

A photograph of children's hands drawing on a dark surface with colorful chalk. The drawing includes various shapes like trees, flowers, and abstract patterns. One child is wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt, and another is wearing a patterned shirt and green bangles. The background is a dark surface with colorful chalk drawings.

Sibelius and the World of Art: Experience and Expression through Music and Imagery in Arts Educational Studies

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Abstract

This is a qualitative case study of student teachers' and children's integrative arts educational project in the Ateneum Art Museum called "Musical Surface". The article introduces the collaborative design learning process of students and focuses on the ideas of using new technology in arts education. The research methods used include content analysis of students' reflective and evaluative writings and video documented observations of their arts pedagogical sessions.

The results show that student teachers learn more deeply in the participative learning process about arts education. They learned innovative ways to integrate new technology into integrative arts pedagogy.

Keywords: Integrated music and arts pedagogy, iPads, augmented reality, teacher education (generalists), Art museum as learning environment, design learning

Introduction

This article introduces students minoring in arts and crafts subjects at the Department of Teacher Education (Helsinki University) who engaged in integrative arts education in collaboration with the Ateneum Art Museum as part of the exhibition *Sibelius and the World of Art* and **Art workshops** in January 2015 entitled *Soiva pinta* ("Musical Surface"). With this theme they celebrated the 150th anniversary of Jean Sibelius, the Finnish national composer, by providing children with an experiential introduction to his music and the works of art created by his contemporaries, whom he inspired.

Contemporary arts pedagogical writings (e.g., Eisner, 2002, 94-95; Räsänen, 2008, 38; Paatela-Nieminen, 2013) focus on constructive and integrative learning strategies that encourage the active role of students and children by supporting their creativity and autonomy. In this interactive design-learning project, new solutions for future learning environments were also researched and developed. In the design learning process, students define problems and create solutions to common challenges in collaborative work (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2006). The collaborative design-learning approach, based on progressive-inquiry, provides tools that help students think and

act in new, uncertain or problematic situations and find creative solutions for their intentions (Seitamaa-Hakkarainen et al., 2010; Kangas, 2014). It is developed for facilitating design learning processes, students' creative design thinking and computer-supported learning (Seitamaa et al., 2010; Lahti & Seitamaa-Hakkarainen, 2014). In this study, computers were used as tools to make art and support group interaction. The results of former studies show that the collaborative design learning method as well as the use of modern technological applications fit very well into integrated arts educational studies (Ruokonen and Ruismäki 2012; 2013).

Study design

The purpose of this article is to introduce and describe the design process of the student teachers (N=12) during their collaborative arts study project with pre-school and comprehensive school pupils in the Ateneum Art Museum environment. The project theme was music by Sibelius and works of art connected to him.

The research problems were to discover through the student teachers' experiences how their design learning process developed. The research followed the tradition that assumes that phenomena are meaningfully experienced and can be represented in personal writings and narratives (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008). The data consisted of participative observation and the writings of a closed Facebook project group.

The research methods used included qualitative content analysis of students' reflective and evaluative writings about the creative design learning process and descriptions of video documented observations of the arts pedagogical sessions. Ethical rules of research were followed.





FINNISH NATIONAL GALLERY

ATENEUM

KLASSIKOT UUDESSA VALOSSA
KLASSIKER I NYTT LJUS
CLASSICS WITH A TWIST

Finland’s leading art museum Ateneum Art Museum houses Finnish art from the 1750s to works of artists who debuted in the 1960s. Ateneum is part of the Finnish National Gallery, along with the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma and the Sinebrychoff Art Museum.

Ateneum has cooperated with the Department of Teacher Education at Helsinki University for more than a decade, giving all its first year students a possibility to participate in a workshop offering information on the museum’s collections. In addition, some more advanced projects have been made recently in conjunction with special exhibitions. New and

different approaches in arts education benefit both the students and the museum.

Ateneum interacts with and attracts a variety of audiences with events, guided tours and workshops. The workshops main target group is children from kindergartens and elementary schools. Other target groups are visitors in the non-stop and adult workshops. In 2015 Ateneum’s workshops were visited by 3,816 children and 2,288 adults.





Findings

The design learning project began in a discussion of the intention of the project after meeting the museum staff. In Finland in 2015 the 150th anniversary of Jean Sibelius' birth was celebrated and student teachers decided to create an experiential workshop for children. First, they studied and learned some information about Sibelius. They studied information about Sibelius's childhood and Ainola environment; they listened to music of Sibelius as well as his travelling to Northern Karelia. They also learned about synaesthesia and used the information while designing the augmented reality to one painting. They established a closed Facebook group for sharing their ideas and study results. They visited the Ateneum Art Museum exhibition *Sibelius and the World of Art* and the museum workshops to get to know the art historical context, the artworks and museum pedagogy. They decided to use new technology (iPads and two applications, Aurasma and iStopMotion) when introducing paintings to children. After that, the student teachers planned for the real activities at the Ateneum Art Museum. This meant research to gain an understanding of what was essential to know and do. This step required rigorous, knowledge-based research in order to observe and understand the project's potential in the art museum learning environment. The group shared a common intention and began to plan how they could connect children with Sibelius and the art of his time in an artistic way. They worked in smaller groups and shared responsibilities. Students planned how they could activate children to visual art and

music-making in art workshops. The options of social media were used effectively in communication, planning and reflection in all phases of the design learning process. Students planned museum tours by integrating music, drama and the application of augmented reality to works of art using new technology.

The students worked on the theme knowing and planning what their group was doing and understanding the expectations and tasks to be accomplished. They also selected the roles and leaders of their project. All students worked with high expectations and optimism thinking that they could animate children into visual art and the music of Sibelius as well as promote their own creativity in the arts. The students designed tours for groups of pre-primary and primary-school children with a drama-based experience during which they met Sibelius, a violinist and a group of Kalevala singers who performed with five-string kanteles; they could also join in singing the Finlandia Hymn. They named their plan Musical Surface according to the Ateneum's workshop theme. The co-operation with the museum was wonderful. Students could begin their guided tours for children before the museum was open to the public. This special arrangement offered opportunities to use music (instrumental playing, singing, computer voices) and drama in the exhibition halls that they would not ordinarily have been able to do during museum hours.

In addition, the children engaged with new technology by using Aurasma applications on iPads to open the augmented realities associated with the works of art on display. Ronald Azuma

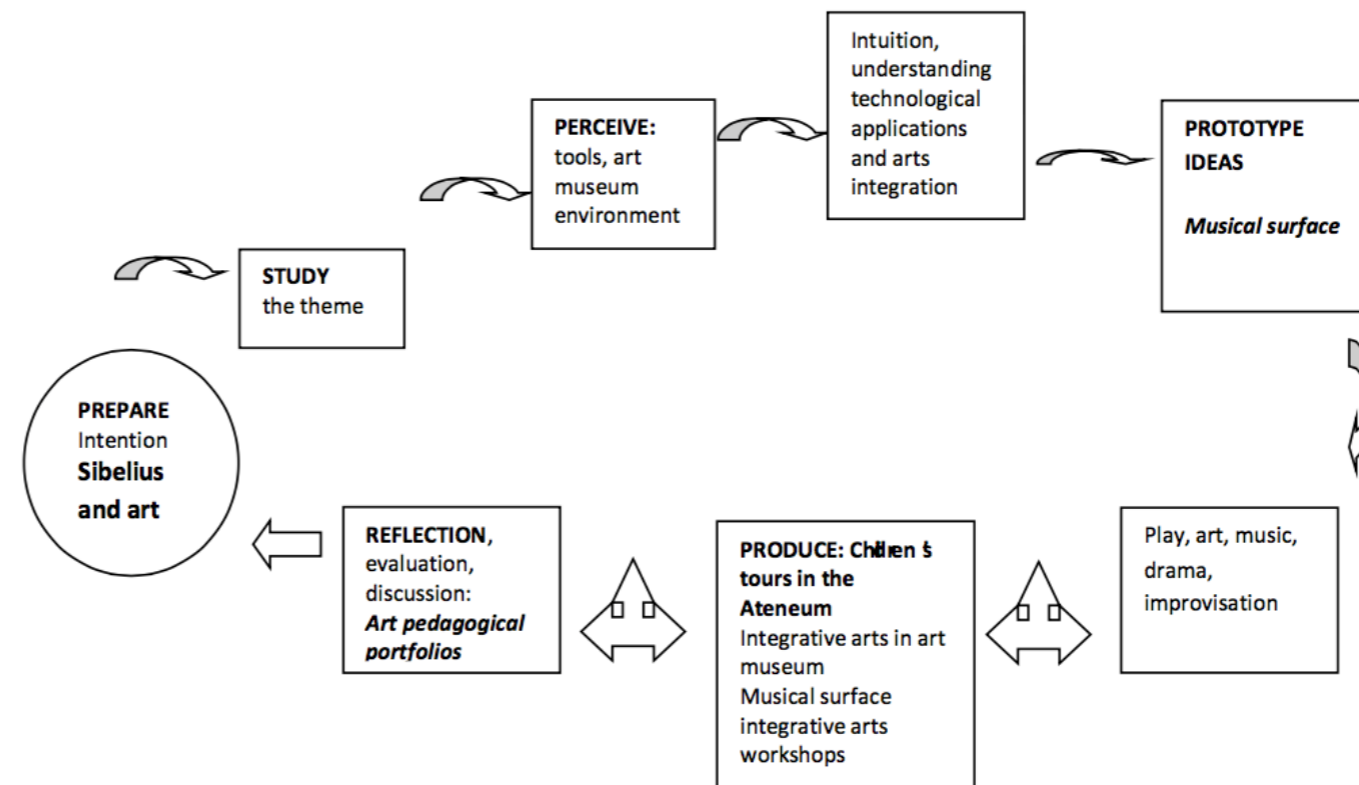
(1997) defines augmented reality as combining real and virtual objects in a real environment, functioning interactively and in real time, and aligning real and virtual objects with each other. During the animation design process many questions were discussed: "What happens if you present historical facts together with a playful animation?" "In art it is possible to combine reality and imagination in a playful augmented animation story?" In the present experiment, Eero Järnefelt's painting of a landscape in Koli was augmented by using the iStop Motion application with an animated film in which Sibelius and a young local boy together drag a piano up a steep hill.

