Transcending Culture Through Storytelling

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To what extent can, a cross-cultural exchange of stories via digital recordings through online art collaboration whereby personal narratives are orally exchanged and then visually interpreted; develop an appreciation of cultural diversity, active listening and visual literacy skills?

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SIGNED STATEMENT

I hereby certify that the material in this Research Report, which I now submit for assessment on the program of study leading to the award of Professional Masters of Education in Art and Design with Digital Media is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others except where duly acknowledged.

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<u>Abstract</u>

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore to what extent an international art collaboration where personal narratives are orally exchanged then visually interpreted may develop student's appreciation for cultural diversity, listening skills and visual literacy. The study's underpinning rationale stems from the rising level of cultural diversity within student populations in Irish schools, and that in order to establish genuine integration and inclusion we need to consider the way we teach students how to think, feel and react to others from different cultures, religions or backgrounds. The aim was to connect students by exchanging stories that highlighted shared life experiences rather than focusing on cultural differences. Students would do this digitally by recording audio podcasts and exchanging online where they could further communicate. Students ultimately needed to apply active listening and visual literacy skills in order to interpret the stories and create the art work. The study investigates literature surrounding the topics of intercultural education, empathy, storytelling, social behaviour and communication. The data was collected and interpreted using a variety of research methods. Found was that students developed empathy and cultural respect by connecting to the students in Dubai through personal stories of shared experiences. Classroom discussion, research and online communication were essential teaching strategies in supporting students develop a deeper understanding of culture. Active listening and visual literacy were essential skills in supporting the development of respect and appreciation throughout the art making process.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Transcending cultures by Storytelling, Listening and Interpreting: A study into an international art collaboration where personal narratives are orally exchanged then visually interpreted and how this process may develop student's appreciation for cultural diversity, listening skills and visual literacy

The ever increasing cultural diversity in both urban and rural communities in Ireland is a pressing issue for the department of education. In order to establish genuine integration and inclusion for all students in Irish schools, we need to consider the way we teach students how to think, feel and react to others from different cultures, religions or backgrounds. During my experience teaching in schools with largely diverse student populations, I witnessed the difficulties that arise when attempting to achieve integration and inclusion school wide. In these schools I observed how initiatives to "celebrate cultural diversity" can frequently become a surface level, social studies lesson, in the customs and traditions of other countries which mainly highlight the differences of how people live.

This study has explored an approach to improving student's ability to personally relate with peers from different cultures or back grounds and it was designed as a short course in conjunction with the new junior cycle framework. The new framework outlines key skills such as being creative, working with others, communicating and staying well. More specifically a statement of learning for the new junior cycle outlines that students should learn to 'appreciate and respect how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she/he lives' and as such this short course was designed to align with these educational values.

By orchestrating the international art collaboration where students exchanged stories based on personal experiences under the same subject matter - hopes and fears, I hoped for students to discover what they may have in common with their international counterparts. Students explored this through a process of making visual artistic interpretations of the others story. I gathered research by observing students throughout the communication exchange process, as they were challenged to translate audio in to visual, paying particular attention to the art work that was created as a result.

Research Aims

- Discover if exchanging stories with students in Dubai, based on personal experiences or opinions using the same subject matter, can affect student's ability to relate with peers from different cultural backgrounds and develop an appreciation for cultural diversity.
- Explore the use of audio podcasts in the art classroom as a way of developing students' communication skills through personal story telling and active listening
- Investigate ways to improve students' visual literacy skills in order to interpret audio, consider visual communication and ultimately create visual illustrations.
- Develop my active research skills as a teacher by observing the students during the process of the project gathering evidence on the students' behaviour and their learning throughout.

This research was carried out with a group of fourteen 2nd year pupils. These were pupils of VEC vocational secondary school, with only 200 pupils situated in Ennistymon Co. Clare. With this in mind it is important to understand that this document represents a small scale research project with its own unique benefits and limitations.

Action research was suitable as a research method in this case for a classroom based research project as it encompasses the way in which a teacher works, continuously planning, acting and reflecting. This research study utilised qualitative methodologies as well as some quantitative in order to determine and analyse to what extent the short course could achieve the aims mentioned above. The data gathering methods for this study included: questionnaires, focus groups, classroom observations, visual imagery and my research journal.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review

The number of immigrants to the Irish state in the year to April 2016 is estimated to have increased by almost 15% from 69,300 to 79,300. This continuing increase of immigrants calls for the department of education to implement and improve on strategies to facilitate inclusion and integration for foreign students in Irish schools. The relevance of this issue feeds the topic for my research study, how can students be taught through art education to respect and communicate with a person from a different culture whom they seemingly have nothing in common with.

Through the short course 'The Art of Storytelling' I will attempt to connect students with other cultures by using online technology, allowing students to exchange stories and personal narratives with peers from other cultural backgrounds. In order to contextualise and rationalise this study, direct links can be made with the six key skills as outlined in the new junior cycle framework. With wellness as the underpinning focus of the new framework, this project combines each of the 6 key skills. In this paper I will review literature that discusses intercultural education, the method of international online collaboration and the potential role that empathy plays in adolescent's ability to co-operate and identify with others from foreign cultures. I will present the literature under the following headings;

i.   Intercultural Education: Policies and Projects
ii.   Storytelling and Illustration: Cultural Exchange
iii.   Moral Conflicts : Considering Social Behaviour

2.1 Intercultural Education: Policies and Projects

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment outlines the need for 'intercultural education'. The term 'interculturalism' expresses a belief that we all become personally enriched by coming in contact with and experiencing other cultures. An intercultural approach is important within the curriculum in order to help students to develop the ability to recognise inequality, injustice, racism, prejudice and bias and to equip them to challenge and to try to change these manifestations when they encounter them (www.ncca.ie, 2017)..

In a study by Schachner, Noack, Van de Vijver, and Eckstein (2016), two types of school policies with regards to cultural diversity are investigated, (a) fostering equality and inclusion and (b) acknowledging cultural pluralism, (a term used when smaller groups within a larger society maintain their unique cultural identities, and their values and practices are accepted by the wider culture). The aim was to evaluate the psychological effect on early immigrant adolescents, as they adjust to new school climates. The method of the research was a longitudinal, multilevel analysis based on 386 immigrant adolescents in 44 classrooms in Germany. The study revealed that, when applied, both types of policy promoted better well-being and fewer psychological and behavioural problems at an individual level. The results of the study had implications for teachers and school administrators, that schools should move beyond merely reducing discrimination, but promote equality and inclusion and simultaneously develop a climate embracing cultural pluralism. This might allow students to also draw on their ethnic culture and identity and adapt to an integration strategy at school, which is likely to be more beneficial than assimilation for school adjustment outcomes (Schachner et al. 2016). While the study provides evidence as to why such policies that foster inclusion should be embraced by teachers and school administrators and how they benefit students, the article lacks any practical suggestions as to how this may be approached in terms of extending existing curriculum activities.

A case study by Hopper, S. B. (2014) presents a Texas-based school that implemented a series of 'global projects', in order to connect their students with other states and countries. Interactive videoconferencing was introduced in each grade from Kindergarten to grade 8. In the paper the value of such 'global projects' is discussed. Videoconferencing is a tool that can be used to connect one school to another, regardless of location. This tool can be used to extend existing curriculum and help act as a medium for incorporating critical thinking, communication, collaboration, global and cultural awareness. The type of project presented in this case study paper, relates to the cultural diversity policies mentioned by the author. As they have the potential to serve as a practical application of the policy, to an existing curriculum. A rubric was developed to demonstrate the different areas of learning that took place throughout the projects and although not an originally anticipated outcome, student's perception of cultural diversity was an aspect that was noted in the findings, with the author mentioning that cultural diversity can be an unexpected outcome of the projects, although, that this would represent an effective project (Hopper, S. B. 2014). The engagement in these global learning projects with distant partners was successful and effective in educating

students on the traditions and lifestyle traits of the people and the countries they connected with. Although there was little evidence to show that the content of the projects would develop a more personal connection between students or have an effect on the student's ability to empathise with others from foreign cultural backgrounds. In regards to my research this highlights for me the importance of defining the difference between learning about cultures and learning about people, it causes me to rethink the focus of my project, while using the method of connecting online mentioned in this paper, I need to consider designing the project to ensure students are connecting to the real people on the other side.

2.2 Storytelling and Illustration: Social and Cultural exchange

Storytelling can have a strong capacity to enhance the development of empathy in those who take part in the process, so personal storytelling lies at the heart of the planned international collaboration. Using technology to open up the learning space is also an interesting focus of the short course. An article by Bianchi (2008) presents the rationale, methodology, and selected outcomes from "*More than a body's work*", a collaborative, international, arts educational research project. The project took place at different locations in England and New York, where workshops with collective goals, following the same ethos were facilitated. The projects' central intention was to investigate diversity in young people's personal and cultural experience. And its ethos was to provide inclusive opportunities for young people who may not ordinarily have access to the arts. The article discusses its strategies and its potential impact in relation to current initiatives and policies within the arts, culture and education. For the research project a diverse selection of socio-cultural groups was targeted within a range of formal and community-based educational settings. This included participants from schools, colleges, youth organisations, artists' groups, community groups as well as young people with limited access to cultural capital, such as teenage mothers-to-be and school-excluded students. These participants were tasked to consider their personal identity and experiences and express this through their body and its appearance. During the workshops a questionnaire was used to invite participants to contribute ideas and observations in relation to their own experiences, and to consider: "How significant is the body and visual appearance in constructing identity? What processes and practices do individuals employ in creating visual identity?" (Bianchi, 2008). The participants finished work, both written and visual was subsequently exhibited using an online platform so that the groups in different locations could observe and reflect on the outcomes. A number of galleries took part in the project showing the exhibition and hosting interactive programmes

related to the topic. The outcome for participants was a platform for expressing meaningful ideas about their own identity in relation to personal and socio-cultural influences (Bianchi .2008). '*More than a body's work*' participants perceived the project's focus as relevant to their lives, validating their identity and enabling them to freely express personal views. It is comparable to the project evaluated in the case study Hopper 2014, in terms of modelling a strategy for connecting young people to other cultural identities. Although while the project presented in this article results in its participants experiencing more personal explorations of cultural identity, it does not directly suggest the fostering of empathy in adolescents in terms of students connecting with peers from other cultures on a personal level. Experimenting with this idea will require consideration of not only the method of the process like that of '*More than a body's work*' but the subject matter that I will apply to the project also.

In a journal article by Manny (2008), the author explores the connection between technology, empathy and storytelling. The article expresses that as the world grows smaller and more connected by technology, that role of empathy is growing larger and more important than ever. The author states however, while our technological connectedness has increased, there does not appear to be a proportionate increase in global empathy. The author in this piece claims that storytelling is the key to empathy. The research on the topic presented in this article begins by explaining empathy neurologically, as the emerging role of 'mirror neurons'. Discovered in primates in the 1990's, mirror neurons are 'a set of neurons in the premotor area of the brain that are activated not only when performing an action oneself, but also while observing someone else perform that action. It is believed mirror neurons increase an individual's ability to understand the behaviours of others, an important skill in social species such as humans' (Manny 2008). The connection between mirror neurons and storytelling is explained by the evolution of mirror neurons and their links to language, emulation and empathetic response. It makes a powerful case that without the vicarious stimulation of storytelling and unfamiliar role models, there is little motivation the human brain has to reach out and feel for "the other'' (Manny 2008). The author goes on to claim that non-visual stories have a deeper psychological impact than visual stories, since non-visual rely on each mind using its personal experience to build using its imagination, making it a more relatable vision with a greater impact on one's empathy. In essence, the receiver of the story becomes the co-creator of the story. The author observes that there have been many cases where storytelling serves as a catalyst for social change, due to its ability to foster empathy in great amounts of people from a variety of backgrounds. For example, American

opinion about the war in Iraq changed dramatically once U.S. citizens started hearing the soldiers' and civilians' blogged stories, on both sides of the conflict, and realized that the US government sanctioned media stories which they had been told previously were, at best, misleading and, at worst, false (Manny 2008). The author argues that storytelling as a way of broadcasting shared human experiences is possibly the most effective way of fostering empathy in people there is. The research presented in this article strongly links to the hypothesis, and goes into further detailed discussion on technology looking at the positives and negatives of social media, gaming and virtual reality, though it does not focus in on the effects towards adolescents in particular.

2.3 Moral Conflicts: Considering Social Behaviour

A study by Malti, T., Ongley, S., Dys, S. and Colasante, T. (2012) examines how adolescents feel during every day experiences of moral conflict and social inclusion or exclusion and how they reason with these issues. They address the question by integrating developmental research on emotions and reasoning into situations involving moral transgressions and social exclusion. They focused on the emotions and reasoning of 12 year old adolescents in three contexts; intentionally harming another peer, omitting prosocial duties, and excluding another peer who is an "out-group" member (Malti, T. et al. 2012). To carry out the research, they studied an ethnically diverse community sample of 84, twelve-year-old children from a major Canadian city. Ethnic backgrounds reported were; western European (32%), eastern European (13%), South and East Asian (10%), Caribbean (6%), West and Central Asian (4%), African (2%), Central and South American (1%), and other/multiple origins (28%) (Malti, T. et al. 2012). Participants were posed with a variety of scenarios that were designed to elicit moral responses. Following each story, participants were asked how they would feel (emotions) and why they would feel that way (reasoning). Findings revealed that the majority of adolescents were concerned about moral issues such as fairness or equality. In the words of one adolescent, "I wasn't treating everyone equally. Since she was new, she probably didn't have anyone to hang out with, and I made it worse." Many adolescents also provided reasons based on empathy toward others, for example, "When somebody don't want to play and another person comes and you say no, it hurts." (Malti, T. et al. 2012). As discussed in the article by (Manny 2008) these findings display empathy as one individual having the cognitive and emotional ability to put themselves in the shoes of the 'other'. Interestingly, social exclusion contexts elicited empathy-based reasoning more frequently than intentional harm. While reasoning based on sanctions or rules was more common in contexts of

intentional harm than in contexts of social exclusion. The research conducted in this study offers a detailed insight into the direct connection between social inclusion and exclusion and adolescents empathetic reactions.

An article by Villadangos, M., Errasti, J., Amigo, I., Jolliffe, D. and García-Cueto, E. (2016) presents the findings of a study on the characteristics of empathy in adolescents measured by the Spanish validation of the Basic Empathy Scale. The Basic Empathy Scale (BES) was developed by Jolliffe and Farrington (2006) and is based on the definition of empathy proposed by Cohen and Strayer (1996), that is, the act of understanding and sharing the emotional context of another person. This approach therefore includes both cognitive and affective components, overcoming the limitations of many other scales (Villadangos, M. et al. 2016). Affective empathy is described as experiencing a similar emotional response with another person and cognitive empathy as understanding rationally the emotions of another person. The questionnaire for the BES, consists of 20 items and uses a 5-point Likert scale answer format ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). It has 9 items related to Cognitive Empathy and 11 items related to Affective Empathy. The study was carried out on a sample of 752 adolescents (339 males, 413 females) aged 14-25. The results showed reliable validity in regards to measuring both affective and cognitive empathy. The Basic Empathy Scale, therefore, appears to be a useful instrument to measure empathy in adolescents. This tool might also be useful in educational assessment, given that empathy is a key element in establishing satisfactory interpersonal relationships and in regulating prosocial and antisocial behaviour. In this sense, it is important to mention its potential usefulness in intervention programmes aimed at correcting aggressive behaviour such as bullying (Villadangos, M. et al. 2016). In relation to my research, as an action research project, there may not be room for me to conduct these kinds of tests; as such they might be inappropriate or interruptive with the project. It does mean though that I will take into considerations the language used by students and their social behaviour throughout the project.

