisation.

I will further illustrate all details of the above issues that I came up with in the video analysis of video project 3, but here, I will briefly describe how each issue came up with us as we worked. One of the interesting changes after getting more familiar with digital video making through the first video project, was that I was becoming aware of the audience. Having a rough idea about the topic, I had a time to research three possible participants (one male and two females) to decide the best subject for my digital story in the pre-production stage. Although all three international doctoral students could represent their unique life stories as students, foreigners, and professionals, I wanted more intriguing and dramatic content for the audience as well as for myself. For example, I wanted to illustrate my subject’s professional aspect in her academia and personal life. It was not easy to show professional aspects of computer science major students in the short time limitation in an intriguing way. I compared three shots of three potential participants’ professional aspects through imaginative visualization; A scene of his computer programming while he is working with a computer (male CS student), a scene of her ability of reading ancient Chinese book while she is reading her literature (female EALC student), a scene of singing a recital and practicing her voice performance (female Music student). My choice was the option 3, a student from music department since I thought her story would have a more dramatic and entertaining aspect, combining story
with music. I chose this student and her story not only to be aware of the audience but also to avoid any uncomfortable issues.

The second important issue I came up with was that I tried to avoid any legal issues or troubles when I began my project. Since a digital video shows everyone’s face as well as their story, I needed to be careful with shooting surrounding people without their approval. Although I could shoot both computer science and EALC students while he was teaching in a class to show the academic life more descriptively, I wanted neither to violate their students’ portrait rights nor did I want to get permission from all the students that would be involved if I used him for my video. I tried to find a way of needing less legal permission for constructing my story, and this played an important role in my choice. The music student was a rich source in of herself and so I could shoot only her to show her professional aspects, which is mainly singing.

Also, this second assignment raised my concern about the importance of intentional editing, and moved forward to the balancing between intentional planning and improvisation. I feel that digital stories are like the abstracts of the complete paper and the compendium of the whole work from previous experiences since the digital story has only 3-5 minutes to convey its story. I needed to work with a person, to videotape a person, and to share somebody’s story through my perspective and my own selections of images for this assignment. Although the story could be proceeding unexpectedly according to her interview answers, I needed to construct the structure and content of the narrative to guide this video story. Based on the story structure that I intentionally planned, I prepared interview questions and interviewed her. However, the editing process brought up the issues between my intentional plan and what occurred naturally.
The editing process was full of negotiation between the planned structure, content, and the unexpected results of working with a person. Since I was a storyteller attempting to convey another’s story through my video, I did not want to switch or replace the original content of my subject’s responses to my interview questions. Also, as a director of this video, I originally had a purpose or message that I wanted to convey. Since I approached this topic with full research and planning, I had an outline and structure for a 3-5 minute video. However, my human subject (participant) was vivacious and her story forced me to leave the outline and improvise the editing process. With the spontaneous nature of the videotaped interview and the arising issues, I became more acquainted with digital storytelling. I was growing aware of the concerns and struggles surrounding digital video making through my own video making experiences. These concerns became clearer during the third video assignment, the last project, and enabled me to think about the many details I would have to attend to as I continued working with digital storytelling as a medium.

### 4.3.4 Becoming a digital storyteller: Module 3.

During the course of various creative attempts intended to increase my familiarity with telling digital stories, I became more interested in making creative videos for both my own entertainment and for the purpose of sharing and communicating meaningful stories in a digital format. The final project in the class was the culmination of each individual student’s unique learning experiences and video making explorations happening throughout the semester. This section will illustrate the process I followed in making my own final video project, some narrative properties of the videos made in our
class, how various media components coexisted in these videos, and the post-modern artistic strategies involved in creating digital videos.

4.3.4.1 Pre-production: planning, research, and storyboarding. My creative media process began with appropriate preparation. During my previous video making experiences, I became increasingly confident and passionate about creating new video pieces. I embraced all of my experiences including the struggles and the developments through trial and error, and I wanted to create more sophisticated digital stories that could serve both as social commentaries and as personal stories. The following journal entries show the short vignettes during my pre-production stage.

As regards to the final video production, what I sought to achieve was expanding my second video theme. I originally wanted to interview four different international Ph.D. students and hear their stories. In order to clarify the theme of my project, I interviewed each one in search of a storyboarding idea, which could embrace all four subjects. Interviews usually began with casual talk, although I had specific interview questions. However, one interviewee’s story was quite interesting because of the diversity in his life. He said that he was a cultural kid. He lived in several different counties, and had many multi-cultural experiences. He was influenced by several different cultures but stated that he didn’t fully belong to any particular culture. I wanted to interview him at length to hear more about his story. I didn’t interview him using my structured interview questions.

During my third video-making project, the creative process began before the actual shooting or storyboarding began. We spend a lot of time talking, reflecting and organizing the idea/topic. We created the script together using the in-depth interviews, which took a lot of time. Once we had the outline of information, we listed the story points (childhood, friendship, struggles) and created the story. I became a messenger who shared his/her unique story with people. (Journal, Week, 9)

In this preproduction stage, I tried to research possible topics that I would like to create. With vague ideas (I want to convey a story about an international PhD student), I contacted a few people to share their stories. My personal experience and current life itself influenced the way of selecting topic for my final project. While I was talking with
one of my interviewees, a clearer topic that I wanted to convey just surfaced in my thoughts. His story intrigued me and was special to me because of a pattern I can see in my friendship in current situation. His story is about feeling isolation and struggling with his identity as cultural outsider in everywhere. Many of my close friends are foreigners in this country. Most of my closest friends whom I am mainly interacting with are non-American graduate students. I always feel like a foreigner wherever I am here, so I as a teller/media author can relate strongly to foreigners' feelings of being outsiders. As a storyteller, I was able to deeply involve his story personally, and I try to convey this story to the audience, in order to bring compassion. In regard to my third project, I encountered the challenge of working at the mercy of my subject, Tom, Tom was extremely cooperative for the duration of this project, and he enjoyed sharing his unique background and story. I did not fully understand where I wanted to begin the story, and I wanted to have as many possible creative avenues as possible. During the pre-production stage, I conducted in-depth interviews with Tom, who was a wonderful, inspirational person, and I do not think I could have chosen a better subject. The focal point of in-depth interviewing was to understand Tom’s story as described from his perspective and as interpreted by myself (the listener). Tom enjoyed sharing his story with me, and I was able to interact and bond with him. We conversed for two hours so that I could better understand his background, his issues, and his life before actually working on the storyboarding.

Me: Can you talk a little bit yourself focusing on your identity and how it is related to your background?

56 Tom signed IRB consent form to be included in this dissertation.
Tom: I was born in the US, but I grew up in Singapore. My parents are Filipino-Chinese. I believe there are three groups of people that have had the most significant influence on my identity. My culturally Filipino parents, the Singapore expatriate community, and international students in America, or more. I believe my worldview has been derived from elements of several different cultures that I have been exposed to.

Me: I know that your passport says you are American, but you mostly hang out with Korean international students even if you are Asian American whose roots are Chinese Filipino.

Tom: Asking the question "Where am I from?" presents an interesting dilemma. It is difficult for me to answer because, going by where I have lived the longest, I have lived for 14 years in Singapore and 12 years in the US. Going by where I consider home, I feel like a foreigner everywhere I go. Going by what country passport I hold, the answer is America. Going by where my parents are from, the answer is the Philippines. Going by where I grew up, the answer is Singapore. You can see there are many versions to my answer. I believe the most accurate answer is I am a cross-cultural kid, who grew up not in, but among worlds. I get my sense of who I am not based on external factors, such as nationality, food traditions, customs, and languages.

Me: I know a lot of Korean students who have citizenship in the USA, but they actually grew up in Korea - since America gave citizenship to those who are born here. Most people might think they have socio-cultural benefits, but I have also seen some who have become confused with their identity. It sounds like you background experience from diverse cultures is very beneficial. Can you share more of your story?

Tom: Yes. Socio-economically, I am quite well off. My parents completely supported me financially for my whole life, so the concept of debt is foreign to me. I was born in Honolulu, Hawaii. I went to nursery [school] in Rochester, New York until I was 4 years old. Then I moved to Singapore and attended an international school until I was 18. During this time, I received my GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) and IB (International Baccalaureate) Diploma at the United World College of South East Asia, a prestigious school following the British pattern of education, whose student body is mainly comprised of international students whose parents are rich expatriates. Then, I moved to the US to pursue undergraduate studies in Mechanical Engineering at the University.

After graduating, I wanted to start working to earn money. However, my parents wanted me to go to graduate school to receive a PhD. After much arguing, I eventually obliged and followed my parents’ wishes.
After I graduated, I felt very lost in terms of what my career would amount to, since I was so sick of Engineering and felt emotionally exhausted. I took a year’s break and relaxed, then completed a certification in teaching English as a second language, and traveled to Korea to try to teach English. I changed my mind again and moved to Singapore to spend time reconciling with my family, who I’ve been away from for 8 years, and to rethink my life direction. (Interview 1. Tom)

After listening to Tom’s story, I decided to convey a cross-cultural children’s story in my final project. This is an intriguing topic for me because it was both Tom’s personal story and a social story for all cultural kids, “who grew up not in, but among worlds” (Interview 1, Tom). Although I initially knew little about Tom, I have met several cross-cultural Korean children while studying in the US. During the Pre-production stage, I decided on the topic, researched the subject, and planned the structure and the storyline. Below is a sample entry from my pre-production journal.

**TOPIC:** Tom, Who are cross-cultural kids? : Who are they? What makes them different? Tom is an inspirational person, and his story deserves to be told - As someone who represents the lives of cross-cultural kids.

**BACKGROUND:** I will introduce the concept of cross-cultural life, and how it affects a person’s life. I will touch upon his background, his issues, and his life.

**STRUCTURE:** The piece will begin with footage from the general discourse of a cross-cultural kid. This opening will serve to gain the interest of viewers by introducing an unfamiliar concept. Tom will share his story in his own voice-over. I am not sure how this video should/will unfold until I begin the actual shooting.

**CONTENT:** I am not sure yet if this will be like a movie with the actual actor or abstract footage. More details will come, once I began the actual shooting.

**AUDIENCE:** My audience is made up of students from this class. This video will be relevant to some international students or some native students who want to understand different cultures.

**RESOLUTION:** If I can help people to understand/know/hear some of a cross-cultural student’s story, this is enough. I do not want my video to be a social
activist documentary. I want to create a neutral piece so that my audience will naturally come to understand someone’s life. (Journal, Week, 9)

In order to create a meaningful digital story for my final project, I spent enough time on topic exploration, and moved on to the storyboarding process. During the storyboarding (See Table 12) process, I needed to plan out the types of music, audio, and video files to use, and plan the sequence of the story.

Table 12

Storyboarding Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Script</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Story 1</td>
<td>When I think about my childhood, it feels like a puzzle full of pieces that don’t fit. I was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, though I have no recollection what Hawaii is like, having lived there for just half a year. I do remember fragments of my next destination, Rochester, New York, that was my home until I turned four. I remember playing with an American girl my mom used to babysit every day, riding my tricycle around the neighborhood, seeing kids playing picnic. I remember eating Cracker Jacks and being excited every time - to find out what free toy I would discover inside. These memories, as well as my passport, say that I am an American. But that could not be further from the truth. When I was four, my Filipino-Chinese parents relocated to Singapore, where I was to grow up for the next fourteen years attending the international school under the British education system. I am a cross-cultural kid, part of a growing demographic in this generation who grew up not in, but among worlds. I can relate to my Filipino parents, the Singapore expatriate community, Asian-Americans, and International students in America, yet, I do not have full ownership in any of these cultures. Elements from each of these have been incorporated into my life experience, but my true sense of belonging is in relationship to those who also grew up ‘among worlds.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound:</td>
<td>Title Scene (2”)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background music + Self-narration (Voice-Over)</td>
<td>Intro (2-5”) brief sketch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still Image</td>
<td>Slide show of still images (1’)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting his childhood pictures and recent pictures.</td>
<td>I may add more still images or video clips.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>Home video pieces if possible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Story 2
When it comes to the way I relate to others and build friendships, I consider myself an adapter. Because of my migration patterns, I have always been forced to adapt to a new environment and culture. Therefore, I have gotten quite comfortable with quickly adapting to many different kinds of people. The way I make new friends is by patiently enduring an observation mode, where I gauge their behavior, mannerisms, customs and values. Then, I interact with them at their level according to those cultural features. As this happens, I create a new "culture face" within myself that gets incorporated into my identity. Therefore I have several different culture faces that I switch on and off subconsciously depending on whom I am interacting with. My friends say that I make others feel comfortable and open, and I believe this has allowed me to make close friends from diverse cultures. Once people get to know me for a while and we enjoy relating to one another superficially, we start building the expectation that we are alike and share deep values. However, we eventually realize that we are not the same, and subsequently we get disappointed and hurt. This has happened numerous times in my life, and it makes me feel that I lack substance in my personality.

Sound:
Background music + Self-narration (Voice-Over)

Still Image:
no still image here

Video:
Scene of a boy acting (typing, driving, walking, running, talking, biking, hand-holding)

I might change the background music. I am thinking of a piano solo which is very calm and serene.

I will not show an actor’s face, I will shoot him in a distance. I will try to describe the contents in an actor’s action.

Sepia or Black-White tone.

Total length for story 2 is 1’. I might have subheadings.
Table 12 (cont.)

**Story 3**

One of my struggles is a profound loneliness I feel even when around family and friends. I believe the reason is most people, even close friends, are only able to see a small part of me that matches and relates to their culture. For example, my American friends will neither see my Korean side nor my Singapore expat side. The advantage of being able to readily switch different culture faces on and off comes at the cost of feeling this loneliness from not being able to open all of myself up to anybody. Something else I struggle with is a love-hate relationship with settling down in one place. Deep inside of me, the instability I’ve had in my friendships has made me yearn for a stable life, settling down in a location where my friends will be in the same place forever. However, in all the places I’ve lived in, whenever I spend more than a few years there and start getting comfortable, I feel a strange restlessness, and feel that I need to relocate, even though I love and value the relationships I've already built. This part of me feels scared to settle down, because I feel like I would lose a part of myself or miss out on the rest of the world if I did. There is a certain value I place on not being rooted, and I'm not sure if hanging on or letting go of it is the better thing to do.

But I try to tell myself that my life, just like everyone else's, is a unique adventure, and all adventures present both challenges and rewards. The reward is the diversity in my friends and the feeling that the world is my backyard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound:</th>
<th>Story three will be 1’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background music + Self-narration (Voice-Over)</td>
<td>Video footages might be overlapped with story 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still Image:</td>
<td>Ending scene might be a long-take scene.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:no still image here</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I might add some for the transition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scene of a boy acting (typing, driving, walking, running, talking, biking, hand-holding)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although many more story features can be further developed using the multimedia components of the video, the above table shows the initial planning and structure for the video. Planning and storyboarding are a continuing process that can be added to, and subtracted from, during the production and post-production stages.

4.3.4.2 Production: Actual shooting and collecting media files.

Vignette (recreated scene from journal entries, Week. 10)

It is the day for shooting the scenes for my video. I took my iPhone and went outside. I had asked my friend to act for me earlier. I assured him that I would neither shoot his face nor zoom in on his appearance, given that he is
uncomfortable having the camera record him. We had lunch and talked. The weather is not so nice. It is cold, windy, and cloudy. We went outside to shoot outdoor images. I worry about the noise produced by the wind while I shoot. As time progressed, I became more comfortable asking for what I wanted to shoot. I asked him to run, walk, and ride a bicycle. At the commencement of the shooting, I became frustrated because all of the video footage became shaky because I needed to run in order to shoot his running and his biking (cinema verite).

I asked him to move very slowly. He said that he felt awkward because he was not a professional actor. In addition, slow walking and slow running does not manifest properly in my video. My video footage shows him intentionally running in slow motion. I do not like the result. I wanted to shoot him from diverse angles, but felt a bit uncomfortable asking my friend to keep repeating the same action. I was not satisfied with the video footage that I had taken, and we came into the building to shoot other scenes involving typing, walking, stationary leaning, chin-holding and thinking. I felt that in comparison with the outside scenes, he preferred sitting inside in silence and posing naturally. I asked him to do whatever he wanted, and to draw himself away from the situation. I left him alone in the room to pose and behave naturally, and reflected long enough to figure out a new way to approach the shooting.

I thought about how to do a better job with my novice actor. I decided to shoot small close-up samples of his actions. For example, images of his fingers (for his typing scene), his hand movements, his feet, and his shadows. More abstract images can be used to create more implicit images. I determined that I was communicating with my audience better with limited resources. During the past several hours, I attempted to find motions and gestures suitable for illustrating my script more clearly. The keywords for my video would be loneliness, chaos, identity, and similar terms. My actor posed naturally while I tried to think about these keywords and shoot his movements from different angles. I zoomed in and out, closed up his fingers, and intentionally shook the camera for effect.

I am sometimes frustrated because I already have some mental images that I want to visualize but I am having trouble shooting the right footage to illustrate these images. I changed my mind about creating videos using my friend’s acting. I decided to shoot a wide range of random images and collage them to juxtapose the storyline of my script.

What was obvious in my production stage is that I had to change my initial plan constantly. I felt that I was creating something from live objects. What I needed to keep thinking was that I was not creating fancy movies with unlimited resources. I was sharing
a story, and this story had to be embodied with limited resources effectively. Although I did not work with professional actor, I could shoot abstract images that can visualize the feeling of particular moments of his story rather than asking my actor to act the scene literally. During the production stage, I attempted to collect video footage that can help create context and add visual variety or depth to my video. I attempted to shoot images with strong emotional delivery to improve effectiveness. I attempted to consider lighting when shooting videos in order that all of the clips would have the same tone. I was not concerned about the lightening and the colors of the video because I could edit them during the post-production stage. The actual shooting process was mainly conducted indoors due to weather conditions. I filmed random objects such as trains, trees, streets and flowers. I attempted to make long clips of each object with the idea that I could edit them down later in order to ensure that I had enough footage to work with during the entire video. I collected two types of audio files, narration and downloaded music, two types of images, digital photos and edited images, recorded videos, downloaded videos (from YouTube) and edited videos for post-production editing. These video production elements were in raw forms, and I had to edit and finalize all of these media components, and integrate them into a meaningful digital story.

4.3.4.3 Post-production: Editing. I needed to organize my thoughts and raw media clips in order to create meaningful and powerful digital stories in the post-production stage. Editing was a very individualized decision-making process to me.

Vignette (Recreated from my journal entries, Week, 13)

I open my Mac, and select the iMovie icon to open it. I click on the iMovie icon on the dock. It is the time to begin editing. It takes several seconds to load all the data in iMovie. I already transferred all the video footage in my iPhone to the
laptop. I had a folder named final project in the desktop. On the screen, I click “create project”. I name my project “final project,” and clicked “save”. I go to “file import” to select clips. I need to browse for a folder with a lot of raw video footage, and I select many of them for future use. It takes four minutes to import all video clips and more time to import the sound clips. All clips are in the “process window”. I am able to drag and drop more videos to the window, and I am able to delete some of videos from the window. I save my project frequently so as not to have any trouble. I make sure the timeline bar is visible because keeping the allotted time is important. Total time of my raw video clips is one hour. I need to cut off them to make a 3-4 minute video.

I carefully observe each video clip, click and drag some of them to the project window. I know I can rearrange the order of clips by clicking and dragging them anytime. I sometimes check the preview window by hitting the play button. I drag the voice-over into the project window. Total length of the voice-over is 3min, and it means my video will be around 3’30” to 4’. I insert still photos in between video footage in order to make the transitions clean. The voice-over narration will be playing during the entire video. I am planning on doing dual sounds for some areas and including calm music sound over the voice-over. The video elements are sometimes sandwiched around still footage. I want some transition in each story. I add transitions by clicking transition icon on the “task bar”. The transition window shows all the available transition animations, and I can preview them before selecting. I click and drag the rollover transition effect to the arrow between two video clips. I select a gradient wipe transition for the introduction clips.

To add sound effects, I click on the Audio icon. I choose mp3 file for the background music, and drag it to the project window. Although, each sound effect has a pre-set duration, I can edit and split selected audio clips. I can delete the segment of audio that I do not want by deleting them. I can also change the audio levels in the sound effect menu. I can actually click on the arrows on the bottom of the video clips in the project window for the multiple functions. I can crop videos. I can select the beginning and end point of each video. I can drag each video in the sequence that I want. I can also add some effect to my videos. By clicking video clip effects, I can add flip effects, black and white effects, or a cartoon effects.

As described in Chapter 2, the post-production stage involves editing, and editing is the stage during which meanings are created in an aesthetic manner. In the world of digital storytelling, the storyteller creates and adds visual variety or depth to his/her video by dragging and clicking. The editor must think about what would be the best type of
visual representation to use in order to describe the narrative structure using key image frames in the sequence. I attempted to use footage that meshed with the words in the narration, e.g., when the narration spoke about loneliness, I showed an image that depicted being alone. I spliced the videos to fit the images with the words in the narration. I shortened clips that dragged on for too long or which failed to fully make sense in terms of the lyrics. Given that the narration basically involves telling a story that is already visually apparent, I sought to use the background sounds as a simple mood maker. If a few videos turned out to be blurry, I avoided using those videos. The editing process required a great deal of work in order to make it complete. I sometimes did not have perfect videos or pictures that would properly illustrate the story, and sometimes the transitions among videos were rough because they abruptly switched to a new video or picture. Developing a finished product required that I finish putting clips and photos to the music that were juxtaposed well in terms of the words in the narration. I had to repeatedly reedit the film and time everything properly in order to obtain the final product. The sample journal entry below reflects my struggles while editing the final project.

I have just finished my final project, and played my video for my own pleasure. I will show my video to my colleagues tomorrow. I am actually happy to have completed my video. Creating a digital story is a joyful experience as well as a personal struggle. I am uncertain whether this video is fully artistic or meaningful. During most of the editing process, I reflected on my artistic nature and techniques. My final project is not as rough as my first video but I remain unsure about how to create a digital story. The editing process is fun, however. It is like a collage. I can do everything with my collected raw footage. This final project took almost six hours to edit. I naturally started to think like a documentary maker or a film-maker while editing this video. It is a creative/artistic work. Although I am just clicking and dragging using my small laptop and mouse, the hours fly by in a short amount of time. I cannot believe that I have been able to work such long
hours and wind up happy with my work. I researched, shot and collected hundreds of raw media clips, and was overwhelmed at first.

I attempted to convey compassion in this final project. I attempted to pursue coherence, harmony, flow and the use of emotion in this final project. However, the more I learn about video making, the less satisfied I become with my own work. I am gradually coming to feel that I need more advanced software, more sound files, and more time to work on my project. I currently feel that to create an artistic narrative video production is really hard work. I have many ideas about conveying meaning in digital stories, but do not know how to best deal with all of these ideas. I also feel that this struggle is a sign that I am ready to move on to the next stage, meaning move on to a more advanced level. (Journal, Week, 14).

I am a dedicated digital storyteller, and acknowledge that I was a non-professional user of digital video cameras and the video editing software program. During the editing process, even though I experienced difficulties, I was able to visualize my creative ideas by constant improvisation. Blending and juxtaposing multimedia clips with each other facilitated the creation of an enjoyable digital story, and I was able to give structure to the digital story throughout the editing process.

