Faculty Development Report
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I used my Fall 2012 Faculty Development Grant to attend the Southeastern College Art Conference in Durham where I was part of a panel “Art History 2.0: New Technologies and Changes in Pedagogical Practice.” My paper addressed the various ways that new technology and pedagogical models had been incorporated into the core Art History courses at Otis. This has been one of my key areas of concentration for the past four years. My invitation to participate was actually the result of a paper that I had given at College Art Association a couple of years earlier on a related topic.

I spoke on the relationship of new and emerging technology and pedagogy. This included the use of electronic portfolios by faculty and students, pedagogical models for student work, new issues of visual rhetoric in digital assignments, and the advantages and challenges of “flipping” the classroom.

I find that regional conferences are often much more helpful since there is a greater opportunity to interact. I met a lot of people and spent quite a bit of time talking other art historians who are grappling with many of the same issues that we do at Otis. As the result of my presentation, I was asked to write a blog essay for a new pedagogical site, Art History Teacher (http://arthistoryteacher.wordpress.com/blog/). It's titled "Flipping the Classroom without Flipping Out."

Conferences are an important area for professional development and, given the economic landscape, I was very pleased that I was awarded the funds to attend and present. I came back with more information, some great contacts, and a strong sense that Otis is really ahead of the curve with technology and pedagogy.
Out of the Cave and into Cyberspace or Lessons I learned While Rethinking Art History, Technology and Pedagogy in the Classroom

Parme Giuntini, Otis College of Art and Design

If you are teaching, you are using some kind of technology. That could be anything from dipping your toes in the water with PowerPoint to full submersion—working within a course management system, using electronic portfolios, blogging, lecture capture, YouTube videos, and making your own podcasts. It could be using digital texts and image data bases, Smarthistory and other kinds of educational internet sites and giving electronic feedback for student work. I fall into the second category although I don’t consider myself a techie. Every scrap of technology I use, I’ve learned on the job. I have seen technological innovations like digital projectors, online resources, and Smarthistory make dramatic changes and those were the ones I kept. I have also participated in beta tests that involved hours of work and ended up with ineffective results like lecture capture. Those I had to walk away from, say “I tried, but it’s not going to work in my course. I need to find something else to accomplish the same goal.”

I am what is called an “early adopter” although in my department the term most often used is guinea pig and I encourage this because it works to my benefit. I need my faculty to know that before I ask them to do something new, I’ll work out the kinks, that I’ll not saddle them with something that is unwieldy. When we adopt a new technology, they are getting something that is road-tested and I can be one of the “go to guys”. I admire faculty who forge ahead on their own, learn new technology and incorporate it into their classes, but that’s a very idiosyncratic approach and it relies on individual initiative. My experience has been more group oriented. I beta test everything for a year before I ask my faculty to adopt it. When I roll out something new, it always initiates in a core freshman course with 12 sections, generally nine different instructors and about 250 students. Anything new starts from the bottom up and what my faculty learn in that course, they migrate to other courses and other faculty. They become peer instructors.

For the past five years, my scholarly focus has been the intersection of pedagogy and technology, two terms that I encourage you to think of as a package deal. The ability of technology to deliver high quality content online is present and readily accessible, often for free. This means that the art history professor...well, any professor really, is no longer the gatekeeper to information. The traditional lecture based course with its 20 lbs. of textbooks probably never was the best way for most students to learn, but it was the standard and most of us took those kinds of courses so that’s what we knew and what we continued. Pedagogy today criticizes that model and the passive classroom it produces. So, while I used to be a “sage on the stage,” I’m a convert to “the guide on the side.” It wasn’t an easy or graceful transition because it is a culture shift from what was familiar, from the way Art History was taught to a new model that is being developed weekly. But I did it. Now I’m an
advocate of the “flipped classroom,” the active classroom, collaboration, project based learning, peer to peer learning, and student group work. In his book, *The Learning Paradigm College*, John Tagg identifies this as a shift from the Instruction Paradigm where faculty deliver content in the classroom to the Learning Paradigm where class time is spent actively engaging with the content that has already been made available. It’s a shift from a classroom where you deliver the content to a classroom where you mentor student learning with content that has already been delivered. This is eminently possible with technology, but it does present some pedagogical obstacles for many faculty.

