

2017

## Korean Popular Music (K-Pop), Youth Fan Culture, And Art Education Curriculum

Aelim Kim  
*University of South Carolina*

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KOREAN POPULAR MUSIC (K-POP), YOUTH FAN CULTURE, AND ART  
EDUCATION CURRICULUM

by

Aelim Kim

Bachelor of Fine Arts  
Hongik University, 2004

Master of Arts  
Hongik University, 2007

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts in

Art Education

College of Arts and Sciences

University of South Carolina

2017

Accepted by:

Olga Ivashkevich, Director of Thesis

Minuette Floyd, Reader

Natalia Pilato, Reader

Cheryl L. Addy, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

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## DEDICATION

Dedicated to my parents and my husband

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Olga Ivashkevich, for bringing me into the field of art education. Her thoughtful guidance, supportive encouragement, and endless patience allowed me to start my academic journey in the United States. She has been the perfect role model of an intellectual scholar and passionate art educator. I learned not only what to read and how to write but also the virtues of being a good teacher for students. I also want to thank Dr. Minuette Floyd for creating a supportive environment in many aspects during my study. Her classes and workshops inspired me to broaden my views as an art educator. Moreover, as a member of my thesis committee, she provided insightful feedback and valuable comments. In addition, I am grateful to Dr. Natalia Pilato for her time and effort in helping me improve my thesis. I will never forget her kindness and encouragement as a committee member. Lastly, I wish to thank the students of the art exhibition club I worked with at Seoul Arts High School as well as their teacher, Ho-Chan Lee. Without their participation, this project could not have been done.

I was very fortunate to be able to study at the University of South Carolina. I met incredible people, gained precious experiences, and started my scholarly life. I give thanks to God for allowing me this valuable opportunity.

## ABSTRACT

The advent of digital technologies has allowed the multi-directional distribution of cultural products and blurred boundaries between national popular cultures. This sociocultural condition opens up a global public sphere for youth so that they can actively participate as part of a transcultural audience of popular culture and communicate with their peers from all over the world. K-Pop (Korean popular music) is an example of popular content that has reached across the globe and attained a worldwide fandom through digital media platforms. The K-Pop industry proactively applied various strategies to utilize this media condition and target global youth. Considering the cultural experience of today's youth, K-Pop can provide valuable educational opportunities in the art classroom.

To navigate the current condition of digital media, in Chapter 1, I explore K-Pop music videos as examples of digitally mediated popular culture that introduce a national cultural phenomenon into the global public sphere. I also examine how K-Pop penetrates youth culture worldwide and generates their participation. In Chapter 2, I describe a research project that I conducted in Seoul, South Korea. The process of this project included the following steps: (1) decoding K-Pop media texts, (2) encoding participants' own meanings through media production, and (3) sharing the finished media projects. Chapter 3 provides the primary findings from the research project, including the following: (1) the importance of teaching elements of media texts and digital languages, (2) the characteristics of media production by youth as understood through the framework

of “Smart Swarms” (Duncum, 2014), and (3) ambivalent attitudes toward critical issues in popular media texts. Through theoretical research, its application to a curriculum, and the curriculum’s implementation in a school setting, this project demonstrates how popular media texts can be used as effective educational resources for youth in the digital age.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
ABSTRACT .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH STATEMENT AND QUESTIONS.....	1
CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	3
K-POP AS A GLOBAL PHENOMENON: STRATEGIES AND DIFFUSION.....	4
BORDER-CROSSING K-POP: TRANSCULTURAL MEDIA FLOW AND THE PARTICIPATORY FAN CULTURE OF DIGITALLY MEDIATED YOUTH.....	8
IMAGES OF FEMALE IDOLS: GIRLS' GENERATION AND THE COMPROMISED FEMALE IDEAL VS. THE SUBVERSIVE, POWERFUL GIRLS OF 2NE1 .....	12
MONO-DIRECTIONAL WESTERNIZATION OR MULTI-DIRECTIONAL HYBRIDIZATION? .....	18
GRASSROOTS YOUTH FAN CULTURE OF K-POP .....	23
CHAPTER 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE SETTING AND CURRICULUM UNIT PLAN.....	28
PROJECT LOCATION: SEOUL ART HIGH SCHOOL.....	30
THE PARTICIPANTS .....	33
CURRICULUM OVERVIEW: EDUCATING CRITICAL PROSUMERS— K-POP MUSIC VIDEO AND VIDEO COLLAGE PRODUCTION.....	36
CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS OF CURRICULUM OUTCOMES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR ART EDUCATORS .....	51
TEACHING MEDIA ANALYSIS AND DIGITAL LANGUAGES .....	51



MEDIA PRODUCTION BY YOUTH AS “SMART SWARMS” .....	54
AMBIVALENT ATTITUDES TOWARD CRITICAL ISSUES IN K-POP .....	56
CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS FOR ART EDUCATORS .....	59
REFERENCES .....	63
APPENDIX A: CURRICULUM UNIT .....	67
APPENDIX B: LESSON PLANS .....	82
APPENDIX C: STORYBOARDS .....	96
APPENDIX D: ARTIST STATEMENTS .....	100
APPENDIX E: PERMISSION TO REPRINT .....	108

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Mind maps .....	40
Figure 2.2 Selected frames from video by Group 1 .....	45
Figure 2.3 Selected frames from video by Group 2 .....	46
Figure 2.4 Selected frames from video by Group 3 .....	47
Figure 2.5 Selected frames from video by Group 4 .....	48

## INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH STATEMENT AND QUESTIONS

As various digital media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook are utilized as popular channels to communicate globally, today's digital media content often combines numerous audiovisual elements simultaneously. The music video is one of the most popular forms of music enjoyed among today's youth. The popular music industry releases and distributes its products via YouTube to intentionally utilize the dynamic participation of Internet users. Since youth are the most active group who consume and produce digital media content and since they are skilled at adapting to digital technologies and languages, those cultural products are shared and re-created, acquiring new meanings and being understood in different contexts by global youth.

At this point, educational implications can be found regarding youth as active "prosumers" (Duncum, 2011) in a digitally globalized world. The current Korean popular music (K-Pop) industry is aimed at the global market, and their cultural content has successfully reached youth around the world through digital media. Regarding the pedagogical aspects of the interaction between popular media content and youth, the following research questions will be examined in this thesis: (a) What characteristics does K-Pop have as a form of global media content? (b) How has K-Pop extended its audience across borders and built up a global fandom? (c) In which ways do youth consume K-Pop and produce their own meanings? (d) What kinds of pedagogical approaches that utilize K-Pop as an educational resource can work? I hope the findings

regarding these questions will be of some help in mapping popular visual culture education in the digital age.

## CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK<sup>1</sup>

People today constantly experience elements of other cultures and communicate with each other through digital technologies, and youth are the group who most quickly adopt digital media into their everyday lives. According to a new study from the Pew Research Center (Lenhart, 2015), “aided by the convenience and constant access provided by mobile devices, especially smartphones, 92% of [American] teens report going online daily—including 24% who say they go online almost constantly” (p. 2). Increasingly, today’s youth spend more time communicating with each other through various social networking services or social media channels, such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest. As the global social environment of youth culture has changed—and with it, the way young people communicate and experience the world through digital media—there have also been changes in youth culture itself. Bennett (2004) describes a new, digitally mediated youth culture of “shared ideas” (p. 163) in which interactions take place not in physical spaces, such as on the street, in clubs, or at festivals, but in virtual spaces facilitated by the Internet.

With advances in digital technologies, “popular cultural signs and media images increasingly dominate our sense of reality, and the way we define ourselves and the world around us” (Strinati, 2004, p. 205). That is, popular culture, as experienced through digital media, constitutes a large part of the substance of everyday life for

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<sup>1</sup>Adapted from Kim, A. (2017). Accepted by *Pedagogical Globalization: Traditions, Contemporary Art, and Popular Culture of Korea* under the title, “How Does Digital Media Shape Today’s Youth? Transcultural K-Pop and Participatory Fan Culture.” Reprinted here with permission of publisher.

today's youth. Duncum (2002) emphasizes the importance of everyday exposure to popular imagery, which plays a major role in creating our "attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs" (p. 6). He notes that "everyday visual imagery is influential in structuring thought, feelings, and actions precisely because they are every day. It is because they are so ordinary that they are so significant" (p. 6). In this sense, examining the popular culture of the present moment through visual images can serve as a meaningful pedagogical opportunity in art education because by doing so, it is possible to understand how youth consume and negotiate globalized visual culture more deeply.

This chapter explores today's youth through K-Pop (Korean popular) music videos and considers the relationship of these media productions' transcultural flow to the patterns of participatory fan culture among global youth. Specifically, the chapter discusses how popular media reflect the living conditions and desires of today's youth, how global youth enjoy hybridized cultural products and communicate with each other through them, and what kind of pedagogical implications can be drawn from the global, growing phenomenon of the transcultural popularity of such media texts.

### **K-Pop as a Global Phenomenon: Strategies and Diffusion**

K-Pop is a genre of popular music in (South) Korea that is largely characterized by the audiovisual marketing strategy<sup>2</sup> of using music videos. During the initial stage of its emergence, around the early 2000s and before the advent of digital media technologies, K-Pop was mostly isolated within Korea. Since the mid-2000s, digital technologies like YouTube have allowed K-Pop to cross borders and reach all over the

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<sup>2</sup> I use the term "audiovisual" here to emphasize a distinctive feature of K-Pop—that it is mainly consumed via music videos, through which viewers consume K-Pop stars' dancing and fashion as well as the music itself.

world. During the 2000s, several Korean entertainment companies tried to market their singers to a global market.<sup>3</sup> Their efforts led to the expansion of K-Pop's listenership in East Asia, Europe, South America, North America, and the Muslim world (Korean Wave, n.d.). In 2011, "K-Pop music videos were seen 2.28 billion times from 235 countries" ("thunerstix," 2012). The strategies employed by K-Pop producers for the creation and dissemination of compelling material can be summarized as follows: diversity of audiovisual content, systematic training of singers, synchronized dance formations, key movements in the choreography, and rapid distribution via the Internet (K-Pop, n.d.).

As a prolific YouTube user has said of K-Pop, "I thought it was great, just like colorful chaos. It can be called colorful chaos."<sup>4</sup> One aspect of his expression, "colorful," is the way most K-Pop music videos present multicultural and hybrid elements in their music production and visualization. The French audiovisual organization the Institut National de l'Audiovisuel defines K-Pop as a "fusion of synthesized music, sharp dance routines and fashionable, colorful outfits combining bubblegum pop with the musical elements of electro, disco, rock, R&B, and hip-hop" (Rousse-Marquet, 2012). In addition to these international music styles, to create multicultural products for the global market, many K-Pop entertainment companies hire or contract producers, composers, and choreographers from around the world (Park, 2013). To foster the ideal multicultural image seen in many idol groups, the use of multiple languages also seems crucial. Many members are from foreign countries—for

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<sup>3</sup> YG Entertainment, SM Entertainment, and JYP Entertainment are three representative entertainment companies in South Korea. For more information about their strategies for globalization, refer to Oh (2013), Shin and Kim (2013), and Shin (2009).

<sup>4</sup> This comment is excerpted from "YouTubers React to K-Pop" by Fine Brothers Entertainment. Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekJ-ldOD0TQ&feature=share&list=SP23C220A2C5EC0FDE> for the full video.

example, the United States and China—and are scouted from auditions abroad to become future members of idol groups. In particular, many of them are native English speakers who are able to more naturally and fluently sing and rap in English, which is important for K-Pop performances, since they often blend Korean and English. This multicultural method of production and the hybrid characteristics of K-Pop help popularize it in the global market.

Idol groups are a dominant form of K-Pop ensembles, consisting of multiple members who are given standardized training by entertainment companies, with each member performing a specific role in well-ordered choreography that includes a visual hook—a repeated dance sequence that matches the melody and lyrics of the song.<sup>5</sup> Visually captivating images of beautiful young men and women executing tightly choreographed dances are one of the strong elements of K-Pop performances onstage and in music videos. Many entertainment companies in South Korea initially contract children or teens who are eager to be members of a pop idol group. These young people are trained in a strictly regimented environment in which they learn the various practices that will allow them to “be a star,” such as singing, choreography, foreign languages, and the diet and exercise to have the right look and physique (usually Westernized body proportions are preferred). According to the *Wall Street Journal*, “management firms pay for everything; leading talent house SM Entertainment has pegged the cost of rearing a single idol at around \$3 million, which for [the popular group] Girls’ Generation would be multiplied by nine” (Yang, 2012). To debut as a member of an idol group, budding

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<sup>5</sup> It is hard to find a proper reference that can explain why K-Pop idol groups have large numbers of members. However, it is indisputable that this system allows idol groups to gain more fans and additional revenue (for example, through members’ individual activities and advertising deals) so that the companies increase the possibility of generating maximum profits.



performers need to learn to conform to public tastes and mores, not only in their appearance but also in their personality or persona. Their contracts require that they learn how to behave in public, be fashionable, express themselves in a unique and appealing way, and sometimes even get plastic surgery. After they debut, the company controls every move in their daily lives. They smile the way they are taught, dance the way they are trained, and say what they are told.

Finally, since Psy's "Gangnam Style" music video (Park & Yoo, 2012) spread around the globe in 2012 via YouTube, new K-Pop songs have come to be routinely uploaded onto YouTube to be broadcast to a worldwide audience at the same time they are released on domestic Korean television. Often, a company officially announces that their group will reunite and release a new album and restarts promotional activities (Ramstad, 2012). Leading groups like Girls' Generation upload teaser music videos and posters on YouTube and other websites in the same fashion as movie trailers before the release of their official albums. These materials quickly circulate all over the world online. This distribution system has changed young people's way of enjoying popular culture and, in particular, music; contemporary teenagers enjoy music not merely by listening to it but also by viewing it through digital channels like YouTube. In addition, they freely communicate with each other about the music, both visually and aurally. Those in today's digital generation actively share videos they like and even videos they have produced themselves. In this respect, the consumption of K-Pop is an active rather than passive cultural practice, furthering K-Pop's strong influence on youth in many countries. Thus, an inquiry into the aesthetic and sociocultural influences of the K-Pop phenomenon on its teenage fans seems useful. In the next section, I will examine the

digitally mediated distribution system of K-Pop, which is a key factor in the relationship between today's youth and one of the most influential contemporary popular cultural forms.

### **Border-Crossing K-Pop: Transcultural Media Flow and the Participatory Fan Culture of Digitally Mediated Youth**

As examined in the previous section, the strategies for the promotion of K-Pop depend on the dissemination channels opened by digital technologies that allow cultural products to easily cross borders and be shared by fans worldwide. Oh and Lee (2013) explore the relationship between media technologies and the birth of new music genres. Following Hirsch (1971), they explain how FM radio stations were crucial in spreading rock-and-roll music all over the world and how television, particularly the MTV (Music Television) network, drove the fame of Michael Jackson, highlighting his dancing and fashion as well as his songs. Similarly, K-Pop can be considered not only a new music genre but also a new kind of genre based on innovative digital tools that takes advantage of young people's fast adaptation to new technologies. Using various digital devices, today's youth are more connected than ever before to the world beyond the physical spaces where they live. Youth cultures are "cultures of shared ideas ... in the virtual spaces facilitated by the Internet" (Bennett, 2004, p. 163). This is significant for our understanding of how today's youth enjoy cultural products, obtain pleasure from them, and imbue them with their own meanings. Jung (2014) states that fans play a significant role as promoters of the K-Pop industry, dovetailing with the distinctive K-Pop distribution system through free streaming music and video platforms like YouTube, which allow it to reach mainstream markets in different countries directly, crossing

cultural borders, and to be distributed by local youth fans in multidirectional ways. This creates cultural divergence and ultimately disrupts the mono-directional flows of global cultural industries previously dominated by Western culture.