In conclusion, the literature reviewed delivers both practical and theoretical considerations for the proposed research project. The article by (Schachner et al. 2016) evaluates and recommends policies to improve inclusive education in culturally diverse environments, as the study by (Hopper, S. B. 2014) evaluates methods of using technology to connect with outside of the classroom. The research project by (Bianchi 2008) suggests ways, in which young people in different locations can explore their identities, express their personal narratives and interact online in the process. The article by (Manny. 2008) discusses at

length the examples of storytelling being the "key" to empathy while the study by (Malti, T. et al. 2012) examines how adolescents deal with moral dilemmas such as social exclusion. They outline suitable research methods in order to understand the role of empathy in adolescent's decisions and the study by (Villadangos, M. et al. 2016) offers a research method that directly measures the presence of empathy in adolescents.

Taking the collection of literature into account, I find elements have emerged that I need to take into consideration in regards to my research project. Firstly I think that connecting my students with peers from other countries needs to be a core part of this project, and I need to decide the most effective way of connecting them using online communication, comparing the effect of video conferencing, emailing, and social media, in relation to what I would like that to achieve from the communication. In that sense, then, I need to consider how to use storytelling effectively, one element that is not discussed in deeper detail in the literature in regards to storytelling and art projects is the importance of subject matter and the effect it could potentially have on the project outcome. Lastly I need to plan how I will go about gathering and interpreting the research from the classroom; my study requires methods that will allow for the potentially messy data that will emerge from the students' language and social behaviours when faced with complex subjects such as cultural diversity, inclusion and empathy.

Chapter 3

Research Design

Action research was an important methodology for this small-scale, participatory teacher research work that aimed to investigate the development of student's ability to communicate, interpret and appreciate cultural diversity. Firstly, engaging in action research means as the researcher, I was directly involved in the practice of conducting the study. In small-scale, classroom based research like this, I was provided with a deep, rich, and broad range of experiences to draw from. In this way, Grant (2007) argues that the distinct strategy of action research is essential in 'adapting, changing, and redesigning' research practices (Grant, pg. 266, 2007). Therefore, focusing on action research practices encouraged my ability to recognise and adapt to unexpected findings, as they appear throughout the project. This is suited to educational research because as seen in *Figure 1.3* it fits around the way a teacher already works in a continuous cycle of planning, acting and reflecting.
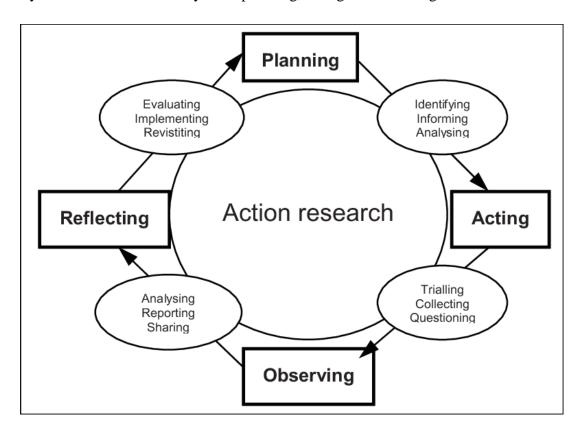

Figure 3.1 *Action Research Cycle Diagram*

There were three ways in which students communicated with the students in Dubai for the duration of the project, through the stories they orally recorded and sent, the art work they made in response to the stories they received, and the opportunities they got to question each

other through online communication. The content of these varied messaging methods carried a lot of valuable data in relation to the research question.

"*To what extent can, a cross-cultural exchange of stories via digital recordings through online art collaboration whereby personal narratives are orally exchanged and then visually interpreted; develop an appreciation of cultural diversity, active listening and visual literacy skills*."

Analysing this type of field note data was a process that occurred throughout the project. It began the moment I entered the classroom and continued as interactions were happening, as I wrote up descriptive notes, and as I considered what those interactions and descriptive notes meant. Thematic mapping was needed in order to make sense of the constant and messy flow of data which helped to inform the other methods of data analysis needed. Observing and recording the use of language by students in terms of what they said through their stories and visuals and discussions in the classroom was critical to the study, as was monitoring the quality of the art work produced, to gauge not only student's interest in the project, but their learning as it happened.

3.1 Research Methods

For the purpose of this multifaceted study, I needed to apply a variety of research collection methods to ensure I collected the appropriate and relevant data and did not miss out on valuable research. The main methods I employed were; Questionnaires, Focus Groups, Observation and interviews.

3.1.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used during this study from the start until the end. In the beginning to capture some baseline data to inform further areas of inquiry and to use as a comparative after certain aspects of the project had been fulfilled. Informed by the analysed content from my observations from discussion focus groups, the questionnaires allowed me to seek more direct and detailed content by emphasising certain areas of interest. For example inquiring students understanding of culture and their opinion of cultural diversity as the project progressed was directly linked to the research question. The questionnaires were a useful method of tracking students learning developments and views on the topic.

However this method was limiting due to the fact that it only asked for a limited amount of information with explanation and also did not require participants to give elaborate answers.

This means there could have been missed opportunity to expand on the themes that were dealt with mainly through the use of questionnaires.

3.1.2 Focus Groups

Class discussion played an essential role in learning and the research for this project. The most common purpose of a focus group interview is to provide an in depth exploration of a topic about which little is known, in this case, gauging student's thoughts and opinions on cultural identity. For such exploratory research, a simple but, rich descriptive narrative is quite appropriate and often all that is necessary. In this instance I used the student's art works in progress to prompt the narrative. In this type of analysis the emphasis is on why something is said.

These are examples of measures that have a long history of use:

(a) the frequency with which a symbol or idea appears, which tends to be interpreted as a measure of importance, attention, or emphasis; (b) the relative balance of favourable and unfavourable attributions regarding a symbol or idea, which tends to be interpreted as a measure of direction or bias.

(b) The kinds of qualifications and associations made with respect to a symbol or idea, which tend to be interpreted as a measure of the intensity of belief or conviction (Krippendorf, 2004, p. 59).

Although focus groups were a very important method of data collection, allowing pupils to voice their thoughts and opinions on the themes being explored, there is a risk that the participants may have voiced what they thought that I as the teacher/researcher leading the lessons wanted to hear. This would mean that some data may not be authentically linked to the theme it is being applied to.

3.1.3 Unstructured Observation

Assuming the role of 'participant as observer', unstructured observation was used as a method to gather data for the research project. Unstructured observation was geared towards understanding students' perception of people from other cultures and their capacity to empathise. This method included informal conversations with people, watching behaviours, reading documents, note- taking, and using a reflective diary. In this way, unstructured observation was utilised to gain a better understanding of how certain events unfolded over

the time; catching the dynamics of situations, the people, the personalities, contexts, resources, and roles within the class group.

While this was a valuable method to gather an encompassing overview of the relevant emerging themes throughout the project, it is also limiting due to the fact that I am the sole researcher. As I am the researcher and teacher involved in this study, by its very nature it may be difficult for me to be impartial with my observations and recollections. This means that I may be biased in observing the evidence in a way that will achieve my research aims.

3.1.4 Interviews

The semi-structured interview was a method of gathering data used throughout the research project. The informal structure of the interview allowed for the participant to discuss topics surrounding an issue, as they wish. Therefore, this method allowed for the appropriate expression of personal opinions, feelings, and values surrounding the issues, as they affected the participant of the study. This was information which be used to complete any logical gaps in data that were previously provided by a participant (through surveys/ questionnaires). I was limited by time during this project, which meant that I only had time to interview around a third of the class. This means that while the data gathered from those interviews may have been relevant, it doesn't represent the perspective of the entire class.

3.2 Data Analysis

The collection of qualitative data that appeared from a variety of raw forms was transcribed and organised with a systematic approach, an inductive approach filtered and grouped the data around themes that extended from the research question.

A coding system was used to analysis and organise the data collected, the type of coding system that was used in this qualitative research was thematic coding, which searched for thematic patterns.

Thick description was used as an approach to analyse the data gathered from observations made throughout the research project. This form of data analysis involves evaluating the extent to which observations made are transferable to other times, settings, situations, and people. The detailed accounts of observations made can be placed in an overall context, by identifying patterns of a broad range of situations; behaviour, people and experiences. Therefore, this particular aspect of thick description is vital to the research, as it provides

context for the observing and interpreting of the impact of the project on students' actions, opinions and ideas.

The validity and reliability of the findings in this study were ensured by the triangulation of data sources whereby findings are based on data which was collected from a variety of methods taking into consideration of mutiple perspectives from this small scale study.

3.3 Participants

The research participants included fourteen second year students, from a small rural secondary School in County Clare. These students are aged between 13 and 15, of mixed ability and from similar ethnic and social backgrounds. In order to collect the required data each student signed a consent form, indicating their willingness to take part. This teaching practice data collection period lasted for 10 weeks

3.4 Ethics

As this research was undertaken in a secondary school classroom and the subjects are aged 13 - 14. Thus, issues surrounding child protection have been addressed.

Their parents/guardians were informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended uses of the research, what their children's participation in the research involved, and what risks and benefits were involved. This information was accurate, clear and easily understood and was provided in a constant form and any further information can be provided upon request of the parent/guardian.

The participant and their parents were allowed to consent in a voluntary way, free from any coercion, undue influence, or manipulation. Any information supplied by the participants for the research will be strictly confidential and their anonymity will be respected at all times.

Any data gathered will be stored on a password protected laptop and backed up onto a password protected hard drive. The data will be destroyed at a specific after all research is conducted and the data is analysed.

Chapter 4.

Key research findings

Introduction

The following chapter represents the prevailing findings that have emerged from this research study. I will present and discuss these findings, which surfaced over a 10 week period.

The research question was "*To what extent can, a cross-cultural exchange of stories via digital recordings through online art collaboration whereby personal narratives are orally exchanged and then visually interpreted; develop an appreciation of cultural diversity, active listening and visual literacy skills.*"

The findings from this study emerged as a set of complex multi layered and interconnected themes, which made it difficult to separate and define them. For the purpose of this paper I have grouped themes into key findings with some sub-findings as a way to make sense of the evidence collected. While reading, one should bear in mind the connective over lapping nature between findings.

The key findings I am presenting are:

i. Students developed empathy and cultural respect by connecting to students in Dubai through personal stories of shared experiences
ii. Classroom discussion, research and online communication were essential in supporting students develop a deeper understanding of culture.
iii. Active listening and visual literacy were essential skills in supporting the development of respect and appreciation throughout the art making process.

4.1 Students developed empathy and cultural respect by connecting to students in Dubai through personal stories of shared experiences

I found that by listening to their personal stories, students developed a sense of respect and sensitivity towards the students in Dubai. This was evident in their discussions and decision making process for the art work made in response to the stories and their use of visual literacy skills (which I will discuss later). I found that the personal nature and content of the stories told had an effect on student's motivation and how they approached the art making process and project as a whole. Most of the students in Dubai provided detailed, descriptive

and honest accounts of an emotional experience. The level of emotional honesty took my students by surprise, and it is worth noting that there was an age gap of around two years between my students and those in Dubai, accounting perhaps for the difference in maturity.

"*Students reaction to hearing the podcasts from Dubai for the first time: 'Why are they all so depressing?' Students were taken back by the maturity of some of the other student's stories, their honest accounts and vivid descriptions.*" (Research diary entry, 09/11/17)

Students were challenged to develop art work in response to the content of the stories. For some this meant responding to a person's account of their feelings and emotions. In one example a student in Dubai talks about feeling depressed and having her heart broken.

"*Have your tears cried like rain? Have you ever died when you were alive? Have you ever went out to a desert place when it was raining? Were you ever tired of life? Were you ever disheartened? Have you ever lost hope and emotions for any reason?*" (Dubai student podcast transcript 10/11/17)

By actively listening to the podcast and interpreting the audio, the student identified the themes of heartbreak and depression. The student navigated through the visual art making process to represent these themes. As seen in *figure 8* a progression can be seen in the student's work as they try to decide how to visually represent the sensitive topic.
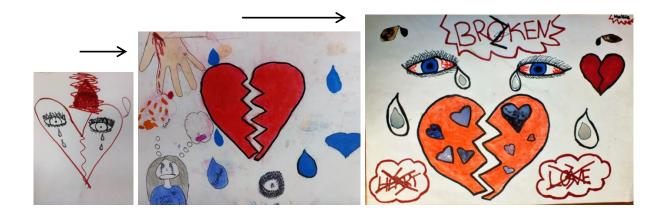

Figure 4.1 Development of student illustrations

There is a process of refinement and consideration evident in this example of the progress of students work based on the podcast. This happened through a process of active listening and also group discussion on the work. The class discussed the works in progress and considered what the different imagery in them could communicate to the students in Dubai.

During a review of the work a class discussion developed where students expressed concerns about the impact some of the imagery could have on the student who made the podcast in Dubai. In particular the illustration of somebody cutting their wrist as seen in *figure 4.2*

Student 1 *She might be upset or something*

Student 2 *She might think we picked it up a bit wrong*

Student 3 *Yea because like we are over exaggerating it bit*

Student 1 *Yea and if she looks at people from Ireland, and they drew a picture of her cutting herself, I feel like it would be like not good.*

Figure 4.2 Detail of student drawing   *Table 4.1 Work review transcript* (See app

In the evidence presented in *table 4.1*, students can be seen taking into consideration the impact of their art work on the feelings of the students in Dubai. Students discuss how the student may be upset by the image and the way they have portrayed her story. By refining the art work in line with what was discussed in the group review, and removing the graphic symbolism, as seen in *figure 4.2,* indicates that the student decided to take the person in Dubai into consideration, displaying empathy and respect towards their story and their feelings.

Students expressed sympathetic feelings towards the students in Dubai due to content of their stories and also sense of relating to their lives. When asked what they had learnt by listening to the stories from students in Dubai the majority of students stated that they learnt that they have a lot more in common with students there, than they had originally perceived.

"That a lot of the stories I sympathise with were similar or relative to me and my own experiences and I have learnt that despite where they are they are not so different to me & you. Some of the students had very good English and I did not expect this to be so". (Questionnaire, 19/12/17 see appendix 4)

In summary I found that students developed a sense of empathy towards the foreign students by listening to their stories, as a result students were engaged in the project and motivated to learn and to produce art work out of respect for what had been shared. I found that students developed an appreciation for the foreign students from listening to their stories and realising their common ground.

4.2 Classroom discussion, research and online communication supported students develop a deeper understanding of culture.

I found that, through taking part in class room discussions, and doing research based on the connection made with the foreign students, students deepened their understanding of culture. This is evident in the work students produced, data collected from questionnaires and focus group discussions and from my own observations throughout.