I’m going to speak in three voices: as an art historian, as an educator and as an administrator. I’m going to focus on our core freshman course, Introduction to Visual Culture because this is where we initiate new technological and pedagogical changes. It’s a fall course which gives my faculty the summer to become familiar with new technology and pedagogy; I would never ask them to try something new mid-semester. What is successful is continued in the next core class, Modern which runs spring semester. Many of the same faculty teach both courses so we have that advantage of faculty experience and continuity.

Just a few pertinent demographics…Otis is an art and design college, about 1200 students who are all studio majors. Our classes are small, between 15 and 22 students and they meet once a week for about 3 hours. My faculty is primarily part time and many of them have a long institutional history with the department…I went to grad school with some of them so I’m not working with junior faculty who quake in their boots when I speak; these are peers. With the exception of new hires for whom I now make technology an employment mandate, these are digital immigrants, not digital natives. We have a small but well equipped Teaching and Learning Center in the Library with two full time staff including an instructional designer. They run workshops and are always available for individual help. Most of my faculty was wedded to traditional technology like slide projectors. Actually, I’m not going to say anything about digital imagery and projection except that we switched to digital projection en mass about eight years ago in one semester. It’s a story unto itself but since digital projection is now the currency of the classroom, it’s past history and there are bigger technology issues facing us now.

As of fall 2011, the first year core art history courses all began using an electronic portfolio format which eliminated syllabi that were word docs or hard copies. All assigned readings were online either from books or journal articles accessed through databases, educational websites, and the occasional PDF.
The electronic portfolios included links to the Otis Library site as well as sites like Smarthistory and YouTube because there is excellent material there. These core courses are taught through a common syllabus which I develop with faculty input so, with the exception of weekly writing prompts and the final exam, everyone uses the same syllabus. We agreed to a common syllabus several years ago, so that was not an issue...just how it was delivered.

Electronic portfolios or ePortfolios as we call them are a feature of the Digication course management system that we use and a key reason that we adopted this particular platform. As an art and design college, it was advantageous for our students to have electronic portfolios. Once enrolled, every student is set up with an ePortfolio and for every class they take--at a minimum--they post their best work from that class and do reflective writing on their coursework and education. We archive all of this electronically for departmental and institutional assessment. An added advantage for faculty is that you can review the previous work of every student in your course. You know what classes they've taken, what kind of critical thinking and writing they've demonstrated, what they thought about these courses and their education. Technology makes this possible and it has been very helpful to faculty.
These ePortfolios function like mini-websites and they accommodate all kinds of images, media, text, fonts, colors, voice files; you can link to the internet and you can project them. They had tremendous potential for faculty use so I was encouraged to beta test them as the vehicle for syllabi delivery and for teaching which I did for a year in both a core class and an elective. I revised most of my lecture material for the Eportfolio format.

(what we today would call "profiling.")

What are the consequences in a discussion of national identity when fine art visual production is dominated by individual groups? when some people are painted in and others painted out?

Americans also had concerns about painting their own history and this caused some problems once the nation decided that any respectable nation needed to support art, including official art. Most of these concerns were about subject and interpretation, what kind of history to pictures, whose history to picture.

but it took a lot more time than writing lecture notes because I had to write into a digital space and deal with images and text...it was much more work than a PowerPoint. It was a great resource for the students and I became a pro in visual literacy doing that, but it took so long to redo lectures that I didn’t encourage faculty in that direction. Additionally, projecting Eportfolio pages was fine for text, bullet points, and the occasional image, but it was not as image friendly as the Madison Image Digital
System that we use or even PowerPoint. I was used to projecting a much larger image, being able to split the screen, bring up different images at will, add new ones if I wanted to very quickly and the ePortfolios aren’t built for that.