One important part of my last project editing was the impact the peer feedback session had on my final product. After creating my initial digital story, I was able to hear my peer-classmates’ thoughts and feelings regarding my efforts. Accepting or rejecting their suggestions is up to individual producers in the peer review sessions, however, showing my draft to the audience and observing how they reacted to my video allowed me re-edit my video-production with their perspectives in mind. I felt that the peer review and suggestion time could be very influential to those who are working with digital media as their medium. For example, when I work with a more traditional medium, I cannot change the whole composition, color, and focus of my work, even if I hear a really good suggestion or my insight for that project changes due to peer feedback. However, I was
able to change my ending, I was able to delete particular scenes that weren’t so intriguing, I was able to cut off some parts of a story that didn’t fit well and I was able to add more a powerful title scene with digital technology as my medium. For example, my original ending scene and narration was more about my narrator’s self-conviction. “But I try to tell myself that my life, just like everyone else's, is a unique adventure, and all adventures present both challenges and rewards. The reward is the diversity in my friends and the feeling that the world is my backyard”.

My original intention to create this piece was suggesting the happy ending. He tried to tell the happy-ending of his life, and tried to end his story in a very positive way. I got feedback about my ending from classmates, that this ending narration blocked audience immersion into the story, and it sounded too structured. I agreed with their comments, and I tried to convey the positive ending in more subtle and implicit ways. I went back to re-scripting, and revise the story to “So where does all of this bring me today? As a 26 year old, I have only just begun the journey of putting puzzle pieces of my past and present. This is an immensely personal journey that awakens many painful feelings, some which are even being felt for the first time. This is a journey that, whether or not it will bring about true healing in the end, I must take”.

I then went out to re-shoot a scene for my ending, and re-edited my project. Changing the ending scene and story created a completely different story. This process confirmed for me the importance of peer review during the post-production stage.
4.3.5 Video analysis based on the conceptual framework:

Exploring improvisational video making.

4.3.5.1 Analyzing the digital story: Properties of narrative. As I previously stipulated in Chapter 2, there are five common important properties/aspects of narrative in a video. They are (a) teller: point of view/narrative voice, (b) subject matter: characters, actions and setting, (c) time, (d) topic/theme, and (e) audience and context. Meanings of a story are shaped based on the purposeful manipulation of these properties of narrative. In the following Table 13, I show my analysis of the narrative of my video based on these five narrative properties.

Table 13

Properties of Narrative of My Third Video

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Properties of Narrative</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teller/Narrator:</td>
<td>Teller and Narrator in this story is a guy in his mid-20s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject matter:</td>
<td>Character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>Asian American, cross-culture kid. He can be an individual or he can represent a group of this third culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions/Events</td>
<td>Actions/Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>This story consists of three major points. (1) his background, (2) his relationship/friendship, (3) his current issues and reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A sequence of this story is (a) birth point to his mid-20s, (b) his 20s, and (c) recent days into his future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He speeds up the time from his childhood to the present in the first part. The pace of part 2 is slowed down in order to provide more details. He explains his current issues in part 3 with a neutral pace.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 13 (cont.)

Actual time: 25 years of his life.
Implied time: around 20 years.
Recorded time: 4 min and 30 sec.
Running time: 5 min and 13 sec.

Topic/Theme

An Asian-American mid-20-year-old guy shares his life from a distance. He considers himself a cross-cultural kid who is global. Like all of us, his life and his cultural background has various pros and cons. He is highly accepting of other cultures, but at the same time he has an insecure identity issue.

Audience/Context

Audience: Graduate students in a new media making class.
Artist Context: An international graduate student in the US who has met a lot of cross-cultural students who are studying in America.
Viewing Context: This story will be placed for viewing in new media making class in a Midwest University.
Social/Cultural Context: A media-making classroom is only for graduate students, but they are from all different disciplines. All of them are American white people except for me.

One voice is particularly telling. The narrator shares his personal story as told from his internal perspective. In his story, the point of view (meaning the point of view of the one who sees) and the narrative voice (the one who speaks) are same. The subject of this digital story concerns a young man who describes himself as being a “cross-cultural kid.” The main character in this story is, at different points in time, an Asian-American man and a Singaporean-American whose parents are Filipino-Chinese who has citizenship in Singapore. He spent a significant amount of time in several different states in the United States, South Korea and Singapore. When he lived in Singapore, he did not have friends from Singapore, because he attended an international school where most of the students were citizens of foreign countries. Later on, he came to the US. for his undergraduate and graduate studies, living far away from his parents. Although his
passport says that he is a citizen of the United States, he feels as if he is a person with international citizenship. He does not feel that he belongs in the US. The three main events/happenings in this story are: (a) how he grew up immersed in several different cultures, (b) the unique qualities of his relationships/friendships, and (c) his current struggles, issues, and hopes. The specific time frame of the story ranges from his birth to his current stage of development in his mid-20s. The physical locations where the main character exists in this story are Honolulu, Hawaii, Rochester, New York, Singapore, South Korea, and Illinois, US.

The order of this story is basically chronological. This story begins with his birth and continues up to the present day. This story does not rearrange the events in his life for dramatic effect. However, the duration of each year in the video differs from his real life. This story briefly illustrates the main-character’s first 20 years in one minute, and spends 4 minutes on the next 4-5 years. The tempo of the story is rapid at the beginning of the story, after which it slows down. Although the time span covered by the story is the first 25 years of his life, it does not clearly indicate his age. The audience may assume that he is about 20 years of age based on the content of the story. The running time of the video is 5 minutes and 13 seconds, and the recorded time is 4 minutes and 30 seconds. The remainder of the running time involves the title scene and the credits.

I believe that the topic of this story asks questions of the audience. This story concerns an Asian-American man in his mid-20s. He shares his life in an unemotional manner (neutral tone of voice) in this digital story. Because he has a diverse cultural background, moving between countries is easy for him. He says that he is highly accepting of other cultures. He spent most of his life among different cultures, and has
attempted to adjust to his passport country and his parent’s country. Most people think that this sort of cultural experience is beneficial to people because this is only possible for those whose parents are highly educated and successful in their careers. However, the main character in this story confesses that he experiences difficulty because he is unable to culturally categorize himself. It seems to me that sometimes such people hope to live in a single culture to which they can completely identify. The main character of my story has the notion that he wants to fully participate in any culture to which he chooses to belong.

Tom’s story emphasizes his different cultural identity reflecting upon alternative life that he might have experienced and had him upbringing been different. Those identity and relationship issues might have become less problematic to him like now. Tom’s story is one of personal journey through breakdown, trouble, negotiation, and growth. The teller/narrator (Tom) narrates a coherent story regarding his cross-cultural backgrounds from childhood to the present day. The teller/narrator (Tom) places himself as one who has discovered his true-self having struggled with his relationship and identity through his childhood cross-cultural experiences and the subsequent compromises till now. His story reveals the necessity of one’s cultural identity to facilitate identity integration and relationships.

As an artist/creator of this story, when I consider how the audience might position themselves in relation to the story, I hope that the audience can re-think the meaning of spending a significant part of their developmental years outside the culture of their parents. I created this story specifically for my class peers who are graduate students in a new media-making class. The story of this video is grounded within the context of an
artist, which is how I identify myself. As an Asian international student who is studying in the USA, I have met many Korean students whose passports were issued by the United States although they actually grew up in Korea. Most such students were born in the United States when their parents were working or studying there. After growing up in Korea, they came to the US. to attend undergraduate or graduate school. The character in this story has a complicated cultural background, and my compassion for “cross-cultural kids” is also based on my personal experiences. The viewing context is a Mid-western university, graduate level, new media course classroom. This digital story was created in 2011, when ‘globalization’ and ‘cross-culture’ were familiar terms for most people.

4.3.5.2 Analyzing the digital story: Media components and artistic strategies.

Digital stories often have a multi-modal nature, so I will illustrate the three types of media components of this particular digital story in this section, including images, sounds, and words. I will also further describe how collectively combining words, images and sounds in a scene add a powerful and meaningful impact to a digital story. I used artistic strategies to systematically connect sounds and words in both still and moving images. Basically, each scene was created through layering and hybridizing two to three media components such as sounds, texts and images, by mixing them into a specific scene.

The main image components of this digital story are moving images. They are mostly recorded videos made by myself, and included edited videos. I also made use of downloaded video clips from YouTube, and cut parts of them for personal use. Downloaded and edited video clips (See Figure 2) include: (a) a scene of rain-drops
(1’55” to 2’18”), (b) a scene of abstract images (3’15”-3’ 30”), and (c) a scene of trains (3’37-4’30”). The color of this digital story is black and white.

Figure 2. Downloaded and edited video clips

I intentionally used monochromatic tones to enhance the continuity of this story and the continuity of the images. I did not have professional lighting, and I felt that black and white can not only cover up the inconsistency of the image tones, black and white imagery might also conveys a sense of nostalgia or loneliness. The story and the narration are calm. I attempted to avoid using high-contrast color images, and black-white images appear to be soft. I also created a black and white movie in order to allow the audience to focus on the narration sounds, because color might overwhelm the audience. This video made use of two types of camera movements: the zooming shot and the steady shot. I
used the Dissolve transition effect for the transition. There is a gradual transition from one image to another, which helps create the smooth transition in this digital story. I selected the most natural fade-in and fade-out transitions rather than selecting visually funny and intriguing transitions.

The dominant sound in this digital story is the voice-over narration. A man’s voice adds emotional substance and authenticity to this story. Since the narration leads the whole story, I attempted to get an accurate and precise reading using a neutral tone of unemotional voice. The voice-over in this story is clear and consistently audible throughout the running time of the video. There is no background music in this video. Instead of background music, the sound of an artificial heartbeat accompanies the voice. The heartbeat sound is used in this video to maximize the audience’s emotional experience. As a video maker, I wanted the audience to feel as if the narrator was telling the story in person. The pace of the heartbeat became faster at some points and became slower at other points.

Words are an important artistic property of digital stories. The title scene showed the words “I am a cultural kid” for ten seconds. This phrase encapsulates the main topic of this story beyond images and sounds. For a period of 10 seconds, this single sentence conveys the key information of this story. In order to optimize the expressive qualities of words, I wanted a particular font that would make it seem as if a real person was writing the text. I wanted to achieve the handwriting effect, so I wrote a sentence on the window and shot the window.

I utilized two main artistic strategies in my digital story: collage and the adaptation of literary devices. Throughout the 5 minutes and 13 seconds of running time,
this digital story involves a wide range of juxtaposed images, sounds, and words. The mutual juxtaposition of different types of multi-media creates meanings in a scene. For example, a scene from 13” to 15”, the narrator begins to tell his story. The voice-over begins with the words “When I think about my childhood, it feels like a puzzle full of pieces that don’t fit.” A slow heartbeat accompaniment is heard as the narration begins.

Figure 3. Selected scene from the researcher’s video.

As we can see from Figure 3, the image of this scene is a long shot with someone’s back to the camera. The camera position remains still, and the audience can focus on the background images, which include a fuzzy focus bus running in the street establishing the shot. The image in this scene is grey toned with low-contrasted black and white, and it is not a clear shot. This intentional juxtaposition between sounds and images adds to the meaning of the spoken sentence “When I think about my childhood, it feels
like a puzzle full of pieces that don’t fit.” The composition of this shot reinforces the narrator’s confusion. His memory is hard to put a handle on, like the blurry image of the bus. The depicted person in the scene gives the feeling of being isolated through the video creator’s use of black-white image juxtaposed with a heartbeat sound. This scene shows that the main character appears on the street, looking at the street without being a part of the actions on the street. A literary device (visual metaphors) is used that can be interpreted in several ways (See Figure 4).

Figure 4 (cont. on next page)
From 2’24” to 2’50’, the narrator says:

My friends say that I make others feel comfortable and open, and I believe this has allowed me to make close friends of people from diverse cultures. Once people get to know me for a while and we enjoy relating to one another superficially, we start building the expectation that we are alike and share deep values. However, we eventually realize that we are not the same, and subsequently we get disappointed and hurt. This has happened numerous times in my life, and it makes me feel that I lack substance in my personality.

During this scene (Figure 4), the camera displays a close-up of the movement of a hand that is holding strings as the strings detach. This movement repeats twice. The hand may be assumed to be that of the narrator. His hand closes tightly and then opens up again at a slow pace. He grasps a string, but the string is gone later in the scene. As the creator of this video, I edited this video to show the string moving toward and into his hand. I wanted to visualize the participant’s relationships using a visual metaphor in this particular scene. The hand represents the main character, and the string represents his friends who he says detach from deep involvement in his life.

From 3’44” to 4’20’, the narrator says:

The advantage of being able to readily switch different culture faces on and off comes at the cost of feeling this loneliness from not being able to open all of myself up to anybody. Something else I struggle with is a love-hate relationship
with settling down in one place. Deep inside of me, the instability I've had in my
friendships has made me yearn for a stable life, settling down in a location where
my friends will be in the same place forever. However, in all the places I've lived
in, whenever I spend more than a few years there and start getting comfortable, I
feel a strange restlessness, and feel that I need to relocate, even though I love and
value the relationships I've already built.

This narration is conveyed through a relatively long continuous scene (35
seconds) compared to others, which are usually less than 25 seconds (See Figure 5).

Figure 5. Footage of train

One noticeable feature of this scene is that I obtained the footage from YouTube,
rather than shooting it myself. My intention was to show the main character’s strange
restlessness and instability, so I wanted to portray a consistent conceptual journey that
resisted settling down in one place; thereby representing the life journey of the main
character. I thought that showing a train and the view out its windows would symbolize such a journey, so I searched for images of trains on YouTube. I downloaded seven different train cuts from random videos, each with different camera angles and framing techniques. After examining each video carefully, I decided to use cuts from two different videos that maintained some continuation and harmony in terms of framing technique, color tone, and camera movement. The view out of the train windows are a visual metaphor for the journey of the main character. As an artistic strategy, I used both re-contextualization and metaphor as literary devices to convey the story. Although travel is a familiar concept that indicates physically moving from place to place, I appropriated this familiar concept and applied it to the main character’s conceptual journey through his relationships and his emerging identity. The main character might be the train itself, or he might be a traveller on the train. Although neither the audience nor I, as the storyteller, know the schedule or destination of the train, we can assume that the theme (travel) developed through train symbolizes the life of the main character.

From 4’45” to 5’13’, the narrator says:

So where does all of this bring me today? As a 26 year old, I have only just begun the journey of putting puzzle pieces of my past and present. This is an immensely personal journey that awakens many painful feelings, some which are even being felt for the first time. This is a journey that, whether or not it will bring about true healing in the end, I must take.

I wanted the film to be open ended, but at the same time, I wanted to convey a positive ending for those individual’s straddling two cultures, including the main character and including myself. As explained above regarding my changes to the script, I wanted to show that life could go on amidst all the pain and struggles, and that the main character would survive his personal journey. In many regards, the main character acts as

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a surrogate for me, allowing me to explore aspects of my own journey, feelings, and identity as an individual living away from the culture of origin.

Figure 6. Scene analysis example

In order to create this final scene (see Figure 6), I drew a smiley face with my finger on a steamed-up car window, and I chose to film it while the car was moving to allude to the movement of his life journey. Throughout these final scenes, a finger draws a smiley face, as if the character is growing up. The smiley face is a metaphor for the main character; his life journey unfolds as he develops, and that is indicated by the changing background seen through the steamed window. I do not know whether the character of this story will eventually settle down somewhere. However, I wanted to
show no matter where he is, he will develop a sense of stability and continuity throughout his journey. After the narration ends, the heartbeat sound continues, to give the audience time to breathe with the character and immerse themselves in the story for a while, before the heartbeat fades out.

4.3.6 Reflection.

Over the course of a semester, I explored digital storytelling and developed my ability to communicate with an audience through the construction of a creative digital story, an experience that brought me both a sense of accomplishment and feelings of frustration. Before learning about digital storytelling, I perceived it as another way of telling stories, aided by digital technology—a way of decorating plain oral or written stories with multimedia features, like images, text, and sound. However, through the process of learning about digital storytelling, I came to realize that digital storytelling has different meanings for different authors, and also that it functions differently in each individual’s project. Additionally, the nature of digital video storytelling including the multimedia, sights, sounds, live footage, storyboards, narrations, transitions, and artistic strategies, conveys something distinctively different than other forms of storytelling such as plays, books or music alone.

Each video that I made was unique expression of what was going on inside my mind during the particular time that I created it. For example, my first digital video was simply an attempt to mix diverse multimedia into a story: I tried to decorate my plain story with audio and visual effects. I did not spend much time using the technology in a meaningful way to add artistic expression to the story. Since I was unfamiliar with my camera and editing software, that first attempt was more of a technology exploration than
in-depth digital storytelling. Although I believe it produced superficial results, this hands-on experience did open my eyes to the process of creating digital video. Experiencing the whole process from pre-production to post-production led me to appreciate the intricacies of the craft. For instance, the juxtaposition of images and sounds requires constant decision making; a one-minute video took hours to edit.

Selecting a topic was also an activity that involved more than I would have initially guessed. In order to choose a topic, I had to do research to find something that inspired me. Next, I had to think about how to portray this topic to the audience. At first, my topics reflected my personal cultural interests. Since the audience had different personal, social, and cultural concerns, I needed to craft my film to cultivate my audience’s interest. As I experienced these real issues related to digital video creation, I started to feel more like a filmmaker. I thought about camera angles and powerful shots during preproduction for the first time. After creating an outline of the main character’s story, choosing specific locations, and visualizing the images in my mind, I moved to the next stage: shooting (production).

While collecting raw media footage, I was able to improvise scenes according to ideas, conditions, and availabilities that emerged. Sometimes the scenes I had envisioned in my initial shooting plan didn’t turn out well; other times, I found better ideas for visualizing the story once I started filming. This emergent character of developing a shooting plan and then revising it on site proved to be beneficial. I also tried to collect sounds to go with my video images. Since the actual juxtaposition happens in postproduction (editing), I collected sounds based on what I anticipated would be useful. During postproduction, I was then able to create a conceptual collage of three media
components. I constantly questioned myself during the editing process regarding the juxtaposition of images, sounds, and text to create meaning. Since I was able to capture more diverse shots as my skills developed over the course of the semester, the amount of time I spent on the creation of my digital story grew longer with each project. When I finished the second and third projects, I was shocked at how much time I had spent editing. However, I didn’t feel bored during the process, because every change I made while editing had an immediate and dramatic effect: I clicked and dragged and dropped, and the computer showed me the changes instantly. Since I could actually confirm how my decisions affected my project, I was able to try a wide range of juxtapositions to find what would work best. I found the editing process to be a rewarding experience.

Digital video is a way of telling stories creatively and effectively, making them interesting to the audience as well as myself. Over the course of the semester, I have come to understand that creative digital story involves the use of creative forms of media to convey a strong message. In order to create a compelling story, there should be the strong connections between the narratives in a digital story and artistic form. The more I learn about video making, the wide range of collage possibilities, and the opportunities for improvisation with ideas that emerge during the filmmaking process, the less satisfied I am with the films that I create. For example, digital stories can have multiple possible endings, diverse visual metaphoric images appropriate to each particular scene, and a wide range of possibilities for juxtaposing images and sound. Faced with such an array of choices, I have gradually come to feel a need for more advanced software and more time for experimenting with such a malleable medium.
4.4 Case Two: A Self-Motivated Learner and Filmmaker

4.4.1 Profile: Bob.

My first study participant was Bob, a white male Art Education master’s student interested in art history, visual culture, new media, fine arts, and technology. He stood out in the class because he was very knowledgeable about digital technology and film theory, even though he was in his late 50s. I found Bob to be an interesting character: clearly sociable, and stereotypically artistic looking with guitar and long hair. Because Bob was a natural performer and storyteller, he was easy to interview. Bob enjoyed having me as an audience. The research interviews gave him an opportunity to share his years of life experience.

During class sessions throughout the course of the semester, Bob provided feedback to our classmates regarding technology issues, and he introduced interesting film terms in the class. I enjoyed his participation in my research, and he appeared to as well, saying that everyone loves telling their stories, so you will not have any trouble finding research participants. Since we had taken the film course together, I was able to sense a warmth and mutual respect between us. Each interview was conducted on campus, and on each occasion, Bob brought his videos and journals and took the time to show them to me. Bob was a very meticulous person: although all of our interviews were conducted six months after our last class, he had saved almost all of his materials from the course. As a result, our interviews were robust with detail and insight.

In our first interview, Bob shared his background and experiences regarding art, education, and technology. To some degree, he had experience with three important aspects throughout his life, art, music, and technology. Bob made strong identity claims
to being an artist and musician:

It was like I was in the art world all the time. And going to art shows—it was just a thing that I really loved to do….I’ve had a long background in the arts. I started out as a musician when I was probably twelve years old, and I started playing at folk festivals, which were big community music events in the 1960s. And so I travelled around quite a bit, even when I was—well, with my parents, of course. And played a lot of places. So I was always in contact with the art world, especially the more—music, and especially not the mainstream art world, but the… more offbeat art world. (Bob, Interview 1)

Bob’s involvement with art and music continued throughout his life; he was even planning on going to an art show after that first interview.

Bob had an interdisciplinary educational and professional background. Originally from New York, he performed on guitar in front of an audience for the first time when he was twelve years old in Upper Manhattan, which he described as “a big thrill for a twelve-year-old boy,” especially because of all the girls cheering for him. Later, he was a member of various bands, and he played at several art festivals. Although he was very much interested in music, he went to a technical school and got a degree in architecture. I asked him about this educational decision:

Me: You like music a lot, and had rich music related experience. I am wondering why you decided to study architecture rather than music?

Bob: Rock musicians—which, I was into country and rock—did not…had kind of a…their own—theyir own genre going, and formal music instruction was kind of disregarded, because formal music instruction is a lot of structured music, and in the rock and jazz worlds, it’s very improvisational. So you don’t learn the formal concepts so much as you learn how music notes relate to one another and how the music flows. Much more experimental. (Bob, Interview 1)

Since he likes less structured music and more artistic freedom, he was not interested in majoring in classical music. Bob went on to work in the field of architecture as a draftsman for eight years, under a talented designer. He was closely connected with the
art world during this time; he explained, “architecture and art are very interrelated,” and “a lot of architects were actually doing art, and vice versa” (Bob, Interview 2).

As Bob explained, he had an experimental nature, and so his artistic journey continued. He studied art and design for a certificate in Web Design, subsequently working as a web designer; he also showed interest in photography:

I did a lot what I would call artistic photography. Experiment around with black and white and a lot of landscapes. That was mainly the extent of my photographic artistic direction. (Bob, Interview 1)

Later, Bob earned a bachelor’s degree in art history and a master’s degree in art education. He also earned an Associate of Arts and Humanities degree, taking many art history courses with the intention to major in art history.

In addition to his art-related experiences, Bob was savvy about technology and media, despite being a member of what I viewed as an older generation, which I usually assume to be less adaptable to the growing role of digital technology and new media. Bob described himself as “a very motivated self-learner,” and he also said that he enjoyed working with art and technology (Bob, Interview 1). Even before he had taken formal classes in technology such as iMovie, Windows Movie Maker, Photoshop, and Dreamweaver, he had already been working with them. As he claimed, it wasn’t hard for him “to just sit down and within an hour…be familiar with all the techniques” relevant to a piece of software (Bob, Interview 2).

Since Bob was in his late 50s, he had observed and experienced the development of digital technology first hand from its beginning. When Bob was in his 30s, the personal computer was introduced, and he adapted himself to ever-emerging new
technology throughout his life. In the first interview, we discussed the different software programs that he was familiar with:

When the computer age first started, in—probably about ’82 or ’83, my friends bought the Commodore 20s and the Commodore 64s. Those are like the first little home computers you could buy. There were also—Radio Shack also had home computers: Tandy. And this is just right on the verge when IBM started to come out with their PS series. And I didn’t like computers, because I didn’t like the programming in BASIC, and they couldn’t do anything then. They could do very little except play games. But within several years, my own field that I was in, which was architectural drafting, it shifted into AutoCAD….And everybody wanted that skill. If you were going to keep working in the work environment, they wanted that AutoCAD skill. So I…let’s see, that was in ’96 that I went to Parkland and I took a course in Auto CAD. And then—but then even that didn’t really prepare me for the digital world, so eventually I bought myself a computer and completely taught myself the complete basics of DOS….