Student's initial reaction to the proposed exchange was mostly confusion over how they could connect with students living in Dubai. Students questioned what language they speak there, with one student remarking in regards to Arabic *"I thought that language didn't exist anymore"* with another "*Yea I thought that language was gone now*" (Questionnaire week 14/10/17). These initial reactions indicated that students did not have much prior knowledge of what life in the Middle East might be like, and so could gain more understanding from the project. This caused me to consider strategies to teach students about culture.

Before contact was made with the students in Dubai, I carried out a questionnaire to establish some base line data of student's prior and current understanding of cultural diversity, and to gauge student's understanding. Students were asked to describe differences between them and the other students. Students mentioned mostly language/accent, food, clothes and weather with one or two students mentioning nationality and way of life, as seen in *Figure 1*.
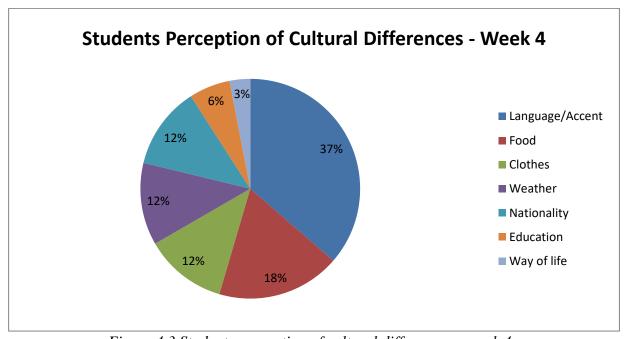

Figure 4.3 Students perception of cultural differences – week 4

Culture is defined as the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society. When asked about their understanding of cultural diversity students however, mentioned mostly geographical features or national symbolism, suggesting students lacked some comprehension of the deeper complexities of culture. "*We live in Ireland, we play Gaelic football. Our symbol is a harp. They live in Dubai, they speak Arabic*" and "*We live in Ireland. It is a lot colder and rains a lot more here. We play different sports and talk way different*" (Questionnaire 29/10/17. See appendix 3)

Students received email messages from Dubai week 5, detailing where the students were from originally and how they defined their own cultural identities.

"*I lived my whole life in the Netherlands and I have a Dutch passport but I feel more Moroccan than Dutch for some reason. I feel more connected to morocco and I love and proud that i am from Morocco more than being Dutch*"

"*I'm from Seoul, South Korea. When I was 2 years old, I went to Malaysia and lived there for 5 years. , I went back to Korea and spent 2 years. In 9, I came to Dubai and lived until 14 years old. I went back to Korea and spent 1 year and a half. I'm 15 years old and living in Dubai again.*"

Figure 4.4 Excerpts of emails received from students in Dubai (see appendix 9)

The emails contained honest and detailed accounts of the student's origins and how they question over their own cultural identities. In *figure 4.4* the students can be seen explain how they have mixed cultural backgrounds and how they personally navigate their own identities depending on how they feel and where they relate to, these honest explanations exposed my students to a real notion of cultural diversity. In response to these messages, I assigned students the task to do research into the culture of the countries the students that had messaged were from. Based on the initial indication of their understanding of what culture is, I decided I would need to provide some scaffolding for students and planned an activity to help them with the research. The aim of the activity was to help students identify what defines culture. I quizzed students on their own culture, writing "*Ireland*" on the board. Students were to suggest things they would use in a visual representation of Irish culture. Once the suggestions were written up on the board, students had to identify what categories they would fall under. They came up with folklore, food, sport, and traditions along with celebrations, colours, language and wildlife. As seen in *Figure 4.5*
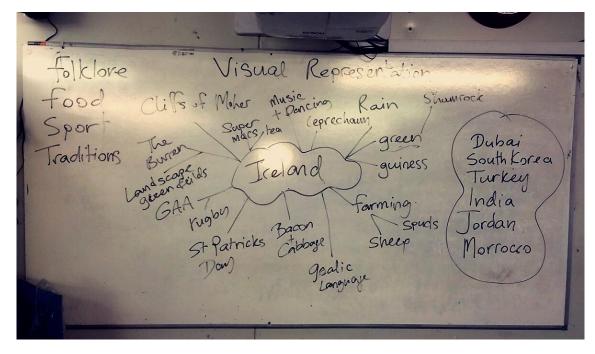
Figure 4.5 Classroom learning activity to help student identify cultural signifiers

Students were assigned the research as homework, and come back to school the following week with enough information to create a visual representation of their assigned country to present to the rest of the class. As seen in *figure 3 & 2* some of the students made a fair attempt at presenting what they had discovered from their research. In figure 2 the student presented information about the sport played in India, cricket being the most popular. In figure 3 the student presented information about the architecture, the wealthy culture, climate and the landscape of the UAE. Each student stood in front of the class and presented their work, explaining what they had learnt about their assigned culture.
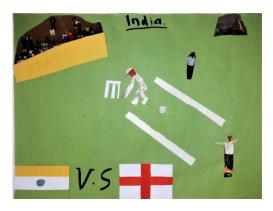

Figure 4.6

Figure 4.7

I found however that the students still had not grasped the idea of different social behaviours. This prompted a discussion where I told students about some cultural differences I had experienced while living in the UAE. The example I gave was when local people in the UAE

have a birthday or any sort of celebration, the person who is celebrating will bring chocolate into school to give to all of the students and teachers. In their culture, celebrating was associated with giving gifts rather than receiving. From the discussion students seemed to gain a clearer understanding of how subtle social behaviour can define cultural differences. Students were able to discuss some cultural differences they already knew but had not considered, one student gave an example of how we might consider it rude to burp at the dinner table but in other cultures it is considered as a compliment towards the food. I found that this discussion helped students think past obvious clichés when it came to discussing cultural differences.

While students were making the art work based on the podcasts, they had the opportunity to communicate with the students in Dubai on an online 'Padlet' platform as seen in *figure 4.8*. Here they could post messages and ask questions. I found that students expressed their appreciation for culture and interest in learning more about cultural diversity by asking students in Dubai questions about their lives in Dubai and their cultural backgrounds. Students asked questions such as "*do you have funerals the same as we do in Ireland*" and "*do you celebrate Christmas?*" as seen in *figure 4 and 5*.
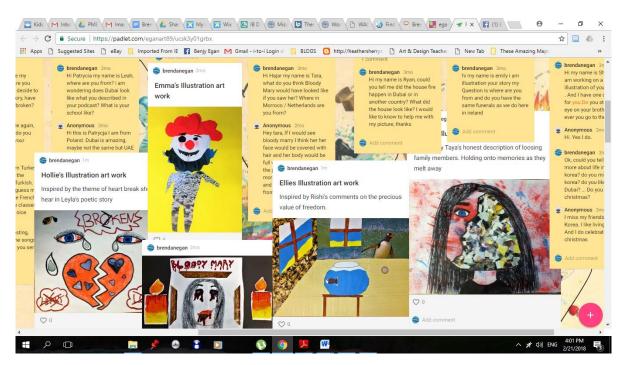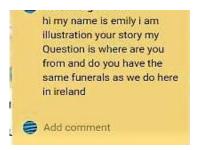

Figure 4.8 Padlet online communication platform

Figure 4.9 Padlet student comment   *Figure 4.10 Padlet student comment*

The student questioning in *figure 4.9* was illustrating for a podcast where the student in Dubai spoke about the death of their grandfather and uncle. The student was brainstorming ideas for her illustration and considered how she could illustrate a funeral. These inquiries suggest that students were interested in learning more about the students they were illustrating for and also their cultural differences.

A discussion about cultural differences arose amongst the students on another occasion while I was conducting a group review of some illustrations the class were working on. As seen in *figure 4.11* the drawing depicts a girl crying with what looks like something covering her mouth. I chose this image to review as I felt that it was interesting imagery for students consider the potential message students could send to the students in Dubai.

Figure 4.11 Student illustration sketch

I asked the student who made the drawing, what did the thing around her mouth represent? The student replied that the blue around her face represented her drowning in her own tears. I asked the rest of the class what they think the girl who sent the podcast might think it might mean. Students remarked *"It looks like a mask on her face or something"* another said "*a mask"* and *"a bandana".* The students then made a connection between the drawing and the

traditional clothing for a Muslim woman. Students expressed concern about how this may be interpreted by the students in Dubai.

Do you think they could think it is disrespectful?	**Class** - **Yea!!** **Student 1**- *Well no I think, that like they are happy with their country and what they do and stuff so, they have their own way and stuff, like they are proud of their country so if they saw that they wouldn't mind* **Student 2** -*They have no reason to get offended..* **Student 3** - *Yea they wear it all the time so..* **Student 4** - *Well what if they put us in a leprechaun suit or something!?*

Table 4.2 Class discussion transcript about respecting cultural differences and stereotyping.

(See appendix 7)

As seen in *table 4.2* when I asked students if they thought it could be misinterpreted and considered disrespectful the class all said yes at first, but then had some debate on the issue. One student pointed out that simply referencing somebodies culture is not necessarily disrespectful. Though another pointed out the risk of stereotyping when they asked "*what if the put us in a leprechaun suit*?" The way in which students are considering here the problematic nature cultural stereo typing, indicates to me that students were developing a greater appreciation for the sensitivity around cultural diversity.

In summary I found that, by holding classroom discussions, students had the opportunity to learn more about culture while forming opinions on what cultural diversity means to them. In week 10 of the project I conducted a questionnaire to gauge students understanding of culture in comparison to week 4. When asked what their understanding of what defines culture is students responded:

"*My understanding is of their traditions, food, special events, beliefs, ways of looking at the world, the cultures history, sports, and traditional music*" (Questionnaire 19/12/17)

"I think that culture is traditions, food, sport and the way that different places and countries do things in their own unique way". (Questionnaire 19/12/17)

The student's answers were much more in depth in comparison to responses given in week 4. Each student mentioned aspects closer to the definition of culture, understanding culture more closely as the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society. I found that as a result of connecting with foreign students and taking part in class room discussions students were able to express their opinions on how they felt about cultural diversity towards the final stages of project.

> *"I think cultural diversity is a good and interesting thing because if everyone had the same culture it would be boring and going to different countries would not be interesting. I think it is important to understand and respect the different cultures"* (Questionnaire 19/12/17)

As seen here, and what I found across the entire class as a whole is that students had developed the opinion that cultural diversity was a positive reality because the variety means there is always something to learn.

4.3 Active listening and visual literacy were essential skills in supporting the development of respect and appreciation throughout the art making process.

4.3.1 The 'listening circle'; Active listening skills were introduced and practiced to assist students with the project.

In order to assist students in reaching a maximum potential outcome for the project, I decided I would need to scaffold students towards becoming active listeners. In order to establish an environment based on listening, I had students take part in a '*listening circle'*, explaining that it was a space for story sharing and focused listening. A listening circle, as seen in the example in *figure 4.11* has no sides and everyone can see each other to create a fair and comfortable atmosphere for sharing and listening. I needed to create an atmosphere where students would feel comfortable sharing personal stories and opinions, so I tried to establish this as early as I could and build on the model as the project progressed.

Figure 4.12 'The Listening Circle'

I found that by focusing on listening as a key activity for this project, students were well equipped with the active listening skills needed to interpret and illustrate the podcasts sent from Dubai. This is evident in the progress shown in work students produced in response to listening throughout the project. Shown in *figures 4.12 and 4.13* are drawings students made in week 1 in response to actively listening to a story I read out loud to the class.

Figure 4.13   *Figure 4.14*

Students drawing from listening; Students made drawings from listening to me read the story of "Abdulla of the Land and Abdulla of the Sea" out loud.

The activity challenged students to focus on the details of the story and creating interpretive drawings as they listened. This was a skill students needed to practice for when they received the podcasts from Dubai.

4.3.2 Active listening skills further developed in order to pay respect to the stories exchanged

I found the strongest evidence of students developing their active listening skills visible in the art work that they produced as a result to actively listening to the podcasts from students in Dubai. The stories told were rich in descriptive language and vivid description, and demanded the considerate attention from the students listening. Along with the language used, students were challenged to interpret the tone of the podcasts through their illustrations. In *figure 14* a detail of an illustration drawn by a student can be seen, created in response to the audio podcast - transcript seen in *figure 15*. By comparing the illustration with what the student was listening to, it is visible where the student has listened closely and translated the audio into visual form.
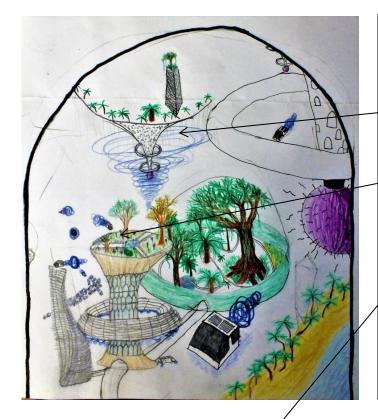
Figure 4.15 Student Illustration detail   *Table 4.3. Transcript Quotes of Podcast*

In the illustration it can be seen where the student has included details told in the story and an accurate interpretation of the intense tone of the fear, panic & anxiety felt on the occasion. In an interview, the same student identified that listening to the story and hearing the emotion in the students voices, was something that was unique to this project.

"*I think that listening to stories is better, than reading I know you are still getting the same information, but, you just hear blank words, whereas hearing the story you can hear some emotion to it. So then you can really get the experience of what is going on.*" (Student interview 09/11/17 see appendix 6)

In another example seen in *figures 16 – 19* a different student demonstrated their active listening skills through the creation of a detailed illustration.

Figure 4.16 Student illustration

"the light in the sky is **so clear and blue** there is no pollution but it's clear"

Ever building has a little forest on top of it, full of green gigantic palms or trees and many flowers around it

. Everything is so white and green and blue, everything is so clear and so colourful.

"They have their solar panels on top, you can hear all the trees moving in the wind… everything is just so clean and natural."

Table 4.4 Podcast Quotes of Podcast

Figure 4.17 Student's illustration Detail.

Figure 4.18 Student's illustration Detail

In this example, the student can be responding directly to the descriptive language that they heard in the story. A vivid and detailed picture in built of the clean, clear future described. With the blue, green and white colours, the buildings with little forests of palms and trees and flowers on top, the cars that are flying over the buildings with solar panels on the roofs and the clear blue energy that is radiating out of nearly everything.

During a discussion about how students were communicating with their illustrations, they mentioned that including this level of detail in their work was important to them. For it meant

that students in Dubai would know that they have appreciated their stories by listening closely. Students discussed;

"*But if you put in a bit more detail it shows you were listening a bit more though... So they think that we appreciate it a bit more*"

"*Because they will be listening to our, so like if they listen to ours properly you give the respect back*" (focus group see appendix 7)

In summary students were challenged to improve their listening skills throughout the project. By establishing the importance of listening early on in the project with the listening circle, I found that students were able to apply themselves to actively listening to the podcasts from Dubai. Students demonstrated their improved listening skills through their drawings. I also found that student's appreciation of listening as communication was developed, as students were motivated by the consequence of exchanging with students in Dubai.

4.3.3 Visual literacy skills were developed in order to successfully communicate visual interpretations with respect to the stories told.

