

# Application of Digital Teaching Materials in Art Education – Example of “Ethnic Arts Research Topics” at National Dong Hwa University

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**Abstract** This paper focuses on the use digital teaching materials and innovative method in instruction on the anthropology of art, including the world's cultures and ethnic arts. Taking the class “Ethnic Arts Research Topics” in the master's program at National Dong Hwa University in 2009 an example, this paper examines the relationship between ethnic arts and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and also explores the nearly-forgotten oral cultures and art traditions of non-Western ethnic groups. From a geographical perspective, research on the world's ethnic arts may focus on Europe, Asia, the Americas, Africa, and Oceania, and each of these regions has its own artistic characteristics. Research on the relationship between Taiwan's art and culture and that of other global regions is also included in this class, which combines the research methods of art history with those of anthropology, and it is hoped that this approach will enable a new interchange platform to be established. Thinking about artifacts also leads into the complex relationship between material culture and contemporary art. At least three stages can be identified when a historical perspective is applied to non-Western art: primitive art, colonial art, and contemporary art. The class also examines the historical development of Taiwan's indigenous art, and further discusses how contemporary ethnic art is handed down from one generation to another, while adopting innovations along the way. When designing teaching materials for the class, different sessions variously included ethnographic films, exhibits of cultural artifacts, displays of music and dance ceremonies and performances, field videos and photographs, introduction to e-Museum sites and relevant films, and use of a blog to discuss visual art and images with students. In general, digital teaching materials comprised an important part of the program. In addition, students' assignments could be completed employing multimedia methods, including use of online materials, music, film, ethnography, tourism advertisements,

exhibitions, cultural performances, and interviews. With regard to visual art, it was necessary to find images connected with cultural artifacts, and then convert them to PowerPoint documents. Topics requiring use of visual art included the cultural implications of Maya stone carving, the Kingdom of Benin's sculpture, the consumptive function of visual art of Vietnamese restaurants, and transformation of Taroko indigenous cloth weaving into a cultural innovative industry. With regard to cultural heritage, many images concerning field research and films from community websites are employed in an introductory role. Some relevant topics in the class include "Hakka tobacco houses – from industrial buildings to communal awareness," and Sino-Russian buildings in Manzhouli and their prospects. With regard to exhibitions and performances, many resources concerning the world's music and dance can be found on the Internet, and can be connected with traditional and modern anthropological approaches. Relevant topics in the class include discussion of how Taiwan's popular belly dance and Cambodia's “Angkor culture” have been handed down over several generations and exhibited or performed. Other issues explored in the class include the social connotations of traditional “court” and “popular” dances, and the current status of and dilemmas facing Taiwan's shadow puppet shows. By embracing interaction with the online world and visual exhibitions and performances, this class promotes new approaches to instruction in visual culture and communication of music and dance performances.

**Keywords** Art Education, Ethnic Art, E-Learning, Visual Culture, Multimedia

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## 1. Introduction

Taking the class “Ethnic Arts Research Topics” (in the master's program at National Dong Hwa University) as an

example, this paper seeks to explore the linkage between art, anthropology, and global ethnic art education, find ways of putting Taiwan’s locally-oriented education into action, and use new theoretical principles in art history in local instruction, learning, and innovation. In this paper, the author discusses theory, the production of teaching materials, examination grading standards, student feedback, and the application of digital teaching materials in order to assess new values and possibilities in art education.

## **2. Structure and Orientation of the Graduate Program**

The Department of Ethnic Relations and Cultures, College of Indigenous Studies, National Dong Hwa University, has established the following instructional goals: development of theoretical perspectives on ethnic relations, cultivation of capable individuals with practical experience, helping members of indigenous groups receive higher education, expanding people’s view of ethnic and cultural diversity, enhancing social action, and realizing the concepts of ethnic equality and cultural diversity. The department places special emphasis on multidisciplinary training, which is employed to increase students’ understanding of ethnic groups and indigenous cultures. The department’s graduate program focuses on the following aspects:

### **2.1. Basic Multidisciplinary Academic Training**

This aspect includes training in anthropology, sociology, the arts, law, history, and other relevant subjects, and is intended to enhance students’ sensitivity toward other cultures as well as their cross-cultural communication ability.

