LEARNing Landscapes

Journal

Pedagogical Practices: The How of Teaching and Learning

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Statement of Purpose

LEARNing Landscapes™ Journal is an open access, peer-reviewed, online education journal supported by LEARN (Leading English Education and Resource Network). Published in the spring and autumn of each year, it attempts to make links between theory and practice and is built upon the principles of partnership, collaboration, inclusion, and attention to multiple perspectives and voices. The material in each publication attempts to share and showcase leading educational ideas, research, and practices in Quebec, and beyond. We welcome articles, interviews, visual representations, arts-informed work, and multimedia texts to inspire teachers, administrators, and other educators to reflect upon and develop innovative possibilities within their own practices.

Review Board (Vol. 14 No. 1)

Editorial

It is hard to reconcile how the time has passed since the last editorial, which marked month three of the pandemic. Here, a year later, we have learned to exist in a world of isolation with many new and different demands by inventing ways to keep connected with family and friends, to teach and live in a changed world, and to stay healthy. It has been an unusual journey—one that is once in a lifetime. We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to all essential workers, including teachers, who have literally put their lives on the line and contributed so much to the safety and well-being of all of us. One of the highlights for the editorial team at *LEARNing Landscapes* during this unusual year has been the large number of excellent submissions that we received from our call, in spite of the excessive demands of COVID-19, and the creative thinking and innovative practices that are represented in these articles. Our wonderful peer reviewers found time, in the midst of other responsibilities, to respond thoroughly and extensively to our authors, for which we, as well as the authors, are most appreciative. They have consistently, over the years, made publishing a learning process. A formal thank-you goes out to them. We also want to express sincere thanks to our talented and devoted copy editor, David Mitchell, who for 14 years has served *LEARNing Landscapes* and worked his magic.

The articles in this issue represent multiple levels of education and a wide range of interesting pedagogical practices based on principles of social constructivist learning (Richardson, 2003), which indicate that:

- Knowledge is socially constructed and builds upon previous knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978).
- Learning is active, contextual, and personal (Piaget, 1937).
- Learning occurs in the doing and the reflection upon it (Dewey, 1938).
- Learning must be meaningful and involve different modalities (Honebein, 1996; Eisner, 2002).

The underlying themes that cut across the many different contexts in this range of work all espouse the need for relational, reflective, and creative processes for meaningful and successful teaching and learning. We hope you will enjoy the variety and the read.

It should be noted that in all our issues, the articles are arranged alphabetically, but for the purposes of discussion in this editorial they are arranged thematically.

Invited Commentaries

We are very pleased to include in this issue invited commentaries from Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Montreal, Quebec. **Eleanor Duckworth** is Professor Emerita at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE). In our interview with her, Duckworth traces her constructivist teaching roots to her work with Jean Piaget and, subsequently, with the Elementary Science Study in Boston. She describes how later she developed, based on constructivist principles, the now famous T-440 course at HGSE, known colloquially as the "Moon Course." She shares how graduate students who took that course over a span of more than two decades continue to keep in touch with her some 40 years later, to share, discuss, and

solve pedagogical questions based on her approaches for inspiring constructivist teaching and learning. **Carol Rowan**, an independent scholar and educational consultant based in Montreal, explains in our interview how she developed her passion for the Arctic and wanted her children raised with the cultural and Indigenous knowledge in which she found herself immersed and profoundly engaged. She developed a pedagogy that she calls "learning with stories." She began by carefully observing and visually documenting the young children while they were engaged in activities outdoors. Then she worked with an Elder in the community to produce these "stories" in Inuktitut. This gave her access to Inuit cultural knowledge, provided a way for the children to identify with their language and validate their experiences, and built strong ties with families, which shifted their perception of her as a teacher. She advocates for a "Nunangat pedagogy," a "thinking with the land, water, snow and ice—about going outside" and working with Elders to bring Indigenous knowledge into educational practices, locally and beyond.

Pedagogies in the Early and Elementary Years

Haley Dominey, at Memorial University, explores the research on the relationship between imaginative play and creativity, both inside and outside classrooms, and laments the lack of emphasis on these important dimensions of learning in schools. She argues for professional development to help teachers create the necessary conditions for imaginative play and suggests the arts and multidisciplinary approaches for learning can enhance creativity and encourage imagination. She provides an example of how, in a grade five science class, a student was encouraged to "think outside the box" during an activity on identifying and categorizing natural resources. Dominey concludes with a series of photos of mundane objects she took in her home during COVID-19 and shares how, in careful observation and contemplation from different vantage points, she was able to perceive aspects she had previously overlooked. **Lisa Nontell**, from the University of Saskatchewan, discusses the tensions that exist between teacher-centred teaching and play-based approaches in Kindergarten. She describes how she shifted her emphasis to play, and worked alongside her students as a fellow learner and participant in reimagined workspaces for exploration, experimentation, and imaginative play, and where meaningful and exciting learning took place. **Anne Murray-Orr** and **Jennifer Mitton** are located at St. Xavier University. These authors discuss how six elementary/middle school teachers in Eastern Canada incorporated critical literacy into their classroom practices. Their observations and interviews revealed that critical literacy practices need to be intentionally imbedded into planning, so that students are engaged in issues that are relevant to their communities, and should experience multimodalities of expression and representation. **Sonal Kavia**, an education consultant, and **Shaun Murphy**, from the University of Saskatchewan, studied the use of mindfulness practices by two educators (one veteran and one beginner) and a school leader in a small rural elementary school. Their narrative inquiry, replete with vignettes and examples of support from the school leader, reveals that the qualities of deep listening (to the self and others) and being present and aware in the moment, as well as direct perception and empathy, all contribute to creating compassionate, caring school spaces and a mindful pedagogy. **Jillian Vancoughnett**, also from the University of Saskatchewan, describes her work with a parent to meet the needs of three-year-old, Shirley, who was diagnosed on the autism spectrum. Jillian used parent knowledge to help guide a transition from working in the home and surroundings through a series of gradual moves to a school setting.

She suggests that authentic and meaningful home visits should be at the centre of a special needs program and highlights the pedagogical possibilities that exist when parent knowledge is "invited and welcomed." **Pradita Nambiar**, who is a teacher in Vidyaranya School, and **Sharada Gade**, who is an independent researcher, both located in India, describe in three vignettes a reading-aloud pedagogy that Pradita uses with her Kindergarten students. They posit that reading aloud fosters the cultural-historical development of children through socio-dramatic play and word substitution. This exposure helps them to prepare for and transition into the subsequent grade.

Literacy Pedagogies

Emma Chen, from the University of Saskatchewan, shares an autobiographical narrative inquiry into teaching Chinese to her preschool daughters to develop and maintain their heritage language. She transformed her home into a multimedia space for listening, playing, reading, writing, and creating, and integrated friends and relatives into the activities. She kept a daily, digital diary to document what transpired. She highlights how this heritage language learning builds passion about the language and helps to connect immigrant children with families, culture, and community. She advocates for including this approach in the education system. **Debbie Golos**, University of Minnesota, **Annie Moses**, National Association for the Education of Young Children, **Elaine Gale**, from City University of New York, and **Michele Berke**, from the California School for the Deaf, provide an overview of the various existing perspectives for educating Deaf children. They argue that the sound-based approaches, which are used most frequently, emanate from a deficit notion about Deaf people that suggests they need to be "fixed" so they can "fit" into a hearing world. They discuss that, instead, there is a need for a cultural perspective that views Deaf individuals as visual beings who have their own language that exists in a rich, visual culture, in theatre, sports, and language. They believe that teaching American Sign Language (ASL) would benefit all students and, furthermore, would help develop positive perceptions about their peers who are Deaf.

Secondary School Pedagogies

Jessica Whitelaw, at the University of Pennsylvania, describes a yearlong, collaborative practitioner inquiry with two secondary teachers and their diverse group of students in an urban, art-based school. She shares, with detailed examples and excerpts from interviews, how the teachers strategically and intentionally used the arts to explore the topics of "Who am I? Who are you? Who are we?" as the impetus for fostering relational and social justice teaching and learning. One example discusses how the students wrote a script to protest a funding cut that would have a direct impact on their ability to continue to attend the school. They learned about empathy by getting to know others more personally, and found their voices as they portrayed who they were and why. She suggests that placing the arts at the centre of classroom life develops these deep relational spaces. **Amanah Eljaji** describes her work with grade nine secondary students as she helped them create counter stories to push back at the dominant and negative narrative which they had internalized about being Muslim. Sharing artwork and poetry, and other multimodal approaches, she shows how she helped them create their own stories to map out resistance

to the dominant narrative. She urges teachers to provide "many mirrors" for youth to see themselves, as well as "windows" through which to view other diverse worlds. **Anne Phelan**, from the University of British Columbia, and **Melanie Janzen**, from the University of Manitoba, posit that obligation is what often drives teachers in the midst of the "machinery of schooling." They describe four teacher stories that support the notion of the sense of obligation and the faith teachers have in dealing with the unexpected, and helpfully juxtapose these with John Caputo's work on teaching and ethics. They show poignantly how inventive these teachers had to be in dealing with the tensions that occur between the demands of their everyday duties and/or fear of breaking rules and the strong sense of ethical obligation they felt as professionals about responding to unexpected events that occurred.

Reflective Practices in Higher Education

Warren Linds, **Tejaswinee Jhunjhunwala**, **Linthuja Nadarajah**, and **Antonio Starnino**, at Concordia University, and **Elinor Vettraino**, at Aston University, describe a 6-Part Story Method (6PSM) they use as a pedagogical tool. It uses abstract images to elicit a structured storytelling process that enables reflexive learning about approaches to ethical practices. The 6PSM process builds on Gersie's (1997) Story Evocation Technique (SET), where participants draw on cards to create a visual story based on a six-part structure—character, task, a force to help, a hindering force, an action, and ending. Vettraino developed picture cards to alleviate embarrassment that might result from adults having to draw. Linds used the 6PSM process as a course assignment and then, subsequently, invited three willing students from the course to work with him and Vettraino. They created their individual stories from the same set of cards. Three themes emerged which included safety, the difference between want and need, and creative exploration. The work concluded with an individual exploration of each theme and suggested that the structure of this process provides a degree of safety and limits what emerges. The telling of the story moves in and out of the structure, partly as a result of a response from others, and each telling provides new knowledge for the creator. **Elia Gindin** and **Meaghan van Steenbergen**, two teachers, and **Douglas Gleddie**, a Professor at the University of Alberta, engaged in a four-month, reflective, online process in which they shared a teaching experience, then read each of the shared stories to understand the feelings and contexts of their colleagues while bringing their own experiences to "the table." Finally, they produced a collaborative reflection in a shared Google document. They discovered that this collaborative process enabled them to understand experiences from different perspectives and was a valuable reflective approach for inducing professional growth. **Sandra Jack-Malik**, **Janet Kuhnke**, and **Kristin O'Rourke**, at Cape Breton University, describe their narrative inquiry with preservice teachers on the use of the Kairos Blanket Exercise (KBE). The purpose of the KBE exercise is to build understanding about shared history as Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. The process involves the exploration of the history of pre-contact, treaty making, colonization, and resistance, while stepping onto blankets that represent the land and the role of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples during these experiences. Simultaneously, the participants reflect on what they know about this history and how they learned it. Later, in "Talking Circles," they share what they have learned and what this means to them. The results of the study indicated that the process made the participants feel safe enough to ask questions. Some shifted their understanding of the history, and others, interestingly, began considering how they might contribute to

decolonizing their teaching, which augurs well for this pedagogical approach. **Julie Mooney**, at the University of Alberta, used auto-ethnography, autobiographical writing, and scholarly literature to weave together her personal narrative, with self-reflection and theoretical work as a way of wrestling with how to decolonize and Indigenize her teaching. She examines critically and poignantly her identity and miseducation, and the roadblocks she has encountered along the way. She discovered, as illustrated in her compelling narratives, that relationality, responsibility, and place are the "starting points" for living reconciliation and enacting decolonization and Indigenization in her teaching and curricular practices.