I found that students developed their visual literacy skills through the decision making process with their work as they considered how to interpret the themes they had identified in the stories they heard. This was a combination of questioning what symbolism to include in the imagery and the materials most suitable.

As mentioned previously, due to the personal subject matter heard in the stories from Dubai. Students felt the need to consider the feelings of the other students when exchanging their illustrations. Seen in *figure 4.18* is the image of somebody cutting their hand, students ultimately displayed sensitivity to this person's story and this required students to practice visual literacy skills in order to analyse the symbolism in the work and its potential impact. As a group and individually, students needed to decide what kind of message they were going to be sending to their counterparts.
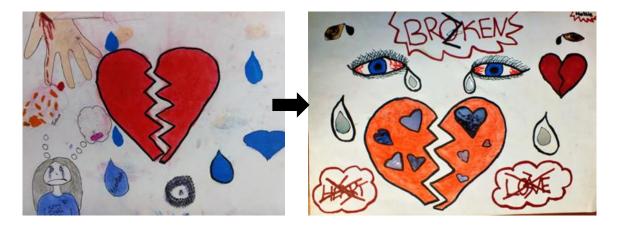
Figure 4.19.   *Figure 4.20*

Ok so what about it makes you say depression?	*Student 1*– Well like I mean shes cutting herself .. and the pills *Student 2*– Yea the pills *Student 1* – And she's crying *Student 3*– Thinking of suicide maybe?
Yea ok so why do you say suicide?	*Student 1* – Because theres drugs and shes trying to cut her wrists *Student 2*– She's overdosing
What would you say in the strongest message in the picture?	*Student 1* – The Heart *Student 2*– The hand with the knife *Student 1*– I think the heart
What would you say is the strongest message? Heartbreak, depression or suicide?	*The Whole group* – Suicide

Table 4.5 Transcript of focus group (see appendix 7)

As seen in *table 4.3,* students were discussing the symbolism found in the first image in *figure 4.8.* Students discussed the symbolic meaning of the different imagery that dipicted a broken heart, someone crying, pills and a cut hand. Students as a group agreed that the illustration depicted quite a strong message of depression and suicide. Seen in *figure 4.19* is the same students subsequent work made after the class discussion. It is evident that the

student decided to refined their concept and removed the imagery that students felt expressed the theme of suicide. The result is an illustration that still portrays a powerful message while being respectful to the student and their story. Ultimately the decision to remove the symbols was a move towards empathic sensitvity toward the student in Dubai as discussed, but it required the entire class to practice their visual literacy skills in order to analyse the imagery in order to do so.
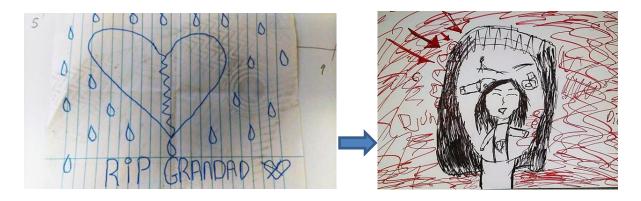

Figure 4.21

Figure 4.22

Figure 4.23

Another example of visual literacy skills can be seen in the development of students work displayed from *figure 4.20* to *figure 4.22*. The student was listening to a podcast about a student discussing the death of her grandfather and uncle. In the podcast she talks about struggling to hold onto memories of loved ones as they fade away.

"I started cherishing moments more than I should; I started capturing everything physically and mentally. And some point they start fading away as memories, from how hard I tried to cherish them." (Podcast Transcript)

The development in *figure 4.22* displays the student searching for way to represent the theme of loss and mental health that is mentioned in the story. The student found success in experimenting with materials and combining collage with drawing and paint to represent the concept. It was necessary for these students to develop their visual literacy skills to be able to achieve the outcomes that they did. The process of interpreting the audio to the realisation of this work was one of a visual journey, analysing the different visual symbols and material effects along the way.

In summary, the key findings of this study emerged from themes that were complex and interlinked, so identifying and separating them was a worthwhile challenge. I found that students reacted to the stories they heard from students in Dubai with empathy and respect, as they were able to relate to the experiences being described. I found that while attempting to teach the complexities of culture can be problematic, that open and frank classroom discussion along with research strategies assisted the lessons and that actually connecting with people from other cultures was the ultimate motivation for students to develop a deeper understanding. And finally I found that students developed their active listening and visual literacy skills in order to pay respect and show their appreciation of the stories they received.

Chapter 5.

Evaluation of Findings

Introduction

In this chapter I will evaluate and discuss the research findings outlined in in the previous chapter. The findings are in response to the research question:

"*To what extent can, a cross-cultural exchange of stories via digital recordings through online art collaboration whereby personal narratives are orally exchanged and then visually interpreted; develop an appreciation of cultural diversity, active listening and visual literacy skills.*"

I will interpret the meaning of each finding and discuss by aligning the findings relevant literature and theory that may support or otherwise the relevance and possible implications of what was found in my study. The key findings are presented as:

   i. Students developed empathy and cultural respect by connecting to students in Dubai through personal stories of shared experiences
   ii. Classroom discussion, research and online communication were essential in supporting students develop a deeper understanding of culture.
   iii. Active listening and visual literacy were essential skills in supporting the development of respect and appreciation throughout the art making process.

5.1 Students developed empathy and cultural respect by connecting to students in Dubai through personal stories of shared experiences

I found that from listening to their personal stories, students developed a sense of respect and sensitivity towards the students in Dubai. This was evident in their discussions and decision making process for the art work made in response to the stories and their use of visual literacy skills. I found that the personal nature and content of the stories told had an effect on how some students approached the art making process. Most of the students in Dubai provided detailed, descriptive and honest accounts of an emotional experience. Hearing these stories lead to students expressing a sense of empathy towards them. This finding is supported in "*Empathy in the Time of Technology: How Storytelling is the Key to Empathy*" where author PJ Manney examines the connection between storytelling and the ability to empathize and relate to somebody we don't know.

"*But what is it in a story that makes us empathize? I believe it is the imaginative act of the reader translating the words on the page into thoughts and feelings, enabling them to see the world through the characters' eyes and feel their feelings. It is also the recognition that humans share common needs, goals and aspirations and that these are either met or unmet in the story of every life, be it real or fictional.*" (Manny 2008).

Manny describes the power of being immersed into a person's story. I found that students made a strong connection to the other students from the act of listening to their voices telling the stories. This process of active listening meant students were challenged to use their imaginations to illustrate the stories, this process meant students built a stronger connection with the stories they were listening to. This finding is supported by Manny (2008) as they discuss impact of a non-visual story on the receiver.

"*That the non-visual story has a deeper psychological impact than the visual story, since the non-visual relies on each mind using its personal experience to build its imagination, making it a more intimate, relatable 'vision' with a greater impact on one's empathy. In essence, the receiver of the story becomes the co-creator of the story.*" (Manny 2008)

Here the author discusses the essence of listening to a story and combining personal experience and imagination to build a vision, and the implications of fostering empathy. In summary, I interpret this finding to mean that if, listening to personal stories has the potential to develop empathy in this way- there could be implications for applying this theory across a range of projects in the art room, that could potentially assist in teaching students to be tolerant and respectful of others.

5.2 Classroom discussion, research and online communication were essential in supporting students develop a deeper understanding of culture.

5.2.1 Discussion

I found that, by taking part in the project, students gained a deeper appreciation of cultural diversity. This was evident in the work students produced, data collected from questionnaires and focus group discussions and from my own observations throughout. I found that students developed their understanding of culture by; connecting through stories, communicating with foreign students, taking part in classroom discussions. To interpret this finding I will a look back on the "*Intercultural guidelines in the Post Primary school*" a policy document produced by the NCCA to outline methods to enabling students to respect and celebrate diversity and to promote equality and challenge unfair discrimination. On the role of discussion it states that "discussion has a key role in intercultural education. It provides a chance for students to talk about their ideas and feelings and can open up opportunities for

developing or changing their ideas or feelings where appropriate. It can develop a range of skills such as asking questions, active and positive listening, taking turns, summarising views, etc." (www.ncca.ie, 2017). In discussing cultural diversity in particular I found that reviewing the student's art work was an effective catalyst in generating this type of discussion. This is also supported by the policy document when it points out that it is not a good idea to throw open a discussion without first providing some guidance and how it is the teacher's role to provide a suitable stimulus for generating discussion, such as a poem, newspaper article, piece of music, visual stimulus or physical activity. (www.ncca.ie, 2017). The meaning of this finding is intrinsically linked to each of the others. Discussion is a fundamental teaching strategy for any project to achieve higher order learning, although there are implications for this study in particular. Encouraging discussion underpins the overarching aims of the short course, for students to be able to share stories while learning to actively listen to them and for students to develop and voice opinions while respectively listening to each other's.

5.2.2 Online Communication

I found that by connecting with students living in a different part of the world, from different cultural background encouraged students to develop their understanding of culture. By communicating online through, emails, messages, stories and art work students had an extrinsic motivation that fuelled their learning. This idea of connecting students with the world beyond the classroom is suggested in "*Studying Culture in the Social Studies Classroom – What is Realistic?*" by Allan R. Brandhorst where the author discusses the potential benefit of cross-cultural interaction when learning about culture and how the understanding of another culture ultimately requires direct contact with carriers of the other culture. People must be in direct communication across the cultural divide (Brandhorst 2002). The author goes on to discuss the potential of connecting students across cultures using online tools to enhance cultural understanding, suggesting support of my finding that the online collaboration between my students and the those in Dubai encouraged their understanding of cultural diversity

"*Clearly this last step in teaching and learning about another culture goes well beyond the scope of formal schooling. It is included here as an indication of the limitations of formal education when attempting to promote cultural understanding. There are however, obvious steps that schools could take to move closer to the ideal. One would be the… promotion of international pen pal programs for elementary school students. In an internet age the potentials for cross cultural communication for reducing cultural misunderstanding…should be explored.*" (Brandhorst 2002)

As well as developing a better understanding of culture to a certain extent, I found that students had developed an opinion on cultural diversity, with the majority articulating their appreciation. Brandhorst discusses the limitations of teaching the complexities of culture in the classroom, but supports the finding that a strong emphasis on tolerance of cultural differences is important and more achievable pointing out that it may be unrealistic to pursue the goal of providing insight into the complexities of other cultures. A more realistic goal might be the teaching of tolerance for cultural differences (Brandhorst 2002)

5.3 <u>Active listening and visual literacy were essential skills in supporting the development of respect and appreciation throughout the art making process.</u>

5.3.1 Active Listening

I found that students developed active listening skills by taking part in the process of this project. I attempted to establish an atmosphere of listening in the classroom that could promote sharing through discussion. I found that the early focus on listening resulted in some quality art work and discussion. The intercultural policy document supports this finding, when it indicates the link between discussion & listening.

"*An important outcome in teaching about such controversial material would be to achieve a classroom atmosphere in which students engage in interesting and informed dialogues, free to express their opinions and relate their experiences, yet remaining respectful of both other students and other opinions.*"(www.ncca.ie, 2017).

Students expressed that they wanted the students in Dubai to be able to see how well they listened to their stories, stating that it would be respectful to listen to their stories as part of the exchange. The meaning of this finding suggests that students developed an understanding of the importance of listening as part of respectful communication. This theory is presented by Quaquebeke & Felps (2018) whereby the authors discuss the 'respectful inquiry' and how it is achieved.

"*We define respectful inquiry as the multidimensional construct of asking questions in an open way and subsequently listening attentively*" (Quaquebeke & Felps 2018)

This theoretical communication construct reflects the structure of the short course. Students were to consider the nature of communication exchange and the important role of listening in being respectful. The authors goes on to explain how they refer to such communication as "respectful" because inviting the thoughts of addressees without pre-emptively limiting the

range of appropriate answers carries a signal of equal worth and dignity (Quaquebeke & Felps 2018)
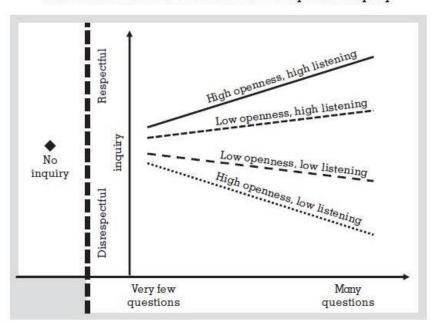

FIGURE 2
The Multidimensional Construct of Respectful Inquiry

*Figure 5.1 Multidimensional Construct of Respectful Inquiry Diagram (*Quaquebeke & Felps 2018)

As seen in *figure 5.1* a diagram by Quaquebeke & Felps (2018) the more open questions asked paired with subsequent active listening creates a respectful inquiry where the recipient feels worthy and valued. This theory aligns with an area of focus that emerged during the short course; the importance listening while trying to communicate respectfully.

5.3.2 Visual Literacy

I found that students developed their visual literacy skills as they worked to develop and improve the illustrations they were creating for the students in Dubai. By reviewing the artwork students were and prompting discussion, students developed their ability to analyse visual material and identify meaning within the work. Visual literacy refers to the ability to comprehend and create images in a variety of media in order to communicate effectively (Considine 1986). I found that students displayed visual literacy skills through their ability to analyse the symbolism found in the work. This finding is encouraged by Considine (1986) discussing strategies for teaching visual literacy skills and the rationale behind it. The author

explains a simple activity where students are shown a photo of an eagle and tasked to interpret what it means. The process opens way for discussion of literal and figurative or symbolic meaning. Even if the picture doesn't change the meaning can. The same image in a different time and place could represent something different. (Considine 1986).

"*A turkey means something quite different in the US than it would in Australia. Through this simple process, students discover that even though everyone sees the same image, they do not all read it the same way.*" (Considine 1986).

This finding is linked to the other findings and means that there is scope for further consideration of the potential for applying visual literacy skills to developing student's appreciation for cultural diversity.

5.4 Limitations of the study

The study inevitably had limitations, because it's a small sample of a limited age group in rural Irish school with a level socio economic group, and perhaps a wider variety of participants might have impacted the findings. As a novice researcher, I have learnt lessons from carrying out this study in regards to observing and gathering data and now that I have evaluated the findings I can identify the limitations of the study that might have resulted in gaps througout the data collection and analysis. I realise that as the active researcher and teacher in classroom, one must be open to observing themes that emerge from the study that may veer away from the original research question. I may have been limited by being invested in the aims and question I had outlined myself beforehand, causing the potential to miss out on some valuable opportunities to further probe other themes that arose. This applies also to my role in analysing the data, as it cannot be guaranteed that I am unbiased in searching for themes that will achieve a result for my research question. In terms of data collection methods used, each was appropriate to certain extent, each had limitations. The questionnaires were useful for collecting some quantitative data and capturing some strong succinct statements from the students, although questionnaires are inherently limited to the questions on them and the student's willingness to answer honestly. The focus groups worked well in capturing student's honest comments and opinions as they happened in the moment, although the discussions could be limited to capturing opinions from the students who were willing to openly speak, perhaps missing a wider variety of viewpoints.