Several YouTube users stated that this opportunity for multidirectional communication via YouTube is “the best part of YouTube.”<sup>6</sup> One explained his familiarity with the website as follows: “It’s like I was born into it. I don’t know what a great thing it is because I’ve always had global outreach.” Other YouTube users also strongly recognized its global aspect:

It’s definitely [a] surreal feeling, especially when we meet these fans, [and] they don’t even speak English ... it means you can have these friendships and connections with people all over the globe ... Now you have the opportunity to just be huge because of the availability of it being all over the world ... I was like, “There’s no way people in Hong Kong watch my videos.” And to go to a sold-out stadium in Hong Kong is like, “Wow!” We are all talking about the same 10-minute video on the Internet that I made in my bedroom in Canada that you watched in Hong Kong, and then you told me that you shared it with your friend in Singapore?<sup>7</sup>

They also rated the multi-directionality of communication on YouTube as opposed to the limitations of conventional mass media like television; as one said, “It just makes you realize how ridiculous TV is, when everything’s just blocked behind channels. You’re

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<sup>6</sup> They responded to this question, “K-Pop is helped massively by this global platform we all make a career on called YouTube. How do you feel knowing people can watch your content all around the world when that’s not the case for things like television?” See “YouTubers React to K-Pop #3” by Fine Brothers Entertainment (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XuSYtAsMxfY>).

<sup>7</sup> Excerpted from the previous video above.

trapped in this physical object. It's so crazy.”<sup>8</sup> This reflects how international fans pursue active, public participation in a cultural phenomenon like K-Pop and expect and rely on a media platform that can make it possible.

Jung (2014) focuses on “transnational cultural distribution practice” as a feature of the participatory youth culture that drives online K-Pop circulation. According to her, “K-Pop has been widely circulated via new technologies such as fan-blogs, peer-to-peer websites, video-sharing websites, micro-blogging and mobile Internet” (p. 114). She insists that participatory youth culture is “economically substantial” and that this new type of transnational distribution system reemphasizes youth as “active agents in the transnational circulation of popular culture products” (Jung, 2014, p. 115). Indeed, on YouTube, there are countless videos related to K-Pop produced by youth themselves. The most common form is “reaction videos,” which exhibit three basic characteristics: (1) a main character, protagonist, or personality, playing a kind of guide or MC role,<sup>9</sup> introduces the video s/he is going to watch and shares his/her excitement; (2) s/he displays a small screen beside her/his face and plays the video; (3) s/he shows her/his feelings and thoughts about the video while it is playing on the small screen. This format enables the audience to watch the music video simultaneously with another fan's reaction to it, sharing emotions and thoughts among the whole community of viewers. Moreover, the international audience can easily communicate with the producers of the reaction videos (for example, by leaving feedback or requests for future videos). These YouTube users are also very often interested in connecting with different people from around the

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<sup>8</sup> Excerpted from the previous video above.

<sup>9</sup> Due to the nature of one-man media production, the producer usually also plays the role of the main character. Most videos of this format are shot in the producer/main character's personal spaces, like a bedroom.

world (i.e., of different cultures, genders, ethnicities, and generations) and in their distinct reactions to the material. Therefore, they often create specific forms of reaction videos with titles like “Non-K-Pop fans react...,” “K-Pop reaction—Guy Edition,” “Black people react to K-Pop,” or “My grandma reacts to...” Another famous form of youth-led cultural practice among K-Pop fans on YouTube are “dance cover videos.” Many teenagers or young adults form their own dance teams and practice dances imitating their favorite K-Pop groups; sometimes they dance in the classroom, showing off to their classmates for fun, in gyms or auditoriums for events like homecoming, or even in public as professional dancers. K-Pop dance covers have led to the emergence of phenomena like K-Pop dance video games,<sup>10</sup> flash mobs,<sup>11</sup> and more broadly, dance festivals and contests all over the world. Another example of participatory youth cultural practices in this context includes translation teams for non-Korean-speaking fans. These teams translate videos of their K-Pop idols into various languages through a collective work process. This kind of active user participation further blurs national borders and language barriers within the globalized youth culture.

K-Pop music videos can thus be regarded as a medium that reflects the conditions and desires of today’s youth within the transnational cultural flow that characterizes their lived experiences. Thoroughly examining and analyzing specific idol groups and the cultural productions related to them help to further our understanding of the K-Pop phenomenon and the pleasures and desires of its young fans. In the next section, I briefly

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<sup>10</sup> K-Pop dance games are a kind of dance medley by a group of participants. The host plays refrains from K-Pop songs, and the participants must follow the exact dances that they see on the music videos. To watch an example video, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoy8EHvfvGc>.

<sup>11</sup> Flash mobs are performances by groups of fans, usually with dozens of participants. To watch the example video, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JW11FqbWhaA>.

sketch the landscape of competition among K-Pop girl groups, which is one of the most prominent issues in the contemporary K-Pop music scene. In addition, through the juxtaposition of the two most popular K-Pop girl groups, 2NE1 and Girls' Generation, and their fan cultures, I examine how popular culture mirrors the life conditions and desires of today's young women around the world and how global youth negotiate the consumption of these cultural products under a transcultural media regime.

**Images of Female Idols: Girls' Generation and the Compromised Female Ideal vs.  
the Subversive, Powerful Girls of 2NE1**

Howard (2014) used the word “packaging” to express the methods and strategies of the prevalent business model in the South Korean music industry that emerged in the 1990s. He argues that the first distinctively “idol” K-Pop groups were established in the late 1990s when the first Korean boy band, H.O.T. by SM Entertainment, achieved great success in the domestic market. The success of H.O.T. provided a formula for other entertainment companies to create idol groups, and many similar boy bands and girl groups subsequently launched.<sup>12</sup> During this period, the so-called first generation of “packaged” girl groups, such as Fin.K.L. and S.E.S., attained success and stimulated the market to mass-produce numerous latecomers that mimicked them. In the next decade, despite the large number of girl groups on the market, they took a largely standard form and image. Maliangkay (2015) claims that many music videos represented two typical female images, “a sweet and innocent girl (angelic) that stirs a sense of protection and is non-threatening to men” and “a provocative and sensual femme fatale (seductress) that

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<sup>12</sup> In his article, “Mapping K-Pop Past and Present: Shifting the Modes of Exchange,” Howard examined the Korean pop industry chronologically from a socio-economic perspective.

threatens men with sex appeal as a weapon” (p. 94).<sup>13</sup> The former type, “angelic girls,” include, for example, members of Fin.K.L. and S.E.S., who were called *yo-jeong* (fairy), implying the fantasy of an innocent, beautiful young girl presenting a pretty doll image without sex appeal. Meanwhile, other girl groups and female singers, such as Um Jung-Hwa, Babyvox, and Chakra, fostered images of oversexualized femmes fatales. In short, until the mid-2000s, female images represented in K-Pop idol groups were binary and stereotypical.

Diversification into more varied and hybridized female representations began in the late 2000s, leaving behind the simple dichotomy of the older period and moving into a complex and multidimensional representative economy that reflected both the desires of today’s young females and images of ideal young women tailored to public demand. Lin and Tong (2008) explore “imaginaries of Asian femininities” by examining “modern Asian women with both old and new qualities” (p. 105). They argue that most Asian women have traditionally been under a Confucian social order that places women in a subordinate position to men, similar to the binary system of gender roles and relationships that is driven by the tradition of European Enlightenment. In their empirical study of contemporary Korean drama and its Asian women viewers, Lin and Tong found that as many Asian women as men receive higher education and participate in the wage economy, moving beyond the traditional Confucianist framework and improving their position compared to women of previous generations. Despite this, Lin and Tong found from their informants that many Asian women still tend to be attracted to “lost traditional feminine virtues” (p. 106), such as attractive appearance and

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<sup>13</sup> Maliangkay cited this explanation of female images quoted from Kim Hoon-soon’s study on Korean music videos from the mid-2000s.

comforting/subtle/courteous/amiable/delicate/thoughtful personal qualities, even while they still pursue the development of strong and independent characters. Therefore, Lin and Tong conclude, modern Asian women “identify with a ‘hybridized modern woman’s image’ combining the traditional virtues and new women qualities” (p. 109) and argue that “this kind of ‘ideal perfect modern Asian woman’ seems to embody the deepest desire of many Asian women to have the best of both worlds (i.e., career and love/family)” (p. 110). To explore how these ideal female images are reflected in K-Pop when viewed as a popular cultural product, I now turn to the examination of music videos from Girls’ Generation and 2NE1, which represent two predominant female images in K-Pop that have been mass produced and successfully marketed throughout Asia and the West.

### **Girls’ Generation**

Performers of Girls’ Generation, formed by SM Entertainment in 2007, are an example of the “hybridized” ideal female image of women who are hyperfeminine and hyperattractive and live cosmopolitan, urban lifestyles. In the initial stage of the group’s career, it pursued an image of pure, cute, and passive girls who are eager for *oppa*’s<sup>14</sup> love. After the success of their first album, *Into the New World*, in 2007, they started to diversify their characters and play a variety of stereotypical female images. The nine girls have been represented as delicate girls who love dreamy guys (“Kissing You,” 2007), lively cheerleaders who support football players (“Oh!,” 2010), passive mannequins who are waiting for their loves (“Gee,” 2010), hot taxi drivers who are ready

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<sup>14</sup> “*Oppa*” is a term that literally means the “older brother (of a female speaker)” in Korea; however, while girls/women use this term when addressing an older brother, they also use “*oppa*” to address older male friends in a way that shows politeness, affection, and sometimes flirtation. This term is frequently referenced in Korean pop culture in general, such as K-drama and K-Pop.



to serve male customers (“Mr. Taxi,” 2011), sexy goddesses of fortune who can grant men’s wishes (“Tell Me Your Wish (Genie),” 2011), bubbly hip-hop dancers who want to have fun with handsome boys (“I Got a Boy,” 2013), femme fatale nurses who can destroy male patients (“Mr. Mr.,” 2014), and cheerful, pure blonde girls who enjoy partying together on an exotic beach (“Party,” 2015).

Girls’ Generation has built a male fandom by speaking directly to male audiences. In their music videos, members of the group often stare at and talk to the camera lens (and thus the viewer) as though they are speaking to someone on the other side of the screen. This effect removes the barrier between the fantasy space of the image and the real world, and the audience becomes immersed in the video and the music.<sup>15</sup>

Epstein and Turnbull (2014) examined music videos from various K-Pop girl groups and analyzed visual images and lyrics, sequence by sequence. Scrutinizing the video for “Oh!” (2010), they reveal several specific ways in which Girls’ Generation represents a “strongly gendered image” (p. 319) as suggested above. First, their choreography includes several *aegyo* poses, which evoke a “calculated performance of cuteness that infantilizes those (most frequently female) who engage in it in the hope of gaining the favor of a superior or attracting romantic attention” (p. 319). In addition, “the pairing of football players with cheerleaders emphasizes gender differentiation as well” (Epstein and Turnbull, 2014, p. 319).

While seemingly cute and even infantile, Girls’ Generation members show their confidence as beautiful and successful modern women. They highlight their femininity

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<sup>15</sup> This kind of camerawork is often used in the media, including in advertisements, simulation games, and movies, to draw the audience into the scene. For an example, see the Japanese dating simulation game, *Love Plus* by Konami and the 2013 Internet advertisement by Gillette Korea®.

as a key feature of their success as global stars. In the *The Boys* album (2011), they show their proud, sassy, and chic attitudes via black costumes and their overtly sexual, powerful dance. Thus, even though the members of Girls' Generation generally play extremely girlish, "pure" female characters, sometimes they present themselves as independent women who can take the lead in their relationships with men because they know that their feminine attractiveness can function as a weapon and leave men disarmed. In this way, Girls' Generation performances reflect two contradictory images: a modern, successful, and powerful Asian woman and a traditional, cute, and submissive female.

## **2NE1**

In contrast to Girls' Generation, 2NE1, a four-member girl group formed by YG Entertainment in 2009, more definitively embraces a powerful, modern female image. They display strong confidence, and sometimes even arrogance, in the use of hip-hop culture and "swag,"<sup>16</sup> and they embrace hip-hop as part of their musical background.<sup>17</sup> According to the interview with Robert M. Poole (2012), Teddy Park, a Korean-American producer of 2NE1, always wondered about the lack of Asian acts in the world music scene, and he said he now works to make Korean hip-hop a big wave in the mainstream music industry. In addition, Park emphasized the attitude of Korean women, saying, "Especially for this country, we needed women to stand up" (Poole, 2012). Poole added, "It's an attitude that may translate well overseas, where outspoken female artists

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<sup>16</sup> The word "swagger" is frequently used among hip-hop musicians and their lyrics (for example, the word was used in rapper Jay-Z's song "All I Need" in 2001). Among 1,385 definition entries, the top-rated Urban Dictionary definition for "swag" is "appearance, style, or the way he or she presents themselves." For more information about this word, visit <http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/swag>

<sup>17</sup> YG Entertainment is one of the most predominant entertainment companies that has pursued hip-hop music since its establishment in 1996. For more information, visit <http://www.ygfamily.com/index.asp?LANGDIV=E>

such as Rihanna, Lady Gaga, and Katy Perry are wildly successful” (Poole, 2012). Even within the strong, distinct image of 2NE1, nevertheless, the group also embodies various personae as young, modern females who are honest about their feelings while living in a globalized, cosmopolitan world. 2NE1 shows a far different attitude to romance and men than Girls’ Generation. They do not yearn for *oppa*’s love, do not use *aegyo* gestures, and do not wear excessively feminine clothes; instead, in their music, they tend to bluntly address uncomfortable issues regarding (hetero)sexual relationships and their emotions about them. For instance, members alternately take on the roles of an auto-racer looking for revenge against her ex-boyfriend who cheated on her (“Go Away,” 2010), witches who were abandoned by men (“It Hurts,” 2010), and rebellious gang members (“Ugly,” 2011); in another video, they even state that they do not care about men (“I Don’t Care,” 2009).

One unique music video from this group, “Hate You” (2011), takes the form of a short anime clip. In it, the group displays their characters as independent, strong women who take on the role of bounty hunters seeking a wanted man. They find him at a pub and fight to capture him. Finally, they shoot the fugitive, and he transforms into a monster: His arms grow longer and attack the group until eventually one of them severs his extended arm, another blows him up, and he dies. The act of cutting off the man’s extended arm might be interpreted as evoking Judith and the head of Holofernes.<sup>18</sup> In the music video, 2NE1 uses aggressive, conventionally masculine weapons such as swords, guns, baseball bats, and firebombs. They ride motorcycles, race cars, and a Hummer.

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<sup>18</sup> This story is from the deuterocanonical book of Judith and describes a beautiful heroine killing a strong man. It became one of the most frequently repeated motifs in fine art through many centuries, connoting the power of women.

They “speak out” through megaphones. They often glare at the camera, raising their eyebrows and exposing tattoos. They wear pants decorated with studs, rather than conventional miniskirts. 2NE1 presents threatening and powerful female images, and unsurprisingly, a young, female audience comprises the great majority of their fandom. Thus, 2NE1 shows very new and unique characteristics of femininity in South Korea.

The audiovisual strategies used by these two all-female groups serve as examples of how current conditions of media production targeting specific audiences are intertwined and how cultural products and consumer demand are connected. The music videos from Girls’ Generation and 2NE1 considered here show diverse images of young women in the sociocultural context of contemporary Asia. Building upon this, the following section will use these two groups to discuss their transculturally oriented, culturally hybridized features and the participatory cultural practices of global youth in relation to K-Pop.