Visual Pedagogical Approaches in Higher Education

Gail Prasad and **The Lions BEd Group**, at York University, describe their study on reflective practice with six teacher candidates who were part of a course on "Inquiries Into Learning." Prasad workshopped collage making with the students and then guided them through the creation of a series of three collages to portray their vision of learning and their doubts about becoming teachers. The final collage was one that merged these hopes and fears. This work culminated with a final reflective statement. This collage process revealed to these candidates how their hopes and fears naturally and realistically mingle. The authors hope to use this work to explore further aesthetic-based pedagogies in preservice teacher education. **Ellyn Lyle**, a Professor, and **Chantelle Caissie**, a student, both at Yorkville University, reveal evocatively, poetically, and reflectively, their dialogical analysis of shared learning experiences. Their work was guided by the notion that personal experiences inform both what and how each learner comes to know. The poetic writing space they created became a safe place in which to share vulnerabilities and build relationship. They conclude that their "co-constructed praxis" is a way to re-humanize education because it helps to resist the dominant discourse that otherwise would "write their stories" for them. **Alison Grittner** and **The Social Justice Learning Collaborative**, at the University of Calgary, share how six Master of Social Work students, in an online learning environment (due to COVID-19), created sensory essays through drawing, photography, performance, music, and media, to reflect critically on their social location and identities. More practically, the sensory, arts-based essays helped to alleviate the amount of screen time for the course. They show how this process allowed these students to draw on their unique perspectives and experiences to foster deep reflection and transformative understandings of social justice issues. **M'Balia Thomas**, at the University of Kansas, describes two Teaching of English to other Language Learners (TESOL) assessment tasks in which she has integrated creativity. The first of these is the "Supervisory Observation Report" which she uses in an undergraduate course. The students evaluate a scenario depicting a teacher's pedagogical response to a second language student with limited English proficiency and then offer feedback to improve this response. The second is "The Conference Poster," for which students address the real-world challenges of communicating a theoretical argument succinctly, critically, and visually for their peers. The creation of a poster helps to prepare students for the oral demands of comprehensive exams and dissertations, and fosters professionalization among them. Thomas argues that these approaches, which incorporate everyday creativity, promote deeper learning and risk taking that is needed in classrooms. Also, these tasks help the instructor to focus on and clarify what needs to be taught, contextualized, and provided for students in advance. **Tiiu Poldma** and **Zakia Hammouni**, at the Université de Montréal, and **Lora Di Fabio**, at American Biltrite, describe how they

helped students to connect theory and practice by creating an aesthetic problem-solving task in a workshop setting. Fifty undergraduate, Interior Design Program students in a second-year theory course learned the basic theories about light and colour. Then they attended a workshop put on by the Colour Marketing Group (CMG), a nonprofit, international, colour-forecasting organization. They were shown how colours are forecasted annually and globally. Next, working in pairs, they had to solve a specific colour problem. Finally, they prepared concept boards to share their processes and the thinking behind them. These were submitted as a course assignment, but also were part of a juried competition to select the best work to become part of future CMG workshops. The process helped to elucidate theories, put these into practice, and engage the students in authentic and meaningful learning. **Annie Savard**, at McGill University, shares how she supports doctoral students in becoming Mathematic Teacher Educators (MTEs) during a graduate course that she teaches. Her seminar addresses the divide that exists between theory and practice. It emphasizes how to improve pedagogy for pre- and in-service teachers, and how to coach teachers on best practices. It promotes the need for a critical stance and helps them to situate themselves in their work. In addition, they make connections between their teacher educator roles and their research projects. Savard provides an overview of the class activities and presents five, multimodal assignments (Observation Tools, Cycle of Enactment and Investigation, Coaching Teachers, Journey Synthesis, and E-Portfolio) for supporting the development of MTEs. She posits that the integration of theory and practice, the varied assignments, and the peer work help to position the students differently as MTEs.

Adapting Pedagogies for Learning in Higher Education

Allison Gonsalves and **Emily Sprowls**, at McGill University, co-designed an undergraduate science course with **Dawn Wiseman**, from Bishop's University, and then Gonsalves and Sprowls taught it at McGill. They tried to make it as interactive as possible while pivoting to an online environment due to COVID-19. They provide an overview of the science curriculum and share how previously, pre-COVID students were introduced to what are called Ambitious Science Teaching (ABT) practices, which they then deconstructed and analyzed. For the online students, they offered a hybrid approach by demonstrating with a small group of in-person students (within safety regulations), and by sharing this demonstration synchronously, as well as recording and posting it. Google Jamboard was used so students could talk about science ideas and then collaboratively sketch and share them digitally in real time. A whiteboard, which was used by the small group of in-person students, was photographed and posted to provide a record for the others. They discuss how "rehearsals," that is, selecting a "big idea" and modeling to reach consensus about an explanation, posed challenges in terms of time and in the portrayal in the online context. The authors discuss these challenges candidly and provide helpful suggestions for using the interactive functions of digital platforms. They ponder about whether the transfer of science from an online context to an in-person classroom will work for these future teachers who did the course online. **Sumer Seiki** and **Daniela Domínguez**, at the University of San Francisco, and **Jolynn Asato**, at the San José State University, describe how they use a "familial curriculum" to prepare preservice science teachers. To personalize and contextualize science, this curriculum incorporates "personal, familial, community, and cultural knowledge, stories, and emotions" . . . which have been passed on

generationally. The authors explored a seven-week course with 14 preservice teachers. Using interviews, observations, and artifacts, they share the histories and familial knowledge of three students, which are juxtaposed and re-valued alongside science. The results showed that short science lessons that incorporate accessing, articulating, and translating community cultural knowledge, are extremely valuable and are made relatable through family stories. **Brigette Herron** and **Kathryn Roulston**, at the University of Georgia, discuss the need to "slow down and dig deep" in a first-year seminar and in a graduate course on research interviewing. They share how they teach the students to use Ethnomethodology (EM) and Conversation Analysis (CA) to examine the construction of interviews. They describe two cases. In the first, the students viewed a Martin Luther King interview and analyzed it by focusing on ways of *answering questions about controversial topics*. The second was an analysis of a publicly available interview on interviewing where the students examined *difficult interactions*. These detailed analyses helped the students to understand how participation works in interviews, to notice how question-and-answer sequences unfold, and to recognize the importance of positioning themselves critically.

Journeys in Pedagogical Thinking

Christopher Stonebanks, at Bishop's University, describes his pedagogical journey, which began when he used a Freirean approach in his teaching in the James Bay Cree community in Mistassini. Subsequently, while doing his PhD, he abandoned Freirean pedagogy and became immersed in Critical Pedagogy with some of the key scholars at the time. After his doctoral work, he became involved in an education project in the rural region of Milawi, which prompted him to question the field of critical pedagogy because of the hierarchies that he realized existed in it, and he wished to flatten. The juxtaposition of these pedagogies brought him full circle back to the work of Freire and its emancipatory and humanized roots. He used these ideas to help this community in Milawi build and own a public campus dedicated to lifelong learning. He found his pedagogical home in the work of Freire. **Corinna Peterken**, at Brigham Young University, and **Miriam Potts**, at Victoria University, journeyed through Rock Canyon, Park City Rail Trail, and Great Salt Lake, and share how attentive walking on foot, art making, and storying, produce a relational kind of learning and a different kind of knowing. This combination fosters careful noticing and reflection and establishes links with other living things, places, and materials. The article suggests new perspectives for thinking about and "doing" pedagogy. Last, but certainly not least, **Gunita Gupta**, from the University of British Columbia, shares her pedagogical journey by weaving theoretical perspectives and alternating these with personal and engaging stories of her milestone realizations. She starts from the premise that pedagogy can be understood as the methods for teaching, and then, deftly and poignantly, shows, rather than tells, in her personal narratives, how pedagogy is not a choice, but a response and a way of being with children. She completes her pedagogical journey and simultaneously convinces the reader that, above all, pedagogy is the practice of love.

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Lynn Butler-Kisber (B.Ed., M.Ed., McGill; Ed.D. Harvard) is a Professor of Education in the Department of Integrated Studies, Faculty of Education and an Associate Member of the Institute for Health and Social Policy, Faculty of Medicine, McGill University. She was recently elected Chair of the Elliot Eisner Special Interest Group at the American Educational Research Association. Her teaching and research include qualitative research methodologies; leadership, multiliteracies; and professional development. She is particularly interested in arts-based methodologies, more specifically in visual inquiry (collage, photo/film, and visual narratives) and poetic inquiry on which she has written and presented extensively. She focuses on issues of marginalization, equity, and social justice. Some recent publications include *Poetic Inquiries of Reflection and Renewal: Poetry as Research* (2017), with Guiney Yallop, Stewart, and Wiebe; the second edition of her book*, Qualitative Inquiry: Thematic, Narrative and Arts-Based Perspectives* (Sage, April 2018) and Collage-making, in the 2019 *Sage Research Methods Foundations* (edited by Atkinson, Delacourt, et al.). She is founding (2007) and continuing Editor of *LEARNing Landscapes*, an online, open access, peer-reviewed journal that integrates theory and practice, encourages multimodal submissions and the inclusion of a variety of voices. Current projects include: The NEXTschool Initiative; the Human Displacement and Narrative Inquiry Project (Routledge 2022) and online Sage Nvivo Webinars on arts-based research. She has done a range of international research and development projects in Dominican Republic, China, Indonesia, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, and in the UK and USA.

Visiting Critical Exploration in the Classroom

Eleanor Duckworth

Abstract

In this commentary, summarized from a recent interview, the author reminisces about a career dedicated to critical exploration in the classroom. She discusses the formation of the Moon Group, a group of teachers who met over a period of 25 years to study the behaviour of the moon. Duckworth later describes an exercise in which her students experimented with the positioning of a small mirror in the classroom in order to be able to predict where to place it on a wall so one student can see another in a different part of the room. In another exercise, she had university students observe the learning of children by having them solve spatial problems without any advice or prompts from an adult. She concludes by providing guidance for classroom teachers, emphasizing the importance of making sure, "what you want them to learn is worth learning about."

Discovering Piaget and Inhelder

When I finished my BA, I wanted to go see the world and I won a Rotary Fellowship which sent me to Paris with $2,000 for the year—ALL MINE! And I had money left over at the end! Although I had done my BA in philosophy, I wanted to do graduate work in psychology. I'd never heard of Piaget, but he was on the course schedule that I was required to take. His very first class swept me away—it appealed to my young philosopher's heart. His lectures that year were about geometry—and he pointed to three different kinds: Euclidean, projective, and topological. Historically, Euclidean came first. Theoretically, the base is topological, from which we devise projective and Euclidean. Piaget's question was: "What was the order in which children's thinking developed?" The answer his observations and interviews had led him to was that children's geometric thinking was topological, first; Euclidean and projective developed later. That's what he was lecturing about that year, and it fascinated me.

Then, I found some financial support to continue in Geneva and went there as a student full-time for the next two years. I continued to be overwhelmed by his theories. And I took part in the research, as all students did—as note takers. My first year, I had the good fortune of being the notetaker for Barbel Inhelder, Piaget's coauthor. The second year, I was a research assistant and did the interviewing myself, with a note taker to help. That was really fascinating for me. I was giving kids interesting things to think about, devised by Piaget and the research group—actually that year he was back to studying children's approaches to topology. I loved it. I always wanted to prolong the conversations with the children. I wanted to see what they thought about this point of view and that point of view. I was fascinated by watching how they handled conflicts in their own thinking.

When I came back to the United States, I signed up for a PhD program, but I dropped out of it. Nothing was anything like as fascinating as Piaget, so I wasn't enjoying it. But it meant that now I needed a job.

By then, 1962, Piaget was known by the education world in North America, and, although I had no particular interest in education, I found that that was where I could easily get a job.

Elementary Science Study

My job was with the Elementary Science Study, which was developing science curriculum for elementary schools. I knew nothing about science, nothing about curriculum development, nothing about teaching—but I knew more than most people about Piaget.

Most of the staff were research scientists who took time out from their careers to spend a year or two working on elementary school science. They were terrific and I had a wonderful time. This organization had a biology lab, a physics lab, a woodworking shop, a metalworking shop, and a film studio. The film studio we had to share with a few other projects, but the others were all just ours. What they didn't have were kids. So as they worked away on their curriculum and the materials that would engage kids their subject matter, they tested them all out on me.