However, they turned out to be far superior as vehicles for syllabi, much better than an electronic word doc. which is what I had been using. On the basis of that, I wanted the art historians teaching the core courses to adopt the eportfolio for their syllabus. Most of them were using paper syllabi; a few had shifted to electronic work docs which they posted in the CMS. So this was going to be a big jump for some of them, but one I felt was justified. First, the faculty had already agreed to a 0 cost book bill so all reading would be accessible online through electronic databases or .edu websites or the occasional PDF and the eportfolios easily accommodated this.

Plus, the eportfolios were far superior to a word doc—they were easier to navigate because you don’t scroll through endless text, you click from screen to screen

**Course Requirements**

In the sections under Course Requirements you will find everything that you need to do to complete the course. This includes assigned readings, writing responses, a term paper, and reflections to be posted in your Learning ePortfolio. Most of the written work will be put into your Learning ePortfolio or posted in Ospace if your instructor prefers that.

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<th>Requirement</th>
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<tr>
<td>8 Reading Responses (weekly)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Reflections (week 1, 13)</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Paper draft/ORE forms (week 7)”</td>
<td>20% (includes 5% ORE)</td>
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<td>Final Paper (1200-1500 wd.) (week 13)*</td>
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<td>Final Examination (week 14)</td>
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* items must be submitted or they will not be graded. Follow the easy directions at [this link.](#)

There are rubrics for the paper and for the reading responses. You should look at them and determine the quality of your work before you turn it in. The rubrics are posted here and under the section “Grading Rubrics.”

- Rubric for Visual Culture paper (draft)
- Rubric for Visual Culture paper (final version)
- Rubric for Reading Responses/Blogs

We could add links to all kinds of explanatory material, everything from citation and grammar checking sites to educational sites and it would always be available to the students. We could imbed videos and images, add our own information on writing, include rubrics...this takes up a lot of space in a word doc. and it would run to 30 pages or more in a paper syllabus. Because eportfolios accommodated colors and different fonts and banners, they looked like websites and students liked navigating something like
that rather than scrolling through pages of text. That year I beta tested them I gave my students a paper syllabus, posted the syllabus as a word doc. in the course management system, and made the eportfolio available. Within two weeks, everyone used the eportfolio exclusively. Plus, in a course that addresses visuality and visual literacy in both fine art and popular culture, using a platform in which images and text were integrated made more sense pedagogically. In a department that wanted to adopt visual literacy as one of the Learning Outcomes, it was critical that students practice what they were learning.

We accomplished the shift from word docs to eportfolios in the summer 2011. To help the faculty get over the hurdle of using a new format and to avoid asking them to make the Eportfolio for their class from scratch, I made a template for the two core classes.

I included everything except the weekly homework assignment which they wrote, but I didn’t customize the template in any way (no images, no icons, no banners or colors). All the faculty had to
do was click and make a copy, add their contact information, homework question, and specific class meeting times. That would have been sufficient.

What really happened?

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<th>Welcome Message</th>
<th>Contact Info.</th>
<th>Course Description</th>
<th>Course Requirements</th>
<th>Course Policies (Attendance, etc.)</th>
<th>Grading &amp; Grading Rubrics</th>
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**Welcome Message**

Welcome, everybody!

ARCS 120 Intro. to Visual Culture — Thursdays 12:30 – 3:15 PM in AHMN 301A

Click on the links within this ePortfolio to find information about this class, including the syllabus, course policies, homework assignments, grading criteria, deadlines, and so forth. (If there is any way that this information could be more clear or easier to follow, please let me know.)

Please note that multiple sections of Intro. to Visual Culture are offered this semester, and while the syllabi are largely standardized, they can vary from instructor to instructor. For this reason, be sure to consult our course ePortfolio for instructions, assignments, and deadlines throughout this semester. Don’t assume, for instance, that your VC homework will always be the same as your roommate’s.