Flash? Dreamweaver? It wasn’t that hard, no. I mean, I haven’t found any software to be—in fact, now, at this point, most software…they’re all very similar to one another…. They follow similar rules and similar protocols, so I’m not daunted by any new software. You know, I can…at least be able to navigate my way around within an hour or so. So that doesn’t faze me. (Bob, Interview 1)

Bob was skillful at using various digital software programs, even those that were new to the digital generation. When I indicated my surprise, he said that all software programs followed similar rules and protocols, and that if you keep those in mind, you can work your way through the program:

Why won’t it do what I want it to do? But it was just because you weren’t following a correct procedure. (Bob, Interview 1)

Bob’s background shows that he has been able to successfully experience and learn about new things emerging around him, and that he is a strong self-learner with a high level of motivation and realistic plans.
4.4.2 Factors that influenced Bob’s decision to take the digital video making course.

As an art education student interested in art history, visual culture, new media, fine arts, film theory, and technology, Bob explained that he tried to keep himself up-to-date on all kinds of new computer technology. In his first interview, he explained why he was pursuing an M.A. in art education, and why he was taking a new media course.

I applied for graduate school...in Art History. I wasn’t accepted, but I was accepted into Art Education, and as it turned out, Art Education was a much better fit for me than even Art History was, because I really got involved in the pedagogy and I really was interested in curriculum development and all the issues. But I also had the opportunity to expand the Art Education degree into Media and Visual Culture, which were new concepts that I really was interested in. I...had done a lot of reading in...Art History and in Visual Culture.... And of course, as a web designer, I was also heavily involved in New Media.... I’ve done computer programming and taken all kinds of courses in that, in order to keep myself up-to-date on all kinds of new computer technology, so I’m in this cross-section between New Media and Visual Culture and Art History and Fine Arts, all together. So it’s like...I don’t really have a complete, total focus on any one of them. So when I took the Writing with Video class, which was suggested to me by a professor, I thought, “Oh, that sounds like a really fun class.”... I just recently started working in Windows Movie Maker, just before I started the class. So I thought, “Oh, this is really cool.” (Bob, Interview 1)

Since Bob had interdisciplinary interests and was not afraid of technology, he was not hesitant to take a new media course. When a professor suggested the video-making course to him, Bob’s initial reaction was that it would be “cool” and “fun.”

While I was taking the course with Bob, I observed that he was very knowledgeable about film terms and theory. Since we shared our movies through “show and tell” sessions, I could hear how he used film terms to discuss digital videos, and film terms were relatively new to me. Still, Bob confessed that moving images didn’t interest
his as much as still photography; he had only recently acquired a video camera. His interest in movies was inspired by a film course he had taken.

One of my final undergraduate classes at UIS was a course called European Cinema. I’d never been exposed to art cinema before, and this was really a fabulous class. I really loved it. So that was a real good introduction into moviemaking, because the course was not only introducing you to the...great film directors of Europe, there was also—one of the textbooks was also all about film production. ... So we were introduced to the great directors, like Fellini and Ingmar Bergman, and Francois Truffaut, and Fassbinder—a German filmmaker. So we had to watch all these different movies that they had produced, and then dissect them and deconstruct them and analyze all these different movies.

I’ve obviously watched thousands of movies, but I never considered myself a really big movie fan. I just didn’t think of myself as that. But after I took this film course, I realized that I was really much more of a movie person than I had thought I was. Because I really noticed a lot of things that I’d never realized I’d noticed about movie making. And then, of course, when we started learning all the different techniques that the studios use, like reverse shots and montage, and all these different things in the way film went together, then I really started paying attention to that. (Bob, Interview 1)

Clearly, even before taking this digital storytelling course, Bob already had a rich background in film theory. He shared that the more he learns about film, the more he enjoys it. These newfound interests in new media and film, in addition to his arts and technology related experiences, led Bob to enroll this course.

4.4.3 Bob’s journey of creative video making.

4.4.3.1 Experimenting with making digital videos (Module 1). All three interviews were conducted in the building in which we had taken the video making class. Bob spoke to me about specific pieces of his videos, explaining details behind the work and what they represent. In the third interview, Bob also shared his experience with the video making process and learning how to tell digital stories over the course of the semester. Since he had a wide range of film and digital media related experiences, he was
familiar with the course content and felt comfortable in the class. His expectations of the course were posted in his electronic blog, where we were required to post our video productions regularly throughout the semester in order to interact with our peers. Because Bob was very meticulous, he had even backed up his blog entries and was able to share them with me during our interviews, a semester after the class ended. After the first session of the course, he posted the introduction and purpose of his blog, sharing his expectations of the course:

The birth of this particular blog has its impetus in a course I’m taking for my post-graduate studies in Art Education, facilitated by Prof. John. I say ‘facilitated,’ rather than ‘instructed,’ because he is more or less acting as a guide to the dozen or so students in his class down a path to producing a short video on a subject of our choosing.

I can tell already that this is not going to be a direct path from point A to point B. And that’s great. Like David Balfour following the Stuart royalist/loyalist Alan Breck across the moors of Scotland in Robert Louis Stephenson’s *Kidnapped*, it’s going to be a semester’s journey of discovery – about ourselves, the physical world around us, and the relatively new world of cyberspace, where digital media is transforming the way we do business, the way we socialize, the way we express ourselves, and most of all for we artists, the way we create.

(Bob, Journal 1)

With a firm grasp of film theory and concrete ideas regarding digital media, Bob decided to use this course as a journey of discovery about himself; he seemed pleased with the prospect of experiencing ways to create digital media, rather than following a rote curriculum.

In the second interview, Bob and I watched his first and second video projects together and discussed how Bob had experienced the creative process of video-making personally, as well as the learning issues he had encountered. He described his approach to his first project:
So the first film I made…was 305…. Everybody had to do a beginning film, so my thought was, well, what am I going to do? So I just took my camera outside and just walked around to see what there might be, and then I saw this old house that was on our street that is an abandoned house. And that had a screen door with a number—the house number that was manufactured right into the screen door. So…I got the idea of filming that in kind of a creepy, horror-movie style, where the camera pans in to someplace and starts a sequence of wonder and expectation of what’s going to happen next. (Bob, Interview 2)

Since Bob was familiar with editing software and film structure, he was trying to do something with a “weird idea” that occurred to him at a particular moment. Bob explained that he did not pre-plan anything before creating his first video, except for a vague idea that he would like to make a horror movie in the style of Alfred Hitchcock:

It was all total improvisation. It was just building on what went on before. I get an idea in my head of how to make it kind of weird. It had to all have kind of a strange feel to it that people wouldn’t normally be accustomed to. It’s just, as Joseph said in the class, it’s taking advantage of a situation and seeing what you can do with it. It could have been an experiment that flopped, maybe it wouldn’t have worked. I don’t know. (Bob, Interview 2)

The whole germ of the idea was when I walked over there and saw that 305 and then decided to do the stalking intro to it. And then all the other ideas just were an outgrowth of that. (Bob, Interview 2)

Although Bob did not have a pre-planned storyboard, he did have a certain purpose for this particular video project. Using the number 305 as the overarching theme for his one-minute video, Bob used six different images and unease sound to evoke feelings of anxiety and discomfort (See Figure 7). In Bob’s terms, he intended his movie to be “a little spoof of…a fright film” (Bob, Interview 2). Although his movie making process was improvisational, he had a clear idea about the style, mood, and atmosphere he wanted the movie to convey.
Interestingly, while Bob and I were watching his first video together, he described his video not from the perspective of creator but from that of the audience:

Wait, I could turn the soundtrack down. [pause; music gets quieter] Okay, so now we’re panning in...in kind of a creepy fashion. Kind of a stalking fashion. And now we look at this house number of 305. And so now it sets up the expectation of “What does that mean?” And now we have a hand that’s drawing
305 and onto the—and now we have this sequence here. 305. And a brownstone in New York that I took into Photoshop. And, ah, now we’ve got the helicopter, we’ve got the domino that’s got three and five on it. And it gets blurred and now finally Munch screams 305. (Bob, Interview 2)

In Bob’s video, the number 305 was a theme, and all the scenes were a rendition of that number. And in the end, he inserted Munch’s *The Scream*, with “305!” super-imposed above the main character, as if the character is screaming because “305” is in his head.

As I shared in my case report, my first video project was a more elementary exploration of technology and the juxtaposition of images and sounds. In contrast, Bob had already embodied a certain type of sequential narrative structure in his first piece. He also paid attention to the audience, creating and viewing his piece from his perspective as well as that of the audience. This more advanced creative process was possible because Bob was already familiar with film making and theory; he knew the basics of film composition and had experience with Windows Movie Maker. Without the impediment of technology related issues Bob could focus the first leg of his digital video making journey on collecting visuals based on improvisational moments and then deciding how they would be arranged.

Since he was an experienced composer of music, Bob also created the soundtrack to his video himself using Garage Band on Mac. He wanted his first video to completely reflect his own efforts, including the audio component. Bob knew how to record studio techniques, and he wrote songs and music himself. Since he even won a song-writing award in a city song festival previously, Bob shared how he created the soundtrack and juxtaposed it to images he already had:

I did the sound track because...I could…. I have a separate computer set up for music recording. The software generates the drum track; then I played/added the
bass, rhythm guitar, and lead guitar tracks separately (multi-tracking) for the 305 soundtrack.

This particular audio track was deliberately planned to be spooky, in relation to the film clip's theme of a horror genre spoof. It does this through an overall dissonance: it is out of synch with the drum track, because it continuously repeats a 3-1-5 beat structure (9 beats) over the top of the conventional 4/4 (8) beats of Western music, so they only converge at a couple spots in the audio track. The 3-1-5 beat structure reinforces the theme of the "3-0-5" that the film clip is built on: three beats in one chord, a one-beat pause (a zero, because there is a space there) followed five beats in another chord.

The musical chordal structure (E to F) is built on the first two notes of the E Phrygian mode, related to the tonus diabolicus, a scale built upon fourths, which creates dissonance, and which medieval Christian monks avoided because they felt it was the scale of the devil, hence the Latin tonus diabolicus, or "tone of the devil."

The lead guitar solo is a frenzied heavy-metal solo that ties it all together and which builds up to a shrieking climax to match the end shot of the clip, Munch's The Scream. (Bob, Interview 4)

Bob created the sound track after all the 305 images had been assembled, so he knew how much time he had to work with when he started recording. With the help of digital sound software, Bob created just the right song for his images; he carefully manipulated the sound elements to reinforce the intention of his video. Since this first video project was planned as a horror movie, he planned the audio track to be "spooky," as well, using dissonance and heavy metal sound to create a sense of unease. He even embedded his theme (305) in the drum track by repeating a 3 - 1 - 5 beat structure. Bob completed his first video making process by following his improvisational moment and creating his own sound to juxtapose the images.

**4.4.3.2 Using video as a research tool (Module 2).** Bob’s next video assignment was a three-minute video based on research and pre-planning. Bob’s choice was to produce a serious and introspective documentary-style film reflecting his
experience riding the local MTD buses. The film, titled *Bus*, focused on his personal feelings and commentary about bus transportation. This project was Bob’s favorite, because he received positive feedback about it from the class. It was very different from his first video project from the beginning, in terms of film style as well as process. While his first project was based on improvisational shooting, the idea for *Bus* came about because he had already shot some footage inside the bus, and he started his creative process by looking at video that he already had. After deciding on a topic, he wrote down his thoughts and ideas regarding buses, which he described in our interview:

I rode in a car everywhere. Or drove everywhere. Because when I was in my twenties, I was very restless, and I couldn’t stay in any one place very long. So I was always, always on the road. I mean, constantly. I was just driving all the time. And I’d go to my friend’s house, and I might stay for a couple hours, and then we’d just get in the car and take off and go someplace else, and just always moving. So to go from that, where you were in total control of your movement and destination, and then you have to ride the bus, [where] the destinations and the route are totally structured, and the structure of which you have no control over, was for me, a frightening proposition. I want to be able to have at least the idea that I have the freedom of stopping when I want to and going the route that I want to take. But now, when I’m riding a bus, I’ve totally lost control. I have no more control over my destination, except that I know the bus is eventually going to take me where I want to go, but I have no control over the speed or the route or anything. Or the driving. I just have to sit there. So we’ll see how this turned out. (Bob, Interview 2)

The topic emerged from his raw footage, and then the ideas and thoughts that he had about the topic helped him refine his focus: he explored the differences between riding a bus and driving his own car, and discovered “loss of control” as a sub-topic.

In his journal, Bob wrote about the issues that came up after he had chosen the topic. For example, he wondered if three to five minutes would be long enough to pack in
all the ideas that he wanted to convey. He was also concerned about portrait rights, an issue that I encountered with my project as well. His first project involved shooting objects, so the issue hadn’t come up; he was free to shoot the scenes that captured his interest. However, collected footage of an operating bus naturally involves people. Bob shared his concerns regarding shooting video of people in his journal:

I want to show some scenes of people on the bus, but I don’t like the idea of sticking a camera in my fellow passengers’ faces and shooting away. Some of them might not like it at all, and some of them might be angry enough to do something about it. Something negative, if you get my drift. I don’t like the idea of trying to get people to sign waivers, either. So I guess I’ll just stick to general shots out of the windows or of people’s feet, and do some voice-over narration about some of the feelings I’ve just expressed. (Bob, Journal)

As I had done, Bob avoided trouble regarding portrait rights passively, by filming objects and capturing unidentifiable shots of people, rather than their faces.

Bob’s next step, after refining his topic, was to take his camera along with him to capture footage inside and outside the bus. He did not specifically plan his shots; Bob did not like to work with a very structured storyboard. Although he understood the importance of staying on track, he also wanted to be able to take advantage of the accidental. He believed that the ideas he had already come up with and the footage he captured would determine the direction his documentary was going to take and how it would come together. He collected a lot of raw footage over the course of two weeks, after which he wrote the script to sequence the images and convey a story. The resulting carefully structured storyboard of Bus is shown below, complete with voice narration.

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57 Portrait Rights is a "right" that has been spread by folks in the entertainment industry. They use this right as ammunition to sue somebody who has published a picture of them without their expressed permission.
script and juxtaposition of images.

TITLE: BUS, REFLECTIONS OF A RAMBLIN’ MAN

SCENE: Daytime drive on interstate looking through windshield;
AUDIO: Allman Bros.’ Rambling Man playing on cd player
VOICEOVER NARRATION: It seems like I’ve always been driving, or if not
driving, riding with someone else someplace in a car…down dirt roads, 2-lane
blacktop, or interstates and freeways. When I got my first car, it seemed like I
lived in it. I was always on the road. Driving represents the quintessential
American freedom – the freedom of going where you want to
go. SCENE: Bus driving by right to left
AUDIO: Background, bus motor

VN: That’s why I have an ambivalence about riding the bus to campus. On one
hand, I’m helping preserve the environment and cutting down on urban
congestion – on the other hand, I feel like I’m giving up control of my own
destiny by not being able to stop when I want to or choose the route I’m going.
SCENE: Bus driver’s foot on gas, bus accelerating, fade into downtown bus run
AUDIO: Background bus noise, motor, and people talking

VN: The bus is a lot less comfortable than my car…it’s noisy, it sways, and
sometimes it’s hot…the problem with local buses, you don’t really get to ride
long enough to know anybody, so everybody stays eternal strangers…but the
downtown run is like a movie itself…all the buildings race by past the large bus
windows with the conversations on the bus providing the backing soundtrack.
SCENE: Bus driver’s foot on gas pedal slowing down.
AUDIO: Background bus noise, motor, and people talking

VN: We pull into the bus station.
SCENE: Pulling into bus station.
AUDIO: Background bus noise, motor, and people talking

VN: Bus stations are like worlds of their own. They’re places apart, in-between
zones of liminality that people inhabit for a short time, but in the end they’re
always either coming or going…
SCENE: Bus driver’s foot on gas, bus accelerating, fade into suburban bus run
AUDIO: Background bus noise, motor, and people talking

VN: Growing up in suburbia we always drove everywhere. I’ve always had my
own personal car; I couldn’t imagine being without it. But a lot of times I wished
I lived in an urban center or a small town where I could walk to everything and
not be so tied to the car…Giving up the freedom of driving is a scary thing,
which is why older people hang on to their driver’s licenses as long as they can,
long after their reflexes can’t keep up with the demands of driving.

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SCENE: Bus driving by, left to right
AUDIO: Background bus noise, motor, and people talking

VN: Now it’s time to reverse direction and ride the bus home.
SCENE: Nighttime on bus.
AUDIO: Background bus noise, motor, and people talking

VN: The nighttime bus ride home seems to be the opposite of the daytime ride…now you somehow seem to be inside the movie itself, but watching it and being a part of it at the same time.
SCENE: Night bus scenes continue to fade-out.
FADE-OUT, CREDITS (Bob, Journal)

Bob wrote the script for the narration to match the sequence of his images and ideas that he wanted to convey throughout his video. Bob explained that a lot of the script and accompanying storyboard was written in response to what he had already filmed. His second video was more planned, but the process itself was different from the general media making process, which moves from storyboarding to shooting to editing. Bob’s video making process for this project was less linear; he constantly moved back and forth among the activities of shooting, storyboarding, and editing. Bob described this process in our interview:

I had to adjust the script, and then when I had all my clips together—had all my clips in iMovie, then probably I hadn’t first envisioned that it would be like a daytime to a night time transition. But when I had the night time clips in there, it just seemed that they would naturally follow a daytime scene. So the night time…I don’t think I planned that part. That was just reacting to what I had available and how I would…integrate all these into a narrative story. And so then…when I saw the…duration that I had for each sequence, …I probably had to alter the script…in several different places in order to make it fit that particular sequence that I had so that it wouldn’t bleed into the next one. (Bob, Interview 2)

While portrait rights had been the main issue in the production stage, Bob faced other learning issues in the editing stage. For example, had to alter his storyboard (or script, in Bob’s terms) several times. Initially, he assembled the clips and edited them to
loosely follow his original storyboard, but he was also inspired by improvisational moments from time to time. After importing all his clips to iMovie and trimming them to eliminate excessive length, dead spots, or spots he really couldn’t use, he realized his initial storyboard didn’t match the clips at all, so he had to write a new storyboard with the new clip order in mind. Bob described this process in his journal:

More dialog, less dialog, clips lengthen or shorten to match, what to do? Where should the voiceover start in relation to the clip? Where should it end? Should the existing background noise audio track predominate, or should the narrative? Now I realize what kind conundrums professional documentary filmmakers face on a daily basis, and I have a newfound respect for their expertise! (Bob, Journal)

Bob repeated the process of assembling footage and rewriting the script to match the assembled footage, a process which entailed heavy editing, clipping and rearranging. Whereas for my own third video project, which also included voice-over narration and scripting, I had written the script, recorded the narration, and then found images to juxtapose to the script, Bob assembled the footage first and then revised and juxtaposed his script to support the footage.

Another issue that Bob encountered during the editing process involved recording his voiceover narration. First, he said that reading an audio script was not an easy for him: it took lots of practice to read the whole script naturally. In addition, he encountered technological issues with recording the voiceover. He tried several time to make a high-quality recording, but because of technological issues, he finally had to resort to the built-in microphone on his Macbook, which did not yield the quality of audio he wanted.

In spite of the troubles he encountered while creating his second video, Bob edited and condensed all his ideas and media components to fit with one another, all the
while keeping his audience in mind, ensuring that each scene was short enough to keep viewer interest. When he finally showed his piece to our instructor and classmates, Bob was gratified to hear all the positive feedback regarding his piece. After completing his second project, Bob shared his reflections in his journal:

Someone, I think it was Tony, described the film as “affectionate.” And John [the instructor] spoke of the feeling of being in a womb while experiencing the scenes of riding inside the bus. And for everyone, the inside-the-car road scene with classic rock blasting out on the radio evoked some kind of nostalgic memory. Beyond the difficulties that a novice – or a seasoned professional, for that matter – will naturally encounter in the decision-making process of filming, involving down-to-the-second decisions about what to add and where to cut, it was an eye-opening moment for me to realize that such emotions could be embedded so deeply within a short piece such as this. (Bob, Journal)

Along with the learning issues he encountered throughout the video making process, hearing what his viewers noticed and felt about his video was “eye opening” for Bob. As a digital storyteller, he went through lonely decision-making processes at each stage of the creation of his video. He established priorities to choose footage, to sequence the story, and to condense his ideas into a limited timeframe, with an eye toward audience attention span. When his audience shared their emotional reactions to Bob’s video, he felt rewarded and acknowledged the power of digital story.

4.4.3.3 Creating a video to represent personal beliefs (Module 3). With the learning issues and overall positive experience of his second video making under his belt, Bob wanted to venture into new territory of leaving text behind and communicating solely through the visual. In his journal, he wrote about his vision for his final project, which would wrap up his semester-long digital storytelling experience:

For final Module 3, I think I’m going to attempt a multi-media mash-up, pulling video and audio off the ’net, inserting my own film clips and still photos,
experimenting with montage to create an introspective, semi-biographical, multi-interpretive visual narrative...(Bob, Journal)

Even though the film was required to be under five minutes long. Bob intended to communicate visually and challenge himself by interlacing many meanings into his project. Bob’s storyline was inspired by Billy Pilgrim, the main character of Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse Five*. In the novel, Billy Pilgrim, a World War II soldier, time travels to different eras of his life, from his first marriage, to the war, to his kidnapping by aliens, and finally to his death. Bob appropriated the main idea of the novel, and created an introspective and semi-biographical story. Listing his subject as “Billy Pilgrim Born in Time,” Bob mapped his idea for his final video project in his journal:

Billy Pilgrim had become unstuck in time. At least, that’s how I remember the opening line. Billy Pilgrim – a.k.a. Vonnegut in some kind of loose rendering – is a hapless innocent drafted into the Army in the closing days of WWII, whereupon being transplanted to Germany, he becomes a hapless soldier promptly captured by the Germans after a only few days on the front. Billy’s main problem isn’t being captured by the Germans so much; he hasn’t the slightest idea where he is or what is happening to him anyway – it’s his time dysfunction. Billy wanders aimlessly and randomly up and down the timeline of his life; since time for him is no longer sequential, he never knows at what point in his life he’s going to pop out and live that portion of his life until at some unknown juncture, he then pop outs again into another phase to live those experiences from that time frame all over again.

…

For my final video, Billy becomes a point of departure and a theme throughout the film. In effect, I “play” Billy, but in an obscure way, as Billy interacts with the multiple narratives that thread their way through the storyline. There are several allegories and metaphors afoot here; even I am not sure what they are all about.

…

I think when you finally realize that you are an artist, and that’s where your identity is formed, that you have to accept that fact that you have a heightened ability to be receptive to narratives that have been written on the sands of time.
Time, it seems, may be a palimpsest of some sort, where the history recorded isn’t completely erased when some new event occurs.

... What is this film about? So far, it has been very traumatic. Nuclear war, injustice, identity, and loss and remembrance have all reared their ugly heads in this one. My greatest worry at this point is that it becomes maudlin or is perceived as self-pitying. And I hope it’s not going to be too painful for others to watch more than once.

(Bob, Journal)

This journal entry shows how Bob’s idea evolved out of *Slaughterhouse Five*, how it became related to his own life, and how it became a meaningful creative story. Billy’s characteristics in the novel were a point of departure and a theme of Bob’s video. Billy is not the third person, but Bob, although not in an obvious way; Billy was experiencing traumatic concepts that had affected Bob’s life in some way.