I became the sample kid, and I was a student of practically all their absolutely wonderful curriculum. That's how I learned all the science I know, from my colleagues at the Elementary Science Study. It was a wonderful education. On the whole though, I didn't know what on earth I was doing there. I didn't see how I could be helpful to anybody. I was happy to be this child, but what else could I possibly do? When we started to go into classrooms, my colleagues would try out the materials with the kids and I would talk to the kids to see what they were making of it. That was where I found that I could be useful. I knew how to talk to kids without telling them what I wanted them to say. I was able to learn what they were thinking about the materials. That was what I was trained in, in Geneva.

The Subject Matter of Teaching and Learning

I eventually went back to Geneva and did get my doctorate—17 years after I had received my Master's equivalent there. By the time I got to my position at Harvard, I knew that in my courses I wanted to show kids at work, having them think through some of the problems that were developed in Geneva; I wanted to have my graduate students read articles by David Hawkins, the first director of the Elementary Science Study—a philosopher of science and a wonderful man who had learned a lot about teaching from his nursery school teacher wife, Frances Hawkins; and I wanted them to watch the moon. I had gone back to Geneva and done some teaching and that's where I developed "doing" the moon, but it grew out of the Elementary Science Study, which has a unit about watching the moon.

In my experience with the Elementary Science Study, I learned that my scientist colleagues all loved their particular subject matter, and wanted to share their love and wonder with teachers and children. They wanted to give the students experiences of the phenomena that had given rise to their own wonder. They were not interested in giving the students *words* about these phenomena. If my subject matter was teaching and learning, how could I give students experiences that would raise wonder? I came up with three things.

One was, I would demonstrate with kids this way of asking them questions about what they thought, so as to help students see that kids have a lot of ideas, are willing to think hard for a long time, and can go far in their own thinking without being told the answers.

Another was having my students do that themselves, as homework. People did what they had seen me do—with their nieces, neighbours, roommates, uncles, people hanging out in Harvard Square, and anybody they happened to know. They were practicing the craft of getting somebody to consider some issue, to come up with their own thoughts, and to get somewhere further in their thinking without being told anything.

The third, and very major, thing was to have the students be learners themselves, in the way I wanted them to learn and wanted them to teach.

Their final project, building on these three kinds of experience, was to have the students choose their own subject matter, and devise their own materials and activities for getting people interested in it—trying it out as they went along—with one or two learners.

So those were the three elements that did end up creating, in my students, new wonder and love for teaching and learning.

Observing the Moon

Subject matters that I had students study as a group, for a day or two, included a poem, the mirror problem, and a math problem: "What are all the ways you could lay out four paper clips, each of a different colour, side by side, and how can you develop a system which would enable you to be certain that you had all of them with no repeats?" But the subject matter that we studied for the entire semester was the Moon—what were its habits. They were to document their observations of the moon every day—keeping a record, as often as they could, of when and where they saw the moon was and how it looked.

And then in class, we talked about what they saw, what was surprising, why this was surprising, what was beautiful, what they appreciated and what they had observed that seemed to be a regularity, what puzzled them. They would ask each other to help out by paying attention to something specific, in their own upcoming observations. If the timing was right, we would go out at the beginning of class and see where it was and predict where it would be at the end of class two hours later. Figuring out how to mark where the moon was at the beginning was already one challenge. We would go out together two hours later and see how their predictions turned out, and what further questions they raised.

The moon is available for everybody, and there are some regularities you start to see in a couple of days. You say, "Oh my goodness, it's doing that. I wonder if it will be doing that at the same time tomorrow." Some things one can get quickly, some things would take a month or two to see the regularity—others longer.

And as people start to see the regularities, they start to try to figure out how come that's how we see things. What are the moon and the earth and the sun actually doing, so that we see what we see in the sky? Then they would try becoming the objects. Someone would be a sun, another a moon, and another the earth. And they moved each other around and tried to figure out, how it would look if we were like this and this? It's very tough spatial thinking to figure out what's going on in the sky and on our Earth for it to look to us in some specific way. That takes an entire semester, and it is far from finished after one semester.

Before I started teaching the Harvard course, I spent a few years in a project at MIT with Cambridge elementary school teachers. Part of the project had involved studying the moon, and after the project was over, six of them wanted to keep going, studying the moon. The Moon Group met, I think, every two weeks for about 25 years. Details of some of our later work is in an article, "Twenty-Four, Forty-Two, and I Love You: Keeping It Complex," which can be found as a chapter in "'The Having of Wonderful Ideas' and Other Essays on Teaching and Learning" (pp. 141 to 154). The Moon Group got deeper and deeper into how the moon moves and what's going on in the solar system that results in the movements we see. We stopped for a while, after the 25 years. But we're just now coming back together. We're now starting on light, and reflections. We probably don't have another 25 years to go, but we're starting on light and reflections.

The Mirror Exercise

The mirror exercise requires a plain wall preferably without windows or doors in it. Two students stand up, Mary near one end of the empty wall and Jeremy opposite the other end, but on the other side of the room. We have a little mirror, and the question is: "Where should we put the little mirror, flat against that wall, so when Mary looks into it she sees Jeremy?" And I would have people go and put a little pin or a piece of tape or something on that wall to show where they thought the mirror should go—without saying why. And then I'd have everybody pick one of the marks on the wall that is *not* where they think the mirror should go, but that they think they know why the person thought that. At that point the job is trying to figure out what ideas or thoughts might give rise to this prediction—an important exercise for a teacher. And then people went into little groups to work on where in fact the mirror would go, and how to predict where the mirror would go if the two people move.

I would usually end with laying the mirror in the middle of the floor. It was always a big class of about 50 people. We would all stand up in a circle, and by looking in that mirror on the floor, found somebody on the other side. Everybody saw somebody so there we would be—all 50 people in one little mirror. Quite an astonishing thought! In one class, someone said if the light photons or whatever they are, are bouncing from the mirror to Mary, and she is sending others bouncing off the mirror to Jeremy, how come they don't hit each other and bounce back? And so, Mary would see herself again. It got right into the question of the—well, how does light work, anyway? I certainly don't know the answer that question. I asked my physicist friends and they said, "Well, really, we don't quite know the answer to that question yet." It was quite amazing.

University Students Learning From Kids

When children come to the class, I tell them, "I want you here because most of the people in this room are teachers, and I know that most teachers think that they have to tell you things, and if they don't tell you things, you won't ever know them. And I don't think that's quite true. I think that you can learn a lot of things without being told them. So, I'd like you to show them that."

The students would watch them work, try to figure out what they're doing. One of the major things I liked to show the students is a question about volume. I'd have some little blocks, two centimetres cubed, and then a solid block—the size of four by three by three of the little cubes. And then I had a whole lot of cubes the size of the little ones. "That big block is a chocolate bar and the company that makes it thinks it's not a very good shape. They'd like exactly the amount of chocolate that's in it, but it's not a good shape for a chocolate bar." And the children agree: "Yes, it's not a good shape."

I would ask, "Could you build another shape that has just the same amount of chocolate in it?" I usually worked with two kids at a time and I'd give one of them a two-by-two square and another a two-by-three rectangle—two blocks on top of two blocks, or three blocks on top of three blocks. They were to build out along the table from the original square or rectangle, adding little blocks until it would make the same amount of chocolate as the original block. One 10-year-old, after working for a while, looked at the big block, multiplied, and came up with 36. He started adding squares (that was the shape he had been given) —aiming to add 36 squares! And when he saw how long the chocolate bar was getting, he exclaimed that 36 would be far too many rows. He had the appropriate numbers, multiplied them together correctly, but he had no idea what he was supposed to do with the number that gave him.

If they get interested in how many little blocks make up the big one, they often take the outside area for the volume: "There's 12 on this side, 12 on this side, 12 on this side and 12 on this side, that's 48 and there's nine up here. That's 57 and there's nine down here. So there are 66 in there." Some kids see no problem with that. And that's okay. Off they go not getting it today. Others are perplexed and work hard at figuring out what might have gone wrong in that calculation.

The children usually worked about 45 minutes and then had a 15-minute break. During that time we would discuss what they had done and decide among ourselves what questions to ask them next. And when the children came back I would do what the students had told me to do. Then the children would work again, sometimes as much as another hour. They just worked. If they were intrigued by this question, they just never wanted to stop, which is fascinating to see. The students would notice how hard they worked; and how much silence there was; and that I didn't tell them anything, and yet they learned; and that I never said yes or no to something they thought. The students were able to see both what the kids were doing and what I was doing.

Advice for Classroom Teachers Who Embrace the Notion of Inquiry

Make sure that what you want them to learn about is worth learning about. And then find some intriguing little part of it, to command their interest. Commit yourself to having the students really experience this subject matter. Give them the math problem and let them figure it out or give them the scientific equipment and raise one question or give them a history document and let them make sense of it and then have other backup documents to pursue their ideas. So, you never have to say, "Yes, you're right, or you're wrong." You just get them to keep thinking, your job is to keep them thinking about this subject matter. And your job is to find materials that will keep them thinking.

Eleanor Duckworth was born in Montreal; her schooling was in the public schools of Montreal and Halifax before she ventured into the wider world. A former student, research assistant, and translator of Jean Piaget, she grounds her work in Piaget and Inhelder's insights into the nature and development of understanding and in their research method, which she has developed as a teaching/research approach, Critical Exploration in the Classroom. She seeks to bring a Freirean approach to any classroom, valuing the learners' experience and insights. Her interest is in the experiences of teaching and learning of people of all ages, both in and out of schools. Duckworth is a former elementary school teacher and has worked in curriculum development, teacher education, and program evaluation in the United States, Europe, Latin America, Africa, Asia, and her native Canada. She is a coordinator for Cambridge United for Justice with Peace, and is a performing modern dancer.

Recognizing the Wealth of Knowledge in Inuit, First Nations, and Métis Communities

Mary Caroline (Carol) Rowan

Abstract

In this interview, Carol Rowan recounts how she moved up North to Inukjuak, because she sought to live and learn with Inuit. Following her union with Jobie Weetaluktuk in 1984, and the subsequent births of their three Inuit children, she developed pedagogical approaches informed by and rooted in Inuit ontologies and epistemologies. She discusses how written and spoken Inuktitut language holds culturally specific content. Moreover, she shares how living with land, engaging with Elders, speaking in Inuktitut, and using local materials of the place can serve to displace prevailing Western hegemony with deeper, more intimate understandings of local environments and lifestyles.

Can you tell us how you became involved in Nunavik early childhood education?

I wanted to go up North. A Professor at York University, Dee Appee, a developmental psychologist, befriended me at our church when my mom couldn't go because she had a new baby. Dee had four sons and no daughter, and she took me under her wing. She started to take me to puppet shows and events in the Toronto area where we lived at the time. And she would give me Inuit prints as gifts. I was very young, maybe eight or nine years old, and these prints came from Cape Dorset. They were the very early Inuit prints. So, I had these prints as well as a subscription to the *National Geographic Bulletin*.

My fascination with Inuit and with the Arctic, and with the prospect of exploring the Arctic terrains at some point, was nurtured as a very young child. When I graduated from Trent University with a Bachelor of Arts in History, I asked myself: "What am I going to do?" My two best friends were both going to Iqaluit to work and I wondered, "How am I going to get there?" I decided that if I became a teacher, then I would be able to travel North. That's how I first got North. I went to Bishop's University and got a Diploma in Education. Afterwards, I went to the Magdalen Islands for a couple of years, and then I went up North to Inukjuak on the coast of Hudson's Bay. And I really loved it. It was an amazing community!

I fell in love with an Inuit man and we had three children. By 1987, we were living in Iqaluit and I needed to find some childcare for my two young boys, while I worked. So, I ended up becoming involved in establishing the Iqaluit Childcare Association. From the moment that I had my second son, who was born in Iqaluit, I knew I would need to work, but I also knew that if he was going to benefit from childcare, I wanted him to be nurtured as he would be by my mother-in-law, Lucy Weetaluktuk. This would mean being fed the tenderest morsels of meat, and food from the tail of fish, and being carried on her back, and sung little songs—the aqausiit songs that are custom designed to be dyadic songs between two people. And so that's how I became involved in developing Inuit early learning and childcare, because I wanted my kids to be cared for in an Inuit way, informed by Inuit ways of knowing and being.