### **2.2. Research On Special Topics**

This aspect involves study and analysis of topics in the areas of education, art, religion, economy, exhibitions, and performances connected with culture, social policy, gender, and specific ethnic groups. Students are encouraged to make contributions to the transmission of ethnic culture from one generation to another and to the development of social responsibility.

### **2.3. Practical Work**

The department suggests field research and social service projects, and offers opportunities to work with ethnic communities, social service institutions, and non-profit organizations. These opportunities can give students significant competitive experience and working skills.

### **2.4. Curriculum Development**

Apart from required core courses, the departmental program also encompasses elective courses in two areas: ethnic diversity and culture, exhibitions, and performances. Students can take elective courses from one or both of these areas when accumulating their academic qualifications and obtaining their graduate degree. In addition, students can also select other departments’ courses according to their own interests to enrich their own academic knowledge and skills.

The location of National Dong Hwa University in Eastern Taiwan is ideal for ethnology research, and the department strives to make the best use of local resources. The department has consequently established a local research database, studies indigenous people’s social and cultural development, and promotes local issues and innovative concepts concerning local culture. Furthermore, motivated by respect for indigenous traditions worldwide, the department frequently joins forces with indigenous villages, communities, social service institutions, and non-profit organizations for the sake of cooperative undertakings, which has enabled social resources to be used in an effective manner, and has encouraged students’ participation in practical cultural transmission and development work in indigenous villages and local communities. The department’s most characteristic areas of research and development areas include “development and transformation of ethnic cultures,” “modern and post-colonial research,” “history and culture of indigenous peoples,” and “cultural identity of Taiwan’s indigenous tribes among the Austronesian peoples.” Persons in the department have also been involved in studying such other areas as indigenous ecology and tourism, education about ethnic groups, gender, class, and social development, etc.

## **3. Design and Goals of the Program**

The goals of the “Ethnic Arts Research” program chiefly consist of introducing the world’s indigenous arts, and exploring problems and changes which they encounter in the process of modernization. One main focus of the program is on the relationship between the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and ethnic arts, and it also introduces non-Western ethnic groups’ oral culture and arts. Adopting a geographical perspective, the program examines the arts of ethnic groups of all major world regions, including Europe, Asia, the Americas, Africa, and Oceania, in order to discover their different characteristics. This survey also includes art and cultural relations between Taiwan and other continents. The methods of both art history and anthropology are employed, and it is hoped that this approach will enable a new interchange platform to be established. Thinking about artifacts also leads into the complex relationship between material culture and contemporary art. At least three stages can be identified when a historical perspective is applied to non-Western art:

primitive art, colonial art, and contemporary art. The course also examines the historical development of Taiwan's indigenous art, and further discusses how contemporary ethnic art is handed down from one generation to another, while adopting innovations along the way.

The collection and database of the Musée du Quai Branly serve as a major source of reference materials in the design of the program, and intangible assets, folk culture, lost oral literature, and non-European systems are presented as major research issues. The program consists of five units concerning Europe, the Americas, Africa, Oceania, and Asia respectively and the three main courses in each unit focus on indigenous art, colonial culture, and contemporary art. It is hoped that the program's research scope will encompass the entire world, and the content of courses include visual art, performing arts, and traditional field studies.

While the persons enrolled in this program are all students of the Department of Ethnic Relations and Cultures, they have a wide range of backgrounds. Many of the program's post-graduate students were originally in other, non-art departments, such as the Chinese, indigenous culture, social work, Japanese, foreign language, cultural and creative industry, and anthropology departments, etc. Students typically must take three courses from the doctoral program and nine from the master's program. Each course has assigned teaching materials, and a set of handouts must usually also be prepared. As mentioned previously, the program consists of five units focusing on geographical areas, and each of these units contains three courses on traditional art, colonial art, and contemporary art respectively. In the second course of each unit, teams consisting of two students must give oral presentations for ten minutes on topics assigned by the lecturers. These presentations will involve different aspects, although all will focus on the same cultural region, and they will let other students learn about a variety of relevant subjects apart from the topic of their own presentations.