In our third interview, Bob and I watched his third video together and discussed his experience with making it. After playing the movie, Bob said that it brought back a lot of memories, even though he had watched the piece “maybe three or four hundred times” during and after making it. While Bob’s previous two videos were completely original, for this film, he appropriated the film style, theme, narrative style, and video footage from others. By integrating and repositioning borrowed elements, he created something new in this piece. Since Bob wanted to communicate solely through the realm of the visual, he adopted and borrowed certain aspects of ready-made visual culture, including the novel and the movie. While he borrowed the character and theme from *Slaughterhouse Five*, as discussed above, he borrowed the film style from the film director Luis Buñuel, famous for his use of surreal imagery:

What I was trying to do was…follow the lead of director Luis Buñuel. He was a Spanish filmmaker that moved to Paris, roughly in the thirties and forties, the same time as Dali. He was a very, very committed Marxist-Communist. So the
movies he was making—he was working a lot of times in conjunction with the Surrealists, along with Salvador Dali. …The Surrealists wanted to take the Bourgeois society…because it was all rational and ordered and structured—they wanted to somehow make people think differently, so that they would be able to escape out of this mindset that had caused World War I and all the carnage, and because everything was so rational and ordered and structured. So the Surrealists saw film as an ideal avenue for their ideas, because they could take and juxtapose these different images together, and it would be so jarring to people that it would start making you think in a different direction. So that’s what I was trying to do here. (Bob, Interview 3)

Bob also borrowed the majority of the images in this video from TV newscasts and movies, as well as from his own old home video footage and still photographs, rather than shooting footage specifically for the project, as he had for his first two projects. Bob wanted to convey a story about people born in the 1950s and 1960s through the lens of Billy’s time travel, so he chose to use real images to tell that story visually.

Borrowing images from popular culture introduced a new problem to Bob’s filmmaking process: copyright laws. For example, Bob originally wanted to use an outtake of the movie *Apocalypse Now*, but that would have been a copyright violation. To solve this problem, Bob included different clips from other copyright free movies that he was able to download and use.

For this video, Bob explained that he improvised everything. He started a storyboard, but didn’t finish it. Instead, he followed his intuition, collected footage, and assembled it. Over the course of all of our interviews, Bob maintained that he preferred to create videos through improvisation. He said that storyboarding could be helpful, but he didn’t think that it was necessary in video making. Bob stated, “I just pulled this stuff in and kind of knew what I had to do and just reacted totally to what I had there,” about his improvisational moments during editing (Bob, Interview 3).
4.4.4 Video analysis based on the conceptual framework:

Experiencing creative filmmaking.

4.4.4.1 Analyzing the digital story: Properties of narrative. In the third interview, Bob gave a director’s commentary on his third digital story. Based on this commentary as well as my own interpretation as a viewer, I will provide an analysis of the narrative properties of his video. Based on the conceptual framework described in Chapter 2, I will discuss (a) teller: point of view/narrative voice, (b) subject matter: characters, actions and setting, (c) time, (d) topic/theme, and (e) audience and context. This analysis is outlined in Table 14.

Table 14
Properties of Narrative of Bob’s Third Video

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Property</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teller/Narrator</td>
<td>People who were born in the 1950s and 1960s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject matter:</td>
<td>Character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>Billy Pilgrim, a time-traveling American who lived under the constant threat of nuclear war. Bob took on the persona of Billy Pilgrim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions/Events</td>
<td>Fears: people were on the verge of nuclear war with the Soviet Union during the Cuban Missile Crisis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Billy went to back to the late 1950s. Radioactive fallout from an above-ground nuclear bomb test in Nevada 2500 miles away rained down on town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kennedy’s assassination and CBS news coverage from November 22, 1963.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Billy looking back on those moments from the present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>When: His story begins from when Billy was born until 1962. 1950s to 1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Where: Petersburgh, NY, USA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14 (cont.)

**Time**

**Order**
Sequence: (a) images of nuclear war; (b) text about above-ground nuclear bombs and the assassination of President Kennedy, which took place from 1959 to 1963; (c) Billy, who is looking back on those times from the present perspective. (Time jumps to the present.)

**Duration**
This video chronicles the intertwining stories of three different events during the late 1950s to the early 1960s. The amount of time that the implied story covers is about 10+ years of moments that Billy travels back to, and also 60 years from the past to the present.

Actual time: Mainly 1959 to 1963.
Implied time: From 1959 to present.
Recorded time: 3 minutes, 53 seconds.
Running time: 4 minutes, 7 seconds.

**Topic/Theme**
An American in his late 50s time travels to the years of his childhood. He was still plagued by the fears surrounding threat of nuclear war, from a time when above-ground nuclear bomb testing was acceptable, a cold war with Soviet Union was ongoing, and the president’s assassination was shown on TV. These were traumatic moments, but life goes on.

**Audience/Context**

**Audience:** Graduate students in a new media making class, as well as other YouTube viewers.

**Artist Context:** An American in his late 50s living in the U.S. who lived through the historic moments described above.

**Viewing Context:** This story will be viewed in a new media-making class in a Midwestern University, and will also be made public through a video sharing website.

**Social/Cultural Context:** The media-making classroom was comprised only of graduate students, but they were from all different disciplines. Most of them were American, but they were from younger generations who had not experienced the times Bob portrayed. However, there may be viewers who experienced the same time period among the YouTube viewers.
The actual time shown in the video spans the years of 1959 to 1963, but the video implies that Billy traveled back and forth in time from the present to the focal past moments. This short digital story was 4 minutes and 7 seconds long, including the credits and title; the movie itself was 3 minutes and 53 seconds long. Whereas the audience for my digital story had been limited to my classmates, Bob’s project was more open to the public, as his video could be viewed on YouTube. Bob was more experienced and more confident about his abilities than I was, so he allowed his digital story to be more available for a wider audience.

Bob’s story is about the constant fear of nuclear war experienced by people living in the 1950s. Bob’s generation and their parents tried to submerge their fears, but the threat of nuclear war was ever present, and that was the theme embracing the different stories in this video. Bob conflated himself with the main character of the film, Billy Pilgrim. In the present, in Bob’s film, Billy is a man in his late 50s. At the beginning of the film, Billy goes back to the 1950s, supposedly an “idyllic era,” according to the video text, but the U.S. was on the verge of nuclear war with the Soviet Union. Throughout the film, Billy jumps from moment to moment in time—a characteristic borrowed from the Billy Pilgrim of Slaughterhouse Five. In Slaughterhouse Five, Billy experiences radioactive fallout from an aboveground nuclear bomb test in his town, and then he watches footage of President Kennedy’s assassination on TV. He sees his uncles, father, and mother and listens to their reactions to these incidents. These were undeniably traumatic moments, but then the text on the screen reads, “The river flows and life goes on.” Billy returns to the present and looks back on the 1950s and 1960s with nostalgia.
Bob intertwined different stories regarding nuclear fear in his film, including the Cuban Missile Crisis, the general threat of nuclear war, the assassination of President Kennedy, and the real nuclear fallout incident that took place in his hometown. The Billy Pilgrim in the film was standing in for Bob and other members of his generation, shifting back and forth in time throughout the video, showing different events. Although Bob borrowed the character of Billy Pilgrim and the concept of time travel from a novel, the story he tells in his film is significantly divergent from that of the original novel. He re-envisioned and re-contextualized the character to interpret the events of the film, and he created the consciousness jumping among them.

4.4.4.2 Media components and artistic strategies. I will illustrate three media components of this particular digital story in this section: images, sounds, and words. I will also describe how combining words, images, and sounds in a scene produce a powerful impact on this digital story, based on my interview with Bob and my own interpretation. Artistic strategies were used to creating and systematically connect sounds and words in both still and moving images; each scene grew out of a hybridization of two to three media components.

The main image components of this digital story consist of moving images, primarily downloaded footage from the web and Bob’s old home videos. As I explained previously, Bob’s creative process for this video project entailed the appropriation of ideas, images, and the main character. Bob downloaded video clips from YouTube and edited them for his video. The downloaded and edited video clips include (See Figure 8): (a) a nuclear test scene, (b) the assassination of President Kennedy, (c) a CBS newscast
reporting on the president’s assassination, and d) a scene from Clint Eastwood’s *The Outlaw Josey Wales*.

*Figure 8*. Downloaded and edited video clips

Bob also extracted videos and images from his own old family videotapes, including footage of his favorite childhood rock to sit on, a bridge he remembered fondly, and his grandmother’s house. Since this video footage was taken in VHS tape format, he needed to transfer it to a digital format. Fortunately, he reported that he had already transferred some of his old analog videos to his laptop, so he was readily able to use them. This sounded interesting to me because I had also transferred some of my film
photos into digital format. Since I got my digital camera in 2002, my pictures earlier than 2002 were taken by film camera. I scanned my favorite pictures and transferred into JPEG images, in order to easily edit, share, see, copy and keep longer. Most of Bob’s images were black and white; most of the clips he had chosen to use were originally black and white, so he let them set the tone for the whole film.

Bob also used text and a pop music soundtrack for this video, which he had not done in his first or second video projects. He chose “Born in Time” by Eric Clapton as the song to back the piece, the lyric of which are shown below.

In the lonely night,
In the stardust of a pale moonlight,
I think of you in black and white
When we were made of dreams.

I walked alone through the shaky streets,
Listening to my heart beat
In the record-breaking heat
When we were born in time.

Just when I thought you were gone, you came back
Just when I was ready to receive you.
You were smooth, you were rough,
You were more than enough.
Ah babe, why did I ever leave you
Or believe you?

In the rising curve,
Where the ways of nature will test every nerve,
I took you close and got what I deserve
When we were born in time.

Just when I knew who to thank, you went blank
Just as the firelight was gleaming.
You were snow, you were rain,
You were stripes and you were plain.
Oh babe, can it be you've been scheming
Or was I dreaming?
In the hills of mystery,
In the foggy web of destiny,
You're still so deep inside of me
When we were born in time. (Eric Clapton)

Because Bob was using a song that was already written, he felt some limitation in terms of his imagination and practice being tied to the lyrics of the vocal track. Bob wanted to make sure that his audio track was synched to every frame of the video, so that the lyrics of the audio track matched the images of the video. For example, at the point of the song when Eric Clapton sings, “when we were made of dreams,” Bob inserted a quote from Gaston Bachelard: “There exists for each of us an oneiric house, a house of dream-memory,” which is refers to the house that he grew up in. Bob carefully spliced the clips to highlight the relevant lyrics. In another example, when we hear “I think of you in black and white,” the house in the accompanying image is portrayed in black and white. Bob felt as if everything in the movie had to be adjusted to match the lyrics; since the song was four minutes and six seconds long, his video was four minutes and six seconds long also.

Figure 9 (cont. on next page)
He also inserted subtitles between the images to further express his message between the moving images, giving the audience a hint towards the structure and meanings of his digital story (see Figure 9). He explained that he carefully choose the font, size, and background color according to what he felt fit the film; he experimented with different types of fonts to see which one he felt was best. Bob explained that he wouldn’t say the fonts “matched the movie, but was going to make it flow along with it” (Bob, Interview 3).

For this final video project, Bob identified himself as a collagist working very loosely, assembling pieces of video, still images, and audio as he went along. In the third
interview, Bob said that he let the work dictate the direction it would take, further commenting that “it comes under the influence of a narrative from out of time that wants re-telling in some form. Sometimes it takes unexpected twists and turns. That’s what’s happened in Billy Pilgrim” (Bob, Interview 3). Bob clearly stated what he was using, how he was using it, and what it meant to him in this video. He perceived his digital story as a work of art, and he adapted certain post-modern art-making strategies, including appropriation and collage, as he described in our interview:

I’m collaging these different images to make one holistic image, but it’s coming all from just taking—appropriating—it’s a postmodernist way of working….I’m collaging as I’m going. That was my main way of working, is to work in collage. And at the same time, I’m trying to do kind of a semi-surrealist type of format, where I’m…trying to juxtapose these different images together to make a whole new meaning and a whole new idea out of other ideas or images. So…even the course I’m designing now, I’m doing the same thing. I’m pulling all this imagery out of contemporary visual culture, and the whole idea is that when you take it out and put it back in the way that you want it to go, that you are asserting your identity, and so…it’s a form of resistance, saying, “No, you’re not going to tell me what my identity should be. I’m going to take what you have—the imagery that you have put out there in popular visual culture—and I’m going to reconstitute it and reappropriate it, and make it to reflect what I want it to say, not what the agenda behind the images is trying to force you to think.” So that’s why I like doing that. I like taking these pieces from here, there, and the other and pasting them together. Only…now we’ve got the element of time in there. Although, in collage you can still have the element of time, because you can arrange your imagery from one side of the canvas to the other, so people will read it in this way, and you can actually arrange that to tell a narrative in that distance. (Bob, Interview 3)

As he explained in his interview, Bob tried to reconstitute and reappropriate imagery from popular culture and make it reflect what wanted it to say. Bob said he wanted the elements of collage in his video to tell a story, not to force the audience into thinking something specific. As he explained his video in detail to me, I noticed several subtle elements of the video that I had missed at first. Bob had tried to intertwine many
complicated ideas together, and these ideas became clearer to me when Bob shared the intentions and hidden stories with me. In the following section I will analyze and illustrate three scenes in detail.

In the scene from 3’4” to 3’14”, Bob used a clip from Clint Eastwood’s *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, in which the main character says, “My words of life are true and my words of death are true.” (see Figure 10) He decided to use a clip from this movie, because its theme is life and death, which was related to theme to his video. He chose this particular clip in order to convey the message of his whole video, directly spelling out his message rather than using metaphor, as he had in other scenes.

![Figure 10. Footage from The Outlaw Josey Wales](image)

The clip Bob used from *The Outlaw Josey Wales* is in color, whereas his other clips are in black and white. Since could easily have changed the clip to black and white in iMovie, I asked why he had chosen to use color here. According to Bob, “By going from black and white to color and jumping like that was in line with my surrealist juxtaposition of different images to make that jump” (Bob, interview 3). Interestingly, he not only jumped between intertwined narratives in his movie, but he also attempted to
insert a jarring sensation between sequential images. He embedded a purposeful surrealist juxtaposition in this ten-second clip.

Bob also imposed this surrealist juxtaposition by jumping from scene to scene while including references to one other at the same time. For example, in the scene from 1’06” to 1’23”, he showed footage of President Kennedy’s assassination. Later, from 2’27” to 3’03”, he showed a tree falling in slow motion. Although on the surface, the scenes seemed completely separate in subject and meaning, Bob explained that the falling tree was a reference to the presidential assassination; he was letting the video reference itself in different places and different times. These clips are shown in Figure 11.

*Figure 11. Example of clips referencing each other*
Another visual metaphor that was noticeable throughout the movie was the imagery of a flowing river (see Figure 12). Bob inserted these clips between traumatic moments such as the nuclear testing and presidential assassination. Through this use of metaphor device, Bob attempted to convey his ultimate message to the viewer, which he relayed in our interview: “In the midst of death, there is the river, which is life-giving” (Bob, Interview 3). In the last scene, Bob inserted the text, “Through it all, our eternal river still flows under the bridge. I wish I was there now. Signed, your friend Billy.” This text transformed the imagery of the flowing river into a significant vehicle for Bob’s message.

![Figure 12. Footage of a flowing river.](image)

### 4.4.5 Reflection.

A semester after we created these movies together for our class, Bob and I sat down in front of a monitor and watched and discussed his third movie. At the end of that interview, Bob explained that how much he had enjoyed the course and the video making process itself:

I think I liked all aspects of it. I liked working the camera. I like framing the shots and making shots. And then editing is great. I hadn’t really even done anything with film until last year, I started messing with Windows Movie Maker.
And it’s a fascinating process to be able to take clips and arrange them and cut down their length and add audio. I love doing that part, too. And then directing…I haven’t really had an opportunity to direct, but I think it would be really interesting to be able to have some actors or actresses and tell them, “Do this,” or “I want this kind of effect, and so we will go that route.” (Bob, Interview 3)

Bob felt some satisfaction as an artist in his ability to expand his working medium even further into digital video making. He liked the fact that he could make movies like film directors, who are generally considered to be artistic and “cool.” Although we are creating the movie even on a small scale, being able to do it was rewarding and satisfactory to Bob because it was denied to most people until the digital era.

Bob was always mindful of his audience, and in our third interview, he reflected on some peer feedback from the class:

Jane…said, “I think you’re manipulating our emotions.” And right at that point, I knew that I had failed, not because the charge wasn’t true. It was true. But that…it was so obvious that she had noticed that…. Here’s a cute little quote [from where?]: “Don’t be heavy-handed. Your audience is extremely media-savvy. Hitting them over the head and attempting to make them sad or extremely angry through your edits is tantamount to a teenager’s angry and depressed poetry. The audience won’t stand for it, and you will end up with a mediocre film.” (Bob, Interview 3)

Bob said that video was for showing to other people, not for watching alone; therefore, he was very attentive to the viewers’ reactions. Because of this, his favorite piece was his second video project, *Bus*, which garnered him the most positive feedback from his viewers. Regarding his third video, on the other hand, Bob said that he “had failed,” based on his viewers’ feedback. One of the viewers accused this video of manipulating their emotions, Bob conceded that his choice of music had led him in the
wrong direction, because he tried to control everything through the music—he let it take over the project. He realized that the creator’s intention should be delivered with subtlety—and therein lies the art. This is a noteworthy point for the digital storyteller. Bob commented, “You’ve got a point you want to get across. You do want to show emotion or make people feel the same emotion you felt, but you don’t want to do it so that they notice it” (Bob, Interview 3).

Learning how to create digital videos also made Bob more competent as an audience member. Having taken these classes, produced his own digital videos, and read about film, he said that he has come to watch films much more closely to observe their finer points. In his words, Bob became “much more cognizant of the process” than he had been before (Bob, Interview 3).

Throughout his semester long video making learning experience, Bob emphasized that he really enjoyed the course, because it was relaxed and fun. He followed his intuitions and tried to be alert for improvisational moments. His video making experience was filled with discovery moments based on his improvisational decision-making and learning style.
4.5 Case Three: Digital Video Making as Art Practice

4.5.1 Profile: Sara.

Although Sara and I were in class together, we did not interact much. She had signed up for the class with her friend, Jane, and they seemed to be intimate friends, each of them sharing unique and sometimes critical points of view during the show and tell sessions. I was very interested in Sara’s video project, because her work reflected her identity and unique values through serious topics. Since we had interacted so little during the semester, I was not sure that she would be willing to do an interview with me about her learning experiences. Fortunately, a semester later, I had the chance to teach another course with Sara as the teaching assistant, and we met weekly. Because of that experience, we felt more comfortable with each other, so I asked her to participate in this study.

Sara was a white female in her mid-20s: a member of the so-called digital generation. She said, “I’ve always had the computer, since…before the Internet was available” (Sara, Interview 1). Sara dressed in bohemian style, wearing feather accessories, flowy blouses, across-the-shoulder bags, and mixed prints and colors; she sometimes made her own unique necklaces, shoes, and dresses. She was an artist, and she had two bachelor’s degrees: one in painting, and one in art education. She identified herself as a painter, and she remembered drawing with crayons at a very young age. She spent most of her time as a child with her sisters, who also enjoyed art, and that is where she developed an early interest in the subject. Sara could remember participating in an art-related state-wide extracurricular activity through her community, and in high school, she took art classes every year under the school’s only art teacher. She was considered
gifted in art; her works always went to the State Fair, and she even had several opportunities to go to Washington, D. C. Despite her talent and interest in art, Sara had a difficult time choosing a major as an undergrad. She entered the university as a physics major, because her family did not think an art degree would lead her into a high-paying job. But as Sara watched art students carrying their art portfolios around campus, she thought, “That’s really what I should be doing” (Sara, Interview 1). As a compromise between her interests and her family’s desires, she chose to pursue a degree in art education, which seemed more practical than painting.

I interviewed Sara on three occasions in the same building where we had taken the digital video production course. Her interview style was completely different from Bob’s. Sara had not taken detailed notes like Bob had, but rather immersed herself in the course, following her own creative process over the course of the semester. Therefore, she shared the notions about digital video making and video as an art medium that she had developed in the course, rather than calling up specific memories about the particular processes she had gone through.

Sara was philosophical as well as critical, with a well-developed ontology about art, creativity, and the nature of artistic expression. Whenever I asked her a question, she would often return it: “What do you think about [x]?” Sometimes she would pause for a while to think deeply. If she was not sure about an answer or if she couldn’t remember a particular moment clearly, she would decide not to answer. Since all three of our interviews were conducted a semester after the course was completed, I sometimes did not get answers to my questions. However, Sara was reflective and insightful in answering questions about what she was willing to share and remember. During our
interviews, Sara shared her unique points of view regarding art and the art making process:

So one thing that I think about art is that...it’s an alternative to language. And that it has this other kind of potential communication that you can’t get in...words or human-human interaction.... Although art can use words, and it can use human-human interaction, it doesn’t have to. Part of it, for me, is, like, finding...a safe way to...express...maybe...difficult things. For instance...I didn’t always know that my family was poor until—I couldn’t even say that sentence until about a year ago. Although all through undergraduate here, I had an intense dissatisfaction that I couldn’t articulate in my social relationships with other people, particularly people from wealthy Chicago suburbs, who were almost my complete classmate student body. I knew there was a difference, but I couldn’t figure out how to put words on that difference. And I don’t think that I made artwork specifically about this, either. But I think that through the process of making things, and practicing, it—you know...

When I make collages, I have a stack of books and magazines and everything, and I skim through every single page of every single one, and I tear it out, every time I find one that I’m attracted to. And once I’ve got all the ones out of a book—sometimes I tear out every page of a book. And then I throw it away. Or to the side. And then I look at the—I see, “What is it?” So I cut around it, and then I file them, and then I come back and I cut exactly around it with an Exacto blade, and then I lay them around on top of each other and look at them all together, and I—you know, you just lay it all out on the space on the floor, every one. And then I might put them back in their files. I might not ever glue anything. I’ve had a couple of pieces of paper that have images on them for ten years, that I just can’t figure out what it is I need to use it for, but I just have to keep moving it around, every time I move. And it hangs back up, somehow. I know that it’s not finished, but it still has to be carried around. But I think that...there’s this meditative quality to it, right? And to the painting, too. But sometimes painting—painting’s different. Sometimes there’s many different ways I will make a painting. I might make one from observation. I could make a painting of your face. I would use a different material then...than if I were to say, “I want to make a painting about this social issue, or this thing.” Then I’d do a very different process of making, preparing and completing. It’s very different than what it’s like just to make a drawing. So it’s not like I use art for one thing. It gets used for all sorts of different things. Sometimes I make things that are gifts for people, and other times I make things that I feel like....I’m enraged by the Gulf oil spill, and I have to make a piece about it. And I have to make a piece that criticizes what’s happening. And I’m going to make something that...explicitly...uses a visual vocabulary, and things—skeletons and things that tell a story and are obvious. But other times things don’t tell a story, they tell a feeling, if that makes sense. And the feeling that I get from something might not
be the same as the feeling you get from looking at that thing. So…there’s lots of
different parts of it….Sometimes I feel like I don’t even make the decision.
Although I’m sure I am making the decisions, I feel like things just kind of
happen, and…like, something might just accidentally be laying on something
else, and then I realize, “Oh, that’s where that’s meant to be.” This word
“immersive.” Some things just come up and, even almost as they have a mind of
their own, are deciding that they belong together or that they should look that
way. And sometimes the materials—whatever that material is you’re working
with—kind of tells you what it wants to do. And your body is almost a tool for it,
instead of it being a tool for your body. (Sara, Interview 1)

Sara believed that art was an alternative to language, and a way of
communication and human interaction, for expressing ideas and feelings that were too
complex to explain verbally. However, she did not believe that she consciously controlled
the outcome of her art-making process. For example, she did not think that she made an
artwork specifically to express her feelings about a topic that she couldn’t figure out how
to talk about, but she believed that any underlying feelings she was experiencing
would come out through the process of creating art. She also described how she felt that
the materials that she was working with during the creative process would often decide
for themselves how they wanted to be arranged. As an artist, she did not want to spotlight
herself or her intentions through her artwork; rather, she wanted allow space for the
forces in her life to emerge from whatever she was creating.