You moved into adapting learning stories approaches from the Māori culture and education. Can you tell us a little bit about that and how you brought that into the early childhood work that you were doing?

Margaret Carr from Waikato University has worked very closely with several Māori scholars, including Lesley Rameka. In 2009, I decided that I was ready for more learning. I had a Bachelor of Arts in History, and I had taught school and had become quite involved in Inuit early learning and childcare. But I decided I needed more. I was missing the theory, although I couldn't have known that then. So, I went back to school. I needed to get a couple of early childhood education courses, which I didn't have. And when I started those courses, it felt like I was on an I.V. The relationship between reading the literature and my quest for learning more about how things worked in early childhood, just linked up through those studies that I undertook at the University of Victoria. At that time, Margaret Carr was the world-renowned lead on learning stories.

I just became fascinated because I felt that learning stories provided a way to not engage in Euro-Western strategies of assessment that were based on a checklist, but rather, to use a storied approach to gain insights into a much broader understanding of relations with family, culture, and language. The work that I saw that was being done in Māori communities, provided an example for us in Nunavik, to meet governments' requirements for assessment, but in ways that better suited our own purposes.

Can you describe this approach in a bit more detail and give some examples of why it really seemed to work for you?

We started by asking the teachers to look for what interested children, with a simple prompt: "Look for children's interests." And the educators began to take pictures of children's interests, for one week. People looked for children's interests and then printed up some pictures. And we looked at them and said: "What stories are there? What do you see?" This was the work I did for my Master's research, when I was in Inukjuak, my husband's hometown, which is on the coast of Hudson's Bay in Nunavik. Interestingly, one of the early childhood educators had gone up the Hill. And she had gone up the Hill to where the local cultural committee had a "qumak," which is a moss structure, and a snow house, an igloo (illu).

The educator had taken pictures of a group of her children, who had marched up the hill and gone inside the snow house and outside it, and later assembled the photos to make a story with them. We talked over her stories with a group of educators and asked, "What are the implications? What do we learn from your story? And what do you want to do next?" And she said, "Well, in the igloo there's a qulliq," which is a stone lamp that's lit using seal fat or, in these days, Mazola corn oil. And she said, "This little girl wants to seek the qulliq lit." And so we talked about the possibility of lighting the qulliq in the playroom amongst the group of educators during this evening meeting. And they said, "Yeah, let's make this happen." And it happened. Because of the way we were working, I had invited the board members and there were administrative people there, too. And the Chair of the Board said, "We have to do this. We can be sure we could hire an Elder. We can find money. We can support this work." So we knew that we were going to get a qulliq lit in the childcare center.

And finally, after three weeks, we had arranged for the Elder to light it. Because my husband is a filmmaker, I had assembled a film crew. My daughter happened to be in town, and the people from the regional government were coming and it was all terrific. Meanwhile, once I arrived at the childcare center, the Elder had called to say her grandchildren's teacher hadn't shown up at school, so she was not going to come.

After 40 minutes, the early childhood educator finally decided to do it. And she lit the qulliq, and children came from the different classes and we filmed the event. And once the lighting was completed, the early childhood educator turned to me and said, "I'm a real Elder now. I'm a cultural teacher now." So, the work with the learning stories actually did three things. First, it provided us a way to access Inuit cultural knowledge through early childhood practice, through this process of documentation, reflection, and planning. We were able to organize an event and make it happen inside the classroom, which actually ended up being really incredibly empowering to the early childhood educator, who became a holder of cultural knowledge. The learning stories were all written in Inuktitut.

Second, now you may or may not know, but there's very little written for young children in Inuktitut. That was 10 years ago. Today, there is more, but there's still very little available. However, these stories featured the children in their community and were put in binders, which could be taken home. They were hung on clotheslines in the classroom, posted on walls, pinned up above cubbies, and posted throughout the child care centre. And they're in Inuktitut. I watched parents reading and laughing together as they were learning about their children's lives in a program. Meanwhile, they're reading all in Inuktitut, which meant that the Inuktitut language was living as a vibrant workplace language, to the extent that the early childhood educators were asking for grammar classes so that they would write better, and speaking to each other and seeking word nuances. This gave us access to Inuit cultural knowledge—it gave us a very vibrant way of making printed Inuktitut live inside the childcare center and in the community.

And so that's language, that's culture. And the third thing the learning stories did was provide us a way to build relationships, because all of a sudden, when the parents are reading about what their child is doing at the childcare center, above the child's cubby, their view of the work of an early childhood educator shifted. And their understanding about their child as an engaged, capable, interested person was made accessible. And so, the work of the learning stories really was very important, especially in those three ways.

What were the challenges? Can you describe one or two?

First of all, working with syllabics was a big challenge. We had been very fortunate to receive some pretty good money from Aboriginal Head Start, so that the early childhood teachers could have laptops with which to manipulate the pictures and type up their texts. However, the keyboards had Roman letters on them, so we would have to paste up a syllabic chart until I managed to find some stickers for the keys. The early childhood educators in the early days had to learn how to use the laptop and upload the pictures. This was in 2011, some 10 years ago. But after all that, they had to write in Inuktitut and then transpose the syllabics on the wall to the keys that were in Roman. That was pretty complicated.

Another challenge I illustrated was the story about the qulliq lighting. It takes time to make things happen. Some of the realities of a small or medium-sized Northern community mean you can't be sure who's going to be where on any particular day. But we had an amazing amount of really good support in the community. The educators took up the work and the parents were pretty excited, and seeing the children open their binders, lie on the floor, and read the Inuktitut stories in pairs together, was to me a dream come true.

What are some of the major lessons you've learned about teaching and learning in the North?

One of the things that came out of the interviews that I did at the end of my Master's research was that the learning stories gave us a way to access cultural knowledge. I went on and did my PhD, and there we worked together with two Elders and some of the early childhood educators and the administration to go further and to think with land, water, snow, and ice. I call it "Nunangat" pedagogies, which mean to get outside of the Euro-Western constructed early childhood center, and try to be with land. And it was, in fact, a lesson learned that it's 100 meters from the child care centre to the shore. You can get outside of the 10-foot fence and go and walk 100 meters to the shore and to a world of possibilities. We had a younger Elder that we called the cultural Elder or cultural educator. And then we had our older Elder. We said to the younger Elder, "You know, we're gonna do this. We're gonna make this happen. What is it that you want to do?" And she had 20 ideas. Immediately, we had a list of all these things that she wanted to do. She wanted the children to go fox trapping; collect willow branches; make a sealskin bag; go cod fishing. And so, I learned that when you kind of get some funding together and you get some resources organized; you can turn to people in the community to say, "What's important, what matters?" And what would you like to do?", that people have really good ideas. And then it's a matter of listening very carefully to those ideas and trying to figure out how to make them happen. And by documenting what's happening with photos, and then by making stories or films, we've made some videos and so on, you have a way to record what's going on. And then to think further, to reflect, assess, and plan for the future.

Are there implications about teaching and learning, more generally, to be gleaned from this pedagogy that would be useful to teacher education programs, researchers in schools in other areas that are aren't Northern, but Southern?

The Nunangat pedagogy is about thinking with land, water, snow, and ice—in other words, it's about going outside. So, what does it mean? It means that as humans, you start to realize, we're not really choosing when we go outside. All of a sudden it's the environment that makes choices for you. One example of that is when I was doing my PhD research and working very closely with this Elder educator and she wanted to go get willow branches and it was a very windy day. When I arrived at the childcare center, I said to the director, "I don't think we're going to go today. What do you think?" And she said, "No, I don't think so, but why don't you go check with Elisapie and see what she says." So I go check Elisapie and she says, "YEAH, we're going! It's good because it's snowing outside and the wind is blowing the snow off the branches. So we're on our way!" One implication is that as humans we're not really in control at all. We might like to think that we are. The environment is of great

importance and, in fact, it makes many choices for us, including what we can reasonably do on any particular day. So that's one implication.

The second implication is about engaging with Elders. It's all part of counteracting Duncan Campbell Scott and John A. McDonald's ideas about residential schools and about removing Indigenous children from their families which perpetuates . . . The residential school system and colonial education undermined families and cut them off from their young children and discredited and made inaccessible culturally specific place-based knowledges.

Engaging with Elders is a very important way to recognize the wealth of knowledge that is held inside Inuit, First Nations, and Métis Communities by knowledge holders and by Elders. And by engaging with Elders, we find strategies to live Indigenous knowledges inside educational practices. One recommendation that I have made, and that I stand by is, I don't really want to be involved in any projects where there are no Elders involved. I think if you find the money, you'll make it happen. You bring in your Elders, who are knowledge holders. From the moment you start to think, you're going to put your pen on a funding application, and you don't let them go until you're all done, unless they move on and you don't have them to work with because maybe they've died, or something else has happened. But you really do need to have Elder participation throughout the whole project from step a to step z—that's an important lesson learned.

Using Indigenous languages, the language of the community, the local language of the place. In the little summary I gave you of the learning stories, I tried to illustrate just how easy it is to bring in a written language into people's lives, but it takes real thinking. But when you're engaging with Nunangat, then there's all this language and some of it has been lost. Some of it wasn't accessible to people our age who were inside these residential schools, when their families were outside gathering willow branches.

During residential school times the language that goes with those gathering practices was not made accessible. Not only the language, but also the process, the places, those deep understandings. I've come to think that Inuit and, more broadly, Métis and First Nations knowledges, have to be lived to be accessible. There is so much meaning embedded in language, that it's absolutely critical. It kind of makes me angry in Quebec when we're so focused on French and then English, but we don't even speak about the 11 other Indigenous languages in our province. And why not? Inside those languages, there is rich knowledge that we're missing out on.

Mary Caroline (Carol) Rowan has spent the last 40 years travelling and working between Inuit Nunangat and Montreal, Quebec. Her interest is in living Inuit ways of knowing and being through pedagogy and curriculum, in places where young children and families are engaged. The trail has involved working in communities with Elders, parents, children, and teachers. This work has led to the construction of child care centres, the adoption of policy, the development of organizational manuals, and the creation of curricula. It has involved teacher/parent education, the making of Inuktitut language children's books, the assembling of learning stories, and a proposal to adopt Nunangat pedagogies as strategy to think with land, snow, and ice.

The Pedagogical Practices of an Immigrant Parent: Maintaining Heritage Language in the Home Context

Emma Chen

Abstract

The maintenance of heritage language is essential to immigrant children's linguistic, cultural, and social development. While there is a large body of literature on heritage language, how heritage language is practiced at home remains largely unknown. Engaging in an autobiographical narrative inquiry, I tell and retell stories of our pedagogical practices in the home context. I seek to bridge the research gap with new understandings of the "parent knowledge" that immigrant parents bring to bear in heritage language education. I invite you into my home and immigrant family's language journey to witness the efforts, challenges, and rewards of learning heritage language.

Narrative Wonders

My name is Molly.
It is my English name.
My mom, dad, and grandma call my name in Chinese.
It is very similar to my English name – sounds like Mao Li.
In Chinese, 猫力 means Cat Power.
I love my name because I love puppies and kittens.
(Molly's conversation with her friends, 2019)

When I think about language and identity, I recall the days when our family first moved to Canada from China, and our older daughter Molly (who was two-and-a-half years old and then our only child) left her Chinese-speaking home for the first time and entered an English-speaking daycare by herself. I remember Molly saying she was scared of daycare and we found out, after a series of conversations with her, the "scary thing" that haunted her little mind about daycare was "English." The image of Molly sitting alone under the bunk bed in the daycare classroom, holding a soaked tissue and murmuring "Daddy and Mommy, Daddy and Mommy..." (the only two English words she knew then), when we picked her up in the afternoons, will stay with me forever.

Then, one day, Molly was unusually excited when we got to the daycare and showed us her new best friend—a little girl who also spoke Chinese! The two of them chatted and laughed nonstop, in their home language, spreading joy and excitement all around the room. From that day forward, daycare became less scary and more interesting for her. With her friend's presence, Molly gradually opened up and reclaimed her confident, happy, and even talkative self! Her English skills also accelerated on a daily basis. I was happy to see her making sense of her surroundings with the aid of her home language, and then transfer the same concepts into the comprehension and expression in English. By the end of

that year, Molly was basically an emergent bilingual who could communicate well in both languages. Being able to express herself in Chinese with her best friend bridged not only the Chinese and English languages, but also her Chinese and Canadian identities.