There are a few electronic locations here at Otis that are relevant to this class. Navigating them can confusing at first, so here’s a quick overview:

1. You are currently in our COURSE ePORTFOLIO, which features course information, requirements, policies, and assignments for this specific section of VC. Come here to review the attendance policy, to download grading rubrics, and so forth. You’re expected to read and understand the material here, but you will never post anything to the course ePortfolio.

2. In our O-SPACE CLASSROOM under “posts,” you will find various messages/updates from me throughout the semester, and you’ll be asked to publish some routine homework assignments here. It’s also a place to ask questions whose answers you think might be relevant to other students in the class. (For instance, you might ask for clarification about an assignment or deadline that’s confusing everybody in class.) Unless you select the “private” option, anything you post here can be seen by me and your classmates. Click here to go to our O-Space classroom: [https://ospace.otis.edu/topic_list.dgi?id=7&cid=76850&cid=105678&cid=338353&](https://ospace.otis.edu/topic_list.dgi?id=7&cid=76850&cid=105678&cid=338353&)

Since they had the template, the hard work was done and they began experimenting and adding icons and images to their class ePortfolios. They added colored borders and backgrounds, changed the fonts and, in a few instances, revised and refined the structure without changing any content. Starting from scratch would have been too much for many of them but customizing was much easier and fun. I think it was almost competitive. A number of them teach sophomore and junior classes and ...encouraged by their success with the template, all of them redesigned their other classes into ePortfolios. In that one semester, faculty adoption of the ePortfolios hit almost 50% and it just keeps growing.
Many colleges are adopting eportfolios for a wide range of assessment purposes but I’m not going to address that. I’m interested in the pedagogical advantages that they offer. The core courses used to have mandatory weekly quizzes. We replaced those quizzes with weekly reading responses which the students posted in their eportfolios.

### Homework for Week 3: Antiquity and Visual Culture

1. **First...and don’t cheat the order or do any research for step 1...** Select an ancient culture (Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece or Rome) and explain what you know about that culture, how you know that information, what particular kinds of works are significant in that culture and why you think they were significant. No research...just what you know now.


3. Find an image of one work of antiquity from that culture and post the image in your ePortfolio (identify it, cite it). Look in a good source (survey text, book on that specific time/place, a database like Oxford Art, a .org or .edu site) to learn about that work. Write a short essay that explains *what the work is and its significance in the ancient world.* This means that you have to provide a context for style, content, and interpretation. Cite your research sources.

4. Find an image in popular culture that references that same ancient work *in part or whole.* This can be an advertisement or internet image of any kind. Post the image in your eportfolio (identify it, cite it). Based on what you learned about the work in antiquity and what you read about visual culture from "Image, Power, and Politics," explain how the ancient work influences the meaning of the contemporary image and what meaning you think the contemporary image is communicating because of the connotations of the ancient work.

5. Find the definitions for the following terms but write them out in your own words use an example (not from the reading) of each and you may post an image as well: representation, construct, discourse, denotation, connotation, myth, myth of photographic truth.

6. Publish and and submit your homework by Monday, 8:00 am.

This turned out be very successful. Studies show that if students are held accountable for reading, they do it. Rather than writing under pressure in class, the students had time to read, think, write, revise and then submit the work electronically. Faculty found they could ask more critical questions; ask questions that involved a graduated measure of research. No one missed reading the bad handwriting. At my suggestion...remember I tested this for a year...faculty made the homework due at least 24 hours before class which meant they had time to read and critique it. Since the eportfolios have a commenting function, the students had faculty feedback on their work before they came to class. So
the instructor could walk into class with a very good idea of how the students understood and responded to the reading. This changes the kind of discussion you can have and opens up the possibilities for group work and questions. Because the work is generated electronically, instructors could project student work and discuss it much like a peer review or studio critique.