Chapter 6.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This research study aimed to investigate the question:

To what extent can, a cross-cultural exchange of stories via digital recordings through online art collaboration whereby personal narratives are orally exchanged and then visually interpreted; develop an appreciation of cultural diversity, active listening and visual literacy skills

6.1 Conclusions

Reflecting on my experience teaching the short course and carrying out this study, I can conclude that teaching the complexities of culture within the confines of the art room is ambitious and in some instances unrealistic. Considering the subtle and layered nature of cultural differences and social behaviour, I suggest that it can be easier to highlight human similarities that can transcend cultural influences. Focusing instead on commonly shared emotional experiences can bring people from different cultures together.

I conclude that receiving personal stories from students in Dubai engaged my students in the project and motivated their efforts. Listening to stories told by real people describing real experiences allowed my students to connect to their foreign collaborators on a level where they could relate and empathise with each other's personal experiences. This was found evident in student's consideration of the feelings of students in Dubai when interpreting the stories and creating the artwork to send back.

I conclude that for students to develop their understanding of what culture is and what it means, classroom discussion and research were essential teaching strategies. Although it was ultimately communicating with students online from other cultures that motivated the learning. This was evident in the understanding that students displayed at the end of the project compared with their understanding at the beginning.

I conclude that active listening and visual literacy are skills that underpin and tie together the different elements of the project. Active listening is a valuable skill for students to consider and practice in terms of art making and respectful communication, Visual literacy is a skill that can be considered as a valuable direct link to teaching cultural symbols and the power of visual language as intercultural communication tool. The development of both of these skills

is evident ultimately in the artwork that students created for the students in Dubai with respect to their stories.

6.2 Recommendations

I recommend further research into several areas based on the findings from this study as well as the extended literature reviewed.

Storytelling

Storytelling underpinned the rationale of this study and I found that it played a role in developing empathy and intercultural respect. I found that students connected to honest accounts of emotional experiences based on the subject matter of fears and hope. I recommend further research into this finding, in order to identify the importance of subject matter and language and the further implications of this kind of story telling for intercultural education in this country and elsewhere.

Online communication

For this project I considered the different methods I could use to connect my students with the class in Dubai. I had to choose a method that would suit the aim of the project, but also the logistics of using communication technology in the classroom. I would recommend further research into the use of digital communication and its implications for international art collaborations in the future. I would also suggest further research into the implications of social media and its effect on adolescent student's ability to communicate. This theme was apparent throughout this study although there was not enough evidence to validate a finding.

Active Listening & Visual Literacy

I recommend further research into the area of active listening and its use in the art room as a way of connecting students with their auditory senses and as method of communication. Throughout the literature and in this study active listening is described as a way of facilitating two way communications that can foster respect and understanding, I suggest further research into active listening and its role in assisting intercultural education.

Symbolism and visual messages played a significant role in this study; I would recommend further research into the role of visual literacy as a skill and its implications in the classroom for reading cultural signifiers in order to understand cultural differences on a deeper level.

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Brendan Egan Short Course

Title of short course
<u>**The Art of Story Telling**</u> A short course that focuses on the importance of storytelling through live and recorded performances and dynamic illustrative drawing techniques and the value in an international narrative exchange. Students will engage in a creative process of composing descriptive stories & narratives with the aim of recording audio/video podcasts and performing live, using storytelling skills and original, creative visual aids with the aim to captivate audiences. Students will engage with visual literacy skills by developing their drawing styles as they visualise and illustrate their stories. The process of this course will include students learning about the cultural importance of storytelling in this country and others. Students will take part in an international story/ narrative exchange. Students will upload & share their recorded story podcasts and art work along with information on our Irish storytelling heritage on an interactive google map, where we will invite students in other schools around the world to share any stories, tales, art work or cultural information they may have to offer. In an attempt to see how very different people can share the same life experiences and how human nature can transcend culture

1. Introduction to junior cycle
Junior cycle education places students at the centre of the educational experience, enabling them to actively participate in their communities and in society and to be resourceful and confident learners in all aspects and stages of their lives. Junior cycle is inclusive of all students and contributes to equality of opportunity, participation and outcome for all. The junior cycle allows students make a greater connection with learning by focusing on the quality of learning that takes place and by offering experiences that are engaging and enjoyable for them, and relevant to their lives. These experiences are of a high quality, contribute directly to the physical, mental and social wellbeing of learners, and where possible, provide opportunities for them to develop their abilities and talents in the areas of creativity, innovation and enterprise. The learner's junior cycle programme builds on their learning to date and actively supports their progress in learning and in addition, supports them in developing the learning skills that will assist them in meeting the challenges of life beyond school.

2. Rationale

The areas of learning in this short course are important for several different reasons;

- Creative writing and Visual Literacy

  Writing creatively and structuring narratives will encourage students to exercise their creative minds and practice using their imagination. It improves their ability to come up with alternatives and different possibilities This broadens their thought processes, which can lead to success in many areas, including problem solving and analysis. Students can often have difficulty understanding and expressing how they feel. Through creative writing, students have a safe place to explore, and this can be a highly beneficial tool for expressing their feelings. Writing can also give students more opportunity to assert themselves and their opinions and develop their "voice." These developments can really strengthen their self-confidence.

  Visual Literacy is a skill and practice that students will need to apply to many areas of art and design and can be beneficial for other subjects too. In our image saturated culture, it is important for students to be able to visualise for themselves, and in turn be able to make sense of and read further into the images that surround them. Developing their drawing style, creating original visuals and illustrating for their creative writing is going to be a challenging task. Though practicing and developing these important skills will benefit students as they go on further into their art studies, while being an enjoyable, personal investigation.

- Story Telling and Public Speaking

  The ability to speak to a public audience is incredibly important for the future of students and how they will develop and succeed in school and beyond. A self-assured child who can effectively address their classmates or an audience is likely to be seen in a more positive light by their peers and develop a stronger sense of self. A good command of public speaking will not only help them in school, but also empower them in any situation they encounter in life. Using story telling as a method of performance will be a great way to introduce students to public speaking in an enjoyable and non-threatening manner.

  Furthermore to being able to just speak in public, the ability to perform an effective and captivating story is an incredibly powerful tool of communication. Want to understand why the likes of Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Bill Clinton, Barack Obama and even Donald Trump became national leaders? The secret lies in their ability to perform and tell effective stories. Story telling is also being sought after as a valuable skill in the world of business and commerce, managers and marketers are beginning to understand more about how to effectively connect and communicate with others. Power point slides can bore listeners, handouts can remain unread and

providing basic reasons and information won't change anyone's behaviour. When it comes to inspiring people to embrace some strange new change in behaviour, storytelling is much more effective than other tools. Stories are the best way of communicating; it's the way all humans' brains are wired. The ability to captivate an audience and the power to persuade is something that will prove invaluable to these students in the future.

- Storytelling and Intercultural Understanding

Storytelling is an ancient art that extends around the globe, as long as there have been people there have been stories. It is said that even if a story is the same, each culture will tell it differently, because each has its own traditions, styles and cultural rules. There are a number of ways that story telling can enhance students learning and understanding of cultural diversity. Stories can allow students to explore their own cultural roots, and storytelling is an intrinsic part of Irish identity. It will also allow students to experience diverse cultures, offering insights into different traditions and values. It will also offer insights into universal life experiences, helping students understand how wisdom is common to all people in all different cultures. Through stories students can see how very different people share the same life experiences. This process will help enable students to empathise with unfamiliar people/places/situations.

3. Aim

The short course in The Art of Storytelling aims to impact students learning by;
- Insisting students exercise their imaginations and creativity when writing and creating visual art work for their stories and performances
- Allowing students a safe space to develop their self-confidence and performance skills in order to perform live to an audience
- Exposing students to the potential creative use of digital media through using photography for their visual work, recording & developing their podcasts and interacting with the online google maps software
- Opening students minds to other cultures and developing their ability to tolerate and empathise with others by connecting with students in other countries and sharing their experiences through storytelling.

4. Links
The way in which the short course links to the statements of learning and a range of key skills is highlighted and explained here.

a) Statements of learning	
Statement	**Examples of relevant learning in the course**
#4.) Creates and presents artistic works and appreciates the process and skills involved	Students will consider and experience the process of using their imaginations to compose an original short story and exercise their artistic abilities in order to produce some creative illustrations to accompany the stories
#6.) Appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she/he lives	Students will receive personal stories by students from other cultures. Students will consider how the stories told by people from other cultures reflect how diverse their lives, values and traditions are. Students may reflect on how they share experiences with others from other cultures
#24.) Uses technology and digital media tools to learn, communicate, work and think collaboratively and creatively in a responsible and ethical manner	Experimenting with photography for material to use in Illustrations. Using audio equipment to record and create story podcasts Using google maps account to search for shared stories from other students Uploading podcasts and art work images on the google maps account

b) Literacy and numeracy skills
Literacy and Numeracy skills are embedded across each of the strands of this short course and integrated into the learning outcomes.

<u>**Literacy**</u>
Students will develop their **writing skills** through the composition of their stories. The content will be fed by students personal experiences, values, beliefs and stories that they have heard from others.

Students will develop their **oral literacy** skills as they are given frequent opportunities to practice telling their stories in front of the class. This short course also provides opportunities for the teacher to actively coach students in the skills of public speaking, such as use of intonation, voice projection and diction. Listening skills are developed as students listen and respond to each other.

<u>**Numeracy**</u>
Estimating, predicting and calculating when involved in the design process, students develop the skills of measurement, scale and squaring up for a stage set, exhibition space, wall hanging, mural, sculpture or modelmaking. They need to calculate the amount of material–fabric, wood, metal, clay–required.

c) Other key skills

Each key skill has a number of elements which clarify the knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to that key skill. The elements and their learning outcomes are set out in detail in *Key Skills of Junior Cycle*. While it is desirable that each of these key skills have a presence in the course, some will be more prominent than others. Identify these by providing examples of where key skills elements, from *Key Skills of Junior Cycle*, appear in the learning activities in which a student might expect to participate.

Key Skill	Key skill element	Student learning activity
Being Creative	<u>Imagining</u> • Using different ways of learning to help develop my imagination • Imagining ways that can make a positive difference in the world • Taking inspiration from the courage and imagination of others • Expressing feelings, thoughts and ideas through movement, writing, music, art, storytelling, drama and imaginative modes of expression	• Students learn to respond to their experience of storytelling imaginatively • Students learn to challenge their creativity from the beginning of the project right until the end

Communicating	**Performing and presenting** • Expressing ideas and emotions through performance and presentation such as visual art, music, drama, design and graphics • Making choices about how best to present ideas to others, taking account of the audience • Communicating using a variety of styles, including roleplay, drama, posters, and storytelling **Using digital technology to communicate** • Using digital technology creatively to present, interact with and share ideas for different audiences • Making decisions about how best to communicate for particular purposes • Be respectful and responsible in digital and online communications	• Students learn to express their ideas and experiences through their performance and visual art • Students learn how best to perform and present their work to the audiences • Students learn how to record audio and edit • Students learn how to use google maps and interact with others on the platform
Managing information and thinking	**Thinking creatively and critically** • Questioning ideas and assumptions, both my own and other peoples' • Making estimations and predictions and compare them with others • Making connections between what I already know and new information • Adjusting my thinking in light of new information	• Students learn to assess their values through writing stories • Students work collaboratively in brainstorming each other's stories
Managing myself	**Knowing myself** • Recognising personal strengths and weaknesses • Identifying influences that make me who I am • Expressing my opinions and feelings appropriately	• Students learn to reflect on experiences in their lives • Students learn to consider their cultural identity

	• Finding ways of dealing with setbacks and difficulties	
Staying well	**<u>Being confident</u>** • Feel positive about myself • Express and manage different emotions • communicate my opinions and beliefs with confidence in a variety of ways • Contribute to decision-making within the class and group • Stand apart from the crowd when needed **<u>Being social</u>** • Participate in actions that make a positive contribution to my school, community and the wider world • Recognise my rights and responsibilities as a local and global citizen • Developing positive relationships	• Students learn to communicate and express themselves through storytelling performance • Students learn to develop their projects with an audience in mind
Working with others	**<u>Co-operating</u>** • Taking on different roles within groups • Agreeing collective goals and work with others towards achieving shared goals • Being flexible and willing to make compromises to achieve a common goal • Showing appreciation for the contribution of other team members • Contributing to decisions as part of a group **<u>Respecting difference</u>** • Appreciating others' similarities and differences as a valuable part of life • Showing respect for people of different cultures, backgrounds, beliefs and sexual orientation	• Students learn to collaborate by sharing ideas on different elements of the project, from the visual work to the performance aspect • Students learn to work as part of a group by taking part in meaningful group discussions • Students learn to respect other members of the class by listening

	• Showing openess to learning from different people Working with others through digital technology • demonstrate collaborative learning using digital technology • use digital technology to participate in collaborative learning and communication spaces • respect the rights and feelings of others when using digital media	to each other's stories with non-judgmental attitudes and open minds • Students learn to collaborate using technology by working together to record each other podcasts, sharing ideas on how to create different sound effects • Students experiment with the google maps platform as a mode of sharing and communicating with others

5. Course overview

The strands in this short course are:

Strand 1 – <u>Introduction - Experiencing</u>

This strand of the course is designed to introduce students to the art of storytelling and illustration. This will be done by exposing students to the elements of a successful story, the skills of an accomplished storyteller and by exploring different artists and their approach to illustration. Storytelling is a central characteristic of being human, and students will consider the fact that they may not be aware of how much they already tell stories in their day to day life. To attempt to compose a compelling story though from start to finish, students will be introduced to Aristotle's simple 3 part equation essential for any successful story: Pity, Fear & Catharsis. Whereas an audience will accept and relate to a character that suffers, then struggles but overcomes in the end. Students will consider how these elements are used to compose different types of stories such as fables, parables, anecdotes, folklore and tall tales. To introduce students to the performative act of storytelling, students will analyse video and audio recording of storytellers. To enhance students understanding of the performative act of storytelling further, I will invite a local professional storyteller (Seanchaithe - Eddie Lennihan) to visit students in the classroom. Not only could the Seanchaithe demonstrate captivating performative techniques, but he will also give students

great insight into the importance of storytelling to our Irish heritage and culture.

*Eddie Lennihan – Local Seanchaithe

Strand 2 – <u>Composing, Practicing and Creating</u>

In this strand, students will compose their stories and begin practicing their storytelling techniques. Students will not be assessed on their writing, spelling or grammar. Instead students will focus on composing a story that is imaginative, creative and compelling. Students can draw from their own life experiences as primary source material and will be encouraged to experiment with exaggeration and creative alternatives. Students will be encouraged to gather stories from family members or members of their community to use also. Rather than writing in essay style format, students will challenge themselves to compose their stories in a more visual brainstorming format.

*Visual Brainstorming of Story Composition Example

Students will take part in a number of activities that aim to develop student's public speaking and storytelling skills, recalling their stories in front of the class in a comfortable environment. Students will be encouraged to improvise and experiment with using prop, objects and instruments for visuals and sounds effects.

Also in this strand students will begin to consider how they can create visual artworks to depict and accompany their stories. Students will be given the task to visualize and illustrate their stories in a map format (A2). This will challenge students to envisage what they have described in their stories, whether it's their back yard, their bed room, their home town or their inner psyche and emotions, and to create a map to illustrate it.