However, that is not to say she did not still face challenges. One day, Linda, the daycare staff member in Molly's room, asked me to stay and told me her "concerns" about Molly's behaviors. It turned out that Molly and her best friend sometimes spoke Chinese to each other in circle time and "it bothered the other kids because none of them could understand what they were saying." The girls did not stop speaking Chinese after a few warnings and "continued to form their closed group which other kids and the teachers couldn't get into." She stated that "it was a disruption of the group activities" and so they had to ask Molly and her friend to leave the group circle and sit in the reading corner by themselves (Personal communication with Linda, November 16, 2017).

I left the conversation with so many wonders. The daycare staff member with whom Molly had spent months learning, playing, and spending much of her days was obviously a good educator: caring about the young children, good at communicating with the parents, committed to early childhood education, and well liked by the children at the daycare. She was also one of the staff who held and comforted Molly during the most difficult first weeks. Why, then, did she struggle to see the challenges and difficulties for an immigrant child to navigate between two languages and cultures? What might it take to have the educators at this daycare awaken to the fact that children's opportunity to speak their home language, not only at home but also in other inviting and welcoming settings, holds tremendous meanings for immigrant children linguistically, culturally, and socially? What can I, as a parent, do at home for my child to maintain a positive language environment, to develop her heritage language skills, and to grow her love and confidence of speaking the language her family and ancestors also speak? How can I use the knowledge of language, culture, identity, and transition that I gained from my lived experiences in becoming an immigrant parent, to help my child flourish in two worlds?

My memory of that moment in Molly's daycare classroom lingered with me long after my living through it. Slipping backward and forward in time, I walked alongside (Pushor, 2015) my children to explore the maintenance of our heritage language in an English-dominated society. Inquiring into this experience afforded me the opportunity to "dwell in" (Polanyi, 1958), to both consciously experience and intelligently contemplate that which I was coming to know. It is through "dwelling in" whereby I can continue to shape and reshape my understanding of what it means for immigrant parents and immigrant children to maintain heritage language. While there is a large—and growing—body of literature on heritage language, few studies (Dixon & Wu, 2014; Kang, 2013; Pham & Tipton, 2018) have explored the specific strategies and practices that immigrant parents implement and the ways in which they integrate resources in the home context to support their bilingual children's heritage language maintenance and development. As a result, how heritage language is used, taught, and practiced in immigrant families' home settings remains largely unknown.

The purpose of this autobiographical narrative inquiry is to explore my pedagogical practices as an immigrant parent, in our home context, in order to make visible my parent knowledge (Pushor, 2015).

It is in considering how that knowledge may be laid alongside the knowledge of early childhood educators, in childcare centers and schools, that opportunities exist to enhance linguistic, cultural, and social experiences for young children.

Narrative Inquiry as Research Methodology

Many wonders and experiences shaped the life narratives of our family's first few years in this new land, a land in which sometimes we feel we are both standing-out and invisible. As Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) pointed out, "The focus of narrative inquiry is not only on individuals' experiences but also on the social, cultural and institutional narratives within which individuals' experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted" (p. 42). In this autobiographical narrative inquiry methodology, I have been empowered to better confront, digest, and analyze these encounters.

One of the traits that draws me to autobiographical narrative inquiry is that it honors the significance of time and space, of the inquiry, of me as the inquirer, and of my children as constructors of our shared learning experience into which I am inquiring. Just as narrative inquirers are strongly encouraged to remember that "participants are always in the midst of their lives and their lives are shaped by attending to the past, present, and unfolding social, cultural, institutional, linguistic, and familial narratives" (Clandinin & Caine, 2013, p. 170), I explore the heritage language learning encounters with my children in the midst of our lives in the new country. These encounters of our family members have a past, present, and future. I enter this autobiographical narrative inquiry as an inquirer and a participant, and begin to engage in the living inquiry of our lived stories. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) describe a "living inquiry" as "a more difficult, time-consuming, intensive, and yet, more profound method to begin with participants' living" (p. 478). During the living and telling of our stories, I am able to see that I am changed as I retell our lived and told stories, and therefore may begin to relive our stories with a newly gained lens.

In these autobiographical narrative inquiries, I work to present our stories as in transition. In narrative inquiries, the key to understanding "place" is to recognize that "all events take place someplace" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 481), and that each place, whether constant or fleeting, has importance or significance. To gain perspective on the experiences of our family, I invite you to keep in mind that, as parents and children, we are living a storied experience on a new landscape in transition. "In narrative thinking, temporality is a central feature" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 29). Our living stories are fluid as the situations constantly evolve.

Telling My Stories: Practicing Heritage Language at Home

The daycare teacher's conversation with me about Molly's use of her heritage language called me to be attentive to my understanding of "parent knowledge" (Pushor, 2015) as an immigrant parent to bilingual children, Molly and her Canadian-born sister, Luna. As I struggled and explored our ways of teaching, learning, and playing at home, I came to understand, "[O]nly parents possess parent knowledge, the

particular knowledge held and used by someone who nurtures children in the complex act of raising a child and in the complex context of a home and family" (p. 15). I was awakened to the realization that in our home, in our family, and in our lives, there are no other people who hold more knowledge of my daughters than me. I am the mother, the insider, the one who holds the parent knowledge gained from my lived experience with my daughters as I care for them, engage with them in play, interact with them with family and friends, transition my family to this new country, and, in all of this, explore with them languages and identities.

I know my children differently and more profoundly than anyone else in the world because of the uniqueness of our relationship—a relationship that is inextricably intertwined, in physical and emotional ways (Pushor, 2015). Walking alongside my girls in the transition to a new country, I share my parent knowledge within our mother-daughter relationship and in the shared time, space, languages, and activities in our home—in singing songs, reading books, doing crafts, playing games; in connections during speaking our first language and the conversations back and forth in both English and Chinese; in sharing personal stories of mine before my children came into the world, and then stories of when they were babies.

With these understandings, I began a shared journey with my children of maintaining and developing Chinese—the language I inherited from my parents, and they from theirs; the language through which I feel a connection with thousands of years of my motherland's history and with billions of people who share traits similar to us. I spent time with Molly and Luna, alongside other close and extended family members—talking, playing, reading, writing, creating, laughing, and sometimes crying—in the home and community context. During the process, I kept a daily digital journal on social media, as a field text to track and document my observations and experiences about our home language learning. I am in the living, telling, reliving, retelling of our stories at home and in the community, co-composing field texts with my children in a relational way, for "relationships are a central way of making sense of the temporal and contextual aspects of narrative inquiry" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 34). As our natural learning process unfolds, I live and reflect on the lived experience everyday as a process of data analysis.

Awakening to (Immigrant) Parent Knowledge

Every human being is a holder of "funds of knowledge" (González et al., 2005, p. ix). It is the knowing that becomes part of who we are as we engage with the world and are changed by it (Polanyi, 1958). Elbaz (1981) conceptualized knowledge as "directed toward making sense of, and responding to, the various situations of" (p. 49) a particular role. In the role of an immigrant parent, I hold a particular fund of knowledge, that of "parent knowledge" (Pushor, 2015) that is grounded in and shaped by the foundational living experience of my personal journey; it is situated in time and space, enveloped within a broader social context, and influenced by my general theoretical orientation (Elbaz, 1981). My parent knowledge, like any other parent's, demonstrates temporal dimensions because it resides in "the person's past experience, in the person's present mind and body, and in the person's future plans and actions" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 25).

As I walked into the midst of my life in a new country, and I gained a new identity as an immigrant parent of bilingual children, I gradually accumulated an additional aspect to my existing parent knowledge—immigrant parent knowledge (Guo, 2012). This immigrant parent knowledge arises out of my own educational background, my professional and personal experiences of interacting with schools in my country of origin, my current understanding of the host country's education system, and my struggles as an immigrant parent. It combines with my parent knowledge growing from both my past and present lived experiences with my daughters and my future aspirations for my children (Pushor, 2008). In telling her own stories, Khan (2018) pointed out a sad reality that immigrant parents and their knowledge are typically seen as deficit-based in the host society. My experience aims to tell a different story, through a capacity-based lens, of how immigrant parent knowledge helps enhance my children's language learning.

Creating a Heritage Language-Rich Home Environment

"A different language is a different version of life." - Federico Fellini (Cantwell, 1993)

Language is important to everyone. It is beyond a mere means of communication. It is part of who we are. For our family, Chinese and English are the two languages used to compose our daily narratives. Like many immigrant families living in Canada, English exists in a much larger world (e.g., schools, workplaces, grocery stores, media) while our heritage language lives within our community and mainly within our home settings. Roessingh (2014) pointed out that many immigrant children completely lose any and all developed language proficiency of their heritage language, due to the fact that heritage language is reserved only for basic oral communication purposes within a small community of family and friends. Over the years, I have witnessed that many children in the Chinese immigrant community spoke only English to their parents even when the conversations were initiated by the parents in Chinese. The home setting and the school landscape may be disconnected from one another, not only geographically, but also culturally, linguistically, and socially. Various home languages are excluded from the school's cultural repertoire, whereas prestigious languages such as English and French are highly valued (Agirdag, 2010). "[A]mong the children of immigrants, English emerged as an unequivocal winner in the struggle for their linguistic souls" (Suárez-Orozco, 2001, p. 136). It is critical, then, that instructional and pedagogical strategies preserve and enhance an immigrant child's heritage language and culture.

So, what can I do, as a parent of two immigrant children? While reviewing the literature in heritage language education, my attention was directed to our home setting. Home is a very private place, often the place in which family members are able to be their most authentic selves (Pushor, 2015). The intimate nature of home enables learning to happen in the most natural ways, particularly with children. I saw the relationship between the girls and me as fertile soil from which their learning would grow. Therefore, the first initiative I took to promote Chinese language learning was to create a home literacy environment, including daily conversations, inter-generational communications, bookshelves filled with picture books written in Chinese, multimedia resources in Chinese language, and fun ways of integrating their names into songs and lullabies.

Conversations were a significant marker of our home literacy environment. Shneidman and Goldin-Meadow's (2012) cross-cultural study reinforced the staggering importance of daily oral input to a child's language development. As we went about our daily business together, engaged in getting dressed, taking baths, having meals, playing games, taking walks, and so forth, I tried to elaborate, explain, and encourage detailed conversations. Especially after Molly gradually mastered the art of the English language, I felt it was important to make Chinese visible as the language she was encouraged to use in our home context. During a bumpy flight to Vancouver last year, Molly sought comfort in my arms and said: "妈妈，我的耳朵里在刮风呢."" The sentence can be roughly translated as, "Mommy, there is wind blowing in my ears." I instantly understood that she had clogged ears due to the pressure shift in the plane. I could not help but be amazed and touched by her extraordinarily poetic expression in our first language. Li (2006) showed us that when parents enforce a heritage-language-only policy at home, children tend to develop a more positive attitude toward and higher levels of proficiency in their first language. Such a "policy" was never forced on my children, for I wanted to keep their passion for speaking the Chinese language alive. The balance between encouragement and enforcement is indeed fine, but what a delight it was to hear the surprisingly charming phrases coming from the young ones, as they mastered the beauty of this ancient language. Every night before bed, I would say "我爱你I love you" to Luna. Instead of saying "我爱你" back to me, she claimed, with her innocent yet frank voice, "爱我！" which means, "Love me!" For a one-and-a-half-year-old child, the conversion of personal pronouns in Chinese was a major achievement, a reflection of her engagement in our day-to-day language exchanges of speaking Chinese.

Inter-generational communications played an important role in Molly and Luna's heritage language development. Everyday communications with their grandmother, one of the primary caregivers who lives with us, helped promote the Chinese-only language commitment at home. Molly and Luna were well aware that "Grandma doesn't speak English," so they "consciously experience[d]" (Polanyi, 1958, p. 195) the switch of languages when they talked to Grandma. Another way in which Grandma passed on her knowledge of language and culture was through cooking and sharing food with the children, as they engaged in the process with her and conversed about making and enjoying authentic Chinese cuisine.