### **Mono-Directional Westernization or Multi-Directional Hybridization?**

Central to the representations of women in the music videos considered above are the issues of transculturality and cultural hybridization. In these videos, it is easy to notice how members of these girl groups have Westernized features, particularly in terms of their appearance, fashion, and cultural context. Girls’ Generation members are frequently presented as stereotypically attractive females in the terms of Western (mainly American) pop culture<sup>19</sup> and are surrounded by visual elements that evoke that culture,

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<sup>19</sup> In the music video “Twinkle” released by T.T.S., a unit group formed by three members of Girls’ Generation, the members act like typical female celebrities, such as Hollywood actresses, sexy rock stars, and musical divas on Broadway in the manner of Broadway musicals. In “Hoot,” nine members mimic sexy American spy movies like the *Austin Powers* movie series. They dyed their hair, and all the costumes were either sensual retro ensembles or futuristic tight all-in-one suits. The introductory scene of the video plainly mimics a James Bond movie with a male character in a black suit and bowtie with a gun.

such as the iconic costumes of cheerleaders featured in “Oh” (2010) and the yellow-and-black-checked uniforms featured in “Mr. Taxi” (2011). Sometimes, exotic objects that are hardly seen in South Korea are used as props—for instance, a jukebox in a 1950s-style American diner, seen in the music video for “Dancing Queen” (2012). Girls’ Generation’s latest album *Lion Heart* (2015) boasts a 1950s pin-up girl style “with the gals rocking vintage dresses with old-school-inspired ’dos” (Benjamin, 2015).

2NE1 is also clearly influenced by Western culture but in different ways from Girls’ Generation. They show a strong sense of the defiant attitude often associated with Western hip-hop subcultures, while Girls’ Generation aims to be looked at as queens of fashionable society. One of 2NE1’s strategies to create their unique style is by absorbing cutting-edge fashion trends into their own image and group identity. For example, in the music video “Fire,” fashion-forward and internationally trendy items such as retro-style jackets with power shoulders and futuristic sunglasses are used to give the four members their stylized visual identities. Representative of 2NE1’s tactical utilization of global fashion trends, the group later collaborated with Adidas on a line of shoes by American fashion designer Jeremy Scott,<sup>20</sup> who was impressed by the music video of “Fire” and who adopted CL, the leader of 2NE1, as his muse for the line. These kinds of hybrid representations are not limited to these two groups: In “Holler” (2014), by the group T.T.S., various screen effects, such as English speech bubbles saying “GORGEOUS!” and “STUNNING!,” are used and presented in a similar manner to those in American comic books.

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<sup>20</sup> Jeremy Scott is an American designer who has worked for Adidas and Moschino. For more information about his shoe design collaboration with 2NE1, visit <http://www.mtv.com/news/2515433/jeremy-scott-2ne1/>.

The Westernized visual images of these two groups might seem reasonable in terms of their music, as Girls' Generation show strong influences from Western bubblegum pop (Benjamin, 2015) and electropop (Covington, 2014) while 2NE1 take inspiration from American hip-hop, as mentioned above. However, these K-Pop groups deliberately use Westernized styles to create hybrid images for global consumption and profit, which differs from the previously Western-dominated Korean media industry. According to Park (2013), the global marketing strategy of K-Pop is dominated by the “G → L → G” model, that is, “globalization of creativity, localization of musical contents and performers, and global dissemination of musical contents through [social networking sites]” (p. 28). Park emphasizes the “internal process of modifying the original creative work to make it more viral to the actual listeners, whoever and wherever they may be,” and claims that “[t]his is not the same as merely copying universal trends in global popular music” (p. 20). In the same vein, Unger (2015) shows how visual presentations by K-Pop girl groups make use of Western conventions with an ethic of “K-Pop pastiche” (p. 27). Therefore, according to Unger, “these videos are also a site of the transnational cultural exchange of hybridity” (as cited in Mori, 2009, p. 27).

Meanwhile, this blended cultural production sometimes transcends its various elements. Iwabuchi (2002) suggests the concept of *mukokuseki* or “statelessness” to explain the successful worldwide distribution of Japanese cultural products, which he claims are also “culturally odorless,” a quality that helps them appeal to a global market (p. 28). Applying Iwabuchi's concept of statelessness, Jung (2010) discusses the “hybridity of contemporary South Korean popular culture and the transcultural desire of audiences in the various regional markets” (p. 4) and confirms the hybridized aspects of

Korean cultural products by conducting empirical studies of audiences in Japan, Singapore, and the West. She insists that the hybridity of contemporary Korean popular culture should be understood as transculturality. She agrees with Welsch's (1999) argument that "transculturality" is the most appropriate term to describe today's culture. Welsch argues that "there is no longer anything absolutely 'foreign' or exclusively 'our own'" and emphasizes that "the concept of transculturality can describe both the homogenizing tendencies of globalization and the heterogenizing aspects of local desires and particularities" (Jung, 2010, p. 17). In this context, *mukokuseki* implies the transcultural hybridity of popular culture beyond "mere" statelessness or odorlessness, and hybridized K-Pop music videos are understood as cultural products targeting the global market and transnational consumption by global youth.

Adding to the hybridized and transcultural images mentioned above, another noticeable feature of K-Pop music videos is the use of virtual space. K-Pop videos are rarely shot outdoors or in everyday living spaces. Spaces often look very futuristic, suggestive of science fiction movies or iconic stage sets. Moreover, various marketing/PR material on the Internet advertises its "product" using Photoshop and special effects techniques. Such unreal virtual spaces make their protagonists look like fabulous, flawless, imaginary people who live in a fantastic fictional world beyond real life altogether—let alone any specific nationality. In the media products in which they are represented, K-Pop stars do not look like real people but like perfect dolls in virtual worlds. Both they and their backgrounds imply a kind of *mukokuseki* that allows them to hybridize enormously disparate elements simultaneously. This strategy of blending different cultures or going beyond one specific culture can appeal to people from a range

of cultural backgrounds, and contemporary digital youth are especially attracted to crossing national and cultural borders.

Additional aspects of the hybridization of K-Pop videos can be seen in the work of other idol groups: blurring borders between nationalities/ethnicities (in the representations of performers), languages (in lyrics), and gender (with the use of ambiguous gender expressions). For example, many male artists have feminine faces, with makeup and pale skin, but at the same time frequently perform fierce dances to a driving, masculine beat. Some groups have members who are visualized as epicene beauties<sup>21</sup> while others are hypersexualized. Many groups have foreign members from different countries and members who speak multiple languages; they are often called by foreign names.<sup>22</sup> BigBang, one of the most popular boy bands, frequently casts White women as their opposites. In the music video for “Bae Bae”<sup>23</sup> (2015), the five male members of BigBang are initially depicted as romantically involved with five White women, and by the end, all ten of them are portrayed wearing traditional Korean clothes on an asteroid, under a romantic moon. This song also intentionally blends musical and visual cultural elements. It is common for backgrounds of many music videos to evoke “odorless” spaces with no particular cultural identity while at the same time clearly representing different cultures. For example, 2NE1 shows a denationalized virtual future world in their music video for “Come Back Home” (2014), while their video for “Clap

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<sup>21</sup> For example, with short hair, a boy-like voice, and a boyish attitude, Amber Liu, a female member of f(x), offers an androgynous image unlike any other female members of the same group, who typically fill hyper-feminine roles. Liu has a multicultural background as well: Although Liu lives in South Korea, she was born in the United States to Taiwanese parents.

<sup>22</sup> Henry Lau, for example, a Chinese-Canadian idol member of Super Junior-M, is fluent in English, Mandarin, Korean, French, Spanish, and Cantonese.

<sup>23</sup> Many of BigBang’s music videos have starred White actors, models, etc. and were shot in the U.S. To watch more examples, find BigBang’s music videos “Blue” (2012), “Bad Boy” (2012), and “Loser” (2015) on YouTube.



Your Hands” (2010) blends various cultural identities in fast rotation: teenagers on backstreets with graffiti, ninjas inside Asian architecture, Amazon women in a jungle, and dancers in virtual space. Moreover, most idol group members achieve a somewhat transracial appearance by dying their hair unnatural colors, wearing makeup to look like anime characters, and even undergoing plastic surgery to eliminate specific features of the Asian face.<sup>24</sup> Many YouTube users point out that many K-Pop stars look like manga characters, implying that global youth accept the images of K-Pop idols as transcultural iconic characters in a similar way to the “deodorized” export products of Sony Television and internationally successful anime, such as Pokémon. As Iwabuchi (2002) suggests, this transnational characteristic of K-Pop music videos is part of what helped K-Pop groups penetrate the global market and win the affinity of global youth, as this transculturality resonates with the habits of today’s globalized youth and the digital-technology-mediated youth culture.

### **Grassroots Youth Fan Culture of K-Pop**

Alvermann, Moon, and Hagood (1999) emphasize the importance for youth to become critical new media consumers and construct their own meanings by communicating with their peers. Many K-Pop youth fans use YouTube and other social media outlets to engage in dialogue about visual representations, narrative, aesthetics, and other aspects of their favorite music videos. For example, some YouTube users have discussed the use of White female models in BigBang’s music video “Bae Bae” (2015). One such user stated: “It annoys me how the girls in the video are white... Stick to having Korean girls in Korean pop videos—represent them as beautiful rather than

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<sup>24</sup> Many idol stars dye their hair unrealistic colors such as green, violet, or even rainbow colors, and they often wear contact lenses with unrealistic colors as well.

swapping them out for the western standard of beauty like the majority of popular music video [*sic*].”<sup>25</sup> Young people from various ethnic backgrounds, countries, and genders all over the world have expressed their opinions on this and other questions regarding K-Pop videos, including exchanging opinions on meanings and plots. For instance, the music video of 2NE1’s “Go Away” (2010) is still drawing an active discussion. One user expresses the following opinion: “For those who are asking if CL died at the end. This is just based on my opinion. The old her (the weak, sad, beaten CL) died and the new her (independent, strong and happy CL) came which means she already move on from the guy.”<sup>26</sup> An unusually high number of people, 126, have responded to this comment to agree or disagree; as one user says, “It’s so amazing how everyone can see different sides of things watching the same video! Music rules, just like 2NE1!”<sup>27</sup>

These examples of active social interactions among YouTube users above show how digitally mediated youth actively consume and negotiate popular culture and share their knowledge and reactions with other youth all over the world through the web. According to Moss (1993), young people use “discussions of texts to understand their position in the audience, to construct their knowledge of the text genre, and to negotiate what constituted [emotion] in the group’s minds” (as cited in Alvermann et al., 1999, p. 30). Similarly, Lewis (1998) stresses the importance of “audience discussion of popular culture texts in classroom” because “the popular culture of young people is not about individual voices and identities. At the local level, in classrooms and communities, popular culture is related to social and cultural group identities, allegiances, and

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<sup>25</sup> To see these comments, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKD03uPVD-Q>

<sup>26</sup> To see the comment, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yW13T2sfKg>, and find the username “Kookie Llama.”

<sup>27</sup> To see these comments, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yW13T2sfKg>.

exclusions” (as cited in Alvermann et al., 1999, p. 30). Various social media channels such as YouTube, blogs, and fan websites provide youth with a space to discuss their favorite topics related to popular culture productions such as K-Pop.

Besides actively consuming popular culture, many young people also take on the role of digital media producers. Duncum (2011) brings the concept of prosumer (a blend of consumer and producer) into the field of art education while examining the creative activities of youth on YouTube. This term was first used by a futurologist Toffler (1980) to describe contemporary “youth who are producing their own imagery drawn from their consumption of popular mass media” (as cited in Duncum, 2011, p. 25). Other scholars have also employed this term to discuss how young people “use new technologies to appropriate, resample, remix, and rework existing cultural artifacts, images, and messages” and the significance of these practices for productive citizenship and creative activism (Ivashkevich, 2015, p. 42).

Beyond the consumers’ positions, many youth fans who enjoy K-Pop produce their own media content and share them with other fans via YouTube. Existing K-Pop content functions as an attractive cultural resource for youth to borrow because it has a considerable cross-cultural fan base. For example, Simon and Martina,<sup>28</sup> a popular YouTube channel, shows the possibilities of how personal users’ media content can create a social sphere in which youth all over the world can meet each other and communicate about the grassroots media content. Simon and Martina, a Canadian couple living in Korea, create videos about various culturally relevant subjects such as food, social issues, popular culture, and tourism, including a large number of videos about K-

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/user/simonandmartina>

Pop. For example, in their video about “Gangnam Style” by Psy,<sup>29</sup> Simon and Martina talk about the strengths and aesthetics of the music video and show their own Gangnam Style production, including playfully reenacting some scenes and creating their own lyrics. They also discuss Psy’s dance, symbolism, visual effects, and the song’s lyrics in a parodic, humorous manner. This video is a clear example of the transcultural prosumption of K-Pop, as it is remixed and reinterpreted via Westernized lenses by a couple who resides in Korea. Their familiarity with Korean culture allows them to grasp the subtle cultural connotations of Psy’s music video while maintaining their own cultural identity as outsiders in their own remake, which creates a transcultural flow of K-Pop fan production.

However, it is necessary to address that personal media productions also can be risky because of their ability to display unfiltered, personalized cultural biases and stereotypes. Simon and Martina sometimes show their inevitable limitations as White prosumers of Korean media and culture, especially when they discuss different cultural aspects of Korea. In the video about “One of a Kind” by G-Dragon,<sup>30</sup> they mock the singer’s accent, making fun of his use of English in the song. In the same video, they make jokes about G-Dragon’s appearance. This example shows that without critical interrogation by both producers and viewers, this openness can negatively affect youth’s attitudes toward and value of different cultures even while active participation in media productions offer expanded channels for multidirectional communication all over the world.

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9J8U4YcosE>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QptkdC989Us>

K-Pop can serve as an effective channel for bringing young people into a cross-cultural, globalized public sphere, as it is a transnational popular culture product that encourages spontaneous participation among youth from all around the world. However, both K-Pop videos themselves and their playful prosumer reappropriations often contain elements of sexism, racism, and cultural toadyism (Western cultural domination) that need to be critically examined and addressed. In the art classroom, K-Pop pedagogy can offer unique opportunities to engage youth in both critical analyses of K-Pop videos and the mindful production of their own creative responses, remixes, and reappropriations of K-Pop texts in collaboration with their peers. Therefore, in Chapter 2, the research project that I conducted in Seoul in 2016 will be described. It will provide concrete examples of applying the previously examined theoretical framework to youth in a school setting.

## CHAPTER 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE SETTING AND CURRICULUM UNIT PLAN

As explored in the previous chapter, music videos are one of the most powerful cultural resources that can influence today's youth, who are surrounded by digitally mediated visual culture. Youth actively produce as well as consume forms of popular culture using digital devices and software, and they also share videos through the Internet. Utilizing this spontaneous participatory fan culture, music videos became one of the most effective media to promote cultural products in the global cultural production industry, including K-Pop. For this reason, K-Pop music videos not only represent the life conditions and desires of youth who are its primary consumers, but they also operate as a platform for role models who can influence the fashion, attitudes, and tastes of youth, as many fans follow their stars. Needless to say, this form of media production affects youth in developing their identities, building their lifestyles, and constructing their worldviews. Because of the tremendous influence of digital media, K-Pop music videos can be useful pedagogical resources that are familiar to youth; furthermore, when used in this way, they can increase students' participation in educational activities and improve students' critical presumption of popular media, critical media text reading, and creative meaning-making.