4.5.2 Factors that influenced Sara’s decision to take the digital video making
course.

As an art student, Sara had had the opportunity to take a wide range of studio
courses. Since the university offers interdisciplinary studio programs, she had already
worked with digital media, experimenting with video installation work and creating
environments that involved digital components. She described her first experience with
video installation as being more like creating moving paintings. The camera was placed on a tripod to shoot something in motion, and then she displayed the finished video next to paintings in the same vein. For example, she made three paintings of fish, and then she created a video of some moving fish. For her video installation, she displayed all four together. Sara shared her video installation experiences with me in our first interview:

Yeah, I wanted moving images, instead of just still ones. I would still do the same kinds of thing, like collaging, um, or…immersion into a certain kind of space. Like, it was usually kind of meditative. Like maybe fish swimming or shadows moving. It was never really, um…like, storytelling. Um…so, yeah. I drifted towards the—because I had ideas of what certain sounds and certain, um, repetitive images could do for someone psychologically. Like, put you in—I never wanted to make it uncomfortable, but make it…comfortable. And like a nice place to be. Making environments that felt good to me to be in. Um…and there’s something about the rhythm of when you can loop a video and you can’t tell where it starts and where it stops. I was interested in that. (Sara, Interview 1)

Although she preferred painting over working with digital media, she said that the experiences were completely different:

A painting doesn’t make sound, and it’s quicker to look at. A video requires a longer attention span. There’s…a different set of decisions you have to make between making a painting and making a moving image. (Sara, Interview 1)

Sara had made three videos before enrolling in the focal digital storytelling course; the purpose of these videos had not been to tell a story or get a point across, but rather to elicit certain feelings through her work. Therefore, Sara enrolled in the course to expand her repertoire of studio skills, and she was also interested in having a community of people to talk to about what she was making, instead of creating art in isolation.

In terms of technology, Sara knew how to how to use iMovie upon beginning the focal course, and she also knew how to use Windows Movie Maker, which she had worked with at a junior high school. She told me that she did not need any more
sophisticated editing tools that these two programs, one for Mac and one for PC, since she was not making a feature length Hollywood movie. Sara taught herself to use these two editing programs, and she explained how easy they were to learn:

> It’s super easy. It’s so intuitive. I did editing with, um, junior high students, and we did video editing, and I wrote out, “Okay, you need to do this and this and this,” but I didn’t even need to. The kids—even ones who had never even touched it before were already like, “Pow, pow, pow, pow.” I knew they would be. It’s so easy. It’s so intuitive. And if they had questions, I would answer them, but mostly they knew what to do. (Sara, Interview 1)

Since Sara was familiar with the technology associated with digital media making, this dimension of the course did not deter her interest in it. With her own intertwined motivation and experience, Sara decided to take digital video making class.

### 4.5.3 A story of Sara’s video making journey.

#### 4.5.3.1 Experiencing and learning video making (Module 1).

Much of the story Sara tells through her video making is about her struggles and ultimately, her drive and determination to succeed as an artist. Throughout the three interviews, Sara shared her notions about video as an art medium and her philosophy of narrative video making, often through incomplete answers infused with abstraction and her philosophy of life; as mentioned above, she often reflected my questions back to me, which created an opportunity for a confessional interaction. My interviews with Sara prompted me to look back my own experience, and I was aware during the interviews of a feeling of respect for her.

In the second interview, Sara and I reviewed what we had learned throughout the semester chronologically. For our first class activity we had been asked to notice ten things around us and video-record them. Since Sara was an experienced artist, she did not
appreciate this activity, which had been eye-opening for me. Sara agreed that this particular activity was probably good for people who might not have an established creative practice to start to notice and consider their surroundings as part of their creative process. However, Sara already had an established creative process, which she described as consisting of “either internal reflection or from observing something in [her] environment that is unsatisfactory” to her (Sara, Journal). Sara was experienced at incorporating ideas from her life into her works of art.

The next class activity was creating a one-minute video for Module 1, exploring a daily ritual through repetition and ordering of images, with or without a narrative. The purpose of this activity was to learn how to use the camera to enliven the senses. Sara approached this first video project as she would a painting, with a thought toward stringing elements together. She did not choose a topic or subject, and she did not have any preconceived intentions for this project; she skipped the preproduction stage entirely. Her approach consisted of searching out images and sounds that were attractive to her:

I went around and I videotaped things and sounds that I found appealing. And then I put them together in ways where elements of each were reflected in the other. So this one—the lights and the black and white spaces, minimal light with maximum darkness and kind of an obscuring of the spaces that they actually might be…I mean, I had tons of footage to choose from, and I snipped out these sections of it, because I thought that they matched. (Sara, Interview 2)

Sara’s editing stage was similarly unplanned. She looked at the footage she had collected and allowed the ordering and juxtaposition of images and sounds to emerge naturally. Her editing process was intuitional as well as accidental, as evident in her explanation of the thought processes she experienced while editing:

“Oh, I would love to see these two things next to each other,” “Wow, I like the way those look together.” Not so much like, “I’m going to do a light study,” but,
I mean, if I have to quantify it with language afterwards, that might be something I would say, is that there’s darkness and light in each one of these. But the whole thing about making artwork and the reason that it’s so attractive for me, and that I feel good to do it is that it’s not language, and it conveys feelings and it conveys experiences that we don’t have words for. And I don’t want to put words on them. (Sara, Interview 2)

I remembered watching Sara’s first video in class and being unsure of what she wanted to convey through her series of random images. It was very different from Bob’s video 305, even though they had both collected images without a preconceived intention.

I was interested to hear Sara’s commentary as we watched her first video together during our interview:

I’ll talk about it while playing it. I mean, part of the decisions that I made throughout the whole thing is that pattern…that movement right there. That has to do with…light, again, but the movement and the subtle things that are happening in our environment that are making shapes that we wouldn’t normally capture. So what does that mean, then, when you capture movements that have no meaning and elevate them to the level of an art piece, especially by putting them in contrast with each other? And then that is the same movement. That shape is also like that. [pause] I liked that sound. This [light] is also like that [light]. [pause] There it [light] is again. Zoomed in on, because it’s like that. This [shape] is also kind of like that [shape]. It’s a water piece. And there it [shape] is, moving again. [long pause] That’s like it, too. [pause] I don’t remember. I can’t remember. It’s been so long, I don’t know why I chose to make it in this way. This [shape] is like that [shape]. I mean, and that sound that she’s making is like that shape. But this image is like that—this image. This feeling of this material is like this material. This shape is just like the shape in my mind. That—that, right there, is the same as that. Do you see what I’m saying? This right here is the same as this right here. And this right here is the same as this right here. So this is the same as that. This is a repeat. This little—is clip, clip, clip. It keeps coming back, because it keeps repeating itself. And this sound—that sound is like this shape. Like, this movement. And the sounds are like movements, you know? So—and that’s just framing. That’s beginning and end, is bookends, so you know that that’s the end of it, because it’s the same as the beginning. (Sara, Interview 2)

When Sara revealed the reasons behind her creative choices for this film, I could see how the scenes in her video referenced each other and repeated subtly, as well as how
her camera followed the movement of light throughout the video. Since there was no clear theme, I did not pick up on these details watching the video alone; it was more like immersing myself in an abstract painting. Her commentary highlighted several small meanings embedded in her video, which made it much more interesting to watch.

Sara acknowledged this dissonance between her and her audience. She knew that this piece would be uninteresting to other people, but was not concerned about her audience; this project was solely for her. Although I had not fully grasped this piece without Sara’s explanation, she did not like having to explain her video project.

I don’t want to have to tell you how to view it. You…have your own experiences that you’re bringing to the table, and you’re going to look at it. I’m not going to always be standing next to it. This is showing all over the world, so I can’t be sitting next to the kid in California who’s watching it, you know? It’s just—people are going to make their own connections to it, so…what connection I make to it, or the decisions that I made, if you can identify that, cool. But if not, also fine. (Sara, Interview 2)

Sara believed that artists expressed what they wanted to share through their art, and the audience would make their own connections to that particular artwork. She enjoyed watching her video a semester later with me, saying “it reminds me of my old self. It reminds me of the way I used to feel about things.” Watching her video took her back to those moments when she shot and edited footage that used for this project, and Sara liked this retrospective moments.

4.5.3.2 Exploring and practicing video making (Module 2). Module 2 entailed an interview-based documentary, and Sara chose to interview her farther and farming, a topic generated from her life; she tried to find topics that she wanted to know more about as well as things she did without question everyday. In the preproduction stage, she brainstormed for topics, listing what she wanted to tell stories about. Her list consisted of
Crystal Light Laboratory, Agora Laboratory and Community, a method for advanced synthesis, hierarchy in art school, Zen Buddhism, and farmers who were her father and his friend. From these possible topics, Sara narrowed her focus to a real farmer’s story of his feelings on the politics of food control. Although Sara had largely disregarded her audience for her first project, this time, Sara wanted to show the thoughts of a real farmer surrounded by fellow farmers to a larger audience. Because she was going to work with people familiar to her, she did not research or plan for this project:

I already knew that this was a topic that I liked to talk about with these people. And I think that they’ve got an interesting and unique point of view, since there’s a tiny fraction of people who produce the foodstuffs for the whole country, and they’re two of them. I think that because they live in such a remote area, they’re only surrounded by people who have the same thoughts as them, so I knew that I wanted to make a video of them to show to a larger audience besides the people they already know. (Sara, Interview 2)

Sara encountered a different challenge than Bob had working with real people to make a video. Bob’s concern had been portrait rights, but since Sara was working with her family, it was easy for her to get permission to use their faces in her video. Sara’s concern was assuring her interviewees that “people in their area could look at this and they wouldn’t feel ashamed of the video of what they said” (Sara, Interview 2). This is similar to the issue I encountered working on my second video project about the international Ph.D. student. Since video is a medium to be shown to an audience larger than the creator and the actors, Sara and I had to be careful not to create any content offensive to the main actors, and also to assure them that being in our videos would not be harmful to them in any way. As creators, we had a certain responsibility to protect our characters by creating a safe and positive storyboard for them.
In the second interview, Sara and I watched her second video, *The Price of Corn*, together, which depicted full shots of two farmers sitting and talking to each other about farming in one of their homes. The first man described how people used to help each other out on his grandparents’ farm, lamenting the fact that the culture has moved away from the model, so that people are not as helpful to each other as the once were. The two farmers also spoke about issues related to farming and corn production: the rising expenses of farming, particularly the equipment, with which their profit margins cannot keep up. Because of these issues, farmers have to do everything they can to increase their income, such as farming more land and growing the only two crops that are consistently profitable: corn and soybeans.

*Figure 13* (cont. on next page)
In Sara’s second video, she intermixed two different types of video footage: full shots of the two farmers, and footage shot around the farm. After watching the video with her, I asked Sara if she remembered how her shooting process in production stage had differed from her first project. Sara explained that she had made a shot list of places that she wanted to shoot on the farm, but she did not rigidly follow the shot list. She walked around, looked for beautiful places, and took several hours of video footage. She considered technical aspects, like lighting and camera views; before the actual shooting, she visualized the interview setting, and asked herself, “Okay, where’s the lighting? Where’s the most interesting point of view to sit? Where is it comfortable for me to look at both of them and for them to be in proximity in the same screen as each other?” (Sara, Interview 2). Sara interacted with her interviewees as an interviewer, sometimes asking or answering questions. She explained that she included her own voice in the film only if it was necessary for the farmers’ answers to make sense. Since she was not working with professional actors or trained interviewees, Sara wanted to help audience understand the farmers’ contributions to the video by including her own voice as the interviewer.
In the editing stage, Sara encountered another struggle: editing the clips together in a way that conveyed the farmers’ story without betraying her own differing opinions on the subject. Since Sara was fluent in editing software, juxtaposing images and sounds was not challenging in itself. She had voiceovers from the interview and plenty of footage, which she arranged so that the length of the footage matched the voiceovers, and so that the images matched up with what the farmers were saying. She trimmed the interview over and over again, cutting out unclear parts and arranging the clips so that they made sense as a whole. Even without any major technical challenges, however, Sara confessed that editing was time consuming because she wanted to portray a sequential story while also hiding her own opinions as the film maker. Although she had the power to lead the story as she wanted, Sara wanted to convey what real Midwestern farmers were thinking, rather than giving voice to her own arguments:

I have very definite feelings and disagreements with what those men are saying… I disagree with them wholeheartedly, and they know it…but in this video, I didn’t so much want my arguments to come out. I didn’t want to show the alternatives. Because I know what the alternatives are. And we see so much of the alternatives, and we hear so much about the alternatives to the point where I feel like the actual story—you know, this area surrounded with cornfields and soybean fields—what’s actually happening with these farmers, we never hear the voices of the farmers. We hear the voice of television—ConAgra and Monsanto’s version of the farmer, which, of course, informs what the farmer says, too, but the farmers don’t actually think for themselves so much. They’re having it thought for them by someone else…. “Brought to you by the farmers of the Midwest.” You may see commercials like that on TV or hear that kind of thing on the radio, and you say, “What farmers are they talking about?” This is brought to you by ConAgra Foods, who wants us to eat as many refined sugars and flours as…our bodies can handle before we get cancer and then have to go to the hospital and die there. So I just wanted to answer the questions and give their rationale behind what they’re doing. And they do that. And I’m trying to ask questions to get them to state their rationale without my views coming through. (Sara, Interview 2)
Sara tried to be as objective as possible in making this video, as in an ethnographic study, dealing with an important learning issue regarding how to deal with the dissonance of the filmmaker’s ideas and character’s ideas without degrading the characters in documentary film making. A filmmaker encounters emotional struggles as a human being when creating a documentary film in order to solely present the characters’ story, hiding his/her own values and ideas.

4.5.4 Video analysis based on the conceptual framework:

Experimenting artistic practice.

In the third interview, Sara and I talked about her final project in Module 3. As I described in the two previous case reports, students were asked to create a narrative persona or narrative stance that viewers might find authentic. I created a video about culture and identity, and Bob created his Billy Pilgrim persona; Sara focuses on the Peter Pan complex, developing the persona of a woman who refused to grow up. Her video was titled Peter Pandemonium.

During pre-production, Sara planned the contents as well as the process of this three- to five-minute video much more than she had her previous two projects. She brainstormed assumptions and notions about Peter Pans in her journal, hypothesizing that Peter Pans could be emotionally scared or mentally detached because they view society as essentially doomed, or that they need to feel that they have alternatives to adulthood. Next, Sara developed her storyline from her assumptions and preplanned what to shoot and how to sequence her digital story. She decided to include part stop-motion animation, some part interview, and part abstract, experimental imagery. Sara chose to use the technique of self-interview in this video, taking on the persona of a woman with a Peter
Pan complex. This choice had been inspired by certain style of interview clips Sara had encountered on the Internet:

I shot…this self-interview…in the style of this…piano composer [who] had this whole thing called the self-interviews, which were supposed to be funny things….So I was listening to some of those, and used that as a kind of cue to think, “Oh! I could interview myself. This could be that kind of thing.” So that’s who it’s based off of. (Sara, Interview 3)

After making the decision to lead the story with self-interview, Sara wrote the script and tried to memorize it.

During the production stage of this video, Sara played the role of actor as well as director for the interview scenes. After shooting the self-interview several times, she created the stop-motion animation:

I visualized the frame and the shot. I knew the props that I would use. I chose those intentionally, the toys. And…I had constraints. I had things that I said I will use, and things that I won’t use, but then within that, there’s a certain kind of magic that happens…I’m making choices, and I’m doing things intentionally, with mindfulness, but …no, I didn’t make a drawing of each of those six hundred photographs that I took before I took them. (Sara, Interview 3)

Sara’s stop-motion animation footage consisted of six hundred images, which she collected by following her intuition: although she arranged the objects and visualized the shots, she let intuition guide her shots as well.
Sara did not share any particular memories regarding her editing process. However, she did say that she was mindful of maintaining the audience’s attention; she considered her viewers during the editing stage. Sara told me that she had an enjoyable time making this video, and her comments echoed what both Bob and I had felt during the creative process of digital video making:

It’s enjoyable to think something through, to think through an issue. To write the script is enjoyable. To shoot it is enjoyable. To edit it is enjoyable. To do the play of the stop motion animation and photo-taking, the satisfaction of a finished project is enjoyable. Producing something and sharing with people and having people see what I make is enjoyable. It’s satisfying. (Sara, Interview 3)
4.5.4.1 Analyzing the digital story: Properties of narrative. In the third interview, Sara illustrated her creative process for her third video, and what aspects were embedded in the piece. Based on Sara’s explanation as the filmmaker as well as my own interpretation as the viewer, I will provide video analysis regarding the properties of narrative for the video Peter Pandemonium. The table 13 shows (a) teller: point of view/narrative voice, (b) subject matter: characters, actions and setting, (c) time, (d) topic/theme, and (e) audience and context of this digital story. In order to provide a better understanding about the narrative in this video, the words of the main character are transcribed below:

If aliens came to earth today, they’d contact us through Facebook.

What do you mean by “state of affairs”?

So I think the increased sense of nostalgia comes from the experience being constantly bombarded with images. And the reason I think that is that being passive receivers if experiences that stimulate emotion, as a contrast with engaging in experiences that stimulate emotion, it’s just really different. And so being passive and watching something and witnessing it as well as creating your own images about it constantly, I think that there’s something weird that’s happening with people’s ability to memorialize an experience.

The insecurity about the future comes from things like that Cheerios ad that I remember from when I was a kid, that—my grandparents had cable, and I would always want to watch Nickelodeon when I went to their house, and there was a Cheerios ad, that the kids all gathered together in a city, and they worked together to change a dilapidated alley into a garden. They used, like, tires, and fill them with soil and have flowers…. And, like, Sister Act II does it. Or Sister Act. Where they clean up in the ghetto, or in the Bronx or something, where they are in Sister Act, and they clean it up and make the park space out of an old VW Bug. And they cut it and make it into a kids’ play area. It’s like…guess what? It doesn’t happen.

You know, of course I didn’t have this language then to understand how I was being manipulated, but…they’re giving me a template.
But it’s just that. Like, it’s an ad for Cheerios, but it’s telling us to take care of the trash situation, and it’s kids taking care of the trash situation. It’s not their trash, but they go and they have to work together to clean it up. And it’s so unrealistic.

They were passive observers of their own documentation. And so that’s what I think a lot of it has to do with.

I say, though, that it doesn’t have to mean that it’s the final endpoint or something.

And everyone entered into situations knowing that they could change or stop or shift directions if they…whenever they felt like it, then our gross national happiness would be much higher.

You’re not supposed to be a chameleon like that. You’re supposed to be a static identity that we can pinpoint. Nobody likes it if you aren’t easy to be—it’s not easy to classify you. Even if you don’t exercise your right to change your mind—even if you don’t exercise your right to change your mind—even if you don’t…even if you don’t exercise your right to change your mind, knowing that you have alternatives is crucial for cultivating a more reflective populous.

Wow. You really got it all worked out, huh?

No. I always feel like I should have a clean, delineated philosophy. Rules to follow that are neat. Like, I’m always trying to write them down on a piece of paper: “Okay. These three rules. And if I just follow these three rules, I’ll be good and happy and stable.” But it doesn’t work out that way, you know?

Very few people have been given empowering language, sentences—empowering sentences, and relationships…and so have no motivation to change anything.

I think it’s at a level where it’s more, and it’s—I hope that it doesn’t, but it probably will become more and more. You know, is it only going to get worse? Is it—I mean, worse, is it only going to be that increasingly, we have more and more images to look at? How? It seems now, like, we’re at a threshold. (Sara’s video dictation)
Table 15
Properties of Narrative in Sara’s Third video

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Properties of Narrative</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teller/Narrator</td>
<td>Teller/Narrator in this story is a woman with a Peter Pan complex. She wants to retreat to her childhood and lives to be juvenile.</td>
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<td>Subject matter:</td>
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<td>The main character and the teller are same in this story. Peter Pans are people in our society between the ages of 25-35 who have never accepted the responsibility of adulthood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Actions/Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sara took on the persona of the main character and interviewed herself. The main character explained her identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When: 2011 (present time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Where: America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Peter Pans are flagged as a group that experiences nostalgia at an unprecedentedly young age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Peter Pans have been saturated by television programming that claims to be a portrait of society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) A template for how childhood identity should be constructed in response to society’s consumerism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) Those children still live at home with their families. They refuse responsibility as adults in a society where they have no voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e) If Peter Pans constructed their own identities instead of relying on the media to project onto them an uncaring set of values, would the frustrations that manifest as social maladies remain?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Duration                  | Implied time: unclear
|                          | Actual time: unclear
|                          | Recorded time: 6 min and 15 sec.
|                          | Running time: 6 min and 30 sec |

| Topic/Theme               | The Peter Pan complex, its causes, and its connection to society and mainstream media. |

| Audience/Context          | **Audience:** Graduate students in a new media making class, also other YouTube viewers. |
|                          | **Artist Context:** An American woman in her mid-20s in the US who is playing the main character with empathy. |
|                          | **Viewing Context:** This story will be placed for viewing in a new media making class in a Midwestern university, and also will be shared in public through a video sharing website. |
|                          | **Social/Cultural Context:** The media-making classroom is only for graduate students, but they are from all different disciplines. Most of them are American, and predominantly a part of the Peter Pan generation portrayed in the video. |

This video was six minutes and thirty seconds long. Sara inserted subtitles as formulations between interviews, to respond to what the main character was saying.

There were an interviewer (implied main character), an interviewee (main character), and the omniscient voice of the texts in the video. Peter Pans were flagged as a group that experiences nostalgia at an unrepeudenently young age, a phenomenon that is already in the media. Although Sara did not identify herself as a Peter Pan, she did feel that others may have projected that identity on her, and she took on the persona of a Peter Pan and made arguments from that perspective:

This is making a comment on why people think that I am one, or why do I perceive other people to think that I am one. That’s more it. Not that I knew—
how could I know what other people think? I can’t know what you think about me, but I can know what I think that you think about me. (Sara, Interview 3)

Sara wanted to show the audience that the main character was a Peter Pan subtly, through the main character’s actions, dress, and words; she did not identify herself as Peter Pan directly:

You also notice the character that is in this film. Look at what she’s wearing. I mean, she’s dressed in the style of a child. So it’s taking some images and things from what childhood is, even sitting on a highchair there, and putting it into the world of a twenty-five-year-old person, who is exactly what this video is about. So what does it mean for a twenty-five-year-old to be living at her sister’s house and putting these things in order and playing, while her sister’s at work? (Sara, Interview 3)

The Peter Pan in Sara’s story was different from Peter Pan as described in the mainstream United States media. Sara wanted to portray a character that refused to grow up in a much different way than Fox News did, for example. Thus, her video showed the Peter Pan character talking, followed by subtitles analyzing what the main character was talking about. The Peter Pan in this video made several arguments. For example, she had been inundated by television programming claiming to be a portrait of society; her childhood identity had been constructed in response to her society’s consumerism; and she is living with her family because she refused to take responsibility. Since the interview script was the main narrative in this video, Sara explained that she shared her interview script with several people in order to get feedback from them, trimming and elaborating as necessary.

