

ASSESSING YOUTH ART: CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF VISUAL CULTURE LEARNING COMMUNITIES (VCLC)

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Adolescent and young adult Visual Culture Learning Communities are complex systems of peer teaching and auto-didactic learning, based on situated rules of ethics and values of one or more youth subcultures. The Research Group on Visual Culture Learning Communities with members from 6 European universities, 1 American and 1 Asian university have studied two such communities in each country for 12 months to evaluate the development of visual language of members and provide educational models for formal learning.

The term, communities of practice, was introduced by *Lave and Wenger (1991)* in their theory of situated learning. The education paradigm used in the groups is triological learning, a process-oriented collaboration model in which groups interact to create knowledge (*Dillenbourg et al., 1995; Stahl, 2003; Engeström et al., 2002; Paavola et al., 2004*). Participants develop epistemic agency and self-motivation as they engage in inquiry and creation with others (*Stahl, 2003*). Contemporary educationalists conceptualize learning as a process of participation in group practices (e.g. *Sefton-Green and Soep, 2007*). Fan groups are exemplars of such creative work based on participation in a broad cultural shift toward artistic expression and civic engagement and informal mentorship (*Jenkins, 2007*). Modes of inquiry VCLCs were perceived as informal learning environments. Collaboration, mentoring and practices were identified that promote the development of visual skills of adolescents and young adults. This presentation interprets the findings of the Hungarian media group of 40 members aged 17–23 years based on 26 voice-recorded, front-end interviews, 27 school days of participant observation, analysis of 32 video films (of 5–20 minutes' duration). Interviews and creative products were subjected to qualitative analyses using common phrase and close-reading thematic content analyses of the transcripts. Visual data analysis included assessment of technical skills and creativity through expert evaluation based on aesthetic, technical and thematic criteria.

Themes and motives of the reportages, short documentaries and portraits reflect not just on the content but also on the form of contemporary news media. Iconography analysis shows that they provide an alternative to mainstream commercial visual imagery both on the thematic and on the aesthetic level. Originality in such a collaborative creative process means peer-transmitted rules about originality, copyright and copying. Group practices involve brainstorming, peer mentoring, production management, (self-)reflection and monitoring of social reception of films produced. These aspects should profoundly influence contemporary assessment practices in art education, still based on 19th century ideals of the individual creator.