*Story Map illustration example

Students will be pushed to be highly creative with mixed media in the illustrations they produce. Students will be expected to experiment with a combination of mixed media and paper collage, drawing, painting, printmaking, use of 3D objects and photography.

To inspire students and inform their process, they will focus on studying and appreciating the work of two illustration artists; Sara Fanelli and Jacob Stack.

Sara Fanelli is an accomplished illustrator whose fascinating works hang in the Tate and appears in the New Yorker and who has twice been the overall winner of the Victoria & Albert Museum's illustration award. Her charmingly illustrated children's books urge young readers to muse on profound topics as it poses a series of thought-provoking questions. One of her books "My Map Book" includes dynamic map illustrations that chart the different facets of a child's world. Her work combines drawing with colourful mixed media collage techniques.

Sara Fanelli – "Map of my Bedroom" Mixed Media collage & Drawing

Sara Fanelli – "Map of my Heart" Mixed Media collage & Drawing

Sara Fanelli – "Map of my Day" – Mixed Media collage & Drawing

Jacob Stack is an accomplished Irish illustrator whose work has gained considerable momentum and today his distinctive drawings are in great demand. Dreamscapes populated with doleful giants, bears, whales and robots are a signature of his work. Illustrative and layered, Jacob's artwork feels like a page from a storybook and his characters are drawn with careful observation. Jacob also uses a combination of drawing, painting, mixed media collage, 3D objects and photography.

Jacob Stack – Pen on Paper

Jacob Stack – Pen & Ink on cardboard

Jacob Stack – Pen & Paint on Photographs

Jacob Stack – Pencil & Organic Objects Photograph

In an attempt to enhance student's appreciation of these artists further, I will contact the artists to enquire if they would be willing to take part in an interview with the students via email or video messaging. Giving the students the opportunity to ask the artists directly questions relating to their creative processes, materials, subject matter, their approach to storytelling etc.

Strand 3 – <u>Recording / Uploading and Performance</u>
In this strand students will carry out two assignments for the course. Record audio podcasts of their stories and perform their stories live in front of an audience.
At the beginning of the course, I will set up a google map account for the class project. I will be in contact with teachers and principals in schools around the world inviting them to take part in a similar project with their students and to share their stories with my students using the google map story account and provide some feedback for my students. Students will use audio recording equipment to record their stories, using the telling techniques they have learnt combined with creating sound effects they have adapted for their pieces. Students will pick locations on the map to upload their podcasts and images to. Like a proverbial message in a bottle, students will upload their stories onto the map for teachers and students around the world I have invited to be able to access and enjoy and provide feedback on.

*"Map of Memories" interactive map – Google Maps

The second task in this strand for students is to perform their stories live to an audience. Depending on what can be organised taking time and schedules into account, students will aim towards performing their stories to children in the primary school next door and/or to other students & teachers in the school. For their performance, students will present the audience with the visual illustrations they have created, and tell the story using props and sound effects.

Strand 4 – Feedback, Reflection and Exhibition

Once students have uploaded their stories onto the google map, the hope is that students from other schools in different countries will respond by also uploading stories or art work or any information they like in regards to storytelling at their locations on the world map. Depending on the amount of response, students may have the opportunity to read or listen to the stories uploaded by other students and consider how they compare with their own in terms or content, and style with their own. As well as stories, students will hopefully also receive some feedback on their work from counterparts abroad. This will be a great opportunity for students to reflect on their experience of the project and what they have learnt and how they can use what they have acquired in the future.

There are a number of other ways that students can exhibit their final work. Contact could be made with the local radio station (Clare fm) to see if they would be willing to create a slot to play students podcasts and display the art work on the website, similarly a local newspaper may be willing to print the stories and the art work. An exhibition could be held that could combine the podcasts, the finished illustrations and live performance elements in the school or in a community/gallery space.

STRAND	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Students learn……	*Students should be able to…..*
Strand 1 **<u>Introduction – Experiencing</u>** **<u>Performance</u>**	• Appreciate the significance of the act of storytelling in the way we communicate in day to day life
	• Recognise the elements that combine to compose an effective narrative – 3 act structure
	• Understand the different type of stories and their different features
Strand 2 **<u>Composing</u>**	• Observe and appreciate the attributes and skills of an accomplished performer & storyteller (Seanchai)
	• Analyse the performance and evaluate what qualities are needed to tell a compelling story
	• Develop a deeper understanding of the cultural importance of storytelling
<u>Creating</u>	
	• Keep a sketch book where they write and sketch out any ideas that come to them that they could use for their stories
	• Gather stories from family members / members of their community
	• Draw out mind maps for brainstorming and composing the stories they will tell
	• Practice performing by calling out their stories in front of classmates
Strand 3 **<u>Recording</u>**	• Experiment with using different props & objects to help tell the story and consider using music, instruments or sounds effects to

	enhance the audiences experience
Performing	• Use their sketch books to draw out ideas for their illustrations and to collect different pictures, papers, materials, photographs, objects that students might use in their illustrations.
Strand 4 **Reflection**	• Illustrate their story in the form of a Map. Mapping either the inner mind of a character, the journey of a character or the location in which the story is set.
	• Observing and appreciating the work by Illustration artist's Sara Fanelli & Jacob stack. Examining their processes and use of multimedia materials
	• Experiment with a combination of mixed media; paper collage, drawing, painting, printmaking, use of 3D objects and photography
	• Use audio recording equipment to record their stories, using the telling techniques they have learnt combined with creating sound effects they have adapted for their pieces
	• Upload their podcasts and illustration images onto their desired locations on the story google map account

	• Perform their stories in front of class mates and another audience taking into using the skills and techniques they have learnt
	• Improvise when performing, recalling a story rather than memorising a script.
	• Experimenting with using props, objects, lights and sound effects
	• Listening to others in their class and stories shared attentively
	• Discuss how they interpret others work and their own
	• Recognise the elements of an effective story
	• Reflect on their experience throughout the project and consider how it has affected their points of view if so

6. Expectations for learners
Examples of student work will be used to illustrate the expectations for learners in the short course. These examples will be related directly to a learning outcome or groups of learning outcomes.   They will be annotated, indicating whether the work is in line with, ahead of, or behind expectations for learners using the features of quality to make these judgements.

7. Assessment and certification

Formative Assessment

- Sketchbook

  Students will be expected to keep a sketchbook throughout the project where they

will write and sketch ideas for their stories, collect materials for their illustrations, record visual & artist research and drawings for their final illustrations. Students will carry out some of this work in class and some at home. The work will be reviewed regularly with feedback given as to how students can improve and move forward

- Performative Practice

  Students will regularly have the chance to practice performing their story in front of the other students where they will receive feedback from class discussion

- Visual Review

  Throughout the process of creating their final visual illustrations, students will display the work as it happens and receive feedback from the class from discussions on how the visual aspect is developing and how it's creativity can be pushed further

Summative Assessment

- ### Final Illustrations

  Students will be assessed on the final visual illustrations they present to accompany their performances and podcasts. The criteria for this assessment will take into account student's ability to interpret the theme of their story into a mapped format, the evidence of artist research and their creative use of a variety of materials.

- ### Live Performance

  Students will be assessed on the live performances they give of their stories to an audience outside of the class. The criteria for this assessment will take into account students ability to tell their story in a manner where they pace themselves properly, communicate clearly, use their body to act out, utilise their visual illustrations, experiment with sound effects and improvise when needed.

- ### Podcast

  Students will be assessed on the digital podcasts they record of their stories. The criteria for this assessment will be based on the sound quality of the recording, students ability to tell a story in a captivating manner in an audio form and willingness to experiment with sound effects.

8. Resources
This part of the specification will identify resources that will support teaching and learning in the short course.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nj-hdQMa3uA - The Magical Science of storytelling TED

https://vimeo.com/4882376 - Sara Fanelli discusses her art work process

http://ideas.ted.com/how-stories-are-told-around-the-world/ - How Stories are told around the world

https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/pixar/storytelling/we-are-all-storytellers/v/video1-final - Pixar Story Telling workshop

Week 1 Questionnaire

Question/	Student Responses
Have you ever had a pen pal? (Communicate with somebody living in a different country) Yes / No	2 – **Yes** 11 – **No**
How do you Normally Communicate with your friends? Please give examples	- "Texting or on call or meet / snap chat or in school / Instagram / facebook - "Talk, snapchat, Instagram, Messenger, Facetime" -"Talk, online, facetime, talking at lunch. Call" - "Phone, in person , snapchat, Instagram, school, facetime" - "Yes I do on snapchat , school , call" -"Snapchat or facebook / intsagram / calling / school - "Yes phone / in person - "Talk Snapchat facebook" -"On my phone – snapchat, ring, message, Instagram. In person" - "Snap chat, Facebook, School, Telephone, calls" -"Talk to them snapchat facebook Instagram" -"Talking – in lunch& in town, texting-snapchat, messages, calling them."
Is this different to how you communicate with your teachers? Please explain your answer	-"Yes. Because we only see them in school" -"Yes because I am not friends with my teacher" -"Yes because I don't talk to them online, and they are not my friends" -"Yes. Because you are talking to your teachers in person and you are not really friends with them" -"Yeah because I like my friends but I don't like most teachers" -"Yes because I don't talk to my teachers online" -"Yes. Different tone of voice and different words used than with friends"

	-"Yes it is just talking" -"Yes because I talk about different things to my friends and I don't talk the same way to my teachers as my friends" -"It is different because you don't fully know them and you wouldn't call them, and they are older" -"Yes because we only see them in school" -"Yes because you usually don't talk to them outside of school"
Do you enjoy listening to stories from other people? Yes / No Why? Please explain	-"Yes I do because its interesting" -"Yes because I like listening to the gossip" -"Yes because its fun" -"Yes because they are making conversation" -"Yes because I prefer it to reading" -"Yes because I find it interesting" -"Yes because I find it interesting and fun" -"I don't mind" - "Yes. I like to listen to other people talk and it's a good change from reading" -"Because you could become interested with the subject" -"I don't like reading" -"No. I prefer to read them myself"
Do you think it is important for you to talk with people from other countries, and find out about where they are from? Yes / No Why? – Please explain your answer	-"No. Not really because its nothing to do with us" -"Yes because I would like to know what is going on in other countries" -"Yes because then you know what its like in different places. And if you want to move there or visit in the future its important." -"Yes because you are making new friends" -"Yes because its good to learn about different cultures" -"No. Because you will never meet" -"Yes. Because it is important to learn about other parts of the

	world"
	-"I don't know"
	-"Yes. Because if I go over there I will have a basic grasp on certain topics"
	-"Yes. Because you will meet someone new who is from that country and if you make friends with them you can go to their country and he/she can give you a tour"
	-"Yes. Because you are making new friends"
	-"Yes. It gives you an understanding of how other people live."

Appendix 3

Week 4 Questionnaire

Question	Student Responses
On this scale of 1- 10 how different do you imagine the students living in Dubai are to yourself? (1 being very little differences – 10 being very many differences)	- 3 7 4 8 6 7 10 6 8 2 2
Could you list some of the differences? (if any)	- Different Accent - We have Irish names they have Arabic names - Food
	- It's a different country - Different Cloths - Different language
	- Maybe bigger houses - Different education - Different time - Different food
	- Accents - Music - Food - Language - Weather
	- They have good weather - They are probably not from Ireland - They wear different cloths
	- Language - Ways of doing things
	- Different Language - There Culture - Different Age
	- Different Nationality to us
	- Different Accent- Different way of life
	- No
	- Different Nationalities
On this scale of 1-10 how similar do you imagine students living in Dubai are to yourself? (1 being very little differences – 10 being very many differences)	- 8 5 5 5 4 5 7 2 3
Could you list some	- They go to School - They have different subjects - They have

similarities? (if any)	exams
	- We go to school
	- Go to school - some of the same food - some of the same education - Similar jewellery
	- Probably all have social media - Have some similar trends
	- They live close to an ocean - They are around the same age - They probably play sports
	- Hair Colour - Eye Colour - Height - Weight
	- They go to school same as us
	- The same basic school life
	- They are in School too - Same age
What is your understanding of Cultural Diversity?	
	- We live in Ireland, we play Gaelic football. Our symbol is a harp. They live in Dubai, they speak Arabic
	- We live in Ireland -We play Gaelic football. Our symbol is a harp. They live in Dubai -It is different there
	- We live in Ireland. It is a lot colder and rains a lot more here We play different sports and talk way different
	- That every culture has different beleifs, colour for celebration different traditional events, -different traditional foods, -on how they see the world, -different style of clothing and language and accents
	- I understand that Cultural Diversity means that cultures can be different. -There are lots of different cultures, almost one in each country, with lots of differences. Countries can sometimes have similar cultures and others can have multiple cultures and accents.
	- That everybody does things differently
	- Different things happening in different countries

Week 10 Questionnaire

Question	Responses
What have you **learnt** about the students in Dubai through **listening** to their stories?	1. That a lot of the stories I sympathise with were similar or relative to me and my own experiences and I have learnt that despite where they are they are not so different to me & you. Some of the students had very good English and I did not expect this to be so. 2. I have learnt that they are not very different then us but they describe everything that they say in their stories much better 3. What their fears are, how they think, what experiences they have had & what their lives are like 4. I learnt that some of them have been through hard times 5. They have the same emotions and feelings that we do but they were more open about it. They had very good English for a second language and I could almost see the story happening because of the descriptive words 6. That they are from all around the world. That they really care about their countries. They speak very good English. They are very honest. 7. I learnt that they have a different stories. And they put a lot of work into it. 8. They were really good at describing how they feel. Talked about their friends & family. All the stuff they were going through 9. They care a lot about their family. They were very descriptive. Most of them had good English. They are very honest people. They are emotional. 10. They are depressed. Their stories are all about emotions. 11. That some of their stories were about their personal fears, hopes some were very descriptive, good punctuation
List some **similarities** you discovered between you and these students through **listening** to their stories	1. I realised that they value friendship and family just as much as I do. Their fears were also similar. We both talked into a microphone. 2. That they care about their families and they also go through things 3. Some of their fears & what they enjoy 4. We both speak English. They are very open people 5. We can both speak English. They had most of the same fears as us and they seem to be as gullible when they were younger as we would have been 6. They had common childhood myths. They care abour their families very much 7. The only similarities we had was fear 8. Theirs were more about how they feel & they had much

	more scary stories then us
	9. Some people had the same fears as us. They had the same childhood myths like bloody mary
	10. Common fears
	11. Some similaritites were fear of loosing someone
List the **differences between your** podcast stories and their podcast stories	1. Obviously our podcasts were familiar to us. Their accents were different and obviously I found our podcasts easier to understand. Our podcasts were recorded in a different environment.
	2. Some of their stories were made up or about their fears, we talked more about things that actually happened
	3. Ours were structured stories but theirs were more like a conversation
	4. Ours were like if we broke our leg or something, theirs were like a house burning down. Our were set in Ireland theirs were set in loads of different places
	5. A lot of our podcasts were stories that were made up but their podcasts were personal experiences or poems.
	6. Our stories were set in Ireland their stories were different. We were writing about st paddys day and matches theirs were different
	7. They described what they were feeling. Ours were based on things that we went to. We tried to do sound effects and have a start middle & end
	8. Their one was trying to keep memories. My one was about trying to find a plan a and getting out
	9. We had a start middle & end but they were just talking
	10. Their podcasts were shorter but more detailed our stories were mostly based on events. Ours were in Ireland. Some of ours had sound effects and dialogue
	11. My story was a story where as theirs was all about emotions

	apart from the one about the fire
	12. Our stories were based in Ireland, based on actual events, theirs were based on emotional events, we had sound effects, some of theirs were complete description.
What is your understanding of **what defines culture**?	1. The food. The celebrations, The religions, Festivals, History. Customs and finally your nationality.

