

Of Immigrants and Natives



Nancy Warholized by Jim McNeill.

I have a confession to make (several, actually). Even though I have a cell phone with a camera, I've only taken three photos with it (and haven't e-mailed them to anyone). What's more, I have never sent a text message or received one (as far as I can tell). And I have no desire to have my own Web site.

Now don't get me wrong—I couldn't live (or edit this magazine) without e-mail and the Internet. (I don't know how previous editors managed with only typewriters and

carbon paper!) And I am addicted to searching the Internet for information—I hold out hope that every Google search will reveal previously unknown treasures.

According to Marc Prensky, the author of *Digital Game-Based Learning* (McGraw-Hill, 2001), I am what he calls a Digital Immigrant (DI), someone not born into the digital world. Even though my fellow teachers and I may want to learn the new digital language, we will never lose our "accent," our foot in the past.

Prensky contends that the single biggest problem facing education today is that "our DI instructors, who speak an outdated language (that of the pre-digital age) are struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language." Today's students are Digital Natives (DNs) who represent the first students to grow up with computers, cell phones, video games, iPods, Web cams, e-mail, the Internet, instant messaging, and other ever-evolving technology.

So what are we DIs to do to reach students who expect connectivity and instantaneity in all media? Prensky advises DIs to accept that we need to learn to communicate in the language of our DN students, while adapting materials to their language. He recommends the design, creation, and use of sophisticated computer games that effectively engage and help students learn.

As art teachers, we need to learn as much as we can of the new digital language, accept help from our students to do so, and look for ways to utilize digital technology for learning in art. For our part, starting this month, *SchoolArts* is launching a digital edition, at www.schoolartsonline.com. We invite you to go online and sign up to receive your free companion digital edition.

In both our print and digital editions, we offer a number of approaches we hope will set you thinking about ways to use technology in your classroom. We have also created a blog at schoolarts.blogspot.com for you to share your success stories with us. ☺

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