At the start, the program introduces first Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the concept of intangible cultural assets. The second course introduces the structure of the program as a whole and the Musée du Quai Branly's layout, architecture, collections, and restoration of cultural and historical relics. Instruction is then conducted into five units, which proceed from the most distant region to the nearer regions. Although the Musée du Quai Branly database lacks a European unit, the author has added this unit because, in the eyes of Asian students, Europe can be considered the home of foreign cultures. In addition, an understanding of the dominant European and American culture enables students to identify the impact of colonial architecture. The five units begin with the geographical regions farthest from Taiwan, and proceed to the nearer regions, in the order of Europe, the Americas, Africa, Oceania, and Asia. Two of these units discuss Taiwan:

Austronesian culture and indigenous arts are covered in the Oceania unit, and the art of the Southeast Asian immigrants to Taiwan are covered in the Asia unit. The unit concerning Europe begins with an introduction to the European Renaissance and the Baroque period, and provides overviews of the artistic, cultural, and historical aspects of important works. This approach helps students to understand artistic features, styles, and forms. During the Baroque period, students are shown how religious elements have brought about a mixed cultural style, and how a colonial element has appeared. The second course explores Baroque architecture in Taiwan during the colonial period when Western-style architecture was introduced as a symbol of imperial power and authority. Students can view relevant buildings in conjunction with this course. In class, historical materials, architectural drafts, and photos of relevant old buildings, such as the Taipei Guest Hotel and Governor-General's Residence during the Japanese colonial period. From their interior design and layout, students can identify political implications. The functions of past and present buildings can be compared to determine the urban design features of the colonial period. In the second half of the course, the students give presentations on preset topics, which include various official buildings of the Japanese colonial period, such as the Taichung Railway Station, Hsinchu Railway Station, Museum of Drinking Water (a modern facility), other Baroque-style buildings, and the Tainan State Hall (currently the National Museum of Taiwan Literature). Among the questions asked in this course are how architectural styles and historical roles evolved into modern functions have? How has the Council for Cultural Affairs reused and revitalized vacant buildings of this type? It is shown that old streets lined with Baroque-style buildings were once the scene of prosperity, wealth, and power. However, due to the relative isolation and economic backwardness of eastern Taiwan, there were no old streets with Baroque buildings in this region, only a few old-style drugstores. Students need to obtain information from historical materials and search the Internet for buildings' current functions and the different fates of historical communities in order to complete their assignments and reports. When no relevant information is available, students may need to perform field studies and conduct interviews. It is hoped that practical work will enable students to clearly understand daily life, local conditions, and government policies during the Japanese colonial period. Furthermore, by investigating the remains of old buildings and researching cultural assets, students can identify the various cultural policies of different cities and counties, and can also probe the relationship between different operating models, the central government, and local communities. The third course introduces how different schools of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century modern art were influenced by primitive art. Films and PowerPoint presentations are employed to enhance students' understanding of the relationship between visual art and history.

The second unit concerns the Americas, and is also divided into three courses. In the first course, PowerPoint presentation and films concerning Latin America (on DVDs) are used to introduce the region's various ancient cultures, including the Maya, Aztecs, and Incas, and their traditional religion, astronomy, architecture, and mutual relationships, such as the role of bloodletting rituals as a common feature of Latin American cultures. Furthermore, the course also explores social organizations and different archeological sites, such as Tikal. Films are used to depict Latin American history and colonization, humanistic customs, traditional celebrations, and such ancient rites as the traditional sun ritual held by the Incas in Cuzco, and which is still performed today. Dynamic methods are used to familiarize students with traditional and modern customs, give an understanding of today's Maya markets, and show the changes between traditional costumes and modern styles. The second course focuses on colonization, especially on the exploitation of the precious metals gold and silver, which was the reason why Spain and Portugal colonized Latin America. In the second half of the course, students learn about Maya costume and culture, the social class system of the City of El Dorado and the Inca Empire, Olmec sculpture and religion, the relationship between pyramids and astronomy, and the ancient ruins and modern metropolis of Mexico City. Students can use images, text, and photographs from the Internet to obtain various kinds of information. The third course uses the lives and works of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo as a basis for analyzing Mexico's native fine arts movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Latin America's surrealist trends, and Latin American artists' denunciation of colonial military rule and attempts to return to their cultural roots through re-examination of local mythology and tradition. Also, films related to Frida Kahlo's life are shown.