2. Culture to me is like traditions, clothes, food, music, and every country has a different culture

3. What defines / makes culture in a place – music, food, people, beleifs. Their way of doing things

4. They are all from other countries but we are all from near around
5. Culture is different ways of doing things, different likes, different religions because of where they live or where they grew up. Differences such as we play GAA but in india they play cricket.

6. The way you do things. Traditions, music, beleifs. Where you are from. Different celebrations

7. They are all from different countries and our class are all the same

8. Different food, music, wrong stuff happening to them. History of UAE is a lot different than here/Ireland!

9. I think that culture is traditions, food, sport and the way that different places and countries do things in their own unique way.

10. From a different part of the world with different traditions.

11. My understanding is of their traditions, food, special events, beleifs, ways of looking at the world, the cultures history, sports, traditional music |

What does **Cultural Diversity** mean to you? Please explain your **opinion.**	1. Different people of different nationalities in a country with their own language, religion, history and customs. Often people clash because of cultural diversity, and this is when racism and discrimination occurs. I appretiate cultural diversity because I believe everyone is entitled to their own opinion, belief and custom.
	2. I think that cultural diversity is every culture has different traditions, like we have st patricks day, and they might not celebrate it and they might have another celebration/tradition that we don't celebrate
	3. Its our own personal way of living and doing things our culture & religion is a part of it
	4. What different people do for celebrations like what food they eat and what way they celebrate for Christmas Halloween and also for birthdays.
	5. There are many different cultures around the world and I think it is a good thing because it is always fun to take part in a tradition from your own country. Also it is fun to learn about other cultures and why certain people have cerain cultures. Sometimes cultures are nessesary to where you live, like in India people wear shawls to cover their heads to stop sunburn and keep them cool where in Ireland people don't wear shawls
	6. I think cultural diversity is important. To understand where people come from and the different ways they live and to learn new things about different countries
	7. It means to me that in their country they do their own different things to celebrate. Like for example some people celebrate Christmas and others celebrate honaka. And other things like music and their religion they all have different ways of celebrating.
	8. I like it because when people go on holidays or move some where new it wouldn't be the same are your home.
	9. I think cultural diversity is a good and interesting thing because if everyone had the same culture it would be boring and going to different countries would not be interesting. I think it is important to understand and respect the different cultures.

	10. Different types of cultures
	11. My opinion of cultural diversity is that I say it is a good thing to be different because they can be interesting. And to respect their culture because it wont be as interesting as it is if you don't respect their culture. They can be amazing and creative as well.

Appendix 5

Week 3 Classroom Discussion

Audio recording transcript No. 1	Student Responses
ME	I Explained the full project to the class for the 1st time Explaining that the class will be collaborating and communicating with another class in Dubai UAE
Student 1.	*How do we communicate with them?*
Student 2.	*Isn't there a time difference?*
ME	* I explain that they will be communicating through stories in the form of recorded podcast, like the ones the class had been listening to before
ME	What do ye think ye could learn, or benefit from taking part in this project?
Student 3.	*How to communicate?* *But if we are only sending stories how is that communication?*
ME	Good question! You are going to have an opportunity to ask the students over there questions. After you have listened to their stories to ask about aspects you would like to know more about.
Student 4.	*But nothing exciting has ever happened to me?..*
ME	Perhaps to you, things don't seem very exciting, but to someone living in another country, the everyday details will be interesting to them
Student 5.	*But what language do they speak?*
ME	They speak English, they will have been learning it from a young age, they could have better English than us!
Student 7.	*Why?*
Student 3.	*So they can get jobs!*
Student 1.	*Cus they don't know any slang!*
Student 2.	*But what language is that country speaking?*
ME	They speak Arabic in the UAE
Student 8.	*I thought that language didn't exist anymore*
Student 1.	*Yea I thought that language was gone now*

Appendix 6

Week 7 Student Interview

Audio recording Student Interview Questions	Student Responses
What do you think of the different elements of this project? Telling stories and listening to stories?	*"I think that listening to stories is better, than reading* *I know you are still getting the same information, but, you just hear blank words, whereas hearing the story you can hear some emotion to it. So then you can really get the experience of what is going on."*
So for this project ye were telling stories and now ye are listening to stories. Which part do you prefer, telling or listening?	*"I think I prefer listening…*
Why?	*I'm not sure, its kind of easier*
So the student – Juna. Would you like to find out more about Juna?	*I would say yes…* *Like what culture does she belong to,* *Like what does she do at school, like what kind of subjects*
So you say you would like to learn more about her culture, why do you say that?	*Maybe, to find out what they do differently to us, like in her culture they might use more different colours then we do*
Ok yea, what do you mean by the colours?	*Like the traditional colours, like for special events, celebrations, parties parades like that*
So their customs and traditional celebrations?	*Yea like that*
Why would you like to find out more about those?	*Am… I'm just interested in what other cultures look like and how they see the world, and how we could see differently to them, and just to learn something new about someone else*
Have you met people from other cultures before?	*Umm not that I know of, no.*
What would you consider a different culture? Like what about someone from England?	*No* *Like India or … Japan*
If there was students in this	*Umm yea, I would ask a bit… in a polite way*

school from these countries, would you ask them?	
What do you mean so, in a polite way?	*Ummm well, just to get to know them you know? And see what they believe in, and then just set our differences aside*
Yea that's great, well hopefully now that we have set up the padlet we can start communicating and find out some more things about the students over there	*Yea well I think it would be cool to learn about them, and then the more we learn about them, the things we could do.*
Yea so for the art work you have started working on now for Juna, is there something you would like to learn to help you with that?	*Ehm, yea I would be good to find out about where the story is happening.*
Yes I think that will be helpful for everyone in the class. So are you enjoying the project?	*Yes*
Have you ever done a project like this in any other class?	*No never and its really fun to try some different things*

Focus Group Transcript

Audio recording Focus Group - Work Review	Responses
Ok guys because we don't have long left to get work done in this project, I would like to have a quick review of the work so far, for ye to have a clear understanding of how to move forward with the work	
So I want to hear from **ye** about this ok?	
So what I want to know is – what do you want achieve with your illustrations?	…Silence
	Student 1- I duno
Well think about it.. like do ye want to make a good one or a bad one?	*Everyone* – Oh a good one
	Student 1 – One that has some character
Ok yea, what do you mean by that?	*Student 1* – I duno…
What would ye like to be able to say ye achieved in your pictures when ye send them off?	*Student 2* – Good drawing
Ok let me put it this way – what is the function of an illustration? Like you would see in books	*Student 1* – to explain what's going on, like to give you a picture of what they are trying to say And to make it more interesting And then its easier for different age groups to read, because if there is pictures, young kids can understand more than they can read
Yea – and why do you think kids find it easier if there are pictures?	*Student 3*– It helps their imagination *Student 1*– They would kind of be more used to seeing stuff than reading stuff
So what is the difference between reading and looking a picture?	*Student 2* – You look at the picture *Student 1*– when your reading your being told whats going on, but when you look at a

	picture you can see whats going on for yourself
	Student 3– You can see what the main character looks like, instead of reading it
	Student 4– You can see where they are, like the whole setting
	Student 5 – when you read something you can kind of make up what it looks like, but when you see a picture you see exactly what it looks like so you don't have to make it up
Would you call illustration a method of communication?	*students* - Yeah
So if your illustrations are a way of communicating a message, what you do think you need to consider when making them?	*Student 1*– Make them based on the subject that the people are talking about, like make sure they are about that And put in some of the detail that they said
Ok yea – So do you think you need to put in all of the detail?	*Some students* – Yeah *Some students* – No *Student 4*– Yeah *Student 2* – No, you pick like the main one
Ok, and Hollie why do you think its important to put in all of the detail that they mentioned?	*Student 4*– To show exactly what they are saying *Student 2* – It's easier to just put in a few details *Student 1*– But if you put in a bit more detail it shows you were listening a bit more though Like if they have a story about going to the beach, and you just draw any beach, then that would just be it
So You think if you put in more detail it shows you were listening more yea? And is that something that you care about? Would you like them to know you are listening? Why?	*All students* – Yeah *Student 1*– So they think that we appreciate it A bit more *Student 3*– Because they will be listening to ours , so like if they listen to ours properly

	you give the respect back
And do you consider that an important element of your illustrations?	*Whole group* – Yeah
Ok so details you think are important - are there any other ways that you can show that you have been listening and appreciating there stories?	*Student 1*– Do a good job of it … Like make an effort with it *Student 6*– Like if they mention a small detail about what they look like or something you can add that in
Ok so let's have a look at some of the work you have done so far - Let's look at this one first – what does this imagery communicate to you?	*Student 7*– Sadness.. *Student 1*– Heartbreak.. *Student 2* – Depression.. *Student 6*– Like mourning someone.. *Student 3*– Depression..
Ok so what about it makes you say depression?	*Student 3*– Well like I mean shes cutting herself .. and the pills – *Student 2* Yea the pills – *Student 3* And shes crying *Student 1*– Thinking of suicide maybe?
Yea ok so why do you say suicide?	*Student 3*– Because theres drugs and shes trying to cut her wrists *Student 2* – She's overdosing

What would you say in the strongest message in the picture?	*Student 3*– The Heart *Student 2* – The hand with the knife – *Student 3* I think the heart
What would you say is the strongest message? Heartbreak, depression or suicide?	*The Whole group* – Suicide
That would be quite an extreme message wouldn't it? What do you think the students in Dubai might read from this?	*Student 2* – The same thing as we do *Student 1*– Would the girl not think it's a bit extreme with the drugs and stuff? *Student 3*– She didn't mention any drugs did she? – *Student 2* Yea but she said its worse than dying getting your heart broken
Will I play it and we can have another listen?	*Group* – Yea yea!
Plays Podcast	" Dying is only leaving the world, a person can also die when they are alive, have your tears every cried like rain? Have you ever died when you were alive?
	Student 1– All I heard was dying while your alive *Student 8*– But sure that's the only way you can die
So you were saying she might think it's a bit extreme, if she saw this	*Student 4*– But she said that dying was something … *Student 3*– Yea but she didn't say anything about drugs. Like she could have had herself die like have herself dead *Student 2* You can die when your alive she said
So how do you think she might react	*Student 2* I dunno when you talk like that like your depressed *Student 3*She might be upset or something *Student 1* -She might think we picked it up a bit wrong

	Student 4 Yea because like we are over exaggerating it bit *Student 3*Yea and if she looks at people from Ireland, and they drew a picture of her cutting herself, I feel like it would be like not good.
Well earlier you said would like them to feel you have appreciated their stories and shown some respect. Do you think this image can do this?	*Student 1* Yea I think its good though its supposed to be over exaggerated **Student 8** Yea well she said dying but she didn't say how *Student 3*I mean we don't her we don't know the kind of person she is, so she might take it the wrong way and she my be upset
What about the fact that she lives in the middle east She lives in Dubai. Do you think these kind of images could mean something else there?	No *Student 1* I suppose the suicide thing though, they might not have that there in that country Which like Ireland has a really high rate *Student 3*It's like a fantasy land over there *Student 8* They live in the richest country in the world *Student 2* Have you sent them already!?
No, Why would you like to send it now as it is?	No
Right lets looks at this one… Yea so the thing around her mouth, what does that represent?	*Student 2* She's drowning in her own tears, it's the depression one *Student 4* Tears Shes drowning in her own tears *Student 1* It looks like a mask on her face or

	something
	Student 2 It's the one about depression
	*Student 3*She looks like a transformer
It represents her drowning in her own tears, what might she think it represents?	*Student 3*A Mask
	Student 1 A bandana
	*Student 3*Ooooh cus over there they wear those things?
	Student 4 Oh yea they do they go around with the?
	*Student 3*Ohhhh shit
	Student 1 Oh yea they go around with the things covering their faces
	*Student 3*Oh my god Emily they are going to think..
	Student 2 – That's around their heads not around their faces!?
	*Student 3*No its around there face aswell!
	Student 8 All it is is a little slit for them to see out
	*Student 3*Like you cant see her mouth at all
	Student 2 – Its not covering her whole face
So what do you think they could think it means?	*Student 2* – I didn't know about that thing!
	Student 1– Ah they probably wouldn't think anything
	But they w probably wouldn't know it was tears
	Student 2 – Well its about depression you never know what shes thinking
So they do wear a garb around their head and faces	*Student 2* – I did not know that! Whats that called?
A hijab or a burka	*Student 2* – Yea but you see tears that are

	blue
What could they think you are saying	*Student 1* – You wear stuff around your heads, and we don't *Student 2* – I just don't really know about that!
Do you see how a mis-communication could happen?	**Group** – Yea
Do you think they could see it as disrespectful?	- Yea!! *Student 1*- Well no I think, that like they are happy with their country and what they do and stuff so, they have their own way and stuff, like they are proud of their country so if they saw that they wouldn't mind - *Student 4* They have no reason to get offended, *Student 9* - Yea they wear it all the time so *Student 3*- Well what if they put us in a leprechaun suit or something!

Appendix 8

Podcast Transcript 1

"My story is about the moment when you found out you lost something

It was the day when we were going to fly out of Jordan and return back to Dubai. I was the oldest 12 year old with two younger brothers and I was responsible for the youngest who was 3 years old I was responsible take care of him in the airport when my parents were going to the restroom.

We were waiting for the time when it was 22 minutes left for the plane I felt empty while I was looking somewhere else he disappeared my heart started the pump 100 per minute my eyes filled with black and my skin started thrill I couldn't control myself my leg starts to run and my voice starts to scream his name out. My parents heard my voice and called me and asked me what happened. I answer them with a cracked voice my throat was dry voice shivering tongue twisted.

We divided sections and started running for him My heart felt like it was going to jump out of my body my muscles couldn't handle my weight anymore and my mental couldn't handle my body the pain in my heart had gotten worse I could feel the sweat pouring from the skin pore. My skin started to feel like it was burning and my eyes were turning red. Suddenly my mum called across from the other lane she had found him.

I dashed over to the place where her voice was coming from On the scene there was my mother hugging him beside the security guards The security had found him beside the chocolate bar section. At that point I couldn't stand properly It felt like my whole body was burning from high heat magma. I hugged him as hard as I could checked it wasn't a dream From the experience I had I learnt that I will always be responsible for my own and for others."

"Hi my name is Patricia so my story is.

Everyday I wake up and I see through the gigantic window in my room. The light in the sky is so clear and blue there's no pollution but it's clear. Butterflies flying and bees and a lot of birds singing every morning.