Not everything worked as smoothly. Because the students posted their work into a digital space that accommodated images, videos, and links, we had to stop thinking of them as conventional papers since the intended vehicle for viewing was a screen. That changed everything. Everyone expected the art historians to somehow instinctively understand visual literacy and guide the students. Exactly the opposite happened. What we discovered is that most of the faculty were unfamiliar with visual literacy in a digital space. They liked the idea of students using images in their work...these were art history classes...but they had no experience working in digital spaces and were giving wildly divergent instructions to the students. Student work had images without context or explanation, all different colored fonts sometimes in the same paper, poorly designed use of space and the juxtaposition of image to text was often awkward. Since I had that year of experience, I was the most conversant with visual literacy so I wrote a short essay about visual rhetoric and visual literacy (excerpt below)

![Visual Rhetoric/Visual Literacy](https://example.com/visual_rhetoric.png)

that was added to the core courses eportfolio, then to the senior capstone course portfolios and now is available for any course eportfolio. All I did was explain the main issues of visual literacy but I
incorporated images and examples so they had information and a model for their own work. It’s not definitive and faculty still have preferences, but it does establish basic guidelines and their rationale.

In retrospect, this is something that I should have anticipated because I had to learn it. I had incorporated this instruction into my own class but we had never discussed visual literacy and digital space as a faculty. The excitement and the focus was on the new technology and learning how to navigate it and put in colors and pictures...we needed to incorporate the pedagogy along with that. Just as a follow up... last year the Association of College and Research Libraries adopted Visual Literacy as a core competency and we added visual literacy as one of our department goals; it will probably end up as a college learning outcome as well. That compels the entire faculty, not just the art historians, to become fluent in visual literacy.

Using videos and podcasts has become an increasingly important part of these courses but it has raised some critical issues. First, how are faculty using videos and podcasts? What kinds of preparation for watching are they requiring? How are they incorporating that information into a larger body of material? Listening to a podcast or a Smarthistory video without some kind of related activity is just as passive as listening to a lecture? I loved Smarthistory from the beginning but most of my faculty didn’t. They considered it Art History Lite without enough substance which really translated into “I’m not sure how to use this so I’ll just lecture instead.” To get them invested in this, my department flew Beth and Steven out to Otis and we ran an art history faculty workshop around Smarthistory. The morning was pedagogy which was really helpful because it gave my faculty an opportunity to ask questions and discuss their concerns. In the afternoon, we all made recordings and then listened and critiqued them. That made several of the faculty interested in making videos. They needed that kind of time with Beth and Steven to really understand how the pedagogy of conversation worked and not to dismiss it as lightweight art history. They walked into that meeting skeptical; they walked out willing to adopt Smarthistory. What I learned as an administrator...sometimes you have to bring the experts in especially for faculty who are skeptical about new technologies and pedagogies. Most of these art historians were fine with a digital image that they could project and talk about but at a loss working with a conversational pedagogy that did not discursively frame the image. They needed background, context, and practice.

They weren’t the only ones. Students need guidance with videos as well because they are very accustomed to viewing them as entertainment. I spent a year beta testing Smarthistory videos before embedding them in the core modern class and my first experience was disastrous. I assigned a Smarthistory video and wrote an accompanying prompt for the students as homework, but when I read their responses, I was really disappointed because they seemed to have missed the critical issues. I realized that they had simply looked and listened; it was a video so they watched, but they didn’t critically engage. We went over that video in class but this time with instructions: write down every term or idea you don’t know, every idea or statement that is not clear, every disagreement between
the two art historians. I had two students do this on a white board and the rest on paper or their computers. Big difference—and out of the questions that they generated, we had an incredible discussion that lasted the rest of the class. What I learned...students tend to watch passively so any video/podcast assignment should come with questions that involve another reading or a small amount of research. Because of my experience which I think is pretty typical...I wrote a short essay “How to Critically Watch a Video.”

