Round Table Presentation

Exploring the deep structure of meaning of word and image through multimedia

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Proposal

Over the past six years of teaching four sections of educational technology every semester in a teacher education program, I have found a large percentage of students involved in the humanities areas are frequently both unaware that technology can be used to create visual representations of ideas and, frequently, afraid of computers. In order to counter this mind set, I have developed a series of multimedia assignments that allow a fusion of literature and technology. Another side benefit of the multimedia assignments is an exploration of the deep structure of the students’ understanding of the meaning of poetry, music, and their personal philosophy.

A round table presentation will consist of a show case of two types of student projects. One involves using poetry with illustrated words and images to add meaning to the surface structure of the poem. The illustrated poetry was used to help students explore the meaning of words through manipulation of the structure of the words. For example the word watch was manipulated to appear as a round circle that looked like an eye. Images were used to add irony or “tone” to the student’s interpretation of the poem.

The other type of project is a student-grown “MTV” MS PowerPoint presentation that allowed students to explore multiple meanings of songs beyond the obvious meaning structure of language. The MTV assignments allowed the students to take a favorite piece of music and explain their personal interpretation of the music with images and sounds. This assignment was extended into a further assignment involving iMovie software that allowed the students to use of images, sounds, songs, and text to expand the depth of meaning of their own personal experiences.

The show cased work will provide a means to discuss the idea of exploring the deep structure of meaning in the humanities area as well as suggestions about how to create these types of projects with students. The idea of “deep structure” in humanities areas also carries over into the idea of deep structure in personal philosophy. Students who completed these assignments also completed an autobiography at the end of the semester. The autobiography included their own personal philosophy that had grown out of this media experience. The overall process of exploring the meaning of words, images, and sounds contributed significantly to the students’ overall understanding of these concepts and a deeper understanding of their own personal philosophies.