Meanwhile, due to the limitation of being products that have to be commercially consumed, music videos tend to engage in materialistic marketing strategies. To attract public attention and maximize their profits, many music video producers often choose

violent and sexually suggestive content rather than creating something innovative or experimental. Many researchers have mentioned various issues regarding the “dark side” of K-Pop music videos, criticizing their sexism, racism, materialism, and complicity in other social issues (Jung, 2010; Jung, 2012; Kim, 2011; Unger, 2015). Because of this and the complicated nature of music videos as media texts composed of both visual and auditory elements, media literacy is the key starting point for pedagogical approaches that seek to enhance critical discussions with students in classroom settings. Students need to be encouraged to analyze each element of a music video, including colors, lyrics, characters, compositions, fashion, choreography, props, shots, *mise-en-scène*, and sequences. Decoded elements have to be explained verbally and understood as being connected to the social/cultural/economic background of music video production. While connecting cultural representations to their social contexts, students can understand the correlation between society and the individual. Additionally, the exchange of different opinions about the same media texts will foster a better understanding of various socio-economic contexts from diverse perspectives. Then, the decoded interpretations can be used to create new meaning on a personal level.

Appropriation can be an effective way for youth to create their own meanings through consuming and producing media content, but in order for pre-existing media texts to be appropriated in critical ways and for new contexts to be created, students must be able to fully understand and deconstruct dominant media texts. One artistic technique that allows for the effective deconstruction and critical re-purposing of such texts is collage, which utilizes pre-existing elements by mining images and remixing them, thereby creating new forms and meanings. While collage has a long history in the

field of fine art, in today's flood of information, people experience collages every day through various media texts, including music, illustrations, graphic design, architecture, fashion design, and film. Furthermore, with the development of digital technology, the manipulation and replication of media texts using software programs, applications, and other devices has become an everyday cultural practice that can also be used in the arts education classroom. Relying on the critical interpretation of images, students can collect video clips, digital images, and stills from various resources on the Internet to remix and recreate their own video projects, and using these images and concepts, they can build storyboards to convey the ideas and themes of their work and choose visual effects for each scene.

The primary goal of the video collage production project that was conducted with Seoul high school students in 2016 was to enhance participants' critical media literacy by challenging them to read and create multimedia texts that respond to the social, political, cultural, and economic contexts of the media content as well as to develop participants' technical knowledge of digital languages. Throughout this project, students practiced how to read dominant media texts and re-create their own meanings by producing video collages that utilized pre-existing media elements, including sounds, music, images, videos, and phrases, all of which were found on the Internet.

### **Project Location: Seoul Art High School**

This project was conducted with 16- and 17-year-old students at Seoul Arts High School, a private arts high school with approximately 1,000 students. The school was founded by Dr. H. D. Appenzeller, an American missionary, in 1953, after the end of the Korean War. This school is located in Pyoungchang-dong, an area of Seoul that is



known as a “traditional wealthy village” and is surrounded by large mountains and a national park. This school specializes in arts education with three departments: dance, music, and art. The Dance Department offers three majors: Korean Dance, Ballet, and Contemporary Dance. The Music Department allows students to have numerous chances to enhance their skills through school programs such as orchestra, piano ensemble, recital, and composition study as well as basic music courses like music theory, music history, and ear training. In art students’ first year, the Art Department provides courses that cover the basic knowledge of art, including art theory, art history, and basic techniques of Korean painting, Western painting, sculpture, and design; during this year, students also explore which specific area they will choose for their university entrance exam and career path. In their second year, students start an in-depth study of art in one of the following areas: Korean painting, Western painting, sculpture, or design.

This school is one of the most prestigious arts high schools in South Korea, and most students are expected to be accepted by top universities. Ironically, the school’s reputation and the high expectations for individual students became barriers to their participation in my research project because my project was an extracurricular activity that focused on popular culture and not a required subject or a project that would enhance students’ artistic skills for the university entrance exam. Most art school applicants in South Korea are very busy preparing for college entrance exams that require a high level of skill in several academic areas as well as the arts. In addition, most students commute to school from long distances because school enrollment is not based on their places of residence. For these reasons, it was not easy to expect students to actively participate in this project. Fortunately, I was able to contact a passionate social studies teacher at the

school who showed an interest in the pedagogical approach of bridging popular culture with teens. He was also an advisor of the “art exhibition club” and conducted extracurricular activity classes one Friday per month. We agreed that I could use the time for my lessons. I sent him my research proposal and curriculum unit plan in spring 2016, and we continued communicating until I visited South Korea in summer 2016.

When we met in June 2016 in Seoul, and I suggested a detailed curriculum with four lessons. In the Korean academic calendar, the spring semester starts in March, and the fall semester begins in September. Since summer vacation begins at the middle of July, June is the busiest time in the spring semester because final exams and other tests take place before the summer vacation. Furthermore, Seoul Arts High School has various events, such as a student art exhibition, an art skills test, a music festival, and a Bible quiz contest. Therefore, my art project could not be done during the spring semester. The teacher and I agreed to start the project in the fall semester, and finally, I met the students for the first time on Friday, September 9. The sessions continued once a month until Friday, December 2.

The place where I conducted lessons was in the main building where there were classrooms for general education, including liberal arts, social studies, and sciences. Each department had its own building for art technique and skills classes. Unlike most schools in South Korea, where students are assigned to one classroom, are provided a class schedule that is followed by all students in that classroom, and do not have many options for which classes they want to take, Seoul Arts High School provides classrooms to teachers, and the students move from classroom to classroom. The classroom for my project was assigned to the social studies teacher, and inside the classroom, there were

about 35 desks and chairs, a teacher's desk, a bulletin board, a lecture desk, a blackboard, a class schedule, and a large monitor that could be used to show television programs, DVDs, schoolwide broadcasts, and the computer screen.

### **The Participants**

The participants consisted of 20 female students who were “art exhibition club” members. “Art exhibition club” is an extracurricular activity supported by the school to provide opportunities for future artists to participate in and prepare their own art shows. Half of the students were the first-year general visual arts majors and the other half consisted of second-year students (with three design majors, four Western painting majors, two Korean painting majors, and one sculpture major); there were no third-year students.

At the first session, students completed a short survey about their grade and major, and they answered five additional questions: (1) Do you have any experiences with courses or workshops in media education? If you have, what were they about? (2) How long are you online per day? Which device do you mainly use? (3) What do you do online? (4) Do you like watching music videos? What do you think about them? (5) What kind of courses or workshops do you want to take relating to popular culture? Nineteen students participated in this survey: 10 second-year students and 9 first-year students. Most students did not have any experience with media education. Only 5 students answered “yes” to the first question; however, the courses or workshops they took were computer skills classes for certificate exams or one-time workshops through school broadcasting that were designed to promote the reduction of Internet usage. Eighteen students accessed the Internet mostly via smartphone, 3 students used various

devices such as laptops, tablets, and smartphones, and only 1 student used a laptop only. Four students used the Internet 1 hour per day, and 13 students answered that they are online 2 to 4 hours per day. One student said she is online 5 to 6 hours, and another replied that she is online at all times, day or night. Students reported that they mostly enjoy visual culture (e.g., YouTube, Webtoon,<sup>31</sup> animations, movies, American TV series) and social network services (e.g., Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Kakao Talk<sup>32</sup>) via the Internet. Most students showed their interest in music videos: 15 students noted that they frequently watch music videos because music videos can be a way to understand music well while simultaneously pleasing the eyes and ears. For the last question, many participants expressed their interest in learning the technical skills to be proficient in digital languages and in learning about Korean popular culture (and other cultures) in the context of a global cultural landscape. They wanted to know more about other cultures, including how they differ from Korean culture and what people from different countries think about Korean culture.

The school schedule was very flexible, and each student had a different schedule due to afterschool programs and additional art skills classes in the evenings. The only time the school officially allowed me to conduct lessons was during the “Club Activity (CA)” class time, which occurred once per month on Fridays; however, this class was frequently canceled for various reasons. Also, it was difficult to contact each student through the teacher in order to find the best times when students could attend.

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<sup>31</sup> This is a term to indicate Korean web-comics that are published online. For more information, please refer to <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Webtoon>.

<sup>32</sup> Kakao Talk is an instant messaging service with multiple extra features in South Korea.

Eventually, I asked the teacher's permission so that I could communicate with the students directly.

The students suggested a mobile chat application called "Kakao Talk" that Korean smartphone users. By uploading pictures of and short messages about their everyday lives and communicating with each other on individual and group levels, this application plays a role in creating the biggest cyber-society in South Korea. Beyond simple chatting services, functions of the "Kakao Talk" app pervade every aspect of life in Korea, including finances, taxis, public transportation, shopping, personal blogs, and games. Every student in the club had a smartphone, which they used actively and regularly, and teachers did not prohibit the use of smartphones at school except during classes. I sent "friend requests" to students, and I created a group chat room named "media studies." Using this space, I could do many things as an outside-school lecturer, such as asking their availability for lessons, notifying them of assignments, sending handouts/class materials/video resources, and responding quickly to their questions. The students freely and easily contacted me via Kakao Talk.

The club had a leader who was a second-year student. The teacher introduced her to me at the first session, and he said, "She will handle everything; she's very smart." She was cheerful and supportive. She contacted students if they did not arrive at the classroom on time and managed student attendance. The leader also controlled the atmosphere of the class (for example, keeping the students quiet when they made too much noise). All the members listened to the leader, and the club had its own rules. During the first lesson, I told them that groups would be needed for making videos. Soon, the leader contacted me via Kakao Talk and sent me a well-organized list with five

groups. In the second lesson, I asked students how they formed their groups, and they said they got together based on closeness; however, many first-year students were grouped at random by the leader. Therefore, the five groups created consisted of four members in each group, as follows: (1) Group 1: four second-year students, with two majoring in Western Painting, one in Design, and one in sculpture; (2) Group 2: four second-year students, with two majoring in Design, one in Western Painting, and one in Korean Painting; (3) Group 3: four first-year students majoring in art; (4) Group 4: two second-year majoring in Western Painting and Korean Painting, respectively, and two first-year students majoring in art; (5) Group 5: four first-year students majoring in art. When I observed the atmosphere of each group, even though some students were not close to each other first, they quickly became intimate, except members of Group 5.

### **Curriculum Overview: Educating Critical Prosumers—K-Pop Music Video and Video Collage Production**

The goal of this project was to provide an opportunity for the students to deconstruct the myths of the dominant visual culture around their everyday lives and practice how to analyze and appropriate K-Pop music videos in critical ways. The procedure of the curriculum was as follows: Students would (1) analyze and interpret K-Pop music videos to develop their critical thinking skills, (2) describe the social/ethical issues and messages in the visual expressions of various K-Pop music videos, (3) collect prevalent images from K-Pop music videos and other resources, such as magazines and Internet websites, and (4) appropriate typical images from music videos and produce new videos to create their own meanings set in new contexts.

## **Lesson 1: Analyzing K-Pop Music Videos**

I first met the students I would be working with on September 9. The teacher who I worked with notified me to be in the classroom by 3:00 p.m. and told me that students would come around 3:20 pm. I arrived at the school at 2:30 p.m. and went to the office of the teachers who were in charge of social studies to prepare worksheets. I created a PowerPoint presentation, a short survey, and a roster. I then went to the classroom and connected my laptop to the monitor to display the prepared presentation file.

Students came into the classroom one by one. It seemed that they were in high spirits after class and moving from another building where they practiced art skills. They brought backpacks, artwork, and food, and they were wearing school uniforms, which consisted of gray skirts and white blouses. It took around 30 minutes for all students to sit down and be ready to listen. During this time, I distributed the short survey that I described earlier in this chapter, and the students filled it out as they chatted with each other and played on their smartphones. Once 20 girls had arrived in the classroom, one girl came to me and asked, “Are you the teacher for K-Pop? I am the club leader. We need to do something for our exhibition project. Could you please wait for a while?” Then, she hushed the noisy students. “If you think you didn’t pay for the posters and exhibition leaflets, please bring the money to me now,” she said. Students paid money, and the club leader organized her notes and called the roll.

The teacher came into the classroom, and he introduced me. After introducing myself, I asked the students if they like K-Pop, and the students had enthusiastic responses. I asked them who was their favorite group, and all of them started to talk

about different K-Pop stars. I knew that most Korean students tend to be quiet in class, even in discussion activities, but these students were vivacious when talking about their favorite K-Pop videos.

To start the lesson through the lens of today's visual and popular cultures, I showed them two works of art: "St. Michael and Satan" (1483) by Raffaello Sanzio and "Untitled GD" (2015) by Osang Gwon. The former was a masterpiece that included a Renaissance icon. The latter was a work of contemporary art that had been shown at the controversial exhibition "PEACEMINUSONE: Beyond the Stage," a collaboration with K-Pop idol G-Dragon. Then, after viewing several contemporary works of art by DongHyun Sohn that hybridize various elements of visual culture from the past to present, we talked about fine art, popular culture, and today's visual landscape. To begin discussing the myths and composition of the images, I showed various types of examples such as advertisements, movie posters, and campaign posters. The students talked about the purposes, audiences, messages, strategies, and visual elements of those images. I also juxtaposed several works composed of appropriated images with their originals, including two posters by Guerilla Girls "Do Women Have to Be Naked to Get into the Met. Museum?" (1989) and "Do Women Have to Be Naked to Get into Music Videos?" (2014) and "Grande Odalisque" (1814) by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. The students discussed the relationship among the three works and their re-created meanings.

Then, I briefly introduced the K-Pop phenomenon and its characteristics through a global lens. We talked about various kinds of roles that music videos play in a digitally connected world, and we examined several elements of music videos with suggested examples. Lastly, I asked students if they could find any critical issues while analyzing



the music videos. Then, I showed typical images from K-Pop music videos that imply violence, sexism, racism, and materialism. The students discussed which elements of the media texts suggested those social issues and how they function as strong messages in societies. They also watched YouTube videos that treated, appropriated, and remixed K-Pop music videos, and they discussed the ways in which these new videos deconstructed the original messages of the K-Pop videos as well as their effectiveness in re-creating meaning. At the end of this session, a brainstorming assignment was announced to encourage students to think about various elements of music videos and to find critical social issues that they wanted to express by creating their own visual productions. Students were asked to create two mind maps reflecting two themes: One was about their thoughts regarding K-Pop in general, and the other was about the problematic issues found in some K-Pop music videos (i.e., racism, sexism, materialism, etc.) that they ultimately wanted to explore by creating their own music videos.

## **Lesson 2: Finding Social Issues in K-Pop Music Videos and Planning Video-Making**

The second lesson was on September 23 around 3:00 p.m. The atmosphere of the classroom was similar to the first lesson. The participants came in one by one, and it took some time for all members to arrive. The leader checked the attendance and talked about their exhibition for a while. After the club business was done, I started the lesson by talking about students' mind maps.