In the unit concerning Africa, the first course chiefly introduces African traditional arts, including the arts of the cultures and kingdoms of such different regions such as West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, and South Africa. The catalogue of the exhibition “Forward Africa,” which was held in Taiwan several years ago, is used in this course as part of the teaching materials. This exhibition displayed African ritual masks currently in French collections. The author has also shown images concerning African rituals from the collection of the Musée du Quai Branly. Discussion of colonial circumstances includes introduction to cultural and historical artifacts and historical mixed styles. The second course concerns the colonial period of African history, and includes a look at African hairstyles, ethnic cultures, African masks and rituals, the sculptures of Kingdom of Benin, African music and drums, and documentary films about Africa. Students view films concerning African rituals and various documentary films, and listen to African music on CDs. By browsing the Internet, students can find various kinds of African addresses whose styles and functions have spawned cultural and creative industries, and also look at many kinds

of African masks, rituals, and customs. The third course takes contemporary Africa as its subject. The music and costumes that gave rise to reggae music are introduced to highlight the impact of contemporary African culture on secondary cultural manifestations such as rap music and graffiti. The Internet is also used in this course to introduce Taiwanese-style reggae music in which indigenous people from Taiwan employ reggae-style music to protest social injustice, eliciting a sympathetic response from students.

The unit concerning Oceania explores the cultures of Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia, and Indonesia. One course in this unit focuses on Taiwan's indigenous arts and culture, and the other two courses trace the artistic and cultural features of the other islands groups, including their customs, history, material culture, architecture, folk songs, and religions, as well as their mutual relationships. In addition, the two courses also discuss issues including the problems encountered by modern tourism in Oceania. Films are employed as an auxiliary approach to introduce sculptures in the natural landscape, rituals and ceremonies, and the current cultures of different groups. Apart from receiving an introduction to the Hawaiian Islands and other islands in Oceania, students also examine information concerning Taiwan's indigenous peoples, including modern Taroko weaving, various combinations of traditional and modern practices, and field studies and interviews. Mr. Tong, the director of the Paiwan Tribal Division at the National Museum of Prehistory, is invited to give an introduction to “Taiwan's indigenous arts and culture.” It is hoped that by relying on indigenous people's own perspectives and the National Museum of Prehistory's role in Taiwan, students can understand Austronesian arts and culture, the museum's collections and exhibitions, and various aspects of Austronesian research, while also feeling sympathy for Taiwan's indigenous peoples.

The scope of the unit concerning Asia includes folk religions, China's minority groups, Southeast Asia, and Taiwan's ethnic groups and their performances, rituals, and ceremonies. The major focus is on the Tong, Tai, and Wa tribes of Guizhou in China's Yunnan Province, their relationship with Buddhism, and the similarities and differences of their architectures, religions, and costumes. Films portraying the ethnic minorities of Yunnan and introducing their customs are shown in this unit. Students give presentations on such topics as the “Wang Ye Boat Burning,” “Pig Sacrifice at Baozhong Yimin Temple in Kaohsiung,” “Initial Investigation of the Marriage Customs of the Wa Minority Group in China,” “Shamanism in North Asia,” “Consumptive Function of Visual Art in Vietnamese Snack Shops,” “Current Status and Developmental Dilemmas of Taiwan's Shadow Puppet Shows,” and the “Sky Lantern Festival in Cambodia,” which examines and compares the different types of sky lantern festival held in two cities. Two kinds of topics are explored in this unit: tourism and tradition. As for Vietnamese snack shops, in the shops opened by Vietnam brides in Hualien in eastern Taiwan, the food has been localized, but shops' interior

designs contain many Vietnamese elements. The origins and costumes of the shamanism used to treat illness in North Asia are discussed in detail. Furthermore, students look at how the theatrical traditions of Taiwan's shadow puppet show were combined with religion in the past, and examine the decline of traditional puppet shows and the possibility of revival through linkage with TV, university clubs, and artists' groups. The fact that puppet shows have adopted a form of Taiwanese religious music (Techno Nezha Great God General) signifies the transformation of a traditional god into a commercial and political symbol. Apart from an investigation of Asian Buddhist customs, the different connections running through contemporary society are also highlighted.