Books can be found everywhere in our house, including adult's and children's books, written in English and in Chinese. I intentionally made it visible that books were an important and normal part of our lives and purposefully modeled reading myself. The importance of repeated story reading and storytelling in both first and second languages has been highlighted in many studies (Avalos et al., 2007; Coyle & Mora, 2018; Collins, 2005; Nunez, 2019; Roessingh, 2014; Strekalova-Hughes & Wang, 2019). Uccelli and Páez (2007) showed a striking finding in their study examining Spanish-English bilingual children, "If children hear, engage and tell stories in Spanish with friends, family, or at school, the learned set of skills required to structure a story in Spanish could positively contribute to children's English narrative quality" (p. 234). Cummins (2017) also suggested that skills learned in a child's heritage language will transfer to the learning of a second language. Therefore, strengthening, supporting, and fostering a positive heritage language environment for immigrant children will create a solid foundation for their

language development in English (Goldenberg et al., 2013). As an immigrant parent, I was attentive to the balance between the dominant language and heritage language. Like many immigrant parents, I held a palpable desire for my young children to learn English. I intuitively and consciously recognized English as the power code (Delpit, 1995) that my children needed to crack for their success in school and in life. Therefore, books and multimedia resources in both languages were introduced and encouraged.

Creating songs and lullabies with their names was another way I made learning heritage language fun. Lyrics with their own names drew their attention to listening and singing in Chinese. Ever since they were babies, each of them had an exclusive lullaby composed with Chinese sentences that rhymed with their names.

"这只小乖*猫*呀 (Hi dear baby cat)

现在要睡觉 (Now it's time to go to bed)

闭上大眼睛 (Close your big eyes)
一会儿就睡着 (Fall asleep really fast)"
(Molly's lullaby, 2014)

"妈妈的小*露露* (Mommy's little Lulu)
不哭不哭哭 (Please don't cry)
妈妈的小*露娜* (Mommy's little Luna)

睡觉睡觉啦 (Let's go to sleep)"
(Luna's lullaby, 2018)

Many researchers have pointed out that parents who demonstrate positive attitudes toward heritage language pose a strong influence on their children's attitudes and language proficiency (Hinton, 2001; Kondo-Brown, 2010; Luo & Wiseman, 2000; Mills, 2001; Oh, 2003). Immigrant parents who attach importance to maintaining and developing heritage language and emphasize the need to continue using the language foster a positive environment for children to grow a passion for that language (Li, 2006). Children in a positive language environment have a higher chance of continued use of their heritage language, even after exposure to English, as compared with children living with parents who do not make these language efforts (Oh, 2003). It was apparent that the intimate moments I shared with Molly and Luna during singing lullabies in Chinese every night were ones that evoked interest in learning heritage language, and these moments also linked their sense of being loved to the language we shared within our home setting. Attentive language practices like this trace pieces of our unique and particular home language learning pedagogy.

So Much More Than Story Reading

In ways that were reflective of my culture, context, personal knowledge, and beliefs, I began my children's language education immediately, by talking with them when they were newborn babies, singing songs, and reading/telling stories.

Children's picture books were my favorite, among the many means of introducing language. I loved picture books because they contained sophisticated real-life topics, short, simple, and child-friendly text, and visual information to help children convey ideas. Because I was also keenly aware of the fact that storybook exposure promotes language acquisition (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002; Sénéchal et al., 1998), I intentionally made picture book reading a part of our language practice at home. For Molly and Luna, though, shared reading was never a "learning activity"; rather, it was a fun family time during which the three of us cuddled closely, sometimes under a warm blanket, sharing in our home language a book with lively pictures and vibrant colors. When I read those appealing stories that happened in ancient China, the modern Western world, or the magic imagination land, I could hear the beautiful Chinese sentences flowing in the air and then into my young children's ears and minds. I witnessed how they absorbed the language and knowledge passed through me from a large community, a rich culture, and the long history of our homeland. Molly, who is three years older than Luna, often took the responsibility of "teaching her little sister" by holding the book and reading to her—and by reading, I mean telling the stories imprinted in her tiny head after many story times with us. Pictures helped link the content and the words. I would deliberately point to the Chinese characters after I had read the same book a few times and knew they were familiar with the story lines, in order to introduce print in our home language. Given the complicated nature of Chinese print, I preferred this more natural way of gradually familiarizing them with the written language.

Following the young ones' lead, we extended and expanded existing story-reading language practice while engaging in picture books. The two sisters freely took initiative. Molly and Luna often applied their "wild imagination" (Conversation with Molly, 2019) to comprehend the stories and utilize the languages in the most creative ways. They showed me the transformative power of drawing, painting, crafting, music, dance, and performance, not only as a way of shaping new and deeper understandings of the stories, but also as a way of forming spaces with potential for traveling smoothly in and out of the webbed and interwoven Chinese and English language worlds. During roleplaying, after adopting the plots and characters in the stories, Molly and Luna tended to use both languages spontaneously and pragmatically. This "translanguaging" (Baker, 2001, p. 281) approach they used is common among bilingual and multilingual children and was encouraged in our home language learning activities. Such exchange and mixed-use of languages is beneficial for both heritage and dominant language development (Baker, 2001).

Real-life stories were the most beloved type of storytelling by Molly and Luna, given the very personal and particular nature of the home landscape. Among those real-life stories, one theme remained most popular: the days they were born. Many researchers have foregrounded the important link between heritage language and family literacy practices. Wong Fillmore (2000), and Scheele and colleagues

(2010) emphasized the importance of developing social capital by sharing past experiences and telling real-life stories to children. Gradually introducing increasingly more difficult vocabulary and complex expressions helps with heritage language development (Vaish, 2019). We must have told, retold, and acted out their birth stories hundreds of times during the course of three years. From the moment mom felt a tummy ache, to the time doctors and nurses took mom in; from how to breathe during labor, to cutting the umbilical cord; from holding the baby in mom's arms for the first time, to feeding and rocking the crying baby to calm her down, we lived and relived those moments through repeated storytelling and acting. It was in these times that they learned to listen to, participate in, and understand narrative discourse. Enacting their birth stories created a path to more sophisticated use of the Chinese language, and contributed to deeply bonding relationships with me and with each other. Engaging in real-life storytelling and story-acting resulted in positive effects in intellectual, social, emotional, and linguistic development (Mokhtar et al., 2011) for Molly and Luna. The process of telling and acting true stories that involved memory and social skills (Glonek & King, 2014) also employed physical as well as narrative aspects that provided a significant foundation for language development.

Nurturing Passion for Early Writing

Play often motivates children to expand their language knowledge and practice their literacy skills (Ewing et al., 2016). One of our favorite language games was "composing" stories using Chinese character blocks. Each of us took a few blocks, arranged them in a row, and told a story based on the words (or pictures in Molly and Luna's case) on the blocks. It was a magical time filled with imagination, silliness, and laughter, as well as free exploration and navigation of the language, both orally and visually. Games like this helped the girls open the door to the wonderful world of Chinese characters, which led to a playful start of early writing.

"Emergent writing is young children's first attempts at the writing process" (Byington & Kim, 2017, p. 74). By making sketches and symbolic marks that reflect their thoughts and ideas, children as young as two years old start imitating the act of writing (Rowe & Neitzel, 2010; Dennis & Votteler, 2013). The big blackboard wall in the living room was our shared writing board. I enjoyed making to-do lists and leaving notes on it while Molly and Luna turned the blackboard into their canvas for scribbling, drawing, and early writing. We exchanged ideas and messages in written Chinese. Some were easy to read and some were not, but every word written down was encouraged and appreciated. In addition to the blackboard notes, Molly and I also kept two journals—a happy journal for cherishing joyful memories and a crying journal for expressing her negative emotions in a healthy way—written in Chinese. Sometimes I helped write down poems that Molly composed in her journal. Her innocent child's world can be seen through her playful way of using her heritage language:

"放屁，是臭臭的哭哭 (Fart is the crying of poop).
雾，就是草地上的云彩 (Fog is cloud flowing on the grass).
(Molly's poems, 2019)

The purpose of practicing writing in her heritage language goes beyond mastery of composing the correct characters and/or phrases. I also engaged Molly and Luna in emergent writing in our home to introduce the knowledge of sound/symbol connections, the conventions of print, and accessing and conveying meaning through print mode in the heritage language system. Drawing on my immigrant parent knowledge, I intended to help the children construct meaning by making relevant cultural and linguistic connections with print (Goodman & Goodman, 2014) in Chinese and their own lived experiences.

Retelling My Stories: Possibilities of Heritage Language Education

In my everyday experiences of practicing heritage language with my young daughters in our home context, new knowings emerged from the fragmented pieces of my old knowings (Anzaldua, 1987/1999). My experiences alongside my children during their language-learning journey challenged me to explore a range of philosophical, theoretical, and practical considerations relating to my role as an immigrant parent and as the first and most important teacher in my daughters' heritage language education. Through inquiry into my reconstructed narrative, I came to embrace theories of parent knowledge, family literacy, and bilingual education and transform the knowledge and information into my pedagogy of language learning in a home context. Shaped by these experiences, I composed a new life narrative alongside my daughters in our home setting, and generated new puzzles and wonderings for the possibilities of immigrant children's heritage language education.

I was keenly aware that there is an extensive body of literature on bilingual education from the eyes of educators, but no corresponding body of literature from the eyes of parents. Few studies have examined the specific strategies and practices that immigrant parents employ, and the ways in which they allocate resources in their home context, to support heritage language development. As a result, how parents make language choices and how each language is used, taught, and practiced in immigrant homes remain largely unknown.

The intention in my autobiographical narrative inquiry is to show poignantly that immigrant parents' efforts in their children's language education in the home context begins at birth, continues on a day-to-day basis, and probably will never end. By spending time living out a pedagogy in which parent knowledge shapes the teaching and learning of heritage language with my daughters in our home, I came to an understanding of my relational, intuitive, intimate, and practical knowledge I hold as a parent. I extended and expanded my children's heritage language knowledge through moments of intimate teaching, learning, and playing when we were engaged in conversations, story reading and acting, and emergent writing. As an immigrant parent, I intentionally brought my own parent knowledge of language and identity into the pedagogical language practices and made apparent to my children the values of maintaining our home language.

Keeping in mind Bruner's (1987/2004) statement, "In the end, we become the autobiographical narratives by which we 'tell about' our lives" (p. 694), I saw this becoming was indeed so for me and my daughters, and, I suspect, for a large community of immigrant families who may have adopted similar and/or

different practices to maintain and develop their home languages. I awakened to see that the value of our home language practices is the ground on which immigrant children can build a lifelong passion for their heritage language, the bridge to connect immigrant children with families, culture, history, and community, and help them find a sense of belonging and identity. As Monteagudo (2011) reminded us, "This capacity of narratives for imagining and constructing other worlds, and for trying to make them a reality, is an essential feature of the human capacity to transform our own selves as well as our social contexts" (p. 298). The stories of immigrant families, such as mine, can create new possibilities for repositioning parents and honoring their roles and efforts on the landscapes of immigrant children's schooling, as well as in their home learning contexts.

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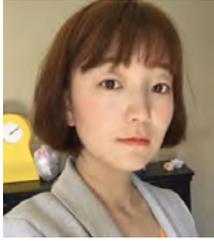
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Evoking *Never Never Land*:
The Importance of Imaginative Play and Creativity

Hayley Dominey

Abstract

This article is a condensed version of the author's research which explores the relationship between imaginative play and creativity in education, and examines the structures, approaches, benefits, and obstacles surrounding the topic of imaginative play and creativity. The photo collection is a reflection on the ponderings throughout the author's project research. Inspired by zoom-in puzzles, a similar approach was taken to the creative representation of pedagogical wonderings through a photographic journey. By looking at things from different vantage points, one can see things in different ways, and, perhaps, experience a sort of catharsis through contemplation of the overlooked in the obvious.

Introduction

This study explores the relationship between imaginative play, both inside and outside the classroom, and examines the structures, approaches, benefits, and obstacles surrounding the topic of imaginative play and creativity. In addition, insight on both the importance of imaginative play and creativity, as well as recommendations for integrating imaginative play and creativity within the Canadian elementary grades, will be discussed.

The photo collection following the research acts as a reflective commentary on some of the academic ponderings the author had throughout the project research. During the spring 2020 lockdown due to COVID-19, these ponderings came from looking at items in the author's apartment from different perspectives in relation to creativity and imagination. Inspired by zoom-in puzzle photographs, where one is tasked with identifying objects from close-up perspectives, a similar approach was taken to the creative representation of the pedagogical wonderings through a photographic journey. Only things that caught the author's attention and generated reflective thought were photographed, and this collection was limited to no more than 10 photographs of unaltered items. By looking from different vantage points, one could perceive things in different ways, and, perhaps, experience a sort of catharsis through contemplation of the overlooked in the obvious.

The key driving questions to be investigated through this study are:

1. How can imaginative play and creativity influence student engagement?
2. How might inviting both students and teachers to embrace their own curiosities and imaginations encourage creativity?
3. How does pedagogical training affect creativity in the classroom?

4. What elements pose barriers to imaginative play and creativity, and what are some possible solutions to overcome them?

Background and Significance

How does one invite both students and teachers to embrace their natural curiosities and imaginations? I believe that one can rekindle engagement through supporting the advancement of creativity and imagination. Authors agree that children are naturally creative in their early years, and play is linked to creativity, allowing for "practice with problem solving and practice with emotions…which foster creativity" (Russ & Wallace, 2013, p. 139). However, for many, with each year of formal schooling, these traits become dulled until they are completely dissolved by the end of their grade school journey. Clearly, even though there is a link between imaginative play and creativity, there still are obstacles to overcome to allow full educational integration. Imaginative play is also essential for *all* children, not just those in their early years. When children are motivated, curious, and engaged, they're also more interested in learning, and what better way to do that than to allow for what comes naturally to children: play (Ayala, 2017).

Unstructured play "can be defined as self-managed, creative, light-hearted, and spontaneous, involving rule making and breaking" (Warner, 2008, p. 1). In this form of play, the ideas come from the child's imagination, where a stick can become a sword and a tree could become a tower, all in the realm of make-believe. This may seem like something from Peter Pan's *Never Never Land*, but the idea of make-believe and unstructured imaginative play holds more educational importance than it's given credit. The American Academy of Pediatrics (cited in NewsWise, 2006) published a report which states that, "free and unstructured play is healthy and, in fact, essential for helping children reach important social, emotional, and cognitive developmental milestones as well as helping them manage stress and become resilient." The Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA) (2019) stipulates that unstructured play is "a child's right and a critical component to child and youth health and well-being." Yet, despite this, unstructured imaginative play struggles to be regarded as a valuable use of time during the school instructional day.

In Canada, education systems have become ever more complex, filled with a myriad of rules, regulations, and expected outcomes. The CPHA (2019) states that the average time spent at public school by students is approximately 30 hours per week, and due to growing government expectations for academic performance, pressure has been placed on many schools throughout Canada to limit the amount of free time during the school day. This leaves less time allotted for unstructured imaginative play time, despite its benefits for physical, social, and mental development (CPHA, 2019). Teachers are mandated to produce assessments and report cards, and with each grade year more expectations are added. Yet, this framework contorts authentic learning (Rule, 2006) back into a systematic form of institutionalization, reminiscent of education from the industrial revolution.

Within the current linear model of education, the intrinsic value of curiosity, the diversity of the learners, and the freedom to create, question, and explore, all become stifled in the standardized system. Thus, the

opportunities to develop transferable skills through authentic learning initiatives are limited. This creates a static representation of possibilities for student achievement instead of a vivid array of human personalities, attitudes, and capabilities. "Human communities depend upon a diversity of talent, not a singular conception of ability. At the heart of the challenge is to reconstitute our sense of ability and of intelligence" (Robinson, 2010).

Children thrive in diverse learning environments that celebrate and explore a wide range of talents. Without acknowledging and incorporating an exploration of imagination, students are denied the opportunity to awaken and cultivate their natural talents. In effect, students' opportunities to develop their creativity, critical thinking skills, and social skills through imaginative play are lessened, and this robs them of the opportunity to develop self-agency. In addition, this over-structuring of their day may lead to higher rates of student frustration, apathy, and lack of concentration (Robinson, 2013).

Russ and Wallace (2013) postulate that it is through engaging in imaginative play that we could support the development of creativity and creative processes, as well as self-expression and interpersonal cognitive skills. They also state that we must acknowledge that, "many cognitive abilities and affective processes important in creativity also occur in pretend play and that pretend play in childhood affects the development of creativity in adulthood" (p. 136). These cognitive abilities include divergent thinking, flexibility, insight, and the ability to view things from alternative perspectives, and all are embodied through the act of creativity and imagination. Thus, with the understanding that adults evolve from their lived experiences throughout their childhood years, this vital connection to awakening one's mind must not be downplayed to lesser importance or overlooked (Russ & Wallace, 2013).

Imaginative Play in the Current Educational Landscape

Imagination is the key to unlocking deeper cognitive functioning and the inspirational opportunities of learners, yet many educational environments seem to struggle with the ability to fully incorporate imaginative play. It is arguable that the educational landscape within Canada can be influenced by the pedagogical philosophies of teachers, the bureaucratic regulations to assert a sense of accountability, cultural influences, and even the fear for physical safety. Each plays a role in the limitations which suffocate the breath of creativity and innovation under a tightening grasp of control. Even with the best intentions to improve the quality of the education administered, the very lenses that guide educational implementation are the ones which can hinder new possibilities.

Is Teacher Training Sanitizing Imaginative Play?

There are a host of possible reasons why teachers do not extend themselves imaginatively past the training they receive during their teaching preparation. The amount of risk taken as educators can often be connected to personal experiences and philosophies, as well as where teachers are in their careers. New teachers, in particular, may not feel comfortable taking risks and could be concerned with how taking these risks would have an impact on their employability. Do teachers take risks in order to expand

the learning possibilities, or does the possibility to deviate from a regiment act as a paralyzing agent toward the possibilities of exploration? How can perceived limitations on embracing imaginative play affect our students' abilities to flourish?

Are Teachers Inspired or Merely Just Trained?

By the time most preservice teachers enter their training programs, they have had a variety of experiences to influence their educational philosophies, and these experiences are invaluable in laying the foundation for each teacher's personal pedagogical journey. However, through their experiences within their training program, there can be an underlying message of conformity imposed upon them. Instead of encouraging innovation, creativity, and engagement, they are often confronted with the arduous task of learning to fulfill a government-mandated curriculum, and preparing assessment tools, with little emphasis on encouraging and celebrating the joys of imagination and spontaneity. Consequently, "teachable moments" become nothing more than a side-note, a whisper of something wonderful, yet seldom tapped into for fear of straying from the preset curriculum path.

Although there may be instruction on the various subject matters, much time is devoted to the idea of clustering outcomes, formulating lesson plans, and implementing guidelines to conform to a set curriculum. Before these preservice teachers step foot within the classroom to commence their practicums, they are already drilled on the necessity of assessment practices and following guidelines to fulfill outcomes. According to Egan and colleagues (2016), almost all preservice teaching is structured on an antiquated formulaic process derived from the 1960s theoretical teaching models, which themselves were based upon practices created for manufacturers during the Industrial Revolution. Lessons are structured according to outcomes, and plans are designed according to what must be taught, how it will be taught, and how it will be assessed. Everything is predetermined before there is any integration of the learners, leaving little possibility for open-ended diversity in learning.

How can it be expected for students' imaginative processes to be nurtured and developed through educational practices that do not offer the same possibilities to the teachers in teacher training programs? Egan et al. (2016) suggest parameters to reform the current state of teacher education programs to encourage imaginative pedagogy, those being "a commitment to imaginative pedagogy; a reframing of curricular methods courses; changes to field experience; and continuous, rigorous research" (p. 1005).

Assessments and Accountability

Despite a world of wonder, where creative expression, imagination, and curiosity can be prominently seen in society today, the same cannot be said for the importance of imagination and creativity in the curriculum. There is an apparent aversion to creativity and imagination having a more prominent role in education, most notably due to the uncertainties that surround how to assess the subjective and variable aspects that pertain to creativity versus, for example, literacy and numeracy (Thiessen et al., 2013).

However, one could argue that there is an element of subjectivity and uncertainty in all subject areas, even math. Depending on the methods, thought processes, and rationale involved, one can see creativity in the approaches to solving some math problems, as well as the practical applications from this knowledge. Science requires creativity and imagination in the ability to use understanding to explore new possibilities through experimentation. Literacy, too, is brimming with the possibilities to explore, create, and wonder. All these subject areas require imagination and creativity to extend past the information learned, and to utilize these skills in real-world contexts. In basic terms, this leads to the *thinking-outside-of-the-box* mentality, the one which needs to be supported in education.

A broader concept of what is valuable in learning could be adopted across the spectrum of many schools. It is through imagination and creativity that a deeper understanding of self is created and through which students can make sense of the world around them. Instead of looking at the difficulties, one might reframe perspectives toward the conscious integration and encouragement of imagination and creativity throughout the curriculum. Although they require different thought processes, these are the higher-order thinking processes that allow basic skills to be used in more meaningful ways than memorization alone. This also means letting go of tight constraints on expected outcomes to allow for more ingenious exploration and acknowledging uncertainties because these uncertainties are reflective of life (Greene, 2013). Being able to embrace this fear of the unknown would drive the quest to seek knowledge, not restrain it from doing so. To allow for the possibilities of tomorrow, accommodation for creative possibilities could happen today.

Encouraging an Imaginative Pedagogical Environment

One does not exist in a vacuum, as the experiences one has both within and outside the classroom have an impact on the way one sees, experiences, and learns about the world. How does the philosophy of the school affect the mentality of the school, teachers, and students? How does community support influence the integration of imaginative play and creativity? Not all communities are the same, yet, through imagination and creativity, one can transcend the boundaries of differences. Greene presumes, "imagination opens up a plurality of experience and access to Dewey's 'great community'" (cited in Heath, 2008, p. 116), and through diverse communities there are opportunities to support creative and imaginative engagement. Therefore, the outcome of community involvement depends solely upon what the learning community both within and outside of the school values and is not affected by physical location. Instead, it relies upon the community as a whole to dedicate itself toward nurturing imagination.

Societies and cultures that value imagination often have play at the center of activities, and this is where meaning is made (Huzinga, cited in Fidyk, 2019). Imagination and creation are also found to help create and foster a sense of self-completeness and growth, but to allow for this to occur, Fidyk (2019) states that we need "to welcome imagination in both play and pedagogical spaces" (p. 123). For some educational communities, this encouragement might come naturally; for others it might entail a paradigm shift in priorities. The roots of imaginative play and creativity can only grow and prosper in environments that nurture and support their existence. This includes supporting the school community and teachers through both training and resources to create the conditions conducive for imaginative play and learning.

Embracing a transdisciplinary approach that blends life and learning experiences together instead of intense instruction designed to "ram and cram information to their students," places emphasis upon holistic learning through a cooperative, not competitive, environment (Colagrossi, 2018). Strong importance placed upon the arts in a multidisciplinary approach encourages imagination instead of restricting it within a systematic approach. This view of learning is more organic and appears to emulate the possibilities in the real world.

When "Safety" Threaten Possibilities

Another obstacle that could be sanitizing imaginative play is the role concern for physical safety plays in learning. Through play, children are afforded opportunities to learn valuable life lessons on how to handle risks by being "training for the unexpected" (Bekoff cited in The Strong National Museum of Play, 2020; Sandseter & Sando, 2016). In retrospect to her own experience growing up on a Saskatchewan farm in the 80s, Fidyk (2019) reflects: "I expect my parents thought that whatever we might encounter, we could probably handle. We had grown up developing life skills that prepared us for the unexpected—a kind of natural navigation for being-in-the-world" (p. 119).

Now, the same cannot be said for children in today's learning environment. Hern states that children need the opportunity to explore, unrestrained, to make sense of their surroundings but that this "has been obscured and layered over by a noisy cultural demand for supervision and maintenance" (cited in Fidyk, 2019, p. 110). In the quest to protect students from injuries and to regulate their experiences, students are also robbed of the opportunities to learn using valuable thinking skills, skills that need to be developed and used throughout their lives. Thiessen and colleagues (2013) warn that, in the attempt to create safer learning environments, inhibition of creative thinking might also take place.

