

The Hidden Identity in QR Codes



Theresa McGee

Pixelated square images, known as QR Codes, have become the latest technology trend in education. They originated in Japan. QR stands for “Quick Response,” so named because it links to a website faster than you can type. With the help of a camera built into a mobile device, a “scan” of a QR code can connect to information online, download a document, or view an image. You can quickly and easily create QR codes and focus on curricular content while actively engaging your students with technology. Take a look at “QR codes at a Glance” on Flickr to get started (<http://goo.gl/4rzbl>), or watch this clever YouTube explanation on how QR codes are used around NYC (<http://t.co/nAC7fvh>). Try scanning the QR image on this page and link to the video directly.

QR Code Readers

There are many free QR code readers, although my preferred reader is ScanLife. To download ScanLife, type getscanlife.com into your mobile device’s Internet browser. You can also use a computer webcam to read QR codes with a free software download (tinyurl.com/QRwebcam).

Create Your Own

A simple QR code generator to try is called Create QR Code (createqr-code.appspot.com). Just type in text or a URL link and click “Create QR Code.” Instantly you have your own QR code!

Interactive Classroom Ideas

- Create learning extensions and introductions. Create QR codes based on content covered in class and link to video or other online interactive learning activities.
- Hide QR codes in reading materials. Codes can be taped to pages in art books. Students explore the books, find the codes, and absorb the content in order to answer the mystery questions embedded in the codes.
- Engage in a virtual tour using art images on display in your classroom. A QR code next to an art print will take students into a museum for a virtual tour or to a location on a Google map.
- Print out and tape QR codes to different sites on an old, roll-up world map. Students can scan and discover the type of art created in each location.

Beyond the Classroom

- Create a QR code linking each student to his or her personal Artsonia gallery. Art teacher Suzanne Tiedemann from Brunswick Acres Elementary School in Brunswick, New Jersey, had each of her elementary students create their own QR code linking to their individual Artsonia gallery. She then uploaded each code as a work of art on Artsonia for student access from home (goo.gl/5swJ1) Suzanne used QCreate (tinyurl.com/ColorQR) to let her students choose the color of their QR code.
- Make an interactive art show. In addition to the descriptions that accompany student displays, a QR code can be added for students and parents to scan and connect to related educational content. As long as you have open or guest Internet access for your event, parents can bring their smart-phones and iTouch devices from home, connect to Wifi, and scan away. Visit goo.gl/3R9uE to see some examples of QR codes used at a student art show.
- Promote your art program. Art teacher Ian Sands from Apex High School in Apex, North Carolina, added QR codes to his blog and as posters around school to help interested students learn more about his art classes (goo.gl/AGyxi).
- Create QR code artwork with your students. Visit these links for some examples: goo.gl/OvQ3U and goo.gl/A1vaA.

Connecting art curriculum to our visual culture is an exciting concept for students to explore. Create authentic learning experiences and disguise otherwise ordinary learning as a fun activity. For additional resources on QR codes in education, visit goo.gl/FzaBd.

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