#### 4. Student Interaction and Assessment

Apart from exhibitions and performances at the end of semester, oral presentations are performed, and students must rely on in-depth data to make original report. Students are allowed to explore a wide range of topics, but must investigate three issues with a geographical basis—one in Taiwan, one in Asia, and one worldwide. Each student is to spend ten minutes on each topic.

With regard to Taiwan, one presentation topic is "From Industrial Buildings to Communal Consciousness – Hakka's Tobacco Barns in the Past and Present." This topic explores the history of tobacco and looks at why tobacco barns are considered symbolic of Hakka culture. This subject includes analysis of three reconstructed tobacco barns in Taiwan. Tobacco barns, which are historical "industrial buildings," have long played roles in associating communities' memories with emotions. From the angle of community construction, the barns can be used as communities' activity spaces, and places for giving voice to communal consciousness, and they can also link local history with contemporary education. The students can employ first-hand field data and photographs of different styles of tobacco barns, and may examine the role of tobacco barns as cultural assets.

Another topic is "Transformation of Taroko Tribal Weaving into a Cultural and Creative Industry." Apart from retaining its original basic function, the tribal costumes of the Taroko also display features that can be regarded as signs of costume art among various ethnic groups. This topic encompasses the details of totems, styles, and cultural meanings of traditional Taroko costumes in Sioulin Township, Hualien County, seeks to explore costume transformation and innovation, and identify ethnic groups' costume traditions. The students are expected to conduct field studies, interview people, and take photographs of sites. This research may also examine how tradition has been changed by tourism, which is a widespread issue connected with local culture.

Yet another topic is "Cross-field Diverse Cultural Meanings of the Techno Nezha Great God General." This

subject concerns how the important legendary figure and religious symbol of the Techno Nezha Great God General has been transformed in different fields, such as by becoming a political mouthpiece or commercial representative, and is combined with folk and popular culture. Students investigating this subject may show short films depicting different kinds of Techno Nezha Great God General performances, and including advertisements, news, festival ceremonies, TV programs, and political figures' public appearances. These films reveal how the Techno Nezha Great God General appeals to the public and has evolved into an idol in popular culture.

A further topic is "Current Status and Developmental Dilemmas of Taiwan's Shadow Puppet Shows." Taiwan's traditional shadow puppet shows originated from the early Chinese migration from China, and have gradually developed into a distinctively Taiwanese dramatic style. Early puppet shows served the dual purpose of expressing gratitude to the gods while also providing popular entertainment. While the shadow puppet show industry originally consisted of some 50 or 60 troupes, in the wake of political, economic, and cultural transformations, as well as the rise of TV, movies, and other forms of entertainment, only five performing troupes remain today. Facing internal and external difficulties, the shadow puppet show industry is gradually finding new performance approaches providing it with ways to develop, including artistic upgrading and cooperation with university groups. The foregoing subjects all look at how different channels are being used to make cultural assets and traditional arts relevant to contemporary life.

With regard to topics connected with Asia, one presentation topic is "Inheritance and Performance of Cambodia's 'Angkor Wat Culture': Talking about Social Implications of Traditional Dance of 'Court' and 'Common People'." Angkor Wat—Cambodia's most important cultural symbol—was listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site in 1992, and its traditional dance was honored as a "World Intangible Cultural Heritage" in 2003. On the walls of temples at Angkor Wat, there are 1,737 carved apsara (celestial dancers) in exquisitely beautiful postures, which reveal that Cambodia's performing arts have a history of over one thousand years. Cambodia's modern royal court dance symbolizes the imperial family and its traditions, and is also evocative of the carved dancers on the ancient ruins at Angkor. In contrast, traditional dances among the common people in Cambodia portray everyday village life, and are often performed for tourists. The music accompanying these dances is similar to traditional Nanguan and Beiguan music in Taiwan.

Another topic is "Consumptive function of Visual Art of Vietnamese Restaurants." Vietnamese food is considered one of Asia's three major cuisines (along with Chinese and Thai cuisines). This topic involves a look at visual culture of dining in Vietnamese restaurants among the common people, and its role in the creation of exotic flavors. Students must perform field studies, take photographs, and

conduct interviews.