The last issue that I’m going to raise is not exclusive to art historians, nor as easily fixed as writing video viewing instructions or walking nervous faculty through new technology, but I think it is just as critical. The amount of excellent art historical material available on line is increasing exponentially. Everything from academic data bases, educational sites, and electronic journals to PDFs and lectures and podcasts and videos. The internet has eroded the exclusive claim that professors used to have on content. We are no longer the sole gateway to knowledge. More and more of us are putting college level material on the internet for free use. I know because I am one of them. I regularly make podcasts that are posted to YouTube and they now function as the lectures I used to give in class. They’re better actually...because they are uninterrupted, everything flows, I had lots of time to revise and refine. My students can watch, stop, take notes, answer questions, list questions and when they walk into class, they are prepared to discuss. They aren’t hearing it for the first time.
Then there are the MOOCs, the Massive Open Online Courses that offer the same class content taught at Harvard and Stanford and UC Berkeley and Vanderbilt and Emory...the list is much longer. Great lectures, great professors, great content. While currently MOOCs only offer certificates, there are already colleges that are accepting those certificates as transferable credit and I suspect that this time next year that may be the situation for many of our institutions. I want to mine the MOOCs for content; I just don’t want those courses to replace mine or my faculties.

I love technology; I don’t want to go back to paper syllabi and slide projectors, but I think that we have focused on technology too long as an intrusion, something we could avoid, something that was too slick and not really academic. We assumed that the real meat of the course was our lecture material and now technology is here to demonstrate that it’s not. It makes no difference whether you champion a more conservative art history that focuses on the fine art object or some variation of Visual Culture which addresses representation in broader ways; whether you teach western or non-western, whether your class size numbers in the hundreds with a gaggle of TA’s or small classes where you do all the work and know every student’s name. The slide/lecture format of the traditional art history classroom is rapidly becoming a museum artifact. Even in conjunction with digital projection which literally means students do not sit in the dark, it is becoming increasingly harder to justify that the best learning takes place while listening and taking notes.

Technology does offer some challenges. This time we will have to reinvent the wheel and that means spending as much time addressing technology and pedagogy as content. It will mean huge changes in how the typical art history classroom functions. We have to be able to deliver more than content in the classroom because the internet and emerging technologies have made that content available, accessible, and free and often more interesting...last time I checked being a riveting speaker was not a requirement for a Ph.D. Technology has given art historians much more material to work with, but what is going to be the function of art historians in undergraduate education in the 21st century? How are we preparing ourselves to deal with a student population that is comfortable on line, which has grown up learning through videos and game theory...a student population that walks into your classroom with a mobile device and surfs the net when there is even a moment’s lag in their interest.

In my little art and design college, the studio faculty grapple with technology and many of them don’t like it, but they never really worry about their classrooms being passive and while they may have to deal with the MOOC threat in the future, they are safe for now. They may be divas in the gallery or in the industry but they are guides on the side in the classroom. They lecture a little, they question, they model, they critique, they prod, they walk around and ask questions and the students work and learn. No one nods off, no one surfs the net, and no one walks out with a passive experience. That is what I want for all my department’s courses, that kind of engaged experience that can never be replaced by free content regardless of how good it is. I think that will mean using technology to deliver
much of the content; encouraging faculty to make podcasts of their lectures or post their lectures as reading homework. It means flipping every classroom where our students used to sit and listen into active learning spaces where we mentor, question, discuss, critique and lecture...a little. We should be speaking, just not the whole time. Currently, this is the sticking point for most of my faculty because they place a high value on content which they see as best delivered in a lecture. However, we teach in an art and design college where all the studio courses are active classrooms and where students associate authentic learning with doing, not just sitting and listening and, in the case of the art history classes, looking. This is where technology makes such a huge difference if we see it as an aid, if we make it work for us because we all need to be guides if we are going to stay in those classrooms.