When I go outside my window, the blue sky I can't see through the light is just so clear. Every building has like a little Forest on top of it full of green gigantic palm Trees and many flowers around them.

There's no buildings without the solar panels everything is powered with clear energy that's renewable. Everything is so white and green and blue and so clear and so colourful. I All of the cars are flying on top of every building They are very quick however they are very quiet And very ….. how do you say?... Just very clean.

They have their solar panels on top and they just go quick from side to side There is no sound from them. It's so quiet however you can hear all the trees moving in the wind, the blue sky there's a few clouds in the sky and then you can see all the birds and all the animals with cats walking on the pathway.

Everything is just so clean and natural"

Appendix 10

Student Emails from Dubai

"My name is ███ and i am 15 years old. I am Dutch - Moroccan but I lived my whole life in the Netherland, but my parents were born in Morocco and they moved to the Netherlands when they were young. I lived my whole life in the Netherlands and I have a Dutch passport but I feel more Moroccan than Dutch for some reason. I feel more connected to morocco and I love and proud that i am from morocco more than being dutch. I currently live in Dubai this is my second year. I have two brothers and one sister. One of my brothers is in grade 9 and the other one is in kg1b and my sister is in grade 1."

"Hey,my name is ███ and I'm 15.I was born in Indiana, United States but I'm originally from Jordan.I lived in Dubai for 4 years after i had moved out from the states when i was 4 and then i moved to Jordan for 3 years.I am currently 15 and living in Dubai and i hope you now know a bit more about me.I hope you like my podcast!"

"hello my name is ████ i am from turkey i am 16 years old, I lived in Dubai for 10 years my podcast is about me and my sister decided to change schools because the school had so many exams and we weren't learning anything all we did was memorising and the teachers just sat in class and said do that and that without even explaining after months and months like that me and my sister decided to move to a smaller and a better and educational school we finally found one , months after we were starting our new school i was so nervous and wanted to like disappear in the new school i was lonely for 3 months and then one day a girl and a boy came to me and said hello how are u and for some reason i started crying from joy because i finally found friends in my new school i have never been lonely before because in my old school i had so many friends and when i moved it was the first to go through those terms. now in my new school i have many friends and i am very thankful for everything"

"Background information about me
Name – ███████
Age – 15
Nationality – United States
I play basketball and golf. I speak English. My favorite subject is art"

"My name is ███ I'm from Seoul, South Korea. When I was 2 years old, I went to Malaysia and lived there for 5 years. In Malaysia, I've went to the Alice Smith School, a British school. In 7, I went back to Korea and spent 2 years. In 9, I came to Dubai and lived until 14 years old. I went back to Korea and spent 1 year and a half. I'm 15 years old and living in Dubai again.   I have 2 younger brothers and I'm the oldest."

Appendix 11

Junior Cycle Key Skills

- Developing my understanding and enjoyment of words and language
- Reading for enjoyment and with critical understanding
- Writing for different purposes
- Expressing ideas clearly and accurately
- Developing my spoken language
- Exploring and creating a variety of texts, including multi-modal texts

- Knowing myself
- Making considered decisions
- Setting and achieving personal goals
- Being able to reflect on my own learning
- Using digital technology to manage myself and my learning

- Using language
- Using numbers
- Listening and expressing myself
- Performing and presenting
- Discussing and debating
- Using digital technology to communicate

- Being healthy and physically active
- Being social
- Being safe
- Being spiritual
- Being confident
- Being positive about learning
- Being responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology

- Developing good relationships and dealing with conflict
- Co-operating
- Respecting difference
- Contributing to making the world a better place
- Learning with others
- Working with others through digital technology

BEING LITERATE

COMMUNICATING

MANAGING MYSELF

WORKING WITH OTHERS

KEY SKILLS

STAYING WELL

BEING CREATIVE

MANAGING INFORMATION & THINKING

BEING NUMERATE

- Being curious
- Gathering, recording, organising and evaluating information and data
- Thinking creatively and critically
- Reflecting on and evaluating my learning
- Using digital technology to access, manage and share content

- Imagining
- Exploring options and alternatives
- Implementing ideas and taking action
- Learning creatively
- Stimulating creativity using digital technology

- Expressing ideas mathematically
- Estimating, predicting and calculating
- Developing a positive disposition towards investigating, reasoning and problem-solving
- Seeing patterns, trends and relationships
- Gathering, interpreting and representing data
- Using digital technology to develop numeracy skills and understanding

Information Sheet for Principal

Invitation to take part in an Art and Design Education Study.

Dear Principal

The following outlines the details of an art and design education project that I will be conducting with the 2ⁿᵈ year group in Ennistymon Vocational school.

The project will focus on an international art collaboration in which students will exchange stories with students from another school in a different country. I will be conducting research in conjunction with this project that aims to examine to what extent taking part in a collaboration of this nature can develop students ability to communicate, visual literacy skills and an appreciation for cultural diversity.

I am seeking your consent and support to carry out the study. The details of what will be involved in this project and study are outlined below.

Title of the project:

The art of storytelling. International, digital art collaboration in which students exchange stories and create visual illustrations.

Title of the educational study:

An inquiry that examines the degree to which taking part in this project can develop students communication, visual literacy and appreciation for cultural diversity.

Background to the project:

I am a student teacher currently undertaking my School Placement at Ennistymon Vocational School. I will be introducing a project to your students that will focus on examining the degree to which learning how to tell a story and listen to one in order to create visual representation, can assist in developing communication skills and visual literacy. I am interested in exploring the benefits of students communicating and working with students in another country from a different cultural background.

The study - What am I trying to discover?

I am undertaking this study in order to;

- Examine to what extent students can develop their communication skills through engaging in a storytelling exchange and sending and receiving feedback.
- Explore strategies to improve interpretation abilities and enhance visual literacy skills

- Discover methods and strategies to foster an appreciation of cultural diversity through the process of sharing personal narratives, exchanging feedback and carrying out research.
- Develop the students' self-esteem through personal achievement in developing, designing and making in this mode of art, craft and design.

What will happen during the study?

Student's participation in this study will involve survey, focus group, interviews, project work and discussions forums. I will also document project work as it develops for the purposes of data collection.

The material collected during this study will be kept confidential. The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all participants will remain anonymous. All information relating to this study will be protected in accordance with data protection and privacy policies and procedures for researchers in Limerick Institute of Technology.

Are there any risks to doing this study?

There are no perceived risks associated with student's participation in this study. The study will be conducted during the project as outlined above, we will be working together as a group to create art and design work during our scheduled class periods.

What if I change my mind about students being in the study?

If you decide that you do not want your students to participate in the study there will be no consequences to them. They will continue to participate in the all of the classroom activities associated with this project but will not be asked to respond to surveys, participate in focus group responses or have their art work documented as part of the study.

Are there any benefits to doing this study?

The project at the centre of the study is designed to enhance your student's appreciation of communicating and collaborating with students from a different culture, while developing your creative skills through interpreting audio and creating visual art forms. I hope that what is learned as a result of this study will highlight the benefits of such collaboration and how the format can be further used to promote cross-cultural communication.

How do I find out what was learned in this study?

I expect to have the study report completed by June 2017 and I will send a brief summary of the key findings of the study to the school.

Student Teacher/Researcher:

Title of award: Professional Master of Education Art and Design with Digital Media

Department and Institution: Art and Design Teacher Education, Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick Institute of Technology

This research study has received ethical approval from the Post Graduate Research Ethics Committee at Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick Institute of Technology.

Yours sincerely,

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Information Sheet for Parents/Guardians

Invitation to take part in an Art and Design Education Study.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The following outlines the details of an art and design education project that I will be conducting with the 2nd year group in Ennistymon Vocational school.

The project will focus on an international art collaboration in which students will exchange stories with students from another school in a different country.. I will be conducting research in conjunction with this project that aims to examine to what extent taking part in a collaboration of this nature can develop students ability to communicate, visual literacy skills and an appreciation for cultural diversity.

I am seeking consent for your son/daughter to participate in the study. The details of what will be involved in this project and study are outlined below.

Title of the project:

A study into the exchange of stories through an international, digital art collaboration in which students exchange audio recorded stories and create visual illustrations.

Title of the educational study:

An inquiry that examines the degree to which taking part in this project can develop students communication, visual literacy and appreciation for cultural diversity.

Background to the project:

I am a student teacher currently undertaking my School Placement at Ennistymon Vocational School. I will be introducing a project to your son/daughter that will focus on examining the degree to which learning how to tell a story and listen to one in order to create visual representation, can assist in developing communication skills and visual literacy. I am interested in exploring the benefits of students communicating and working with students in another country from a different cultural background.

The study - What am I trying to discover?

I am undertaking this study in order to;

- Examine to what extent students can develop their communication skills through engaging in a storytelling exchange and sending and receiving feedback.
- Explore strategies to improve interpretation abilities and enhance visual literacy skills
- Discover methods and strategies to foster an appreciation of cultural diversity through the process of sharing personal narratives, exchanging feedback and carrying out research.

What will happen during the study?

Your son's/daughter's participation in this study will involve survey, focus group, interviews, project work and discussions forums. I will also document project work as it develops for the purposes of data collection.

The material collected during this study will be kept confidential. The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all participants will remain anonymous. All information relating to this study will be protected in accordance with data protection and privacy policies and procedures for researchers in Limerick Institute of Technology.

Are there any risks to doing this study?

There are no perceived risks associated with your son's/daughter's participation in this study. The study will be conducted during the project as outlined above, we will be working together as a group to create art and design work during our scheduled class periods.

What if I change my mind about my son/daughter being in the study?

If you decide that you do not want your son/daughter to participate in the study there will be no consequences to them. They will continue to participate in the all of the classroom activities associated with this project but will not be asked to respond to surveys, participate in focus group responses or have their art work documented as part of the study.

Are there any benefits to doing this study?

The project at the centre of the study is designed to enhance your son's/daughter's appreciation of communicating and collaborating with students from a different culture, while developing your creative skills through interpreting audio and creating visual art forms. I hope that what is learned as a result of this study will highlight the benefits of such collaboration and how the format can be further used to promote cross-cultural communication.

How do I find out what was learned in this study?

I expect to have the study report completed by June 2017 and I will send a brief summary of the key findings of the study to the school.

Student Teacher/Researcher:

Title of award: Professional Master of Education Art and Design with Digital Media

Department and Institution: Art and Design Teacher Education, Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick Institute of Technology

This research study has received ethical approval from the Post Graduate Research Ethics Committee at Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick Institute of Technology.

Yours sincerely,

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Student Teacher

Informed Consent

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Before reading this consent form you should have read the attached information sheet. Please ensure that you retain the information sheet for your records. If you give permission for your son/daughter to participate in this project please sign this consent form and return it to the school on or before 1/11/2017.

If you have any concerns relating to your son/daughter's participation in the project, please contact either the school or myself and we will be happy to address your concerns.
Thank you for your cooperation on this matter.

Kind Regards,
Brendan Egan

I wish to acknowledge that:
• I have read and understood the attached Parent / Guardian / Information Sheet
• I understand what the project is about
• I know that participation is voluntary and that participants can withdraw from the project at any stage without giving any reason
• I give permission for my son/daughter, to participate in the project that is being done in Ennistymon Vocational School in conjunction with Limerick School of Art and Design

By signing this consent form I am acknowledging that I have read the above bullet points and am fully aware of what each one means.

Parent / Guardian / Responsible Other

Signed: Date:

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Information Sheet

Invitation to take part in an Art and Design Education Study.

Dear Student,

The following outlines the details of an art and design education project that I will be conducting with a 2nd year group in Ennistymon Vocational School. The project will focus on an international, cross-culture, digital art collaboration whereby students personal narratives will be exchanged via digital recordings and then visually interpreted. Helping students develop communication, visual literacy and an appreciation for cultural diversity. I am inviting you to participate in the educational study. The details of what will be involved in this project and study are outlined below.

Title of the project:

The art of storytelling. International, digital art collaboration in which students exchange stories and create visual illustrations.

Title of the educational study:

An inquiry that examines the degree to which taking part in this project can develop students communication, visual literacy and appreciation for cultural diversity.

Background to the project:

I am a student teacher currently undertaking my School Placement at Ennistymon Vocational Secondary school. I will be introducing a project to you that will focus on examining the degree to which learning how to tell a story and listen to one in order to create visual representation, can assist in developing communication skills and visual literacy. I am interested in exploring the benefits of students communicating and working with students in another country from a different cultural background.

The study - What am I trying to discover?

I am undertaking this study in order to;

- Examine to what extent students can develop their communication skills through engaging in a storytelling exchange and sending and receiving feedback.
- Explore strategies to improve interpretation abilities and enhance visual literacy skills
- Discover methods and strategies to foster an appreciation of cultural diversity through the process of sharing personal narratives, exchanging feedback and carrying out research.
- Develop the students' self-esteem through personal achievement in developing, designing and making in this mode of art, craft and design.

What will happen during the study?

Your participation in this study will involve survey, focus group, interviews, project work and discussions forums. I will also document project work as it develops for the purposes of data collection.

The material collected during this study will be kept confidential. The results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all participants will remain anonymous. All information relating to this study will be protected in accordance with data protection and privacy policies and procedures for researchers in Limerick Institute of Technology.

Are there any risks to doing this study?

There are no perceived risks associated with your participation in this study. The study will be conducted during the project as outlined above, we will be working together as a group to create art and design work during our scheduled class periods.

What if I change my mind about being in the study?

If you decide that you do not want to participate in the study there will be no consequences to you. You will continue to participate in the all of the classroom activities associated with this project but will not be asked to respond to surveys, participate in focus group responses or have your art work documented as part of the study.

Are there any benefits to doing this study?

The project at the centre of this study is designed to enhance your appreciation of communicating and collaborating with students from a different culture, while developing your creative skills through interpreting audio and creating visual art forms. I hope that what is learned as a result of this study will highlight the benefits of such collaboration and how the format can be further used to promote cross-cultural communication.

How do I find out what was learned in this study?

I expect to have the study report completed by June 2017 and I will send a brief summary of the key findings of the study to the school.

Student Teacher/Researcher:

Title of award: Professional Master of Education Art and Design with Digital Media

Department and Institution: Art and Design Teacher Education, Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick Institute of Technology

This research study has received ethical approval from the Post Graduate Research Ethics Committee at Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick Institute of Technology.

Yours sincerely, Student Teacher

Informed Consent

Dear Student,

Before reading this consent form you should have read the attached information sheet. Please ensure that you retain the information sheet for your records. If you wish to participate in this project please sign this consent form and return it to the school on or before 1/11/2017

If you have any concerns relating to your participation in the project, please contact either the school or myself and we will be happy to address your concerns.
Thank you for your cooperation on this matter.

Kind Regards,
Brendan Egan

I wish to acknowledge that:
• I have read and understood the attached Information Sheet.
• I understand what the project is about.
• I know that participation is voluntary and that participants can withdraw from the project at any stage without giving any reason.
• I wish to participate in the project that is being done in Ennistymon Vocational School in conjunction with Limerick School of Art and Design.

By signing this consent form I am acknowledging that I have read the above bullet points and am fully aware of what each one means.

Student
Signed: Date: