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The missions of MonCoin: A curriculum for mobile media and civic engagement in the visual art classroom

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Acknowledgements: We gratefully acknowledge financial support of this research through a Canadian Social Science and Humanities Council Insight Grant, MonCoin: Investigating Mobile Learning Networks to Foster Educational Engagement with At-Risk Youth (Juan Carlos Castro, principal investigator; David Pariser, co-investigator).

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Juan Carlos Castro, Department of Art Education, Concordia University, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, EV 2.633, Montréal Québec H3G 1M8, Canada. Email: juancarlos.castro@concordia.ca Art Education researchers have collaborated with secondary four different French and English language after-school and inschool programs. Our objective is to design, test, and develop a visual art curriculum using mobile media (e.g. smartphones and tablets) and social media (e.g. Instagram) to connect students to their schools, surroundings and each other. Our data analysis has already yielded insights into the potentials and pitfalls of using mobile media in schools. In terms of civic engagement we found that youth were initially more interested in learning how to make "good-looking" images, and once they were technically confident some used their images to look critically at their civic environments (Pariser, Castro, Lalonde, 2016). We also found that youth are invested in constructing their identity online through the multimodal documentation of the physical and temporal spaces of the everyday (Lalonde, Castro, Pariser, 2016). Further, the use of mobile media was initially hypothesized as a means for engaging at-risk youth outside of school, only to find that, when given the choice of where they could move and meet, participants expressly sought out opportunities to be together in school (Castro, Lalonde, Pariser, 2016). We have also shown how mobile media can be used to amplify peer-learning and educational engagement (Akbari, et al., 2016). In our final phase of data analysis we are investigating ways that art educators can use mobile and social media to shift students' social relationships, and enhance teaching and learning in art classrooms through the use of mobile and social media.

The MonCoin curriculum is based on constraints that enable (Castro, 2007; Castro, 2013) and video game type motivations (Gee, 2003) framed as missions. Our missions were designed to ask students to reexamine their everyday surroundings and create images that shared her or his particular way of seeing

MonCoin, which means "MyCorner" in English, is a research project that investigates the practical, curricular, and theoretical implications of teaching and learning using mobile and social media in the visual arts classroom. In the last five years, Concordia Art Education researchers have collaborated with secondary school art educators and close to 300 secondary students in four different French and English language after-school and in-school programs. Our objective is to design, test, and develop a visual art curriculum using mobile media (e.g. smartphones and tablets) and social media (e.g. Instagram) to connect students to their schools, surroundings and each other. Our data analysis has already yielded insights into the potentials and pitfalls of using mobile media in schools. In terms of civic engagement we

Figure 1. (page 84) An example of a large themed mission that includes the directions, hashtags to use, and ethical considerations. After Figure 2, only the mission itself is listed. Mission 1: Self. In the first mission we will explore the theme of identity. Show us something about who you are, but without revealing your identity or showing your face. Make sure you use the hashtags: #mission1\_self. We will post more micro missions to inspire you each day related to this mission if you are stuck. Remember: only post content (pictures and words) that you would be comfortable sharing with your teachers or parents.





## WHAT I SEE

Figure 4. Micro Mission 1c: What I see. How we see the world and what we look at help define who we are. This micro mission can be responded to in a number of different ways. One possibility is to visually communicate how you see the world—from what catches your eye to your philosophy of how the world works. 'What I See' is very open-ended.

Figure 5. Mission 2: My School. The second mission involves visually communicating what your school means to you. We are posting all the micro missions at once to inspire you on your walk through school during class today.

Figure 6. Micro Mission 2a: Where I learn best. Where do you learn best in school? There are places in every school where we feel smart, know something, and are confident to apply what we know.

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Figure 7. Micro Mission 2b: Change. Is there something you would change about your school? What would it be? Why would you want to change it? Only show things that realistically can be changed with your positive contributions.

# GHANGE

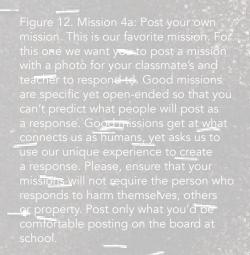
### NEGEBOURHOOD

Figure 8. Mission 3: My Neighborhood. The third mission involves visually communicating what the neighbourhood around the school and where you live, means to you.





Figure 11. Micro Mission 3c: Notice. Look carefully and closely at your surroundings. Do you notice anything that you would not have noticed if you weren't looking carefully? For this micro\_ mission seek out and photograph the little things that you might encounter in your everyday surrounding that generally go unnoticed.



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