Sara and I watched this video together and discussed it. Sara reacted differently to this video than she had to her two other videos, confessing that she could not to remember much of what she had experienced when making this piece. She also said that
at the time of the interview, she no longer believed anything she had said in the video, although she had when she initially made the video. In fact, after watching this video again with me, Sara said that she planned on taking it off of YouTube and away from public viewing, since it no longer represented her beliefs:

That’s the reason I make artwork... because it’s really important to document how I’m feeling at the time. I look back at... my writing, my God, from when I was ten and eleven and twelve, and it is humiliating for me. I actually burnt most of my journals and diaries from that age a couple years ago, because it was so painfully humiliating. So I find that a lot of my artwork in the past, as I get older and I change—you know, with painting, I’ve dealt with it differently, which is I don’t keep any of them. After I finish a painting, I paint it white, and then I start over on top of that. So this is just kind of different, because it’s out there, so watching this, after this interview, I’m going to take this off the internet, because I don’t want it to be representing my name anymore. I feel humiliated by it, which I think happens with a lot of art. (Sara, Interview 3)

Sara considered this moment as part of her natural process that would happen in any art making. Since she was conveying what she felt in a particular moment through artwork, her did not represent her eternally. This idea resonated with me: I had often felt embarrassed about what I had written or believed. Although I was never embarrassed by my technical mistakes, I did feel ashamed of the contents or values embedded in my art that had since changed. I believe that the same thing happens in digital storytelling also.

We are not embarrassed by their lack of perfection, although their quality pales in comparison with professional movies. However, when we create a piece about ourselves, our values, or our identities, we often develop a reluctance to share the piece with others over time. Therefore, because the contents of Sara’s third video were about her own values and arguments, her satisfaction with that piece changed dramatically in just one year. However, one advantage of film as an art medium is that rather than burning their
films or painting them white, digital storytellers can re-edit their pieces continuously as an on-going project.

**4.5.4.2 Analyzing the digital story: Media components and artistic strategies.**

In this section, I will illustrate the three types of media components of this particular digital story: images, sounds, and words. I will also further describe how artistic strategies were used to systematically connect the sounds and words in both still and moving images based on my interview with Sara and my own interpretation.

*Figure 15. Footage of Sara’s third video*

Sara used two sets of images in this film: stop-motion animation and color footage of a self-interview. She created all the moving images used in this video, shooting the interview scenes, and connected a series of six hundred photographs that she had taken to create a stop-motion animation. She intertwined the sets of images, showing
the main character sitting in the highchair, talking as if to the audience, and then inserting
stop-motion animation between the interview scenes, which seemed random to me at
first. She also inserted text as subtitles to guide the audience’s understanding of the main
character’s words. The audio in this video consisted of Sara’s self-interview voiceovers,
but she distinguished the questions from the answers by converting the part of the
interviewer to a mechanical-sounding voice. The result was a character played by Sara
(the Peter Pan woman), and the off-screen interviewer, also played by Sara.

Since Sara was an experienced artist, she used diverse artistic strategies to
compose this video. Sara collaged her images, her text, and her voiceovers throughout the
editing process, appropriating the self-interview format, as described above. Although
Sara borrowed forms or styles, she made her video unique by connecting the interview
clips with incongruous stop-motion images:

I’m critiquing the images that are available to us. And I’m…endorsing making
new images and new kinds of images by just doing it. I’m not saying that, but
I’m doing it. Can you think of another example where you’ve seen stop-motion
animation next to real time film? An interview like this? So, right. So I didn’t
want it to only be the self-interview, because that’s been done. And I didn’t want
it to be only stop-motion, because that’s been done. But I want everyone to go
out and make their own media and make their own new meanings….There’s so
many visual things that could be said that aren’t said through the mainstream
media. (Sara, Interview 3)

Sara’s experience points to an important lesson: digital video making provides many
more possibilities for conveying stories than professional movies do; it can yield new
kinds of products that haven’t been made before. Sara’s experiment with stop motion
animation next to real time film is probably not a familiar combination to the public; the
mainstream media would definitely not create this type of video. But as Sara pointed out,
there are so many ideas to communicate visually than we see through the mainstream
media. Individual digital storytellers, however, are not controlled by the mainstream media; they have more possibilities for creative video making.

I watched this Peter Pan video more than five times before interviewing Sara, both as an audience member during class, and alone in order to prepare my interview questions. Sara’s video was not audience friendly, because it delivered its narratives conceptually. Her piece became more concrete to me after I heard her description. She explained that she adapted two different literary devices: non sequitur and metaphor. However, she did not embody these literary devices in her video by manipulating images, color, camera angles, or shapes. Instead, she used the literary devices in a larger sense, which she explained in her third interview, first addressing the non sequitur device:

[Non sequitur] can be used to take attention from what we’re doing right now. If I just started juggling right now, that would be a non sequitur. So non sequiturs can happen in language, and they can happen in actions, and they can happen visually, also. You could almost say that’s a non sequitur, that thing with the sunglasses over there and the leopard prints. To have a leopard print trash bag is kind of…it’s almost like nonsense to do this. And that’s what makes it funny, is because—I’m not trying to be funny here. But this part of my history and attraction to an artistic style is the use of non sequitur and the use of putting opposite things together. (Sara, Interview 3)

Sara did not use non sequitur in any particular scenes; rather, she used it in her experiment of interspersing stop motion animation and real time film. The stop motion animation seemed absurd to the point of being confusing; those moving objects were not related to how the main interview in any logical way. However, it transformed the video into a completely new creation t.

Sara also used metaphor in a broader sense, again via the juxtaposition of stop-motion animation and interview footage. Although I read some meaning into the stop-
motion animation of the bird flying and the lights going on and off, Sara said that she had not attached any narrative the stop-motion video clips:

These are not illustrations. You know, there’s disconnection between the language that’s happening and the images that are happening. But then there’s also this idea that I want to make some kind of new image, and there’s the larger metaphor of this stop motion and kind of cartoon-like, childish—it’s supposed to be something for kids. So to have this thing, this stop motion thing, this nonsense thing, this is an action that’s like play, and it was play for me to make this. It’s a form of play for me to be able to make something without having to have a stated direction or—it makes it less heavy. (Sara, Interview 3)

Rather than conveying a narrative, Sara wanted the stop-motion clips to represent a larger metaphor over the top of what was coming out of the main character’s mouth. Although the stop-motion animation clips did not directly illustrate what the main character was saying, they represented the childish and cartoon-like feelings behind her words.

Sara’s layering ordering, and juxtaposition of her video clips can be understood as a whole, rather than scene by scene. She incorporated appropriation and literary devices, including ambiguity, non sequitur and metaphor, into her video project by intertwining the stop motion animation and narrative interviews.

4.5.5 Reflection.

Throughout these three interviews, Sara was very careful in answering my interview questions and sharing her video making experiences; she did not want to be misrepresented. Since she was an experienced painter, she knew how to communicate through her works of art, and she had her own notions about digital stories. Sara believed that her story would be communicated in her arrangement of the audio, video, and textual components of a video. She explained, “I don’t see them as one or the other. Because, I mean, if you got rid of that, this is just an idea, then. And if you got rid of that, then this
is just jumble” (Sara, Interview 3). She cared about both the storyline and the audio-visual components, and she acknowledged the importance of ideas and how they are told through the media components.

As an artist, Sara enjoyed observing and listening to what her materials were telling her, and letting her art works emerge from that process. When I asked about her decision-making process and the criteria by which she chose to shoot and edit her video projects during the semester, Sara corrected my word choice:

I disagree with your use of the word “choice” there. …A choice implies you have a control over it, and a preference, I think, is just something that’s there. (Sara, Interview 3)

To Sara, “preference” was a more accurate term for describing her how she made her videos, because she did not believe that she had ultimate control over what she was doing. Sara’s creative process of video making was to continuously yield her preferences, even when it was hard to explain why they were her preferences. Her videos were not completely improvised, but they were not completely pre-planned, either:

I would say that part of the process is it’s an emergent process….I realized what needed to happen as the process progresses….I do storyboard and then I take those shots, but I do take other shots, too, and maybe that’s the improvisation or whatever. But then in the editing phase, that’s when you’re really deciding what meanings are going to get made out of these things. And you can’t know what meanings are going to get made. (Sara, Interview 3)

Although Sara did not completely understand the choices that she was making, she did not necessarily need to understand why she was making those choices. Sara emphasized that filmmakers or artists could be intentional and mindful about their productions without understanding them fully.
Sara also had a unique philosophy about communicating with her audience through her digital stories. Sara agreed that her digital stories would affect other people, but she hoped the viewers did not completely understand what she saying:

I don’t want it to be a narrative. I don’t want it to be readily understood or easily understood. I mean, if that were the case, if I just wanted to illustrate the video I was making, if I wanted to illustrate the sounds I’m making, I would just make a literal thing. And by pairing sounds and words that don’t go together, it forces the viewer to kind of figure out some new way of interpreting things. I mean, if I wanted to make things as clear and concise as possible, I would just write a sentence. Why would I bother even making a video, or any art? (Sara, Interview 3)

As I previously described, the narrative in Sara’s video was conceptual, becoming more concrete after explanation. If the role of digital filmmaking were solely to tell a story, Sara’s work would be a considered a failure. However, Sara views her videos as another art medium in which to express her creative process, so she tried to expand her audience’s capacity for understanding through her digital stories. She used the term “magical” to describe the viewing of a video:

I kind of like that magical thing that happens when the space in between me having attention and you having your baggage of experiences that you’re carrying around … The interpretation and lack of control. As much as you can control something, up to a certain point, at some point, you can’t control what other people are going to think. That’s the magical part. (Sara, Interview 3)

Therefore, Sara enjoyed the creative tension between the filmmaker and the viewers. She believed that dissonance between the creator and the audience must be part of the attractiveness of any kind of art making. She wanted her audience to understand and interpret what she was portraying in her videos. For example, I found certain narratives in her stop-motion animation, even though she had not consciously attached any narratives to it. Filmmakers and artists can control what the audience’s feeling to an extent, eliciting
specific emotions. However, filmmakers and artists never know what their viewers are going to think.

Sara told me an interesting story about a famous filmmaker who created a movie that was received poorly. He was so upset that he made several different versions of it, editing it asking viewers’ opinions on each subsequent version. Sara viewed the filmmaker as needing his audience’s approval, but Sara did not care much whether her viewers enjoyed her videos, as long as she was satisfied with them. Sara clearly identified herself not as a Hollywood moviemaker but as an artist who shares her expression through digital video. In this position, all she wanted was for other people to make more media and stop consuming the work of other people, including her own. Therefore, rather than showing her videos and getting feedback from the audience, Sara was more interested in continuously creating newer digital stories, even if nobody watched them.
Chapter Five

Conceptualizing Learning Issues: Cross-Case Discussion

In Chapter 4, I have carefully described how each study participant uniquely perceived his/her learning experiences in a classroom setting, each with his/her own set of learning experiences, constructions of meaning, technology choices, and artistic expressions, even while situated in the same course setting. All three learners have adopted and learned the art of digital video making, and they explored digital storytelling through their individual creative processes during the semester. As the three digital storytellers speculated about what they were making, how they were processing each step of digital video making, and what inspired their creative practices, it became clear that these individual learners’ experiences were interwoven with and derived from multiple aspects. As a researcher, I considered how these individuals’ personal backgrounds, their previous learning experiences regarding art and technology, their concepts of digital media, their unique creative processes, their artistic expression, and their motivations and inspirations influenced the way that they learned about digital storytelling.

In order to deepen my own understanding and offer a clearer explanation of these three different cases, I will provide a cross-case analysis, re-examining the common themes that emerged from the three cases, and noting the themes and findings that are most relevant to the study conclusion (Chapter 6). This cross-case discussion provides the groundwork for Chapter Six by examining the commonalities and differences of the three case reports in this study: those of the researcher’s and the two research participants’ learning experiences and video making processes.
This cross-case discussion is organized into five categories of learning issues generated from the three learners’ digital video making experiences, their awareness and attention as filmmakers or artists, and the values and meanings embedded in their videos. These five categories are: a) the purpose and meaning of digital video making, b) technological learning issues, c) the creative process of video making, d) completion and demonstration of craftsmanship, e) creative tension between storyteller and audience.

5.1 Shared Notion of Purpose and Meaning of Video Making

My observations across these three cases suggest that these three individual learners had different attitudes and understandings about the purpose and meaning of video making, including what digital video making is and why they were creating their films. I believe that these beliefs are foundational to the individuals’ unique learning experiences and the accompanying learning issues, including technological problems.

5.1.1 Three learner’s understanding of video making.

Bob, whose interdisciplinary background included music, technology, architecture, and art, believed that his digital videos were “not a substitute for writing, but an enhancement of textual expression” in a world mediated by the visuals (Bob, Interview 2). Bob believed that video making was a valuable communication tool in contemporary society, and he wanted to create digital stories to convey his values, experiences, and reflections. He also felt that it was possible to accomplish this purpose without the use of highly advanced and expensive filmmaking equipment. In addition, since Bob was interested in communicating something specific through his videos, he was more concerned about his audience than the other two participants were, considering his films from the audience’s point of view throughout his editing process.
Sara, on the other hand, was an artist, so she viewed digital video as just another tool for creating works of art. Her videos often reflected elements of collage, an art form that Sara practiced outside of filmmaking; she emphasized the importance of the arrangement of the media components: “If you got rid of that, this is just an idea, then. And if you got rid of that, then this is just jumble” (Sara, Interview 3). For Sara, the art of making digital videos was distinct from professional filmmaking; although the latter required exhaustive technical training, such rigor was not necessary for accomplishing her artistic purposes. Whereas Bob was interested in communicating a specific story to his audience, Sara focused on evoking feelings—although never any predetermined feelings; she wanted her videos to interact with the experiences her audience members brought to their viewing of her art, yielding different outcomes for different viewers.

I came into this digital video making experience with an educational and artistic background, and I initially considered it to be storytelling aided by digital technology, with the media components, including sounds, images, and text, existing simply to decorate the narrative. Gradually, I came to acknowledge that digital video making was a way of exploring creative possibilities and communicating meaningful stories by careful integration of media components. I clearly saw myself as a dedicated non-professional digital storyteller, trying to create effective and creative digital stories with limited resources, including relatively low-tech equipment and amateur actors. My learning experiences illustrated the potential and power of multi-modal communication.

The meanings and purposes that these three learners assigned to digital storytelling before, during, or after completing their video projects did not line up exactly with the meanings or purposes of either digital storytelling or digital video making found
in the literature. However, their beliefs about the purposes of digital video making were important to the outcome of their projects. Each learner pursued unique artistic expression, technology exploration, and means of communication; their beliefs about the purpose and meaning of digital video served as the starting point of their digital storytelling journey, and contributed, directly or indirectly, to their learning experiences and creative practices.

5.1.2 Being amateur enthusiasts and enjoying creative possibilities.

All three learners shared the notion that their video making experiences were not comparable to Hollywood filmmaking. None of them tried to create films like professional filmmakers; they were not setting out to make simplified versions of blockbuster films with less-expensive filmmaking equipment. Rather, they enjoyed being able to achieve their digital video production goals with ease and speed as non-professionals, without scriptwriters, trained actors, fancy settings, or high-end technologies. This perspective was not based on a lack of technical ability or inaccessibility to professional equipment. All three learners noted that professional filmmaking was fundamentally different from digital video production as they had experienced it, in terms of purpose, content, and process; I believe that this shared notion is significant to understanding these individuals’ learning experiences surrounding digital video making.

This understanding of the purpose of amateur digital video production is significant because it allowed the individual learners in this study to enjoy freedom and imaginative space while working with their digital videos, exploring and experimenting in the vast world of digital technology, narrative, and artistic approaches, instead of
trying to adhere to a fixed storyboard, afraid to make mistakes. Unlike professional films, which are constrained by commercial purposes, digital stories can encompass a broad set of subjects, topics, objectives, content, attitudes, and working strategies. Digital video making can be a rewarding individual practice filtered through the creator’s collective experiences, working strategies, and ingenuity.

All three learners spoke about their films as a form of art or artistic storytelling, rather than simpler version of Hollywood filmmaking. The three learners were satisfied with their works of art as long as their digital videos had integrity and communicated something compelling. This view of their projects as art was also apparent in the digital storytellers’ disinterest in learning precise film terms or advanced filmmaking technologies or skills in order to create their digital stories; selectively learning what they needed to carry out their creative practices was sufficient. In my case studies, all three learners became digital storytellers through self-teaching and experimentation, acquiring the techniques, knowledge, and strategies they needed through the actual experience of making their videos. They pursued a certain level of technical precision in order to reinforce their digital videos, but their lack of technical precision did not prevent them from achieving their goals. In other words, inferior image quality or film length did not necessarily diminish the power of these digital videos.

My intent is not to provide universal guidelines about the objectives of digital video making; some amateur moviemakers might want to emulate the work of professionals, using professional equipment and refining advanced techniques. The important point is that equipment and technological skills are not as crucial to amateur digital video production as they are to professional film production. These three case
reports show that it is not necessary for storytellers to be limited to or focused exclusively on learning film terminology or pursuing technical improvement; rather developing their artistic sensitivity was the key to their successful creation of unique digital stories. When they kept their own objectives, implications, strategies and motivations for video making in the foreground, they were able to make use of their own unique imaginations, working strategies, and creative ideas to produce compelling films.

5.2 Technical Learning Issues Regarding Technology

Digital storytelling/digital video making involves several different types of digital technology, including cameras, laptops, and audio- and video-editing software; digital storytelling guidebooks often devote many pages to describing the technical aspects of digital video making. Thus, it might appear that learning to make digital videos would require a great deal of time spent learning to use the involved technology. However, the three learners in my study did not encounter challenges using the technology, and they spent little time learning to use it. They used the most widely available free software for digital video making, including iMovie, Windows Movie Maker, and YouTube, and they found these programs simple to use. Although this particular digital video making class did not spend any class time explaining how to use the necessary technology, the learners were able to create their digital videos, even without prior film making knowledge.

5.2.1 Technology and technical skills of three learners.

Of course, previous technological experience influenced these three learners’ interest in and ability to adopt the technology used for digital video making. For example, Bob’s early encounters with technology prepared him for learning new programs easily;
he adapted that skill to digital video making. Sara had made video installments as a painter, using iMovie as an art medium. I had been afraid of using video making software, based on my prior experiences with technology ten years ago, when it had taken me a lot of time and effort to learn about the software I needed to use. This prior experience was an obstacle to my taking the digital video making class; I registered for it and dropped it twice before actually completing the semester.

Although Bob’s and Sara’s initial technology learning experiences were more positive than mine, we all took an active role in video making. All three learners followed a different timeline for learning how to use the equipment and software, but they all practiced and studied the necessary digital technologies on their own using online resources and trial and error. Thus, their technology acquisition was the result of individual experiential learning, not of structured lessons that focused exclusively on learning technical aspects. The technologies used in the digital making class were basic and intuitive; my participants were graduate students, but Sara mentioned that even the junior high school students she had worked with had learned it without any instruction:

The kids—even ones who had never even touched it before—were already like, “Pow, pow, pow, pow.” I knew they would be. It’s so easy. It’s so intuitive. And if they had questions, I would answer them, but mostly they knew what to do. (Sara, Interview 1)

Although the digital video editing software used in the class was simple to learn, it offered an array of video editing possibilities. As Bob said, “We have got capabilities now with this software that were only available to high-end Hollywood studios back in the fifties and sixties” (Bob, Interview 2). Therefore, the most crucial technical skill involved in using this software was learning how to utilize the wide range of built-in
presets to realize each participant’s unique artistic choices. Although their purposes for making digital videos were different, the three focal learners tried to shape their ideas into communicative digital videos through technological digital arrangement of media components. All three learners developed their own unique artistic choices for juxtaposing images and sounds. Technology involved more than mastering technical skills in digital video making practice; the real skill lay in making choices about the use of media components.

5.2.2 Limited technology with unlimited creative opportunities.

All three learners acknowledged the limitations of the basic, free software and relatively affordable equipment available to them for the class, but these limitations did not impact their video making. After devoting a significant amount of time to working with the available technologies, the three focal learners had different perspectives regarding the use of more advanced digital technology. Sara said that she did not need anything more sophisticated than iMovie in her second interview:

My brother-in-law is a professional animator. And he’s always trying to get me to use sophisticated things. I can’t even remember the names of half of them. But I never really wanted to, needed to. I feel like those two programs, knowing one for PC and one for Mac, takes care of all my editing needs. I don’t need anything more sophisticated. Maybe if I were making a feature-length film, definitely I would learn something else. (Sara, Interview 2)

Bob and I, on the other hand, were motivated to use more advanced technological applications. Bob discussed the features that better digital technology could offer in his interviews:

One feature that Premiere has that iMovie doesn’t is the ability to do split screen, so you could have two separate action films going on at the same time within the same frame. So, you know, that’s a Hollywood effect, where you might want to
be showing, two separate scenes that are occurring at the same time (Bob, Interview 2).

I would have liked to have had access to better equipment, because all I had to use was basically my Fujifilm digital camera, which just happened to have a moviemaking feature on it. And it doesn’t do HD. It was just a regular 640 by 480, so it was just your straight three-to-two ratio. And that…was a limitation. (Bob, Interview 3)

I also wanted to use higher technology, because I could not realize the vision that I had in mind using the available equipment. When I tried to shoot running or biking scenes, they turned out shaky, and I could not zoom effectively or get the colors that I wanted.

Despite two of these three learners’ desire to experiment with more advanced equipment, they all overcame their technical limitations and tried to visualize their ideas by combining their limited technology with unlimited creative opportunities:

I mean, obviously, with my skill base, I’m going to have limitations, because I don’t understand lighting and photography and everything about cameras, so even if I had this idea that I could make a super gloss film, this is not ever going to be that. I mean, I guess I went into it knowing my limitations, so it’s not going to stop me from making it, even though I know that there’s things that I’m incapable of reproducing. I think that’s okay. (Sara, Interview 3)

You know, if you’re an artist, you have to work with what you have. You can’t—whatever the situation is, you have to adapt to that situation and create no matter what. (Bob, Interview 3)

Learners will always experience technology limitations while creating digital videos, but it is important to note that these limitations do not lead to low quality digital videos. As Bob stated, digital storytellers have to adapt the technology to their needs, overcoming obstacles by finding creative alternatives for using images, music and sound. Indeed, technological limitations can open the door to improvisation. For example, in the process of making my third video, I was not able to film a real actor, so I experimented with using metaphor, a creative alternative approach. Many video-making learners want to
experiment with better technology after achieving some competence, but all three learners in this study agreed that the technologies available to them in the class were easy to learn and encouraged their individual creative practices. Technical issues that arose were not due to the quality of the digital technology, but to individual creative choices when using it.

5.3 Creative Process of Video Making: Play and Improvisation

In this digital video-making classroom, individual learners actively participated in their own video making processes. Digital video making is about more than the ordering of images; all three learners deliberately collected, edited, and juxtaposed sounds, images, and texts. For all three learners, their creative process of video making involved play or experimentation based on improvisation rather than structured learning.