In groups, students presented the mind maps that they brainstormed together (see Figure 2.1). Group 1 critically discussed problematic issues found in K-Pop such as

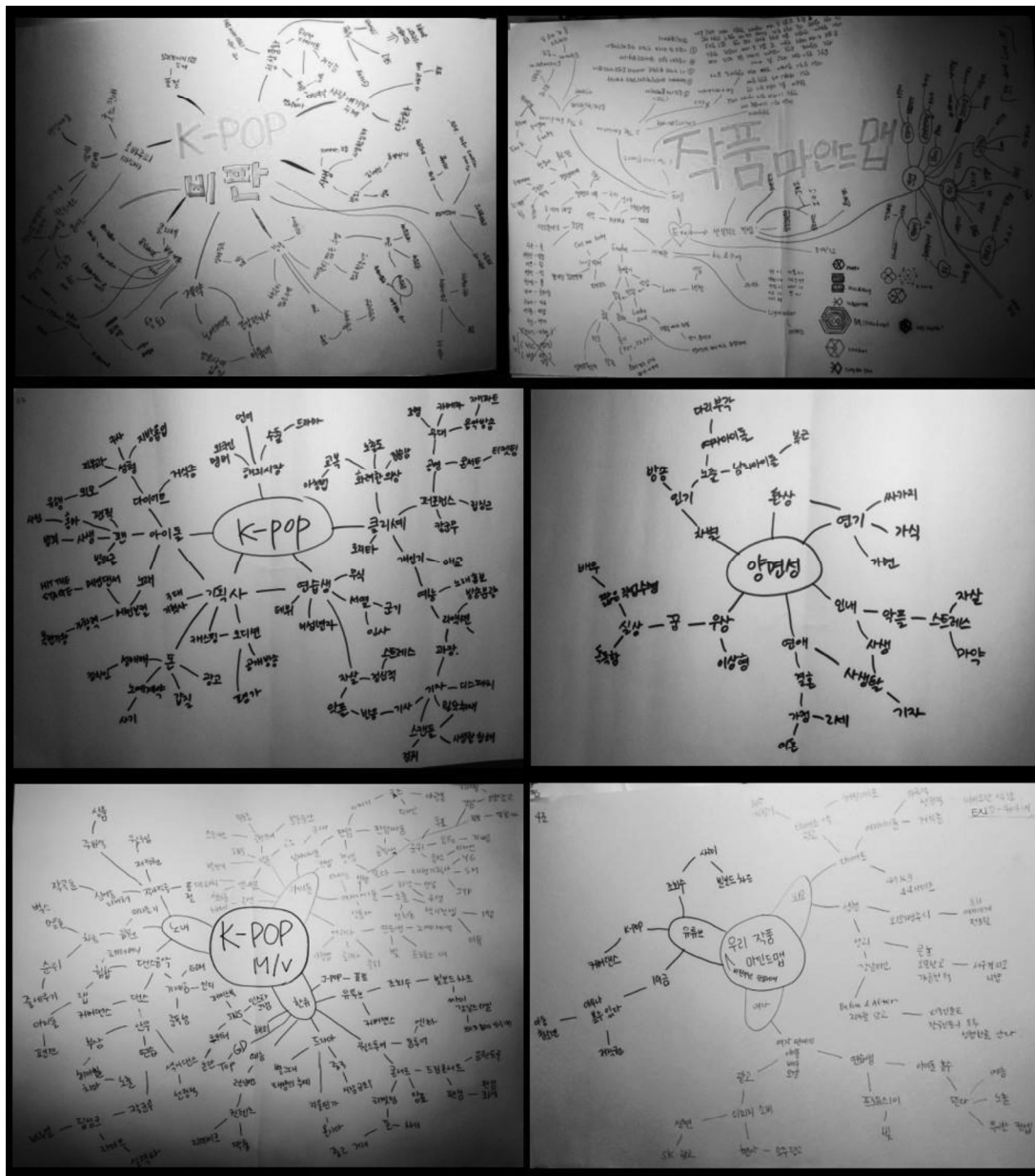


Figure 2.1 Mind maps

consumerism, plagiarism, competition, sexual objectification, clichés, obsessed groupies, similar themes, cultural toadyism, lookism, and the unfair contracts between stars and entertainment companies. They created another mind map to consider the topic for their own video-making. While their second mind map was difficult for me to understand, Group 1 explained that they would produce a video to introduce the concept and

worldview of EXO, their favorite boy band, because they thought this idol group was unique and that it could be differentiated from other groups. Group 2 showed a similar point-of-view with Group 1 about K-Pop in general, noting its excessive uniformity, commercialization, and various negative issues surrounding entertainment companies, trainees, and money. Then, they picked the word “double-sidedness” and added “endurance,” “fantasy,” “pretense,” and “discrimination,” as subordinated concepts. Group 3 created a simple concept map that was not much different from the previous two groups, suggesting a critical perspective on K-Pop idols’ music videos, including a discussion of violent and sexually suggestive content and biased gender images. Group 4 built up a more extensive mind map with three categories, “Song,” “Idol,” and “*Hallyu*.” According to their concept map, “Song” is linked to writing and composing, dance music, and releasing albums; “Idol” is connected to insulting comments, plastic surgery, teenagers, stress, fandom, competition, panic disorders, and social networks. Students associated “*Hallyu*” with YouTube, TV drama, foreign markets, and world tours. Then, they narrowed linked “YouTube” with views and mature content; “Appearance” with diet, plastic surgery, and anorexia; and “Women” with advertisements, body exposure, and image consumption. Group 5 submitted a work very similar to other groups but without much clear effort.

To encourage students to think about other ways they could express the ideas that they explored through mind maps, we talked about what kinds of digital languages we use every day and how we communicate with them. Students discussed various forms of media culture, such as photography, text, animation, video clips, and communication platforms like Instagram, blogs, and YouTube. I introduced them to stop-motion

animation. Most students knew what it was and had watched similar animation techniques before. I explained the process, preparation materials, pros and cons, and other considerations of this technique by showing various examples. The reason I chose the technique of stop-motion animation was because it did not require high-quality video recorders and other expensive devices. It only needed a simple camera that could take pictures and a laptop for editing. I suggested that students use their own smartphones and laptops because those devices were their everyday objects. I prepared tripods and distributed one for each group. Also, I suggested that students utilized pre-existing images from video clips on the web and images in magazines. I brought a number of magazines to share in the classroom, and I let them use the magazines to create their animation videos.

In addition, project planners for video-making were distributed for each group so that students could share their roles and manage the timeline for their schedules. I also gave out storyboard worksheets so that students could create detailed plans based on their mind maps, including image/shot, camera movement/location, spoken text, written text, and music/sound effects.

### **Lesson 3: Making Stop-Motion Animation Videos**

To accelerate the video-making process, I tried to set up the third meeting as soon as possible after the previous session. However, the school schedule did not allow for students to meet easily in October. The students were assigned art skills lessons after school on different schedules. I contacted each participant and adjusted the schedule via Kakao Talk. Finally, the third lesson was conducted twice on October 28, once around 3:00 p.m. for first-year students and 8:00 p.m. for second-year students. Due to their

class schedules, the lesson lasted less than 1.5 hours, and pizza, wings, and drinks were provided. Three students who had to commute long distance could not attend because they share the private shuttle with other non-participant students.

For the third lesson, I wanted to review their project plans, storyboards, and their videos--in-progress. Students were already in the process of taking pictures and collecting images or video clips from the Internet. While the students kept doing their work in groups, I discussed the plan and process separately with each group. Group 1 planned to edit images and videos that would be collected from the Internet to show the worldview of their favorite group. Four of the students were composing the plot and discussing which images they needed. Group 2 focused on the theme of the “double-sidedness of the idol industry” and wanted to utilize both images from magazines and their own drawings. The idea of Group 3 was to visualize “the consumption of female idols by the market.” They were collecting images from magazines. The general outline of Group 4’s work focused on “plastic surgery and ideal beauty in the K-Pop industry.” They planned to mix various images and videos from multiple sources, and group members were creating props by cutting up colored paper. Group 5 did not actively participate, and its members were still working on their project planner and storyboards; moreover, they struggled to concentrate on the project. I tried to motivate them and suggested various ideas based on their mind-map.

After making and/or collecting still images for their animation videos, some groups started making their videos. I introduced various kinds of editing software, such as Windows® Movie Maker, GOM Mix, Vegas Pro, iMovie™, and Adobe® Premiere®. I found that many students preferred using Windows® Movie Maker because it was easy

to learn, free of charge, and most widely employed in South Korea. Even though I did not teach them how to use this software or help them edit their videos, once introduced to the various options and features of the software, students chose what they would use, installed it on their laptops, and learned how to use the programs/apps by themselves via information found online. Because the video-making process was expected to take a long time, I recommended that they set their own schedules and meeting times with their group members and told them to contact me via Kakao Talk whenever they needed to, encouraging them to keep me posted on the work process until the final lesson.

#### **Lesson 4: Sharing and Discussing of Students' Stop-Motion Videos**

Since the last lesson had to be done at least 2 weeks before their final exams, all parts of this project were supposed to be finished no later than the first week of December. The last session was conducted on December 2. Since the previous session, students had frequently contacted me to discuss various issues, such as themes, how to insert music, and asking for more examples of videos that they could refer to. Thanks to their active communication with me via Kakao Talk, I could follow their works-in-progress and had general expectations regarding the results of their projects. A week before the last lesson, I asked the students to send me their final works in mp4 file format. They suggested sharing the files through “Naver Cloud,” a cloud service that Korean people commonly use to share large files. Groups 1 through 4 submitted completed videos before the last session.

The following passage describes the final works of the four groups that completed the project: The running time of Group 1's work is 7 minutes and 47 seconds (see Figure

2.2). It starts with a scene of someone searching YouTube for “TT,” the music video by Twice, a popular girl group in South Korea. The point-of-view goes inside the video. Next, the video continues with several clips from popular music videos by girl groups and boybands. Then, the viewpoint comes out from the monitor and laptop, and they are turned off. Two female students say, “Why are all the music videos the same? We need something new. Let’s try to create it!” The students start to draw and explain the worldview of EXO, a popular Korean boyband. Showing EXO’s selected music videos clips, the students have conversations describing the story of the videos. The images that are used in this section are from EXO’s music videos, and the stories are connected with each other. The video ends with this comment: “I like the concept of these videos because they are different from other standardized works, and they show a fantastic story.”



Figure 2.2 Selected frames from video by Group 1

The video by Group 2 begins with a close-up of a girl’s face watching television (see Figure 2.3). The scene is drawn by the students. The television scene changes to various images of celebrities that are cut from magazines, and the background is piles of the storyboards that I distributed. After showing cut-out images with a soundtrack of



Figure 2.3 Selected frames from video by Group 2

cheerful music, the scene changes to a clip from a concert with flashy lighting and the shouting of an audience. Soon the music changes to something gloomy, and a simply drawn figure with no facial expression walks down the stairs. Then the female figure that is cut from magazines changes clothes and turns on the laptop. Various offensive comments, such as “She looks like she got plastic surgery,” “You’re so bad,” and “She doesn’t sing well,” surround the figure, and she dispels them. The female figure changes clothes again and begins to dance. Then, its body is broken into pieces and finally collapses. Immediately after, hand-drawn images of sad facial expressions are displayed sequentially. Lastly, the hand-drawn girl who appeared in the first scene reappears.

The work of Group 3 is relatively short, as it lasts only 1 minute and 11 seconds (see Figure 2.4). The screen is framed by a television set. First, it shows the outside of a shopping district. The scene changes to showcase cut-out images of female idols who are in similar clothes and poses. One of those girls is picked up by an actual hand, and everything else is mixed up and disappears. Then, cut-out images of four girls in boxes



with descriptions of their ages and weights appear on the scene. They are removed from the scene by hand, one by one.



Figure 2.4 Selected frames from video by Group 3

A lump of fat with a face and the comments from advertising copy open Group 4's video (see Figure 2.5). As the voice continues talking ("Consult with us about obesity!"), the fat is tailored by cutting an outline, and it turns into a thin shape with a smiley face. The texts "Liposuction" and "48Kg" are displayed at the top of the screen as well. In the next scene, the face of a female with freckles and a gloomy facial expression appears along with the sign "Before." Then, her eyes, nose, lips, and freckles disappear, and bigger eyes with long eyelashes and a new nose and lips are shown. She is smiling, and the text "After" is displayed. The text that follows says, "If you want to get natural-looking plastic surgery...." Then, 5 dancing women alternate with dancing figures that are cut out from colored paper. A girl played by one of the group members watches them on the screen and starts to imagine getting an ideal nose, eyes, and lips. Various cosmetic products surround her. Soon after, several fingers point at her, and her newly beautified

face shows tears. She cries with a blanket pulled over her face. The next screen shows a close-up of the blanket. In the last scene, the girl wakes up on a bench and again watches the music video with dancing women that was shown in the beginning. Then, she flips over the smartphone on the desk as if she has decided something, and she leaves the scene.



Figure 2.5 Selected frames from video by Group 4

On the last day, I started the lesson by distributing an “artist statement” worksheet so that the students could compose their thoughts and discuss the results of their projects. Then, the students in each group presented their finished music videos. To attract voluntary participation from students, I let each presenting group show their video first, and then we discussed various elements of the video. However, not many students were willing to speak out, so I addressed questions to the rest of the students based on the format of the artist statements so that they could think about the contents of the other groups’ videos. My questions were: What is the story? What is the theme? Who are the main characters? How do you feel about the colors, music, sounds, and effects? Are those elements used effectively to display the theme? Can you figure out which images

are adapted from pre-existing ones? Is it easy or difficult to tell the producers' intentions? By answering the questions, students were better able to grasp the themes, intended messages, and structures of their classmates' narratives and video compositions.

Lastly, I conducted another survey using the following questions: (1) Do you feel any changes in your perceptions of K-Pop after this class? If so, what are they? (2) Please describe the best part of this course. (3) What were the challenges of this project? Please tell me your suggestions. (4) If you have another opportunity to take a class on media-making in the future, what kind of class do you want to take? (5) Do you think media education is needed in school? If so, why?

Eighteen students participated in this anonymous survey. Most students replied that they started to think critically about popular culture and K-Pop through this workshop. Many students mentioned that they never thought about the "dark side" of K-Pop before; as one noted, "Popular culture that I experienced through mass media was always gorgeous and enviable. I accepted it superficially and took it lightly. By taking this class, however, I was surprised that just one picture or three-minute video could portray various social issues such as racism, sexism, and violence indifferently, even attractively. I realized what the problem of popular culture is and that a critical point of view is important." Also, many students considered the first lesson on analyzing images and videos the greatest advantage of this project. Furthermore, students were happy to experience the creation of videos together as a team. Surprisingly, more than 75% of the participants said that this was their first time producing videos; as one student wrote, "Making a video was entirely new for me. I never thought that I could create a video, even though my major is art. I enjoyed making a video." Regarding the third question,

however, many students expressed difficulty handling the editing software and other technical challenges. Also, almost every participant was inconvenienced by not having enough time to work on the video and managing the different schedules of their team members. In answering the fourth question, students showed roughly two kinds of interests in popular culture. First, students wanted to gain more technical knowledge about making videos, such as computer graphics, set design, and editing techniques. Second, they wanted to get insight into popular culture (for instance, its history, current trends, global media, commercial value, influence, Korean wave, and popular culture in other countries). Regarding the last question, most students emphasized the importance of media education in school, mentioning the following in their comments: “I think that [media education] is essential because this society is getting more digitalized”; “It is necessary. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Internet is highly developed, and the media has become an important issue. Therefore, we need appropriate education about it”; “It is crucial. We spend a long time encountering media, and there are a lot of negative aspects that should be expected. Media education is needed to have a critical perspective and accurate judgment about the media.”

## CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS OF CURRICULUM OUTCOMES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR ART EDUCATORS

Through the experience of developing and implementing a curriculum using K-Pop music videos, I was able to reconfirm various theories and experiences of researchers and educators who have contributed to visual culture and media education. Among several findings, three primary outcomes will be discussed in this chapter: (1) the importance of teaching students how to analyze media texts and engage with digital languages, (2) the characteristics of media production by youth as understood through the framework of “Smart Swarms,” and (3) students’ ambivalent attitudes toward critical issues in popular media texts. This project enabled me to explore the possibility of K-Pop as an educational resource for today’s youth.