In another example, an augmented reality was created with image editing software and a composed sound landscape. The composer Sibelius was synesthetic; he perceived colours as musical keys. The student teachers demonstrated this phenomenon for the children in concrete terms by composing a melody that was then transposed into different keys while the colours of the landscape changed through image editing. Similarly, Ellen Thesleff's painting of a green landscape was first played in F major, but the key and colour were then changed in

accordance with Sibelius's synesthetic perceptions of colour associated with musical keys.

After the experiential tour of the exhibition, the children participated in the arts workshops in which the tone colours, rhythms, melodies, keys and shapes they had experienced were transformed into visual works of art and again into images that the children composed. The workshop participants moved on a "surface" from music to image and vice versa.

Fig.1. Design learning process in combining Sibelius's music and an arts project



The workshop was filled by the sound and imagery of the symphonic poem *En saga by Sibelius* as well as the interpretations of visual art based on Sibelius's "The Trees". The

children explored the connections between image and music as well as the overall audio-visual effect.

At the Department of Teacher Education, the integration of arts and crafts into the curriculum is based on an investigative and inquisitive approach to arts and the application of the Visual Thinking Strategies method to artistic encounters. Participants approach works of art with questions such as “What is going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that?” Children are encouraged to share their feelings and interpretations, a method that combines children’s natural curiosity, inquisitiveness and creativity. The pupils who participated in the art education tours and workshops learned about the arts, in the arts and through the arts. The design learning process can be seen in Figure 1. The student teachers reflected on what kind of art education they had provided and how they had done so, as well as what the children will recall and what they themselves sought to convey.

Through this production I was convinced that I want to work as a teacher. It was very rewarding to implement a multisensory art experience for the children. As an art educator I would like to make different integrative entities and projects. I believe that I learnt a lot of new things, such as how to look at art, the strength of art and how arts and crafts subjects can be integrated arts and crafts subjects.

(Student teacher’s reflection)







ILMA
the world of art
2015

17%
LÖYDÖRETKÄ
MAAILMALLE

22%
TAITELAJA-
TUVEREIDEN
VUOROVAIKUTUSTA

21%

13%
MELANCHOLIAA







Conclusions

The main findings of this project show that collaborative, design-based learning fits very well into integrated arts educational studies of teacher education, especially in co-operation with an art museum, as does the use of modern technological applications. The development of mobile devices and applications has been rapid and global and has offered new possibilities in arts education. Innovative approaches under the artistic use of Augmented Reality technology can be developed. The development of new technology opens new possibilities and activities for creating and integrating arts in education.

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Images

1. Children enjoying paintings and augmented reality
2. Music painting by 3rd grade pupils /react-text
3. Pre-school children enjoying an augmented playful story /react-text
4. Improvising with 5-string kantele from the painting /react-text
5. Conducting the composition from the painting /react-text
6. Improvising and composing /react-text
7. Pictorial partiture by pre-school children /react-text

8. Listening to the music of Sibelius /react-text
9. Student playing violin music by Jean Sibelius /react-text
10. Guided tour to the exhibition combined with drama and music

Photos: Sanna Breilin, student teacher