5.3.1 Play.

According to Shipley (2008), play is a) pleasurable, b) meaningful to the player, c) active, d) voluntary, e) process oriented, and f) self-motivating. These characteristics are embedded in the digital video making process. As described above, digital video making was voluntary self-teaching process for the individual learners. In addition, all three learners indicated that they found digital video making to be an enjoyable and meaningful activity. For example, Bob used the word “affective” to describe his experience:

That refers to the positive or the good feelings you get from doing something on a computer. Or…in other words, you can do work on a computer, like if you have to write a letter or something, and it’s not really affective, because it’s more of, like, a labor—it’s something you have to do. You don’t really want to do it. Or, it’s not that you don’t want to do it, it’s just a chore or a task. But other parts of working—other times when you work on a computer, you get a kind of a pleasure out of it. Like computer gaming, of course, …they’re really affective,
because people get a lot of pleasure out of games. But other people…get good feelings out of writing computer programs. Or just in the way of working with the software. It’s…fascinating, and it’ll keep you going for hours, you know. You get into these programs or start learning how all these things go together and how all they work. And…it’s kind of an affective process that makes you feel involved. So that’s what computers do for me. I get very involved with my software. (Bob, Interview 1)

Bob said that he spent many hours editing, and that it was enjoyable and interesting. Likewise, Sara said that she enjoyed her video making experience:

I mean, it’s enjoyable to think something through, to think through an issue. To write the script is enjoyable. To shoot it is enjoyable. To edit it is enjoyable. To do the play of the stop-motion animation and photo-taking, the satisfaction of a finished project is enjoyable. Producing something and sharing with people and having people see what I make is enjoyable. (Sara, Interview 3)

Sara explained that she spent many hours editing her videos. In order to create her stop-motion animation alone, she shot hundreds of images. I also spent more than ten hours exploring creative juxtapositions with my images and sounds. A three-minute digital video took me more than 20 hours to create, but playing with all the choices and variations in the editing stage were fun and therefore a timeless learning assignment. By experimenting with all the features of the software to create and edit sound loops, videos, images, and transitions, individual learners sometimes felt frustrated and challenged, but the enjoyment of playing with the digital technologies was a key feature in keeping the learners interested in spending large chunks of time on their video productions.

**5.3.2 Improvisation.**

All three learners confronted issues with storyboarding and improvisation. As described in Chapter 2, media scholars including Ohler (2008) and Lambert (2006) have emphasized the importance of storyboarding in the pre-production stage. However, in the
actual video making experiences of the three focal learners in this study, the videos were always evolving, and it was impossible to adhere to any finite, pre-planned ideas. The important components of a digital video are the quality of the narrative and the media choices that illuminate that narrative. Since media choice involves more than mere sequencing of sounds and images according to a preplanned script, individual learners do not know in the pre-planning stage how their digital stories will turn out. Therefore, the learners did not need precise storyboards sequencing their images and voiceovers; they frequently went back and forth between the following stages, following their intuition: a) meditating on initial ideas, b) coming up with new ideas, c) proceeding with new ideas.

For example, in Bob described his first project as lacking a storyboard altogether: “I pre-planned nothing. It was total improvisation” (Bob, Interview 2). Bob took his camera outside and walked around to see what there might be interesting topics, and his first video came from a shot of an abandoned house. Bob also shoot the footage for Bus (his second project) first and wrote the script in response to what he had already filmed, the reverse of the usual progression. During post-production, Bob also blurred the lines among the three phases of digital video making, constantly adjusting his script to video clips and reshooting video footage. Bob emphasized that he was not able to preplan while he was editing:

Again, collaging, there’s no preplanning, really. There’s kind of ideas, and you might start out in a certain direction. And I might—it was just like, if I was doing a collage, I’d set all the, maybe photographs, and bits of found items, whatever I was using, out on the table, and then kind of pick and choose and react to each—what I’ve already put on the board, react to something else on it, that will generate another idea. That’s the same thing I did with the film (Bob, Interview 3).

As we can see from Bob’s case report, his video productions emerged from his
improvisational process, which did not clearly follow the traditional media production stages.

Likewise, Sara explained that her works were emergent and less formulated. Sara’s case report shows that she brainstormed about her videos initially, and then collected images and sounds, enjoying emerging moments. Sara asserted that being open to improvisation did not mean being less intentional:

You can be intentional and mindful about things without understanding them one hundred percent of the way, I feel. You can decide to do things without thinking through the consequences and how they’re going to affect other people. (Sara, Interview 3)

Since I was a digital video making novice, I tried to stick to my preplanned storyboard for my first two videos, but I was gradually able to experience more improvisational and intuitional moments. Because of the nature of digital video, adhering to my original ideas was impossible; my storyboard provided only the initial decisions and elements that I wanted to integrate. Everything else was improvisation. How I would add transitions and special color effects as well as matching the film to the voiceovers, images, and sound effects could not be imagined before actual practice. I constantly asked to myself whether I should go with my original intentions, refining the video according to my intuition and interests. In the practices of all three focal learners, the media making procedures, from pre-production to post-production, deviated from the distinct, linear, step-by-step process. All three learners believed that emerging ideas were vital to digital video making, and the nature of digital video production enabled improvisation with such moments.
5.4 Completion and Demonstrating Craftsmanship

Completing the video project with learner’s satisfaction is related to how individual learners demonstrate craftsmanship. Since digital technology allowed us to refine and modify videos eternally by clicking and dragging, digital video making could be never ending projects with same footages and elements. Deciding how to complete and when to complete the video is filmmaker’s decision, and this decision was correlated to individual’s satisfaction, their level of craftsmanship, meaning the video is good enough to the filmmakers.

5.4.1 Craftsmanship and satisfaction.

All three learners viewed their digital video making as a craft of some sort. Sara considered her digital videos an art form; Bob considered his visual storytelling and film; and I considered mine to be artistic narrative videos. All three learners had prior knowledge about technology and art, which allowed them to demonstrate their craftsmanship through their videos and affected their level of satisfaction with their projects. Craftsmanship during video making involved how the individuals sequenced their videos, controlled tonal values and color, and maintained purposeful picture and sound quality. Deciding when a video project is complete depends on the individual filmmaker’s sense of satisfaction and level of craftsmanship.

Since digital drag-and-drop technology allows digital video makers to continually refine and modify their videos, all three focal learners spent many hours editing their video projects to avoid craft issues, eventually reaching a point of satisfaction, when they could call their films complete. For example, I encountered craft
issues regarding volume and image quality, and I found the music to be distracting at some points in the video, creating a disconnect between the subject and the music as an element. Disappointment and discomfort with my video’s technical issues triggered me to edit again and again, and the video became incrementally clearer and stronger to me. Bob and Sara also paid close attention to craft issues in their videos, spending a lot of time in the editing stage moving footage around and reworking colors and text. Sara’s issue was trying to maintain continuity of color and sound in her videos, while Bob explained that he was editing down and condensing his media components to fit into a scene of limited length. Both learners continued to refine their videos until they were personally satisfied with the results.

The analysis of the three individual learners’ video projects shows that, although their final video projects were by no means flawless, all three learners reached a level of satisfaction at which they felt they could consider their videos complete. For example, I put my media elements together, embedded the story in the video, and connected the story and media elements through artistic creative strategies, trying to remove craft issues in my titles, audio, images, and transitions. Personal satisfaction was my craft goal. When I was satisfied with a project, having removed any craft issues that were significant to me, I decided that it was complete. Bob was more confident about his technical, artistic, and musical skills, and he was more interested in experimenting with techniques and ideas in his video; he tried not to overuse or misuse his raw footage in his videos. When he reached a point at which he felt that his video displayed the footage in a manner he considered appropriate, he decided it was complete. Sara’s final video project shows that she was interested in the artistic expression of her craft. She spent a significant amount of
time creating a stop-motion animation, as well as juxtaposing her elements in a subtly meaningful way that satisfied her sense of metaphor. When she felt that she had edited her video to achieve the evocative, artistic level that she desired, she was satisfied, and she considered it complete.

The three learners’ video projects showed that their levels of craftsmanship and thresholds of satisfaction were different, but they all periodically reflected upon and described their own videos as well as those of the other learners, refining their artistic perceptions, expectations, and aesthetic skills. Although the digital video making class did not specifically focus on refining either artistic or technological techniques, all three learners taught themselves the individualized artistic skills and technical craftsmanship that were important to them, creating unique sounds (Bob), exploring metaphoric images (researcher), experimenting with literary devices, including metaphor (Sara), and practicing with digital technologies and tools (all). In all three learner’s videos, sounds and images were aesthetically crafted through collage, juxtaposition, non-sequitur, surrealistic representation, and metaphor, providing tone, emotional context, and nonverbal meaning to their videos.

### 5.4.2 Craftsmanship and legal issues.

Since digital storytellers need to play multiple active roles, such as director, scripter, and editor, demonstrating craftsmanship also involves dealing with relevant legal issues, including copyrights and portrait rights. The three learners in this study tried to ensure all of the resources they used were legal and credited; Bob tried not to shoot footage of people’s faces when he was filming for *Bus*, and I used the metaphoric images for my third video to avoid human shots. All three learners acknowledged copyright
issues and tried to use public domain materials or their own created footage or sounds. Throughout the semester, all three learners taught themselves how to create satisfactory videos without violating ethics.

5.4.3 Craftsmanship as a process of learning.

All three learners’ videos reflected the unique aesthetic sensibilities of their creators, demonstrating their degrees of craftsmanship and thresholds of satisfaction. For example, I encountered more craft issues when creating my first video than I did with my final videos, but each video eventually became a special creation that met my standards at that particular moment. The sense of craftsmanship was more of a reward than any feedback, and as I practiced and learned, the more work I had to do before I could be satisfied with my final project. New issues, new senses and new ideas came out of each creative experience, becoming new challenges for subsequent projects. My increasing sense of craftsmanship elevated my expectations and standards. I cannot doubt that people with better developed aesthetics and techniques are able to demonstrate a higher level of craftsmanship.

The important point here is that craftsmanship is not about the quality of final project, but rather about the process of learning. In this study, the learners knew their skills were insufficient, but this did not impede their imaginative skills; although they may not have been perfectly satisfied with their videos as artists, they moved on to the next project with experience, knowledge, refined senses and more discerning eyes. Their video making experiences were a process for developing their craftsmanship, working through their own unique ways of refining their craft at their own pace, creating ever more thoughtful, evolved, aesthetic, complete, and satisfactory videos.
5.5 Creative Tension Between Storyteller and Intended Audience

Digital video can function as a meaningful form of communication, since storytelling is our primary means of comprehending and expressing our experiences (Abbott, 2002; Fisher, 1987; Polkinghorne, 1988). Because of the communicative nature of digital video, successful media production should consist of excellence in visual and communicational use of digital technology (Bequette & Brennan, 2008). Because of their digital nature, sharing these videos with other audiences across time and space is easy; although I shared my video only with my classmates, Bob’s and Sara’s videos was available to the public on Youtube, and Sara mentioned that her videos had been viewed and commented on by an unknown boy in California. Communication requires both teller and listener: filmmaker and audience. Throughout the class, all three learners had opportunities to share their projects and reflect upon peer feedback, assimilating and benefitting from each other’s experiences. We were filmmakers and audience members at the same time.

Across the three learners, Bob and I reported high degrees of concern for audience, while Sara showed more concern for the creator. Bob clearly stated that he always cared what his audience was thinking about his videos:

I’m obviously thinking about an audience, because it’s—obviously, if you’re making a film that you know other people are going to watch…you want them to be able to follow the narrative structure in some way and be able to get some kind of sense of…fulfillment at the end of the film (Bob, Interview 2).

Audience feedback was important to Bob’s sense of satisfaction; he was most satisfied with his second project (Bus), having received positive feedback from his audience:

Everybody seemed to find my work acceptable, so in that respect, I was satisfied with it. I thought it was kind of fun to make the videos and show them to other
people. And people either react, you know, laugh or ask questions. So yeah, I was satisfied with all three. (Bob, Interview 3)

For my second and third projects, I also cared about the audience, and I tried to craft my story to be entertaining to my audience, holding their interest for five minutes. Although three to five minutes may seem too short to require significant effort towards keeping the audience’s attention, it is long enough to convey a wide range of narratives, meanings, and styles. My case report shows how I tried to select interesting and meaningful topics for the viewers as well as myself, how I tried to make memorable conclusions, and how I assembled footage to keep the viewers’ attention throughout the running time.

Although she did show some concern about her audience, Sara reported that she was interested more in her own creative process more than the feedback of others. For example, she did edit slurred words and strong accents in her second video to make it more understandable to the audience, but at the same time, Sara explained that she did not care about audience’s response a lot, saying, “I would expect everyone to already have concrete ideas of their visual composition and their aesthetic looks like. I don’t expect everyone’s aesthetic to be like mine” (Sara, Interview 3). This does not necessarily indicate that she did not value audience feedback, just that she acknowledges that people have different aesthetics. However, she confirmed her notion by saying that she did not care audience’ response if she was satisfied with her videos in her case report. Sara’s view of her audience was different from Bob’s and mine.

The degree of regard for audience opinion differs among the three focal learners, but all three learners’ experiences indicate some dissonance and creative tension between the creator and the viewer. As we can see from the case report, Sara stepped back from
her videos as the filmmaker, and let her creation speak. She did not want to set her videos up to manipulate the audience, but rather she tried to let the content tell its own story. Her attitude toward producing videos afforded the audience more freedom; Sara placed a high value on the creative tension between her viewers and herself. Sara used the terms “feel” versus “know” to describe the dissonance between the filmmaker and the viewer:

I guess a hope of mine is that people don’t understand what I’m saying all the way. I don’t want it to be a narrative. I don’t want it to be readily understood or easily understood. I mean, if that were the case, if I just wanted to illustrate the video I was making, if I wanted to illustrate the sounds I’m making, I would just make a literal thing. And by pairing sounds and words that don’t go together, it forces the viewer to kind of figure out some new way of interpreting things. I mean, if I wanted to make things as clear and concise as possible, I would just write a sentence. Why would I bother even making a video, or any art? I think that art and videos have the potential to expand the variety of understanding, and to expand our capacities for understanding (Sara, Interview 3).

As described in Sara’s case report, her third video is an experimental use of metaphor, in which the images and sounds reference each other. Although I appreciated this video through my own internalized experience, the meanings and feelings I took away from the film were much different than those Sara had experienced while creating it, which I discovered during our interviews. However Sara pointed out that her audience would make their own connections to the video, and that she as the filmmaker would have her own connection, as well; that viewers could identify different connections and meanings in her video did not mean that it was more or less communicative.

Bob also respected the audience’s need for personal space to interpret videos in their own ways. Bob confessed that had been heavy handed in manipulating his story to control the audience, and that it had been a mistake:

You’re trying to either convince someone of something, you’ve got a point you want to get across. You do want to show emotion or make people feel the same
emotion you felt, but you don’t want to do it so that they notice it. (Bob, Interview 3)

Bob actually did want to manipulate the audience’s emotions—he just wanted to be subtle about it. Whereas Sara really did want her viewers to be free to take different meanings away from her work. Acknowledging and caring about the creative tension or dissonance between the filmmaker and the audience(s) is an important learning issue. An audience definitely interprets what they watch through their own personal and cultural filters; filmmakers create their movies to intentionally catch the viewer’s interest, trying to lead them to a desired conclusion. It is important to develop an idea/topic while allowing the audience the freedom to absorb and interpret the film through their own lenses.

5.6 Conclusion

My research question focused on the kinds of learning issues individual digital video making learners went through during their video making processes. To answer that question, I illustrated how the focal learners composed, revised, and edited their digital videos, taking into account their backgrounds and artistic strategies. Also, I explored the aesthetic qualities and meanings of each learner’s videos, by analyzing their artistic strategies and media components.

On the first day of the class, the instructor told us that we were getting on a train that would take us somewhere over the course of the semester, and that our individual destinations would be very different from each other. His description was accurate for the three focal learners in this study.
My case study describes the digital video making journey of an inexperienced filmmaker interested in technology, art, and education. While my first video project was more technology exploration than digital storytelling, through hands-on experience, I became attentive to the intricacies of the craft and tried to tell stories creatively and effectively, making them interesting to the audience as well as myself. Over the course of the semester, I came to understand the important of intuition, to have a desire to refine my craftsmanship, to manipulate my creative strategies, to fully experience the enjoyment of working with multi-media, and to recognize the limitations of technological affordance.

Bob’s case illustrated how a person who is technologically competent, knowledgeable about film, and interested in exploring art and music experienced the video making process. Throughout the semester, his videos were communicative, conveying concrete ideas. Although he did not further refine his technological skills, Bob incorporated his film knowledge, his personal values and experiences, his music composition skills, and his artistic techniques into his videos throughout the semester. Bob became more competent as an audience member as well as a maker. Having taken these classes, produced his own digital videos, and read about film, he said that he had become “much more cognizant of the process” than he had been before.

Sara was a painter with video installment experience, and she created her videos as conceptual collages of image and sounds through her unique creative process and philosophy. Sara’s video making experiences were intuitional; she did not completely understand the choices that she was making or why she was making them. Sara viewed her videos not as literal devices, but as another art medium in which to express her
creative process, so she tried to expand her audience’s capacity for understanding through her digital stories.

This cross-case discussion integrates the study findings within the framework of my research questions. Based on the cross-case discussion, I generated five important learning issues regarding digital making process, as described above: a) acknowledgement regarding the purpose and meanings of digital video making, b) technical learning issues regarding technology, c) creative process of video making, d) completion and demonstrating craftsmanship, and e) creative tension between storyteller and audience. Each individual learner incorporated his/her own personal experiences, perspectives, creativity, and aesthetic sense into his/her projects, undergoing unique digital video making journeys, although they were all traveling on the same train—in the same classroom. Through experimentation and self-teaching driven by their own beliefs and motivation, the three focal learners created films out of an ability not necessarily based upon film or technology knowledge, but on their own experiences of experimental learning.

The three case reports provide insights into learning issues of digital video making, and the cross case discussion integrates the notable learning issues across the three individual learners. Chapter 6 will outline the findings that emerged from the three case studies, discuss the implications of these findings, and recommend possible avenues for future research.
In this study, my participant observation, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Bob and Sara, and selected video analysis provided me with rich data to explore the participants’ individual creative digital video making processes and their results, while a multidimensional conceptual framework of digital video making kept me aware of the creative and technical aspects that might be informed in digital video making practice. A cross-case analysis of the three individual learners’ unique creative processes and learning experiences revealed important findings, as discussed in the previous chapter according to five themes: a) the purpose and meaning of digital video making, b) technological learning issues, c) the creative process of video making, d) completion and demonstration of craftsmanship, and e) creative tension between storyteller and audience. Having attempted to answer the primary research questions in Chapters 4 and 5, this concluding chapter further describes the themes that emerged from the cross-case discussion in terms of learning theories, the refinement of the initial conceptual framework based on data analysis, and possible implementations of this research in the field of art education.

6.1 Discussion of Findings

Digital stories have been described in the literature as involving multi-modal narratives embedded in digital technologies (Davis, 2004); combining a number of media into a story (Ohler, 2008); and utilizing still and moving images, text, sounds, music, and voice narration to tell a story (Paul & Fiebich, 2002). In this study, digital storytelling through digital video making embodied individual aesthetic and meaning through
narrative properties and media components, as the literature described. Further, affirming the notions of both media educators and art educators, including Chung (2006), Davis (2004), Lambert (2006), and Meadows (2003), the digital videos included in this study were more than mere narrative accompaniment to a set of visual imagery; they were provocative and meaningful visual presentations woven from digital contents.

6.1.1 Summary of findings.

Throughout the course of the narrative video-making process, learners could actively process and interpret the story, information and meaning through aesthetic qualities that expressed particular kinds of content. Individual learners could convey diverse aspects of their real-life personal, social and cultural experiences as well as their knowledge of technical conventions and personal aesthetic style. Contemporary media making strategies such as soundtrack design, the juxtaposition of image and sound, and the manipulation of images were taken into consideration. These strategies collectively contributed to the pre-production and post-production stages, and are ways of creating both meanings and form. This understanding of the purpose of amateur digital video production is significant because it allowed the individual learners in this study to enjoy freedom and imaginative space while working with their digital videos, exploring and experimenting in the vast world of digital technology, narrative, and artistic approaches, instead of trying to adhere to a fixed storyboard, afraid to make mistakes. Unlike professional films, which are constrained by commercial purposes, digital stories can encompass a broad set of subjects, topics, objectives, content, attitudes, and working strategies.
The three learners in this study created and learned more than I expected, based on the descriptions of digital storytelling in the literature. Upon close inspection of these learners’ cases, however, their experiences developing their craftsmanship in digital video making do not clearly indicate whether this ability is associated with visual, media, or technical competence. Although these learners communicated different notions and understandings about digital video making and the creative process involved, they created digital videos through their own problem-solving and creation strategies. The research findings from the three learners are summarized below.

1) Different individual understandings of digital video: Each learner pursued unique artistic expression, technology exploration, and means of communication; their beliefs about the purpose and meaning of digital video served as the starting point of their digital storytelling journey, and contributed, directly or indirectly, to their learning experiences and creative practices.

2) The use of imaginative/free space in creative practice: The learners did not view their digital videos as simplified, cheaper versions of blockbuster films; rather, they enjoyed the freedom and imaginative space of amateur digital video creation, exploring the vast world of digital technology, narrative, and artistic approaches, instead of trying to adhere to a fixed storyboard, afraid to make mistakes.

3) Self-learning to acquire technology competence: The digital video making class in this study did not dedicate any class time to explaining how to use the necessary technology. However, the learners in my study did not encounter any major technological challenges, and they spent little time teaching themselves to use it through hands-on practice and information available online.
4) Technical learning issues involving technology: The technical issues that did arise were not due to the quality of the digital technology, but to individual creative choices when using it. Technology involved more than mastering technical skills in digital video making practice; the real skill lay in making choices about the use of media components through limited technology by finding creative alternatives for using images, music and sound.

5) Enjoyment of learning through improvisation: Individual learners engaged in video making through the enjoyment of playing with the digital technologies. The three learners’ processes of digital video making deviated from the distinct, linear, step-by-step process; they believed that emerging ideas were vital to the digital video making process, and the nature of digital video production enabled improvisation with such moments.

6) Craftsmanship as a process of learning: The three learners’ video projects showed that their levels of craftsmanship and thresholds of satisfaction were different. Learners demonstrated their craftsmanship by refining their artistic perceptions, expectations, and aesthetic skills over the course of the semester. They knew their video making skills were insufficient, but this did not impede their imaginative skills. Their video making experiences were a process for developing their craftsmanship, working through their own unique ways of refining their craft at their own pace, creating ever more thoughtful, evolved, aesthetic, complete, and satisfactory videos.

7) Understanding of and respect for audience: Although the degree of regard for audience opinion differed among the three focal learners, all of their experiences indicate some dissonance and creative tension between the creator and the viewer. The three
learners agreed that they needed to develop an idea/topic while allowing the audience the freedom to absorb and interpret the film through their own lenses.

6.1.2 Further discussing important aspects of learning digital video making.

Of the learning issues that emerged from my study, several affirm the findings of previous research, but others involve some important aspects of learning about digital video making that have thus far not been adequately addressed in the literature: uniqueness in learning, digital video making as learning through improvisation, individual autonomy in digital video making, digital video making as creative learning, digital video making as self-regulated learning, and digital video making as work-based learning. Although individual learners themselves did not relate their experiences in terms of these specific learning theories, data analysis revealed significant themes in the learning processes of these digital storytellers.

6.1.2.1 Digital video making: Addressing uniqueness in learning. Although contemporary educators have acknowledged the different needs of learners and the diversity of learners’ potentials and goals in the same setting, contemporary classrooms do not accommodate such uniqueness and individuality (Gable, Hendrickson, Tonelson, & Van Acker, 2000). Smith (2000) noted the importance of appreciating the individuality of learners, saying, “get to know your pupils as individuals not as units in a class” (p. 89); respecting and facilitating individual learners’ personal and unique journeys is necessary to help them experience satisfaction, encouraging their differences while acknowledging their limitation (Fischer & Rose, 2001; Tomlinson, 2002).

Accommodating learner diversity might be achieved through the inclusion of other subjects or mediums within the field of art education, or it might involve other
disciplines. My research shows that the art of digital video making can open the door to facilitating individuals’ unique journeys. In the digital video making class in this study, the three focal learners were encouraged to undertake a personal learning journey and to represent the unique characteristics of their own pathway. Thus, they learned to appreciate their own uniqueness and reflect on their individuality, experiencing different levels of satisfaction and different types of goals and achieving them through their own aesthetic decision-making and problem-solving strategies in planning, shooting and editing.