### **Teaching Media Analysis and Digital Languages**

In the survey conducted in the first lesson, many students used the words “interpretations” and “meanings” in terms of understanding the music. Students were interested in literary stories and enjoyed interpreting the storylines in their own ways. However, as Duncum (2013) points out, many students lack the language to describe visual elements in the pervasive images of popular media productions. In the course of my project, when students watched the music video “I” by Taeyeon<sup>33</sup> and were asked to interpret the video, most students answered from a literary point-of-view, discussing the

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<sup>33</sup> To see this video, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OrCA1OInoo>.

overall plot and its message. As art school students, they were also sensitive to visual elements like color, line, balance, and harmony and were able to engage in the critique using a formalist perspective. However, the language that they used to describe the scenes and elements that they determined to be significant were somewhat limited. For example, they interpreted specific scenes from the music video as follows: “The scene is filled with green colors, and it makes me feel comfortable,” or “Lots of diagonal lines used here create an air of anxiety.” Most of the elements that they focused on were insufficient for a deeper understanding of today’s popular media products, which are created by lenses, cameras, props, computer graphics, and other techniques and devices.

I explained various items that comprise music videos, such as colors, backgrounds, lyrics, lighting, choreography, characters’ facial expressions, frames, cinematography, and sound and how they all play specific roles in constructing meanings. Then, we examined several examples. After practicing analyzing music videos, students watched the music video “I” by Taeyeon again and filled out a worksheet that addressed various elements, including the following: (1) Who are the main characters? (2) Talk about the plot. How are the characters developed? (3) How are light and colors used, and why? (4) How are audio elements and visual elements combined? (5) Where is the background, and how is it visualized? (6) Do scenes change quickly or slowly? Where and why? (7) How is choreography connected to characters? (8) Were you impressed by specific lyrics? Why? (9) Are any of the scenes particularly memorable? Why?

I included questions about these elements of music videos to encourage students to analyze the videos more deeply. They could summarize the whole story within the first several sentences and then describe the visual characteristics by responding to the

questions that followed. The following are excerpts of answers from students' responses.

As one student described,

Taeyeon, who worked as a waitress in the city, suddenly encountered a butterfly, and she looked back on her meaningless life. Then she escaped the daily life and traveled to find her dream. She finally discovered another identity of freedom and nature. The scene of nature is shown from bird's-eye view, and it also gives viewers this feeling of escape.

The student connected the usage of frames and lighting to the character's emotions. She also grasped the point that the camera's point-of-view could be used to support the visualization of the plot and themes. Another student responded,

Taeyeon, who is stuck in the realities of life, is represented in black-colored clothes with smoky makeup, and she looks tired in narrow spaces. On the contrary, another Taeyeon is portrayed in brighter colors of outfits. She looks happy and comfortable in beautiful nature. The two contrasting places are shown alternately. When she drives from the city into nature, the scenes change very quickly, and this shows her strong emotion regarding the change.

This student shows an understanding of how the character's body language can create meaning without verbal expression. In another analysis of same video, one student wrote, "The scenes between two identities and different backgrounds are contrasted using (1) colors: gloomy vs. natural, (2) lighting: dark/artificial vs. bright/natural, (3) camera movement: zoom-in vs. zoom-out, (4) subjects: focusing on characters vs. natural scenery."

After this activity, they could make deeper connections between various components of music videos and the construction of meanings. I found that by introducing students to the detailed terms of visual analysis, they were able to read media texts more easily and comprehensively. They could also apply these understandings and knowledge to their own media productions. For example, in Group 4's video, students discussed scene change techniques for making a natural turning point in the narrative. They talked about using colors, zoom-in/zoom-out, or close-ups. Members finally chose to use a close-up of the blanket to connect the two different threads of the story. The girl in the dream covers her face with the blanket; then, the blanket is shot in close-up and the whole scene is covered with the blanket. Finally, the story returns to reality. The students tried to use what they learned about camera work to express what they wanted to visualize. As this example and others from this project illustrate, in order to have better media literacy, students need to be taught the appropriate language for visual analysis of the technology-driven cultural productions they encounter every day.

### **Media Production by Youth as “Smart Swarms”**

While conducting the video-making project and observing teenage participants, I was reminded of the term “Smart Swarms.” By applying Miller's (2010) theory, Duncum (2014) uses the term “Smart Swarms” to explain the group behavior of youth on YouTube. He found that animals that move in swarms in nature had similar characteristics to groups of young YouTubers in terms of following principles: (1) “Decentralized Control,” which allows youth to influence each other in creating forms and themes and facilitates independent and sustainable media production in meaningful patterns; (2) “Diversity of Knowledge,” which provides users with feedback and



information on various options; (3) “Indirect Collaboration,” which enables youth to work together while they keep creating independently; and (4) “Adaptive Mimicking,” which is the key motivating force for the spread of media productions and which inspires each other’s works (pp. 33-34).

My project was situated on the borderline between formal education at a school setting and the informal learning of an “affinity space” (Jenkins, 2009, pp. 9-11). Even though the participants regarded the series of lessons as a kind of extracurricular class at school, I wanted them to feel free from the pressure of a formal educational setting. They were not forced to produce work because of grades or particular results, which promoted spontaneous participation; however, as a consequence of this learning environment, one group (Group 5) did not submit their final project. Therefore, I could fully observe students’ behavior through the framework of “Smart Swarms.”

First of all, the students had a vast amount of experience with watching videos on YouTube and a general understanding of the aesthetics of video techniques. While working on their media projects, they naturally tried to mimic what they had already seen and accepted those predetermined media production rules. For instance, in the video by Group 2, students made a natural scene change using similar colors (the dark color of a cut-out image from a magazine connected to the next scene of a concert without light). Second, the students chose various methods to produce their own videos and referred to pre-existing videos on YouTube. They constantly searched for inspiration via videos produced by others. After discovering useful techniques, effects, and other production methods to solve their problems, the students did not hesitate to apply them to their own projects. For example, Group 2 included several scenes of tearing, folding, and rolling

papers as they found similar “fun expressions” on the Internet. Third, the students quickly learned the video editing techniques that they needed by watching YouTube videos. They did not ask me very many questions about the technological issues they faced. It seemed that they had countless “YouTube teachers” online who could help them. Finding information from cyberspace appeared much more convenient and comfortable for students than asking me for advice. Fourth, most students showed interest in and motivation toward what they enjoyed every day, and it seemed that they were happy to talk about these subjects freely in the classroom. They were willing to watch music videos and talk about them together while also discussing their desires to analyze and interpret media texts, which much exceeded my expectations. Students played with videos, showing their favorite ones to their friends, recording their friends mimicking their favorite stars, and sharing funny videos in their group chats on Kakao Talk.

### **Ambivalent Attitudes Toward Critical Issues in K-Pop**

I found that youth are mostly interested in the issues that are familiar to them and that they are surrounded with. Most participants of my project were female teenagers from upper-middle-class backgrounds with family support and economic stability. As art school students, they also had a sophisticated sense of visual imagery. Moreover, being surrounded by the capitalist culture of consumerism, the girls were very sensitive to fashion, makeup products, and trendy styles in popular culture that were highly accessible via their own digital devices. Not surprisingly, their primary interests were beauty, diet, and plastic surgery. Many students talked about their plans for plastic surgery after finishing their university entrance exams and shared knowledge about diets. I even saw

that members from one group were demonstrating a makeup product, spreading cosmetics out on the desk, and referring to a magazine. On Kakao Talk, they uploaded profile pictures of themselves wearing heavy makeup.

I observed that many students uploaded pictures of female K-Pop idols as their profile pictures on Kakao Talk. They often enjoyed mimicking the gestures and choreography of popular girl groups that are regarded as cute. When I talked to them about “TT” by Twice, a popular girl group, most students mimicked the gesture of the choreography of the music video, and they all burst out laughing. They also frequently talked about members of K-Pop girl groups whom they deemed beautiful. When they were working with magazines, many students kept looking at the photos of the female idols, talking about their make-up, their fashion, and rumors of their private lives. Some students cut out their favorite stars’ pictures to keep as their own.

At first sight, their behaviors toward stars might seem problematic. The teenagers looked like they showed their loyalty to the idol industry without a critical perspective. However, as Buckingham (2000) found, children and youth have the ability to discern the commercial intentions of advertisements; so, too, could my students see various critical issues beyond the industry’s palatable contents. Most students criticized issues even as they enjoyed the videos, including commenting on the standardized beauty among K-Pop idols. In the mind maps they created during the second lesson, most groups pointed out issues related to female idols’ appearance and half of the finished media projects illustrated the same issues. Therefore, the students showed ambivalent attitudes toward female idols: On one hand, the girls admired the female stars as embodying an ideal beauty and tried to imitate them; on the other hand, they also criticized the fact that most

idols had a standardized appearance by getting plastic surgery. Through the process of students' video-making, this tendency was observed clearly. For example, in the video by Group 3, students criticized the idol industry for sexually objectifying female idols. However, at the same time, it seemed they had fun talking about the female idols' appearances while cutting out the images from the magazine. In other words, what they admired, they also criticized.

Indeed, the students seemed conflicted in their attitudes toward K-Pop. Therefore, I believe that educational interventions are necessary and important to address such issues. By acknowledging the pleasures these students experienced when engaging with popular media texts, I helped them understand how the producers of the idol industry could create attractive products and make profits. According to Alvermann, Moon, and Hagood (1999),

[pleasure's] place in the curriculum is important in order to validate students' understanding and the meanings they have attached to popular culture texts. But pleasures derived from popular culture are also noteworthy because they are complicated and at times uncomfortable, and it is through the exploration of these various pleasures that students may take a more in-depth look at popular culture and ponder other possibilities and positions of political, social, and cultural relevance that they have not examined before. (p. 35)

To support students in constructing their own meanings from their favorite popular culture products, I embraced their pleasures and allowed them to discuss and express what they felt when watching their favorite K-Pop videos. Alvermann, Moon, and Hagood (1999) also asserted that

to balance the components of active audiencing, individual pleasures, and critical literacy ... teachers [should] consider several issues. These include a practice based on materials relevant to students' lives, a commitment to students' pleasures and to critical awareness, and flexible teaching practices that allow for teachers to take on multiple roles within the context of a single lesson. (p. 38)

I agree with their suggestions, and in this curriculum, I tried to balance students' pleasure in viewing these media products with critical approaches toward their admired idols.

Thus, through this project, I worked to achieve a satisfactory result via several avenues, including utilizing K-Pop as an educational resource that is close to students' everyday lives, creating a comfortable classroom atmosphere to let students talk about their interests outside of the school curriculum, and minimizing the traditional teacher's role while providing various types of guidance.

### **Conclusion: Implications for Art Educators**

When I presented the issue of K-Pop and global visual culture at the National Art Education Association's annual conference in 2016, I was curious how many art educators in the United States would show interest. Since the "K" of K-Pop seems to indicate a local culture that originated from Korea, I thought that not many people would come to my session. However, many more art teachers came to listen to my presentation than I expected. After the session, several educators came to me and said that they were there to learn what K-Pop is and why their students were fans. K-Pop has benefited from the proliferation of digital technologies and globalization, which have also created new ways of forming identities, constructing learning processes, and socializing for global youth. This is the common condition of today's youth in both Korea and the United

States. Therefore, the educational implications of this K-Pop music video project in Seoul is not limited to Korean youth and educators.

After investigating K-Pop from a theoretical perspective as well as designing a curriculum that utilizes K-Pop as an educational resource, I am convinced that embracing popular media texts in K-12 art education is both necessary and unavoidable. The outcomes from this research project have suggested various possible pedagogical approaches to global youth who participate and communicate with each other through transnational media practices as active prosumers. To engage youth in the critical prosumption of K-Pop videos, I suggest the following series of curricular activities:

1. Decoding: Students talk about their favorite K-Pop performers and choose their favorite music videos. After watching a video, the students are asked to analyze its key elements, such as lyrics, melody, choreography, fashion, colors, scene, sequences, viewpoints, narrative, *mise-en-scène*, shots, and frames. Students are also encouraged to identify any cultural biases and gender, race/ethnic, class, and other stereotypes that might be present in the video.
2. Creating: Students produce their own short video remixes based on what they learned during the decoding stage. They can experiment with several strategies to create these videos, such as recontextualization (placing existing characters into a new context to create a new meaning), narrative disruption (intentionally subverting a predictable storyline), and parody (creating alternative meanings in a playful manner) (Ivashkevich, 2015). In addition, they can learn technical aspects of video production that include video and

voice recording techniques, how to use video editing software, and the utilization of digital tools, such as video cameras.

3. Sharing: Students share their products on YouTube for public viewing and exchange opinions and ideas with their peers from around the world. After gathering peer feedback, students reflect on the reception of their videos, how responses may be different from what they originally intended, and how their productions generate transcultural dialogue and make new meanings with different viewers on YouTube.

By decoding images that students see every day in popular media, they can experience visual culture differently than before. They can also reflect on and deconstruct the myths of the everyday visual culture that surrounds them by encoding their own thoughts into remixes of pre-existing images. Lastly, students can share their work with peers and communicate encoded messages to each other. In addition, by consuming and producing popular transcultural products, youth can reflect on themselves and their own culture and society in ways that transcend their conventional views while also gaining a better understanding of and sensitivity toward different cultural perspectives.

I believe that art educators can help students examine transcultural media texts more critically, produce their own media more critically, and negotiate these products with peers from different sociocultural contexts and backgrounds. Because education is not isolated from the society that our students are members of, we need to use the classroom to address sociocultural phenomena, including economic conditions, cultural issues, and technological development. K-Pop is one example of such cultural

phenomena that can be engaged with in the art classroom. As the global rise of K-Pop demonstrates, it is important for educators who work with young people to acknowledge the current transnational youth culture and recognize its pedagogical possibilities in terms of youth-led, autonomous participation in a multidirectional global mediascape.



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## APPENDIX A: CURRICULUM UNIT

**Curriculum Unit Theme:** Educating Critical Prosumers: K-Pop Music Videos and Video Collage Production

**Teacher:** Aelim Kim

**Grade Level:** High School Students (1<sup>st</sup> grade and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, equivalent to 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> grades in the U.S.)

**SC Media Arts Standards:** N/A

**General goals for the curriculum:** Students will be able to deconstruct the myths of the dominant visual culture in their everyday lives. They will practice how to interpret and appropriate music videos in critical ways. They will (1) analyze and interpret K-Pop music videos to develop critical thinking, (2) find social/ethical issues in the visual expressions and the messages of K-Pop music videos, (3) collect related images from K-Pop music videos and other resources, such as magazines, Internet websites, etc., and (4) appropriate typical images from music videos to create their own meanings and set them in new contexts.

## **Lesson 1**

### **Lesson Title:**

Analyzing Music Videos

### **Visual Exemplars:**

- A. PowerPoint presentation
- B. Various images from movie posters, advertisements, etc.
- C. Various music videos
- D. Typical still images from music videos
- E. Worksheet for practicing reading images
- F. Appropriated images and videos from various resources (art history, advertisements, marketing campaigns, music videos, etc.)
- G. Survey on Internet use and behavior and on interest in media education

### **Motivation / Dialogue:**

- I. Issues
  - a. Visual culture
    - Introduction of visual culture in everyday life
    - Reading images in today's visual culture
  - b. Music videos
    - Exploration of the general concept of music videos
    - Elements of music videos
    - Reading music videos

- Reading music videos critically
- Practice completing worksheet

c. Appropriation

- Introduction of appropriation
- Examples of appropriated visual texts
- Appropriation production can work for critical purposes

II. Discussion Questions

- a. What is the purpose of each image (scenes)?
- b. How are images designed for their purposes?
- c. Why are people attracted to those images?
- d. What is a music video?
- e. What kind of elements are in music videos?
- f. How are the elements used to meet its purpose?
- g. What is appropriation, and what is its purpose?
- h. How can pre-existing visual texts be appropriated?