The topic of “Sino-Russian Architecture in Manzhouli City and its Prospects” concerns the distinctive architecture of Manzhouli City in autonomous region of Inner Mongolia in light of this city's important political and economic roles on the border between China and Russia. This topic includes analysis of this city's Russian-style buildings, examines the integration of Chinese and Russian culture in this city, and discusses the ideas of local government and residents concerning injection of new life into old buildings. Since students will have difficulty obtained direct data, it is suggested that they acquire information from the Internet.

The topic of “Shamanism in North Asia” concerns the shamanism that originated from tribal religions and has survived in North Asia until the present. The central concept of shamanism is that a witch or shaman can gain a profound understanding of the human psyche and spirit, which reaches to every aspect of culture, and this shamanism is tightly connected with people's everyday lives. But while the shamans' ritual invocation of the deities were once grand and solemn events, they have now become cultural performances, and involve special costumes, dances, and chanting, as well as ecstasy and unusual behavior when a deity descends. Students must obtain roughly half of the necessary data and pictures from the Internet, and the other half from books.

A further topic is “Participation in Taiwan's Belly Dance Courses and Participants' Self-Description.” Belly dance is one of the oldest dancing styles in the world. In recent years, the media has publicized this kind of dance, and it has now become a very popular form of healthy exercise among women around the world, including in Taiwan. Along the way, this dance has lost its religious connotations and evolved into a healthy form of exercise, and has even become a kind of national sport. What was once an alluring Middle-eastern dance for young girls has now become a dance for Taiwan's middle-aged women? A student participated in an actual belly dance course, then described her experience, explored her impressions, and discussed the challenges faced by an Asian woman who wishes to liberate herself from physical imprisonment in the face of disapproval from male family members. This student also showed films concerning belly dancing in various countries, including those in the Middle East. She then showed a film revealing her progress in the dance course.

With regard to the topic of the world, one of suggested topics is “Cultural Associations of Maya Stone Carving.” The author of an essay on this topic originally graduated from the university's Department of History, and it addresses questions about the origin of the peoples of the America that have been raised in academic circles. In recent years, Zhang Guang-zhi has proposed a hypothesis concerning the cultural continuity of the Maya and Chinese which has attracted widespread interest. The essay begins with an overview of Maya carvings and then presents simple and interesting comparisons with motifs in traditional Chinese culture. While the two cultures

developed independently, and their offshoots evolved in very different ways, their ancient modes of thinking have been largely retained to the present day.

Another subject is “Sculpture of the Kingdom of Benin.” In the past, the art of Benin symbolized King Oba's official code and also revealed individuals' social status. Royal bronze sculptures were created to express the king's power and authority, and can be considered theocratic art. The subject “African Masks and Coming of Age Rituals” explored the West African Chivanda tribe's coming-of-age rituals, and the ritual role and significance of masks. Furthermore, coming-of-age rituals for males can be compared with those of females to understand how the genders were treated differently in Africa. Thanks to attention from international organizations, female coming-of-age rituals have attracted attention from around the world, and have ignited controversy concerning whether they should be abolished. Apart from showing films introducing these rituals, a student made a film concerning interviews with tribal people in order to explain contemporary viewpoints. The topic “Introduction to African Drums” included a brief discussion of the various types of African drums and their functions, including the significance of African drum music, the relationship between drums and music, and the uses of drums. Japanese Taiko drums and North American Indian drums were also used in comparisons with African drums to highlight their similarities and differences. CDs and films provided musical accompaniment to this presentation.

In general, students' written presentations focus on architecture, exhibitions, performances, and religious festivals and ceremonies. When researching contemporary phenomena, most of the students performed field studies and surveys, took photographs, and acquired materials from Internet on their own initiative. After carefully analyzing their materials and data, the students were ultimately able to think up diverse array of unique ideas.