The three learners cherished the complex phenomenon of digital video making and its creative process “at different rates and in different ways, constructing new knowledge and understandings in ways which link their learning to their previous experiences” (Curriculum Council, 1998, p. 17). My video making experience was a personal journey from novice to more experienced digital storyteller. Over the course of the semester, I gradually became more reflective, finding my own authentic voice and integrating it into my video projects. The topic, subjects, and artistic strategies that I used were from my unique creative process based on my previous experience and knowledge, and they were different from those of the other two learners. Sara also relied on her unique creative process and past experience, imbuing the digital video medium with her off-beat artistic spirit. Bob viewed visual storytelling as an opportunity to use his interdisciplinary background to explore the world of filmmaking. He appreciated that the video making class was constructed to empower and encourage learners to be responsible for their own learning by clarifying their own processes and making connections with their lives.
6.1.2.2 Digital video making as learning through improvisation.  Art education scholars have claimed that the process of making arts through digital technologies differs from traditional processes and techniques. According to this view, students can take action boldly, because efficient and diverse artistic expression is a possibility that is open to everyone. Students can create art with less risk and anxiety because they can alter and edit their mistakes easily using digital technologies (Freedman, 1991; Hicks, 1993; Hubbard, 1991). Digital technology also provides options that support individual creativity, ideas and expression by experimenting with more diverse visual effects than are allowed in traditional art mediums (Roland, 1990; Warren, 1989). Digital art making also enables students to act rapidly when they have a flash of inspiration, and fosters adventurous expression as well as accidental and unexpected images that can be created while constructing intentional images (Freedman, 1991). The technical possibilities of the digital medium allow for a more creative and expressive environment, more closely connected to human intuition.

The above characteristics of digital video making as an art medium allow for the proliferation of improvisational possibilities through fear-free experimentation. All three learners experienced and shared the power of improvisation throughout decision making in every step of planning, shooting, and editing. According to Hagberg (2000), improvisation can be explained as:

…an art form that intrinsically encourages originality; music that constitutes—in a positively valued sense of the phrase—an imperfect art…is not formulaic and yet is governed by regulative ideals;…an art form that demands a distinctive ontology…inviting a reassessment of the nature of artistic rule following…(p. 95).

Since improvisation is a widely used term in jazz music, the power of improvisation has
been researched in the field of music education. For example, Azzara (2002) researched the importance of purposeful improvisatory music making experiences in music education, claiming that the practice of improvisation is valuable in its own right. Montano (1983) also found that improvisational learning could facilitate students’ development of music outcomes in terms of rhythmic accuracy. In art education, Hurwitz and Day (1995) emphasized random improvisation with art elements and principles as one of the characteristics of children talented in visual art making, along with verisimilitude (being true to life), visual fluency, complexity and elaboration, and sensitivity to art media.

As discussed in Chapters Four and Five the three learners encountered improvisational moments in each step of their video making experiences. They navigated the built-in facets of digital technology intuitionally, and experienced the video making process non-linear way, compared to the linear progression from pre-production to post-production as described in the literature. For example, learners sometimes shot raw footage first (production), subsequently creating a storyline for the collected footage. In addition, while editing and assembling footage, the learners often went back to shooting and/or revised their original plans to incorporate emerging ideas. Bob claimed that his second video project relied entirely on improvisation; Sara described how she was dealt with emerging ideas and her own intuitions, transforming her original intentions. I also improvised, finding alterative expressions whenever I was confronted with technological limitations and exploring metaphoric expressions as a way of communication. Thus, digital storytelling practice can function as an effective learning practice to strengthen individual learners’ creative improvisation.
6.1.2.3 Digital video making as a way of self-regulated learning showing individual autonomy. According to Schunk and Zimmerman (2008), self-regulated learning allows learners personally to activate and to sustain their goals, motivations, behaviors and learning strategies. An important aspect of self-regulated learning is that learners have a sense of autonomy (Newman, 2008), continuously using their own learning strategies for effective problem solving (Dweck and Master, 2008). My research shows that digital video making can foster self-regulated learning and individual learner autonomy. In the class in this study, the instructor was a facilitator, encouraging individual autonomy; the three focal learners fully played the roles of scripter, director, shooter, and editor, with permission to pursue their individual visions.

The three learners incorporated their own prior knowledge and skills into their video projects, rather than using any prescribed strategies or methods. They made use of post-modern art making strategies, including appropriation, metaphoric representation, adapting narratives, collage, and juxtaposition, as well as strategies beyond the post-modern, making use of their own film watching experiences, internet sources encountered while web surfing, and diverse literary devices. For example, Sara used a self-video technique that had come across online and adapted a non-sequitur literary device for her video project. Bob shared that he wanted to echo the work of Alfred Hitchcock in his first video, and that he had experimented with surrealism in his third video. Thus, the three learners were given the freedom to use techniques and knowledge that they had brought with them to the class, which directly or indirectly influenced their processes of learning and making digital videos.

Digital video making encourages learners to make use of their differences, and this
characteristic of learning can motivate learners to commit and stay positive (Tomlinson, 2004). Learners seek to be independent and self-sufficient, striving for greater awareness of their skills, abilities and ideas, and taking increasing responsibility for their learning (Lawrence-Brown, 2004). According to Lens and Vanskeenkiste (2008), shared self-regulated learning can achieve cognitive outcomes (performance), affective outcomes (enjoyment), and motivational outcomes (continuing motivation). The individual learners in this class started at different points: Bob was technologically competent, with an interdisciplinary background; Sara had experience making video installments as a painter; and I was a total novice of video making, with some technological competence as a member of the digital generation. These different starting points gave rise to different motivations, goals, expectations, and outcomes for each learner. Because they were given the autonomy to pursue their different paths, all three learners shared that they had enjoyed the process of digital video making and all that it entailed: imaginative freedom, explorative practice, technology experimentation, and the challenges of shooting and editing.

6.1.2.4 Digital video making is work-based learning. My research suggested that digital video making can be achieved by hands-on work-based learning. Raelin (1997) explained that “work-based learning is acquired in the midst of action and is dedicated to the task at hand,” citing Drekske (1981). Work-based learning is not learning about practice but becoming a real practitioner (Brown & Duguid, 1991); the purpose of the digital storytelling class was to teach students to become digital communicators and visual storytellers, rather than teaching them how to use the involved digital technologies. Polanyi (1966) claimed that most new problems in actual learning are not sufficiently
answered by previous learning experiences and knowledge, so learning through hands-on practice is important. Indeed, work-based learning is especially important in digital video making because learning and practicing all of the relevant information regarding all facets of the video making software and possibilities of digital video recording is impossible. The three learners in this study mastered the use of the necessary digital technologies through self-teaching based on hands-on activity. Through actual practice and play with relevant digital technologies, the focal digital storytellers merged their relevant knowledge regarding technology, artistic strategies, and film- and video-making with actual practice, creating tactical knowledge.

6.1.2.5 Digital video making as creative learning. My research shows that digital video making facilitates the creative learning experience. Thomson and Sefton-Green (2011) explained creative learning as follows:

[Creative learning] allows students to use their imaginations, have ideas, generate multiple possible solutions to problems, communicate in a variety of media and in general ‘think outside the box’ (p. 2).

Creative learning focuses on “questioning, making connections, inventing and reinventing, [and] flexing the imaginative muscles” (Collard, 2007, p. 1), and also involves ownership of knowledge, meaning that teachers “are concerned to produce and construct” knowledge in learners by incorporating the learner’s experiences (Troman & Jeffrey, 2011). Troman and Jeffrey (2011) further state that creative learning encourages curiosity and allows the risk-taking necessary to investigate everyday marvels. This essence of creative learning is embedded in how the learners in this study constructed their digital stories. The learning process involved creative exploration and experimentation with visual images, sounds, narratives and technology.
As this study shows, the creation of digital videos is closely connected to the storyteller’s background, creative process, and prior knowledge; the three learners’ intuitive and improvisational moments underpinned their creative processes. In addition, individual creativity was facilitated through individual autonomy with digital technologies. Although celebrating the creativity between learning with digital technologies and artistic practice is not new, my research reinforces that digital video making involves individual creativity in questioning, problem solving, decision-making, and making connections.

### 6.2 Refining the Conceptual Framework

As described in Chapter Two, I devised a four-dimensional conceptual framework of digital video making for this study, based on the literature and initial data analysis, to help me interpret and analyze my data in a structured way, and then to serve as a reference point from which to relate my findings to the literature. Initially, I divided the framework horizontally into four main dimensions derived from film theory, media education, and art education: process, narrative properties, media components, and artistic making strategies. This conceptual division was artificial, of course; in reality, the four dimensions intertwine and overlap considerably throughout the video making process. After a full analysis of the data, which yielded further understandings about digital video making and better descriptors of its complexity, it became clear that the initial conceptual framework needed to be restructured.
Narrative properties

**Teller:** point of view/narrative voice, **Subject Matter:** character/actor, sequential events and actions, setting, **Time and Sequence,** **Topic/Theme,** **Audience and Context.**

**Media components**

**Images:** Moving images and still images color and light, still shot and framing technique, camera movements, depth of field, point of view, focus, transitions and effects.

**Sounds:** Voice-over narration, recorded sounds, sounds created artificially on a computer, sounds obtained from the Web, downloaded music, and original music recorded in the real world, pace and tone.

**Words/Texts:** The expressive qualities of words can be achieved by manipulating words in different fonts or styles. (font color, font face, pace and tone, boldface, italic, simple, and complex)
The resulting refined conceptual framework would benefit from testing in future scholarly research; it is flexible enough to accommodate modification when challenged by further data analysis. As I described in Chapter 2, digital video making requires the effective, coherent, creative, and artistic integration of two spheres: narrative properties and media components. Chapter Two. Figure 16 shows the different issues that should be taken into consideration when integrating narrative and multimedia components. Digital video making is potentially complex, but understanding this complexity is an essential step in making quality digital videos. The refined video making framework identifies the eight components of the two main spheres of video making: teller, subject matter, time and sequence, topic/theme, audience and context, images, sounds, and words/texts. As figure 16 shows, the integration of these components gives rise to six learning issues relevant to digital video making: individual creative/improvisational process; intention versus understanding audience; knowledge/confidence about technology, narrative, and art; individual creative strategies informed by art making, personal experience, and exploration; demonstrating individual craftsmanship; and access to technology.

I prioritized and classified these six learning issues based on the literature and the findings that emerged from my data analysis. The resulting framework is not intended to be a prescriptive tool for digital video making, but rather identifies important considerations across the complex individual video making process that may directly and/or indirectly affect an individual’s video making artistically, conceptually, and technically.

First, the individual creative and improvisational process significantly influences learning about digital video making. In my initial conceptual framework, I represented
video making as a linear process progressing from preproduction to postproduction. However, in practice, the process was a non-linear, cyclical, flexible, improvisational, and playful activity of discovery.

Figure 17. Cyclical process of digital video making with improvisation

All three learners started shooting footage before planning, at various points in the class. Bob’s case shows that he mandated to make something just happen. Sara explored risky endeavors and expressions, led by her artistic creativity. I played with metaphoric images and moved back and forth in the process to accommodate emerging ideas. The resulting video making experiences were interactive and experimental, relying on creative improvisational moments. Figure 17, above, shows the dynamics of the cyclical
digital video making process. In addition to its non-linearity, the complexity of the
digital video making process is further deepened by the challenge of balancing the
maintenance of one’s own initial intentions and the appreciation of emerging ideas and
sensitivities. Regard for audience is one factor that can influence both the process and
product of digital video making. Different people have different notions about how to
deal with the audience while maintaining their original creative intentions, but they all
want to convey particular messages to a particular audience. Appreciating the creative
tension and dissonance between the creator and the audience, some digital storytellers
stand back and let their stories emerge, while others manipulate the audience’s emotions,
either subtly or more obviously. These different attitudes toward audience influence the
individual video making process.

As stated previously, individual learners’ previously attained knowledge about
and experience with technology, narrative, and art can also impact their digital video
making journeys by directly or indirectly guiding their decision-making and exploration.
The autonomy to make use of such knowledge and experience can yield creative
strategies informed by post-modern art making strategies or emerging from the visual
culture of individuals’ daily lives, including creative techniques from different disciplines
and new insights from TV, movies, and the internet.

As illustrated in Chapter five, individual learners’ different levels of
craftsmanship also influenced their video learning experiences. In art classrooms, the
fundamental conventional and technical aspects of digital video must also be given
appropriate attention. Understanding video-making tools such as cameras, laptops, lenses,
and software is an important aspect of the new media-making process. Developing and
refining craftsmanship was an important learning issue in which learners cultivated their own unique ways of refining their craft at their own pace, creating ever more thoughtful, evolved, aesthetic, complete, and satisfactory videos.

Lastly, access to technology also influences the digital video making experience. While the sophistication of the digital technology did not affect the learners’ creative practice, as individual learners achieve their learning goals and expectations, they might need more advanced technologies, including more sophisticated software, high-end camcorders, or lightening systems.

These six learning issues are interwoven in reality; this framework serves to artificially extricate the individual fibers of the video making process, in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of the complex, individualized properties embedded in digital video production. Therefore art educators should teach the technical aspects of camera and video manipulation software for the purpose of helping students make creative choices when they make videos. Students can develop and apply technical skills, aesthetic sensitivities and qualities, critical faculties, and creative storylines when they deliver compelling meanings to audiences in the form of video productions. Throughout the video making process, learners should create vivid scenes using a variety of properties, techniques and elaborations. Learners should be given instruction such that their digital videos are systematic and exhibit logical connections through the use of sounds, words and images. Collectively combining word, images, and sound in a scene can create purposefully meaningful digital stories. There should be appropriate amount/use of images, audio, video, text, and image effect for a sense of coherence to emerge, both in the mind of the producer, and for the audience. The primary
consideration should be the intended meaning of the story, not the mere use of irrelevant images and sound effects. The structure and relationship of sounds and images should be a compelling arrangement within the greater context of a coherent communication. In a video, each cut displays a particular pattern, movement, and disposition of the figures because there is harmony in the manner in which sounds and images interact.

6.3 Implications of the Study

The primary research question of this study focused on identifying the learning issues surrounding the artistic, conceptual, and technical aspects of digital storytelling via the experience of three learners who were enrolled in a graduate level digital video course engaged in video making practice. To that end, I examined how these individual learners composed and edited their digital videos, how their integration of narrative properties and media components contributed to the aesthetic qualities and meanings of their video productions, and what learning issues arose throughout the process. My conceptual framework describing aspects of the digital video making process and artistic strategies, created specifically for this study, can now serve as a tool for exploring and teaching varying digital video making strategies more broadly in the field of art education.

My research highlights the variety of individual learning styles in the creative process of video making. My findings and analysis reveal that some students followed a more structured video making process, while others were more intuitional. One learner began to recognize the value of and then and deliberately engage improvisational approaches after familiarizing herself with the basic video-making steps. Others skipped some of the steps prescribed in video and film making and explored instead the creative process itself. One student seemed to disregard known technical rules, processes, and
techniques associated with video and film making almost completely, preferring to “figure it out by herself” along the way. Her learn-by-doing approach relied on her a sense-of-self as an artist, ready to explore, play, make mistakes, and see what happens as a result. I believe that the expression of these students’ diverse learning styles and creative processes were possible in this research setting because the instructor was an artist in a higher education setting, notably, an art school, and notably in a class with self-selected, highly motivated learners. In art schools at the university level, the responsibility is often placed upon the students to teach themselves techniques and processes, unlike K-12 schools. In my experience, art teachers in K-12 settings prefer more structured lessons, often beginning with a step-by-step demonstration of the project, and trying to troubleshoot in advance some the issues that might come up in the process of art-making. This is especially true at the lower grade levels, or for beginning or foundational art courses at the secondary level. Art teachers often expect their students to spend an adequate amount of time planning and learning techniques, believing these aspects to be foundational to being creative. Based on my findings, I now believe that the different learning styles that students exhibit in digital video making, and perhaps other digital media as well, presents suggests a different teaching paradigm, one that is well suited to digital media.

My thought is that the materials, content, processes, and techniques associated with new digital media are relatively easy for learners to grasp these days; and that art teachers are well advised to focus a bit more on their individual student’s preferred artistic approaches, learning styles, and pace. By allowing multiple approaches to technique and process in the digital storytelling classroom, K-12 art teachers can let
students connect with digital video making at various levels of knowledge, meaning, aesthetic, and technique, and they can capitalize on the more open ended, improvisational, and playful potential of digital video making. Again, it is worth mentioning here that one reason such an approach might be possible is due to the nature of digital media itself, in that digital media can be edited, remixed, and changed on a computer relatively easily (unlike, for example, a more traditional painting). Implications for this study suggest that k-12 art teachers engaging in digital media with their students can now allow students to demonstrate comprehension and mastery of assignments in ways other than structured step-by-step approaches. In this regard, the K-12 art class begins to resemble the college level art class, with its high expectation that students will engage in creative self-directed learning.

My research revealed three different learning styles and creative approaches that appeared among students in a college level digital video class, and these are but a few among the many possible variations that art teachers will encounter in their classrooms. In my experience, learning style and artistic style/voice go hand in hand. Although it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to examine more specifically the connection between learning style and artistic style, their relationship is important in the classroom. Students will encounter and reencounter, in a variety of settings, the knowledge, concepts, techniques, process, and attitudes necessary for creating their own videos by attaining certain craftsmanship levels. In this regard, performance standards should function as guidelines for recommended learning experiences and expected knowledge and skill-based outcomes for students, but performance standards should not limiting teachers’ understandings of the rich and mostly hidden potential of this new medium. Nor
should performance standards limit or students’ abilities to capitalize on their own unique learning styles and artistic voices.

The findings of this study have important implications not only for the areas of media education and art education, but more broadly for learning theories in general. This study presents empirical evidence identifying the learning issues and strategies of actual learners of digital storytelling, highlighting the complexity of digital video making and reinforcing the significance of learner autonomy. Based on my findings, I believe that the processes and potential of digital video making can serve as an alternative teaching and learning practice to facilitate improvisational, self-regulated, creative, and work-based learning in many creative areas of interest to art educators.

6.4 Recommendations for Further Research

This study gives rise to several further questions and topics. Based on the conceptual framework for understanding the individual creative digital video making experience, I suggest six areas for future research to expand on the findings of this dissertation. These suggestions are important for determining the potential benefits of digital video making in the field of art education.

First, further research is needed on the instructional and curriculum design of the digital storytelling classroom. This research should explore the task performance of learners at different levels of expertise in order to inform the design of effective instruction adaptive to the needs of individual learners. In addition, since this study was limited to graduate-level adult learners, future research should include different age levels, to explore how different age learners experience digital storytelling, also informing the design of engaging curricula and effective teaching pedagogy for the
digital storytelling classroom.

A second important avenue for future research is the exploration of personal identity formation through learners’ videos, with a particular focus on the process of personal transformation in holistic ways, including cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and spiritual aspects of learning through digital storytelling practice. This study provided a glimpse into individual personal transformation through video making, in which learners experienced conflict and resolution, deepening their insights and identities. Sharing and creating movies can be an effective way of celebrating individual unique values and identities through the use of metaphor and personification of media components. Therefore, I recommend qualitative research to explore the nature of the personal video making journey that fosters individual spirituality as well as authentic voice.

Third, I also suggest further research into possible effective video making strategies for both learners and instructors. As stated above, there are a wide range of possibilities and methods for assembling, reassembling, and juxtaposing media components in the digital video format, informed by styles of Hollywood films, commercial advertisements, music videos, and user-created content, as well as post-modern art making strategies. Such studies could use both qualitative and quantitative research to investigate the style of a vast amount of visual culture forms that can inform the style and composition of digital videos, and stipulate effective and available potential making strategies from such exploration.

Fourth, I would recommend examining the effect of peer feedback and peer collaboration in the digital video-making classroom at different age levels. The findings of this study do not identify any correlation between peer feedback and
satisfactory/meaningful digital video making, since the graduate level study participants each had a clear way of constructing meanings through their individual creative processes. However, I believe peer feedback and collaborative learning would encourage youth and elementary level students significantly while they brainstorm, solve problems, challenge themselves via assignments, construct stories, and pursue their creative compositions.

Next, I believe the realm of imaginative ability in digital video making should be examined cognitively, emotionally, and spiritually. Digital video is significantly different that other types of pictorial media, and this leads to some immediate conclusions and implications through imaginative creativity. Therefore, I will consider the imaginative ability to a) create and reproduce digital videos regarding meaningful stories, and visual elements and principles, b) interpret, use and appreciate digital videos, c) enhance critical thinking and communication in digital video productions, d) use digital technology as a means of creative expression, e) facilitate the discernment of multiple perspectives for understanding the socio-cultural context of imagery, f) create meaningful digital productions through hyper-textual navigation, and g) understand digital technology and multi-modal digital productions.

Lastly, I would like to examine the relationship between the aesthetic quality and the nature of visual-auditory communication. I believe that the aesthetic quality of a digital story should be achieved by understanding the nature of visual-auditory communication. From example, a series of shots and sounds can convey meanings and produce emotional or aesthetic effects throughout the each shot and each sound. The patterned repetition of a motif at regular or irregular intervals is a method of aesthetic
expression that students should learn. The appropriate movements and patterns of images and sounds create particular aesthetic qualities as well as balance between music and images. Music tempo and image transitions can produce the aesthetic qualities of narrative video productions for the purpose of conveying different emotions. A fast pace conveys strong emotions such as excitement and tension, while a slow pace indicates reflection and relaxation. Therefore, one of further research topics will be how to reinforce communication through refined aesthetic qualities of digital video.

6.5 Personal Reflection

By the end of this dissertation journey, I have come to deeply appreciate everything that inspired, affirmed, challenged, and accompanied my research topic and process. During the three years that I spent on this research, I traveled two different journeys, one toward becoming an amateur digital video maker, and the other toward becoming a qualitative researcher. I wrestled with this dual role, researching myself, my learning issues, and my challenges in order to deepen my understanding and interpretation of my research topic.

While I was exploring my interest in digital video making as a dissertation topic, I observed an interesting phenomenon on YouTube that began with a clip uploaded by a UCLA undergraduate student about Asian students using cellphones in the library. Although this video clip became a hot issue because of inappropriate racist content, the most interesting phenomenon to me was the immediate response by numerous worldwide YouTube users through their own user-created video clips. There was a wide range of differences among these short digital videos. For example, one person created a music video mocking the original speaker, while another person created a parody of the
original, using the same format with different content. Another video showed a group of Asian students defending themselves against the original speaker’s argument. Some created cartoon videos, and others created self-narrated persuasive videos with concrete arguments. The speed and diversity of these shared video expressions of the users’ ideas was impressive and confirmed the importance of celebrating individual learners’ capabilities, especially those of the digital generation, viewing them not as consumers but as producers of digital content.

In order to fully experience both the process and production of digital video making, I registered for a digital storytelling class as a full credit student while I was researching the same setting for my dissertation. From the moment I stepped into the digital storytelling classroom, I have played two main roles: researcher and digital storyteller. Through hands-on experience, I was able to experience the essence of what the literature described, including the benefits of digital media making, digital technologies as a new artistic medium, and digital storytelling as a post-modern multi-modal way of storytelling. As I experienced it, digital video making is an enjoyable act of designing digital imagery and playing with multimedia, utilizing individual autonomy, and producing creative opportunities.

Through this emerging, personal, intellectual and artistic journey, I would like to contribute to both the art education and media education fields with this empirical research. It is my hope that by sharing this research, I can enable a rich variety of learning experiences and individual creative processes through digital video making. I also hope to inspire other educators to research more possibilities and potentialities of digital content making in education across the discipline.
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