**Media / Process:**

- Students will be shown various images and videos through PowerPoint presentation.
- Students will be asked about how they think of visual culture in their everyday lives.
- Students will be asked about their emotions and thoughts as they watch specific images.

- Students will analyze the elements of images (color, composition, font, shot, sequence, etc.).
- Students will explore the process of encoding and decoding image structures.
- Students will talk about their favorite music videos and discuss why they like them.
- Students will analyze the elements of music videos (music, choreography, lyrics, fashion, themes, etc.).
- Students will talk about typical images and stereotypes.
- Students will explore the process of encoding and decoding a music video.
- Students will complete worksheets reflecting the issues discussed.

#### **Concepts and/or Design Principles:**

- Students will understand their everyday lives are surrounded by visual culture.
- Students will understand that images and videos can be read as visual texts.
- Students will practice decoding images and videos.
- Students will find connotations in visual texts.
- Students will understand the concept of appropriation and its purpose.
- Students will understand how to appropriate pre-existing visual texts by watching examples.

#### **Vocabulary:**

- Visual culture
- Visual texts
- Reading images



- Music video
- Convention
- Stereotype
- Deconstruction
- Appropriation

**Closure/Assessment:**

1. Can students analyze and interpret various kinds of visual texts?
2. Can students find conventions and stereotypes of popular visual texts?
3. Do students understand the structure of image-making?
4. Do students understand the elements of music videos and their characteristics?
5. Do students understand the concept of appropriation?
6. Can students analyze and interpret appropriated visual texts?

## **Lesson 2**

### **Lesson Title:**

Finding Social Issues and Planning Video-Making

### **Visual Exemplars:**

- A. PowerPoint presentation
- B. Various examples of techniques of music video production (stop-motion animation, cinematography, etc.)
- C. Worksheets – project planner, mind maps, storyboards

### **Motivation / Dialogue:**

- I. Issues
  - a. Awareness of problems in contemporary visual texts (K-Pop music videos)
  - b. Expression through digital languages
  - c. The logic of appropriation and its process
  - d. Video-making process
- II. Discussion Questions
  - a. Can you see the conventions of and stereotypes in K-Pop music videos?
  - b. Do you think popular media texts such as K-Pop music videos have a strong influence on teenagers like you? If so, how?
  - c. Do you think producers of K-Pop music videos should be responsible of their messages and influences?

- d. Are K-Pop music videos free from ethical and social issues? Why or why not?
- e. Can you find any problems with K-Pop music videos regarding their messages or visual expressions?
- f. How can we enjoy K-Pop music videos as critical audiences?
- g. What kinds of ways can we access modes of digital expression?
- h. How are appropriated works produced?
- i. How does appropriation work?
- j. What is the purpose of producing a work from appropriation?
- k. How can appropriated work make new meanings in different contexts?

**Media / Process:**

- Students will be asked about the social/ethical/political issues reflected in various K-Pop music videos.
- Students in groups will draw several mind maps to clarify their critical thinking and explore concepts for making videos.
- In groups, students will fill out a handout reflecting on the issues discussed.
- Students will be shown various examples of digital languages and their uses.
- Students will be shown various examples of production via appropriation.
- In groups, students will plan to make a stop-motion animation project.
- In groups, students will collect various images from the Internet, magazines, and other sources.
- In groups, students will create a storyboard.

- In groups, students will decide their roles in making their videos.

### **Concepts and/or Design Principles:**

- Students will improve their critical thinking while watching various K-Pop music videos.
- Students will note the social/ethical/political issues in pre-existing visual texts.
- Students will understand various ways of expressing concepts and themes using digital languages.
- Students will understand the concept of appropriation.
- Students will learn how to produce works made from appropriation.
- Students will understand the logic of appropriation.
- Students will find the new meaning that is produced by works of parody.

### **Vocabulary:**

- K-Pop music videos
- Digital expression
- Visual texts
- Critical audiences
- Social issues
- Ethical issues
- Appropriation
- Decoding
- Encoding

- Video-making
- Storyboard

**Closure/Assessment:**

1. Do students understand the characteristics of digital expression?
2. Can students engage their critical thinking skills while viewing visual texts—even ones they like?
3. Can students understand the purpose and the process of appropriation?
4. Do students understand the process of stop-motion animation?
5. Can students plan their video-making projects in their groups?

### **Lesson 3**

#### **Lesson Title:**

Video-Making

#### **Visual Exemplars:**

- A. PowerPoint Presentation
- B. Worksheets
- C. Laptops
- D. Recording devices (Cell phones, tripods, lamps)
- E. Editing software (Windows Movie Maker)
- F. Cardboard, glue, magazines, drawing materials

#### **Motivation / Dialogue:**

- I. Issues
  - a. Sharing and discussing the concepts and plans of each group
- II. Discussion Questions
  - a. Who will be our audiences?
  - b. Are the concepts clear and acceptable?
  - c. Does the story create a strong message?
  - d. To attract audiences' attention, what kinds of story and scenes do we need to create?
  - e. What kinds of techniques, visual effects, music, or other elements are needed?

- f. How can one still image contain and show a whole video?
- g. What is the benefit of the collage technique?

**Media / Process:**

- In groups, students will present their mind maps and storyboards.
- Students will discuss how to plan a video-making production.
- Students will share ideas to make better videos.
- Students will fill out the worksheets to finalize their thoughts before shooting videos.
- Students will start to create images to produce stop-motion animations.
- Students will begin to edit their videos.
- Students will add visual effects (title, subtitles, computer graphics, etc.).

**Concepts and/or Design Principles:**

- Students will help each other to improve their projects.
- Students will learn how to use a camera.
- Students will learn how to edit videos using software.
- Students can utilize the Internet to learn additional skills they need to create media texts.
- Students will experience creating a video in team.

**Vocabulary:**

- Camera work
- Concept

- Message
- Editing
- Sound
- Visual effects

**Closure/Assessment:**

1. Are students able to clarify their concepts?
2. Can students explain their concepts and story for making their videos?
3. Can students accept different ideas and modify their project plans to improve them?
4. Can students use recording devices?
5. Do students know how to edit their images using Windows Movie Maker?
6. Do students understand the concept of teaser images?



## **Lesson 4**

### **Lesson Title:**

Sharing and Discussing

### **Visual Exemplars:**

- A. PowerPoint Presentation
- B. Worksheets
- C. Survey

### **Motivation / Dialogue:**

- I. Issues
  - a. Sharing final projects
- II. Discussion Questions
  - a. Do videos show their concepts and messages clearly?
  - b. Are all elements of the videos used effectively to convey the intended messages?
  - c. Does appropriation work well for its purpose in the videos?
  - d. What kinds of techniques were used to appropriate the media texts?
  - e. How are different meanings created through the appropriation process?
  - f. Are the different meanings of newly created media texts significant to us?
  - g. What should we do to watch popular media texts critically?
  - h. Is it important for amateurs to create and share media texts in our society?  
If so, why?

- i. Can you explain how this lesson influenced or changed you?

**Media / Process:**

- Students will finalize videos and teaser images.
- Students will present their final productions.
- Students will appreciate each other's work.
- Students will discuss their emotions and thoughts with each other.
- Students will fill out worksheets reflecting on the issues discussed.
- Students will complete the final survey.

**Concepts and/or Design Principles:**

- Students can read media texts created by peer groups.
- Students will learn appropriate attitudes needed to discuss productions made by other people.

**Vocabulary:**

- Appreciation

**Closure/Assessment:**

1. Can students present their projects well?
2. Can students appreciate their peers' projects and find their messages?
3. Can students connect different meanings between pre-existing images and newly created images?

4. Did students understand the significance of the video production activity, and can they extend what they have learned to their personal experience?

## APPENDIX B: LESSON PLANS

### **Lesson #1**

**Title:** Analyzing Music Videos

**Grade:** High School Students (1<sup>st</sup> grade and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade)

**Teacher:** Aelim Kim

**Length:** 100 minutes

**State visual art goals:** N/A

**State media arts goals (if any):** N/A

**State language arts goals (if any):** N/A

### **Objectives:**

1. Students will understand visual culture in everyday life.
2. Students will discuss how to read images.
3. Students will practice to decoding various popular images.
4. Students will analyze a music video.
5. Students will understand how visual texts can be appropriated and attain new meanings.

**Concepts and vocabulary:**

- Visual Culture: Aspects of cultural products focusing on images
- Music Video: This is a form of cultural product that became one of the most effective media to promote cultural products in the global cultural production industry. This form of media production affects youth in developing their identities, building their lifestyles, and constructing their worldviews.
- Decode: Through the decoding process, encoded messages in visual texts are translated and interpreted.
- Appropriation: This is the intentional borrowing, copying, and alteration of preexisting images and objects.

**Teacher materials:**

- Computer
  - PowerPoint showing “St. Michael and Satan” (1483) by Raffaello Sanzio and “Untitled GD” (2015) by Osang Gwon
  - PowerPoint showing various types of examples such as advertisements, movie posters, and campaign posters
  - PowerPoint showing two posters by Guerilla Girls “Do Women Have to Be Naked to Get into the Met. Museum?” (1989) and “Do Women Have to Be Naked to Get into Music Videos?” (2014) and “Grande Odalisque” (1814) by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres
  - PowerPoint showing examples of mind maps for assignment
- Music video: “I” by Taeyeon

- Worksheet for practicing reading images
- Survey on the Internet use/behavior and interest in media education

### **Student Materials:**

- Pencils

### **Procedures:**

#### ***Introduction (10 minutes)***

- When students enter the room, they will talk about their favorite K-Pop idols.
- Students will talk about various cultural aspects of K-Pop.

#### ***Discussion (45 minutes)***

##### **Visual Culture**

- Students will be shown various visual examples, such as contemporary artworks, advertisements, movie posters, and campaign posters.
- Students will talk about fine art, popular culture, and today's visual landscape.
- Students will discuss the purposes, audiences, messages, strategies, and visual elements of provided images.

##### **K-Pop Music Videos**

- Students will learn about the K-Pop phenomenon and its characteristics through a global lens.
- Students will discuss various kinds of roles that music videos play in a digitally connected world.

## Reading Music Videos

- Students will examine several elements of music videos with suggested examples.
- Students will be asked if they can find any critical issues while reading the music videos.

## Critical Issues

- Students will be shown typical images from K-Pop music videos that imply violence, sexism, racism, and materialism.
- Students will discuss which elements of media texts cause those social issues and how they work as strong messages in societies.

## Appropriation

- Students will view juxtaposed images/media comparing works composed of appropriated images with their originals.
- Students will discuss the relationship among the works and their re-created meanings.
- Students will watch appropriated YouTube videos that utilize K-Pop music videos.
- Students will discuss the ways in which the YouTube videos deconstruct the videos' original messages and their effectiveness in re-creating meaning.

## *Activity (30 minutes)*

- Students will watch a music video titled “I” by Taeyeon.
- Students will analyze the video with various elements that they learned.

- Students will complete a handout, reflecting on and answering the following questions:
  - Who are the main characters?
  - Talk about the plot. How are the characters developed?
  - How are light and colors used, and why?
  - How are audio elements and visual elements combined?
  - Where is the background, and how is it visualized?
  - Do scenes change quickly or slowly? Where and why?
  - How is choreography connected to characters?
  - Were you impressed by specific lyrics? Why?
  - Are any of the scenes particularly memorable? Why?

### **Closure (15 minutes)**

- Students will be shown examples of mind maps to encourage students to think about various elements of music videos and to find social issues that they wanted to express by creating their own visual productions.
- Brainstorming assignment will be announced.
- Students will be asked to create two mind maps for two themes: One will be about their thoughts regarding K-Pop in general, and the other will be about their awareness of problems from the various aspects of K-Pop music videos that they ultimately wanted to explore by creating a form of music video.
- Students will submit completed survey.
- Students will be dismissed.



## **Lesson #2**

**Title:** Finding Social Issues and Planning Video-Making

**Grade:** High School Students (1<sup>st</sup> grade and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade)

**Teacher:** Aelim Kim

**Length:** 100 minutes

**State visual art goals:** N/A

**State media arts goals (if any):** N/A

**State language arts goals (if any):** N/A

### **Objectives:**

1. Students will discuss critical issues in contemporary visual texts including K-Pop.
2. Students will learn about stop-motion animation.
3. In groups, students will start to create their own videos.

### **Concepts and vocabulary:**

- Social Issues in K-Pop: To attract public attention and maximize their profits, the “dark side” of K-Pop music videos is often criticized—i.e., its sexism, racism, materialism, and complicity in other social issues.
- Stop-Motion Animation: This is a form of video production in which images are captured one frame at times using physical objects that are moved between frames.

**Teacher materials:**

- Computer
  - PowerPoint showing students' mind maps
  - PowerPoint showing examples of digital languages
  - PowerPoint showing examples of stop-motion animation
- Worksheets: Project Planners, Story Boards
- Tripods for each group
- Magazines
- Scissors
- Glue
- Construction paper

**Student Materials:**

- Pencils
- Created Mind Maps

**Procedures:*****Introduction (10 minutes)***

- Students will be reminded of the concepts of the previous lesson using review questions.

***Discussion (40 minutes)***

Mind Maps

- In groups, students will present their thoughts regarding K-Pop from critical perspective with the mind maps that they brainstormed together for their homework assignment.

#### Stop-Motion Animation

- Students will talk about what kinds of digital languages we use every day and where we communicate with them.
- Students will discuss various forms of media culture, such as photography, text, animation, video clips, and communication platforms like Instagram, blogs, and YouTube.
- Students will learn about stop-motion animation, including the process, preparation materials, pros and cons, and the important points of this technique; they will also watch various examples.

#### *Activity (45 minutes)*

- Students will be given a tripod for each group
- Students will plan video-making with their assigned groups, completing project planners.
- Students will start to create storyboards with their groups.

#### *Closure (5 minutes)*

- Students will be dismissed.

### **Lesson #3**

**Title:** Video-Making

**Grade:** High School Students (1<sup>st</sup> grade and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade)

**Teacher:** Aelim Kim

**Length:** 100 minutes

**State visual art goals:** N/A

**State media arts goals (if any):** N/A

**State language arts goals (if any):** N/A

#### **Objectives:**

1. Students will create videos in their groups.
2. Students will understand how to express their thoughts through digital languages.
3. Students will understand how to utilize pre-existing media texts.
4. Students will learn how to edit videos using the appropriate software.

#### **Concepts and vocabulary:**

- Editing: Editing is the process of selecting and preparing written, visual, audio, and film media to convey information.

#### **Teacher materials:**

- Computer

- PowerPoint introducing various kinds of editing software, such as  
Windows® Movie Maker, GOM Mix, Vegas Pro, iMovie™, and Adobe®  
Premiere®

- Worksheets: Story Boards
- Tripods for each group
- Magazines
- Scissors
- Glue
- Construction paper

**Student Materials:**

- Smart Phones
- Laptops
- Lamps

**Procedures:**

***Introduction (10 minutes)***

- Students will be reminded of previous lesson with review questions.

***Discussion (20 minutes)***

- Students will review project plans, storyboards, and works-in-progress.

***Activity (65 minutes)***

- Students will continue creating storyboards with their groups.

- Students will discuss the plan and process in their groups.
- Students will prepare props, collect images or video clips from the Internet, and take pictures using their smart phones, tripods, and lamps.
- Students will be introduced various kinds of editing software, such as Windows® Movie Maker, GOM Mix, Vegas Pro, iMovie™, and Adobe® Premiere®.
- In their groups, students will choose software for video editing and install it on their laptops.
- Students will learn how to use the editing software that they chose via information online.
- Students will start editing their projects.
- Students will set meeting schedules and times with their groups.