## **5. Application of Digital Teaching Materials (Internet, Films, Interactive Platforms)**

In the age of digital technology, the use of technology in instruction has become a necessary approach. Because of the attention to contemporary sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies in the Department of Ethnic Relations and Cultures, there is a great need for data obtained from field studies or community participation. Teaching materials can often be compiled from films and images obtained from data-rich English, French, and other foreign websites. For instance, short films may be used in instruction to highlight contrasts between past and present. Finding relevant films on *YouTube* is another option. In addition, teaching materials should be updated to show what is happening now in communities, present data from recent field studies, and exhibit other regions' tribal materials and popular cultural

exhibitions and performances. Generally speaking, the topics and subjects in this program do not require much information from documents and records, and there is often little prior research data concerning subjects on other continents. As a result, the Internet is typically a necessary tool. Since information has been globalized, students can make good use of Internet to obtain information concerning cultural and historical artifacts in other regions, and also find out how contemporary Taiwan has been influenced by foreign cultures.

Students typically obtain first-hand data from field studies. Another option is to find short films, including rare footage of African rituals and traditional performing arts from the websites of museums in Taiwan and abroad. Many students have made photographs or films of actual events, such as belly dancing, and have used films to compare the belly dance of different countries. In the case of folk religion, students often show how topics and themes from folk religion have been combined with contemporary society or politics –such as in the case of the Techno Nezha Great God General.

## 6. Digital Interaction and Learning

What is e-learning? E-learning is simply all learning activities employing digital equipment (such as desktop and notebook computers, etc.) to handle information and communication. Wikipedia states that the common features of e-learning include the use of distance instruction, the use of e-learning resources, the employment of approaches such as satellite radio, interactive TV, CD instruction, and the Internet to transmit teaching materials, adoption of the Internet as a user interface, and the optional use of synchronous or non-synchronous learning approaches.

The author chiefly used e-learning CDs, the Internet, and the Google search engine to search for data, images, and relevant information, and CDs, films, and the Internet are used as frequently as possible in the master's program. Images from websites are often used in teaching materials to provide further explanation. Since this program covers many of the world's ethnic groups, much foreign data and information are needed in classes. Being familiar with English and French, and eager to use foreign websites as teaching resources, the author has found that art and culture websites in UK and USA provide excellent sources of teaching materials. In many cases, images from the Internet can be combined with video materials to create teaching materials.

The students in this program also used e-learning methods extensively in their presentations. Regardless of the subject, including rituals, celebrations, ceremonies, cultural assets, and traditional performances, students have been able to successful use audio devices and films in their introductions. In a successful, well-done presentation, the content demonstrates how an ethnic group's energies and traditional elements can be transformed in the face of

modernization, and how traditional customs can be presented through exhibitions and skillful performances, making them optimal vehicles for preserving forgotten oral traditions. Apart from examining the websites of museums in Taiwan and abroad to obtain information concerning exhibitions, ethnic groups' dance performances, and popular culture, the students also investigated films concerning rituals on different continents, especially Africa, and made their own films concerning dance experiences and personal observations.

In the past, if one wished to acquire data and information concerning one's research subject, one would certainly have to visit a library and search in books. In this era of digital information, however, as long one has access to a computer with an Internet connection, one can enter relevant websites to obtain needed information. Today, all a student must do is enter keywords in a search engine to immediately get answers concerning explanations of special terms, or places, or incidents, or pieces of artwork. This is how the potential e-learning is being realized.

The term "e-learning" has appeared only in the most recent decade. Before the emergence of e-learning, computer-assisted instruction (CAI) provided no possibility of interaction, and thus yielded very limited learning effectiveness. Owing to the fact that technology has been continuously improving, CAI has evolved and changed with the passage of time. As a result, learning tools have become more varied, and computers can be used interchangeably with many other devices. But as long as these devices are connected with digital e-learning products via the Internet, the goals of e-learning can be readily achieved. When teaching a course, an Internet connection can be used to display audio effects and images spanning different times and places, enabling a lively and dynamic instructional environment.

## 7. Conclusions

Today is a time of tremendous visual overload. One can acquire information very fast by obtaining images on the Internet. However, it is crucial to find reliable Internet addresses and well-managed websites. Thanks to a good understanding of foreign languages, the author has been able to select websites successfully. The effective use of resources from the Internet in teaching materials has created a wide range of teaching and learning possibilities.

It is expected even more content-rich art and culture websites will be created in the future, and more ways of using methods from anthropology, history, and archeology will be demonstrated, bringing new perspectives to art history.

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