**Closure (5 minutes)**

- Students will be dismissed.

## **Lesson #4**

**Title:** Sharing and Discussing

**Grade:** High School Students (1<sup>st</sup> grade and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade)

**Teacher:** Aelim Kim

**Length:** 100 minutes

**State visual art goals:** N/A

**State media arts goals (if any):** N/A

**State language arts goals (if any):** N/A

### **Objectives:**

1. Students will discuss their final projects together.
2. Students will understand themes, intended messages, and structures of the groups' media projects.
3. Students will analyze peers' video projects.

### **Teacher materials:**

- Computer
  - PowerPoint showing students' videos
- Worksheets: Artist Statement
- Survey

**Student Materials:**

- Pencils
- Final projects in the format of MP4 files

**Procedures:*****Introduction (10 minutes)***

- Students will talk about their experiences of video-making.

***Discussion (60 minutes)***

- Students will compose their thoughts by completing artist statement worksheets in their groups.
- Students will discuss the result of their projects.
- In their groups, students will present their finished music videos.
- Students will discuss various elements of the video watching their peers' final projects.
- Based on the format of the artist statements, students will be asked the following questions:
  - What is the story?
  - What is the theme?
  - Who are the main characters?
  - How do you feel about the colors, music, sounds, and effects?
  - Are those elements used effectively to display the theme?
  - Can you figure out which images are adapted from pre-existing ones?



- Is it easy or difficult to tell the producers' intentions?
- Students will think about the content of the other groups' videos.

**Closure (20 minutes)**

- Students will talk about what they learned and feel by participating this project.
- Students will fill out a survey of the following questions:
  - Do you feel any changes after this class? If so, what are they?
  - Please describe the best part of this course.
  - What were the challenges? Please tell me your suggestions.
  - If you have another opportunity to take a media education class in the future, what kind of class do you want to take?
  - Do you think media education is needed in school? If so, why?
- Students will be dismissed.

## APPENDIX C: STORYBOARDS

### Group 1

Digital Storyboard Template  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Image/Shot: 	Image/Shot: 	Image/Shot: 
Camera Movement/Location: <u>가까이</u>	Camera Location:	Camera Location:
Spoken Text:	Spoken Text:	Spoken Text:
Written Text:	Written Text:	Written Text:
Music/Sound Effects:	Music/Sound Effects:	Music/Sound Effects:

Digital Storyboard Template  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Image/Shot: 	Image/Shot: 	Image/Shot: 
Camera Movement/Location: <u>가까이</u>	Camera Location: <u>방식, 2차</u>	Camera Location: <u>물고</u>
Spoken Text:	Spoken Text:	Spoken Text:
Written Text:	Written Text:	Written Text:
Music/Sound Effects:	Music/Sound Effects:	Music/Sound Effects:

Digital Storyboard Template  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Image/Shot: 	Image/Shot: 	Image/Shot:
Camera Movement/Location: <u>가까이</u>	Camera Location:	Camera Location:
Spoken Text:	Spoken Text:	Spoken Text:
Written Text:	Written Text:	Written Text:
Music/Sound Effects:	Music/Sound Effects:	Music/Sound Effects:

## Group 2

22

Digital Storyboard Template  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Image/Shot:	Image/Shot:	Image/Shot:
Camera Movement/Location: <u>중: 7/8</u>	Camera Location: _____	Camera Location: _____
Spoken Text: _____	Spoken Text: _____	Spoken Text: _____
Written Text: _____	Written Text: _____	Written Text: _____
Music/Sound Effects: <u>7/8</u>	Music/Sound Effects: _____	Music/Sound Effects: _____

Digital Storyboard Template  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Image/Shot:	Image/Shot:	Image/Shot:
Camera Movement/Location: <u>자동차 앞쪽</u>	Camera Location: <u>중</u>	Camera Location: <u>자동차 앞</u>
Spoken Text: _____	Spoken Text: _____	Spoken Text: _____
Written Text: _____	Written Text: _____	Written Text: _____
Music/Sound Effects: _____	Music/Sound Effects: _____	Music/Sound Effects: _____

Digital Storyboard Template  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Image/Shot:	Image/Shot:	Image/Shot:
Camera Movement/Location: <u>중</u>	Camera Location: <u>중</u>	Camera Location: <u>자동차 앞</u>
Spoken Text: _____	Spoken Text: _____	Spoken Text: _____
Written Text: _____	Written Text: _____	Written Text: _____
Music/Sound Effects: _____	Music/Sound Effects: _____	Music/Sound Effects: _____

Digital Storyboard Template  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Image/Shot:	Image/Shot:	Image/Shot:
Camera Movement/Location: <u>중</u>	Camera Location: <u>중</u>	Camera Location: <u>중</u>
Spoken Text: _____	Spoken Text: _____	Spoken Text: _____
Written Text: _____	Written Text: _____	Written Text: _____
Music/Sound Effects: <u>자동차</u>	Music/Sound Effects: _____	Music/Sound Effects: _____

## Group 3

3조 - 2학년, 신영희, 김지나, 김민영

Digital Storyboard Template  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Project Title 사랑의 힘

Image/Shot	Image/Shot	Image/Shot
Camera Movement/Location: <u>Hand in</u>	Camera Location: <u>X</u>	Camera Location: <u>X</u>
Spoken Text: <u>X</u>	Spoken Text: <u>X</u>	Spoken Text: <u>X</u>
Written Text: <u>X</u>	Written Text: <u>X</u>	Written Text: <u>X</u>
Music/Sound Effects: <u>사랑의 힘</u>	Music/Sound Effects: <u>사랑의 힘</u>	Music/Sound Effects: <u>사랑의 힘</u>

(1) 사랑의 힘 (2) 사랑의 힘 (3) 사랑의 힘

Digital Storyboard Template  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Image/Shot	Image/Shot	Image/Shot
Camera Movement/Location: _____	Camera Location: _____	Camera Location: _____
Spoken Text: _____	Spoken Text: _____	Spoken Text: _____
Written Text: _____	Written Text: _____	Written Text: _____
Music/Sound Effects: _____	Music/Sound Effects: _____	Music/Sound Effects: _____

(1) 사랑의 힘 (2) 사랑의 힘 (3) 사랑의 힘

Digital Storyboard Template  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Project Title \_\_\_\_\_




Image/Shot	Image/Shot	Image/Shot
Camera Movement/Location: <u>X</u>	Camera Location: <u>X</u>	Camera Location: <u>X</u>
Spoken Text: <u>X</u>	Spoken Text: <u>X</u>	Spoken Text: <u>X</u>
Written Text: <u>X</u>	Written Text: <u>X</u>	Written Text: <u>X</u>
Music/Sound Effects: <u>사랑의 힘</u>	Music/Sound Effects: <u>사랑의 힘</u>	Music/Sound Effects: <u>사랑의 힘</u>

(1) 사랑의 힘 (2) 사랑의 힘 (3) 사랑의 힘




## Group 4

4조 김유민, 김은영, 박세희, 허재민




Digital Storyboard Template  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Image/Shot: 	Image/Shot: 	Image/Shot: 
Camera Movement/Location: X	Camera/Location: X	Camera/Location: X
Spoken Text: X	Spoken Text: X	Spoken Text: X
Written Text: X	Written Text: Before - After	Written Text: X
Music/Sound Effects: E110 - 4월24	Music/Sound Effects: 1월22 06	Music/Sound Effects: 다들요 광고 00




Digital Storyboard Template  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Image/Shot: 	Image/Shot: 	Image/Shot: 
Camera Movement/Location: 365	Camera/Location: TV 365	Camera/Location: 365
Spoken Text: X	Spoken Text: X	Spoken Text: X
Written Text: X	Written Text: X	Written Text: X
Music/Sound Effects: X	Music/Sound Effects: X	Music/Sound Effects: X

Digital Storyboard Template  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Image/Shot: 	Image/Shot: 	Image/Shot: 
Camera Movement/Location: 365	Camera/Location: 365	Camera/Location: 365
Spoken Text: X	Spoken Text: X	Spoken Text: X
Written Text: X	Written Text: X	Written Text: X
Music/Sound Effects: X	Music/Sound Effects: X	Music/Sound Effects: X

Digital Storyboard Template  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Project Title \_\_\_\_\_

Image/Shot: 	Image/Shot: 	Image/Shot: 
Camera Movement/Location: 365	Camera/Location: 365	Camera/Location: 365
Spoken Text: X	Spoken Text: X	Spoken Text: X
Written Text: X	Written Text: X	Written Text: X
Music/Sound Effects: X	Music/Sound Effects: X	Music/Sound Effects: X

## APPENDIX D: ARTIST STATEMENTS

### Group 1

**Title:** 開 (“Open”)

**Keywords:** Music Video, Storytelling

**Theme:** Pursuing changes in music video trends by introducing a music video of EXO, the boy band, that shows different concepts from conventional music videos

**Plot:** Two characters criticize conventional music videos. They give shape to the content and worldview of EXO’s music video during their conversation.

### Expressions

**Conversation:** Two people are developing stories by having a conversation.

- Conversation is more natural than other forms of storytelling.
- Questions and answers can additionally explain abstruse subtitles on the music video.
- Expressions to induce empathy were used.

**Effect:** - Drawing part: Fast

- Subtitles: Added with video to describe the basics of worldview.
- Narration: Only voices were used to highlight the content.
- Overlap: The drawing and video of the tree of life are overlapped.

**Music:** - Eldorado or music from existing music videos was used to boost atmosphere and immersion.

**Utilized videos:** Introducing individual members’ talents

- SMtown Path code

- EXO music video at “MAMA”
- “Love Me Right” → “Lotto” → “Lucky One” → “Monster”
- “Wolf” music video to describe worldview and supernatural powers
- The conversation is connected to the video to express main characters’ thoughts visually.

The conversation is connected to the video to visualize main characters’ thoughts.

Utilized Images: Drawing technique: Same as next scene to notify that main character’s imagination was visualized in the video.

**Top Priorities:** Connecting music videos: Editing well to show subject naturally and simply.

The harmony of videos and narration.

The harmony of subtitles and narration.

**Strengths:** We were happy to introduce the worldview of our favorite boy band.

**Shortcomings:** The acting abilities of main characters, probability (unnatural connection of the stories due to the short running time of the video), insufficient explanation to fully understand the whole worldview of EXO.

## **Group 2**

**Title:** JANUS: Double-Sidedness

**Keywords:** Double-Sidedness

**Theme:** The double-sidedness of idol stars

**Plot:** When a child looks at the idols through mass media, they feel dazzled and amazed.

The reality, however, is not so spectacular. We only see their superficial and fancy appearances.

### **Expressions**

**Characters:** - A child: Representing unbiased and innocent public

- Celebrities: Show both splendid and dark sides.

- Puppets: Represent celebrities in this video because when they play the celebrities, they are not really themselves. They do not act independently and are presences who cannot even make the facial expressions that they want.

**Effect:** - Glittering lighting: Highlights bright celebrities.

- Zooming in/out on television: Shows the intersecting viewpoints of the child and the celebrity.

- The tearing, folding, and rolling paper: Add fun expression by utilizing various motions.

**Music:** - Advertising music /bright and cheerful music: Describe the feeling of watching fancy appearance of admired celebrities.

-Gloomy music: Maximizes the exhausted images caused by hard training and schedule.

- EXO's concert recording: Utilizes music and shouting sound of the audience.



**Utilized videos:** - Fashion images of various celebrities: Splendor

- Drawings

- Concert photos from the Internet

- Malicious comments online

**Top Priorities:** - We tried to describe the gap between the perspectives of a child and celebrities.

- We mostly paid attention to tightly connecting stop-motion images (used many pictures).

- We utilized as many motions as possible to show various images when the scenes and effects changed. We used 1,239 images.

**Color:** - We made the most of the original colors of magazines.

- In the latter half, dark and gloomy atmosphere was created by using somber colors.

**Strengths:** We could develop teamwork while having meals and spending a lot of time together. We were doubtful while taking pictures. However, we became ecstatic after watching the dramatic effect of the stop-motion video after editing, and therefore, we could stick to the work. We were happy and satisfied with exploring the unintentional effects, such as shadows and the unique rough, choppy impression. In addition, we were happy with identifying our aesthetic imagination and expression. Every member got through positively even under the pressure of the time limit.

**Shortcomings:** It is inconvenient not to have enough time to complete the work on time. Even though we planned the shooting by storyboard, in many places, we just played it by

ear. Because our storyboard contained too many contents to express many details of the theme, we were aware that we could not describe everything as planned, so the project did not turn out perfect. (Artists' desires are endless, and they repeat the same mistakes.)

### **Group 3**

**Title:** Idol Factory

**Keywords:** Idol, Factory, Standardization, Commodification

**Theme:** Criticizing Standardized Idols

**Plot:** Idols are manufactured at the factory and are commodified. Every idol's face is made the same shape through plastic surgery, and old idols are abandoned.

### **Expressions**

**Stop Motion:** Various idols, hands. Faces of idols.

**Characters:** - Same-faced idols: Highlight standardization of plastic surgery, appearance, and make-up. They are abandoned as different styles of idols show up.

- Hands of sellers and customers: The customers consume the youngest, skinniest, and most standardized idols, and the sellers discard older and fatter idols.

**Colors:** Pink & Gray: The outside of idols are wrapped beautifully in pink colors; however, inside, they are cold and impersonal in gray colors.

**Music:** "Floating Times": This music is not cheerful but not very gloomy.

**Images:** Magazine images for collage: We collected images (mainly pink colors).

**Top Priorities:** - Same costumes, faces, weight, and early age

- Abandonment of idols who become worthless

- We synthesized one's face and another's body to criticize the sameness of their faces.

- We criticized the commodification of idols by presenting young and pretty dolls (idols) being sold and older dolls (idols) being discarded.

**Strengths:** We could have an opportunity to think again of idols.

**Shortcomings:** We needed more time. We were lacking in technology (music and editing).

## **Group 4**

**Title:** Nightmare

**Keywords:** Plastic surgery, Standardized beauty

**Theme:** Criticizing of K-Pop that presents standardized beauty

**Plot:** A girl follows standardized beauty suggestions on mass media; she soon has a feeling of doubt as she sees her individuality disappearing. Then, she realizes this is a nightmare.

### **Expressions**

**Colors:** We chose vivid and strong colors that are presented in K-Pop music videos.

**Music:** We utilized K-Pop music and expressed characters' changes of mind through music.

**Effect and Composition:** We combined stop-motion techniques and video clips.

**Characters:** We presented real people to achieve a higher level of realism.

**Utilized videos:** We utilized a part of a video clip from "Up and Down" by EXID because this video well displays typical images, colors, and dances in many K-Pop music videos.

**Sounds:** We borrowed various sounds from advertisements to enhance reality.

**Strengths:** The colors are well expressed as team members intended, and the theme clearly emerges.

**Shortcomings:** We could not use a tripod appropriately; the pictures were blurry.

## APPENDIX E: PERMISSION TO REPRINT



### PERMISSION FORM

I, Teresa Torres de Eça, official representative of InSEA Publications, attest that Aelim Kim am the sole copyright owner of the following manuscript, and I hereby authorize Aelim Kim (Master's student at University of South Carolina) the authority to include the following manuscript chapter, "How Does Digital Media Shape Today's Youth? Transcultural K-Pop and Participatory Fan Culture," in the book, *Pedagogical Globalization: Traditions, Contemporary Art, and Popular Culture of Korea*, in her Master's thesis.

*Date:* Visau, 13/07/2017

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Teresa', is written over a horizontal line.

Teresa Torres de Eça

President of The International Society For Education Throught Art-  
InSEA. /[www.insea.org](http://www.insea.org)