Sandseter and Sando's 2016 study states that, "outside forces in society pressure the institution to restrict physically active play" those being "local authorities, playground inspectors, the media, and parents" (p. 187). Yet with these restrictions and limitations on play, they also find that play becomes "less stimulating and challenging, and that both practitioners and children are frustrated by not having optimal play opportunities and healthy developmental conditions for children" (p. 193). Overregulation of a natural state of being kills curiosity, creativity, and imagination, limiting growth and adaptability (van der Kolk cited in Fidyk, 2019, p. 107). Sandseter and Sando (2016) finally indicate that by limiting the experiences of children, there is also a negative impact on their development as their opportunities to learn are significantly lessened.

In the end, one grapples with finding a balance between making sure children are safe, while at the same time allowing them the opportunities to grow and develop. Through their own experiences in play, children learn how to navigate new challenges. Therefore, can one afford withholding valuable opportunities from students for the sake of regulation?

Discussion

If the purpose of education is to prepare students for the future of tomorrow, then it makes sense to equip students with the tools necessary to not only integrate and adapt within society, but to also transform that societal lens to encompass that which is yet to be; to see the possibilities and not the limitations. Perhaps the best way to argue in favor of including imaginative play and creativity embedded within our pedagogical practices is to consider what the purpose of education is in its most rudimentary sense of being. In order to encourage and support student potential, education cannot limit students to a fixed set of stagnant facts, figures, and skills. It must evoke the development of transferable skills, and creative cognitive thought processes capable of navigating new and challenging situations. It must tap into children's natural curiosities, imaginations, and playfulness and use these forms of creativity as vehicles to further propel learners toward deeper and more meaningful connections between themselves and the world. It must allow for the development of social skills, collaboration, and ingenuity, and it must allow for the natural progression of ideas without forcing a finite limit on the potential of the innate sense of wonder developed as one grows.

Through the eyes of children, we see what we could not see is already there, and this propels us to create what we thought never existed there before. To overlook a fundamentally innate human capacity is to decide to, whether consciously or unconsciously, place limits on the possibilities of what is unknown to us. We need to embrace the uncertain and cherish the opportunities for child-driven creativity and curiosities. It is through these teachable moments that some of the most important learning discoveries are created, and the most memorable experiences occur.

One such example of thinking outside the box comes from an experience I had when teaching a science lesson on identifying and categorizing natural resources to a grade five class. They were given a list of natural resources and needed to determine if they were renewable or nonrenewable, and whether they could be used for food, habitat, energy, and entertainment. If they decided that the resource could be used for each category, they had to provide an example to prove their point and be able to defend their answer with logical reasoning. When it came to the discussion over water as a resource, an interesting discussion arose around whether humans could use water as a habitat. Instantly, the majority were in agreement and said that humans could not use water in this way; therefore, it could not be included in the attributes for water. However, one student had decided that water, indeed, could be used by humans for housing.

Giggles arose about how this could be possible, and visions of humans swimming with gills emerged from students' imaginations. Yet I gently reminded the class that all great discoveries came from the ability to look at things from different perspectives and to welcome new ways of thinking. This prompted all the students to become curious as to why their fellow classmate had decided to deem water an acceptable use for human habitats. When given the chance, she explained that far north live Inuit, and in some areas there are no trees to use to make homes. There is, however, lots of firm snow from which Inuit could make igloos to live in, and since snow is made from water, Inuit make their homes from water and, thus, live in water. With the completion of her answer the entire class gasped and from their

astonishment agreed with her reasoning. Using creative and logical thinking, she had used her understanding from other subject areas to identify a form of ingenuity which allowed her to overcome a limitation in thinking.

Through the use of a variety of creative approaches, including imaginative and creative play, one can utilize one's own imagination to support students' imaginative processes in nonthreatening ways to learn through creative means. Thiessen and colleagues (2013) state that everything one does is interrelated with creativity, and that creative skill development is essential and pertinent toward all pursuits: through the active engagement of imagination and creativity, the generation of new awareness, new ideas, and new approaches can evolve from what is known, and surpass the expected to overcome adversity and give rise to the creation of innovation and the advancement of society. Thus, creativity and imagination are important across all levels of education and are linked to the development of higher-ordered cognitive capabilities (Thiessen et al., 2013). In addition, Heath (2008) discusses how this "learning to learn" through inventiveness is "essential to [the] rapid technological development [and] cross-cultural understanding" (p. 116)

By participating in creativity in education, one can awaken "authentic appreciation" for "the sense of possibility, of what might be, what ought to be, what is not yet" (Greene, 2008, p. 17). These experiences could be evoked through a number of ways of understanding, not limited to one form of exploration or creative expression, and integrated across the disciplines. Therefore, by tapping into students' innate connection to imaginative play, they can become awakened to the world around them through their own self-connections and discoveries.

Closing Remarks

When children are invited to play unrestrained from conformities and fear, they make the environment, they learn the rules. It is only fear that holds one back from moving forward. Yet one must embrace the darkness and the void beyond if one wants to turn fear into a driving force for development, self-exploration, and the enrichment for opportunities to support a diverse and dynamic learning scape. It is also in this unknown that the greatest achievements and accomplishments are waiting to be made as "imagination makes visible what is just out of sight" (Greene, 2008, p. 19). Child exploration needs the ability to activate creativity, and this sense of wonder and curiosity can and should continue throughout life and be celebrated.

Through imaginative play and creativity, students are afforded the opportunity to explore, experience, and develop skills and thought processes. They build upon their social skills, increase their sense of self-awareness and self-expression, culture a sense of appreciation and community, and develop problem-solving skills by looking at things from different perspectives. Imaginative play fosters creativity and the opportunity for catharsis and the formation of new understandings. This is an ongoing cycle of growth, and although creativity and imagination is often viewed through a subjective lens, it may not be practical to place limitations upon these processes in the containment of what it means to be proficient. Instead,

perhaps one needs to culturally shift the idea of what it means to learn back to the intrinsic roots of inquiry and imagination as an ongoing process.

Creativity needs to be visibly upheld as important, as echoed by Greene (1977), "all art forms must be encountered as achievements that can only be brought to significant life when human beings engage with them imaginatively" (p. 121). There is a strong connection between creativity, imagination, and play, and when supported, the possibilities for growth beyond the known is possible because the groundwork has been laid and the conditions have been created for these seeds of learning to flourish. The more one encourages imaginative play through the integration of creativity, the less foreign the concept will become in the view of educational practices.

Greene (cited by Slattery and Dees cited in Pinar, 1998) postulates that imagination is a way to liberate the structure of educational perspectives to allow for new ways of teaching, assessing, and experiencing. Rather than fear the vastness and subjectivity of imagination and creativity, one should embrace its possibilities and support this through a variety of social experiences and perspectives. Through the integration of literacy and the arts in education, along with one's own personal narratives, Greene proposes that one can create meaningful learning experiences and transform through these experiences.

> If we want students to learn in a manner that will make that knowledge meaningful and memorable, we need to bring it to life for them in the context of those fears, passions, hopes, or ingenuity, either in the lives and emotions of the originators of the knowledge or in the lives and emotions of people in whom the knowledge finds living purposes today. (Egan et al., 2016, p. 1003)

And it is through imaginative play and creativity that this happen.

Appendix: Photo Diary

Foreword

Through significant occurrences, great inspiration can hit. It was a global pandemic that not only fell under this sediment, it slammed into it. Through self-isolation I found myself questioning the role of imagination in education, and became inspired when looking at things I saw every day. I began to see things from different perspectives within the confines of my apartment and made connections between these items and the notions of imagination and creativity in education.

> To those who are familiar, the intended purpose for this object is well known and lackluster. However, for many, it may also evoke childhood memories. For many, this was not a doorstop, but a highly technical musical instrument. Through curiosity, experimentation, and creativity, music was created, sometimes even lyrical songs. Beats, rhythm, and melodies might have developed, or perhaps even secret codes. Children didn't need to be told what its purpose was, they decided what it would be, and perhaps it would continue to be until otherwise told differently. The purpose was relative to perspectives of the engagement. I would argue that the same can be said for all children's imaginations processes. With a natural intrinsic curiosity, children could be encouraged to wonder and play, without having predetermined outcomes limit thinking. I wonder what this would look like in an educational setting; to allow curiosity and imagination to drive learning.

Inside the mind exists the greatest light of innovation. Curiosities are jumbled within an interwoven and chaotic labyrinth of synapses. These wonderings twist and turn, cultivating in one's mind to extend; bursting out to make their impact on the surrounding world. Ideas illuminate what might never be seen otherwise. Extending one's thoughts leads to new ways of knowing, new ways of perceiving what is seen and how to portray it. Imagination is not linear, but more complex as it overlaps and intersects with a variety of areas of cognition. This requires deeper thinking and deeper understanding. Therefore, it is understandable that there can be a level of unease on how to approach imaginative and creative thoughts because it requires more than memorizing form and function. How can imagination and creativity be supported if they are indeed at the base of learning?

What would happen if approaches to education changed to become less linear and more flexible? With conformity and rigidity, the goal seems to be on providing progress through measurable assessments. Yet, is it possible that these perspectives limit one's overall growth and capacity? It seems that everything given educational value is placed within very standardized trajectories, which year by year lessen the incorporation of imaginative play and creativity. How could the neglect of creativity lead to adverse effects on innovation and imaginative growth? I wonder if this standardized approach could place *more* emphasis on the integration of creativity each year instead of less. What would happen if systems were adjusted to expand creative practices and utilize these skills instead of limit them?

It seems as though education is regulated to fit specific measurements. All of these measurements are standardized across the curriculum and the expectations are the same. There is no *dash* of creativity or *pinch* of experimentation to create something new when this happens. Instead, there are no surprise creations, no varieties, no chances for new discoveries; just limitations to known expectations. Without the ability to explore, elaborate, engage, express, and reflect, students may be missing on all the new recipes of discovery yet to be made. There is no ability to question what you will do next, no ability to take on an unknown possibility. For whom do these recipes of learning really serve if they do not include learners in their creation?

The idea of the unknown can be uncomfortable for many, yet the idea of order, structure, and efficiency can elicit a sense of comfort. The known becomes safe since events and outcomes can be anticipated. What is known is kept, what is not is flushed away. However, this can be a costly reaction in the world of education if careful attention is not placed upon what is being washed away. What is lost in this attempt to control? In many cases, great connections and extensions could be lost and unable to be brought back. The possibilities, the meaningful and teachable moments, all could slip away in the quest for accountability. This could sanitize education through the removal and aversion to creativity and imagination.

There is a disconnect in the ways many learn to teach and how education is delivered, a stark divide between the institution and the world beyond the walls. If the purpose of education is to be prepared to contribute to the world beyond, separating ourselves from the instinctual imaginative play seems counterintuitive, and unnatural. Belittling imagination and creativity from being vital connections between the inner self from the outer physical world leaves a sense of incompleteness. Looking beyond standardization, conformity, and predictability, can only strengthen a more holistic union to the organic world. How does one reach beyond the structures put in place to elicit the wonders beyond?

Though there is importance in standard uniformity, it does not replace the abstract variability that creative imaginative play offers. Uniformity allows for predictability, organization, structure, and control. Algorithmic functionality and systematic reproduction do provide a purpose in life and learning, but how do they expand one's capacity for growth? It is with imagination and creativity that we can use the skills and structures to create new things, to innovate, to ponder, and to explore. Creativity and imagination are the driving forces to utilize knowledge to look at the world in different ways. Through creativity and imagination, one can express innovation in various forms, and create new expressions and appreciation.

What things are overlooked when creativity and imagination are not encouraged? What interesting details, wonderous adventures, emotional developments, and inventive creations are lost? How can one take time to look closely at the value in embracing the variety afforded through imagination? Though the idea of creativity might be considered subjective, the ability to develop an appreciation for the diversity in structures, ideas, and forms opens up new ways of seeing. Diving in, surrounding oneself in the adrenaline of the possibilities, allows playful exploration to ensue. Learning through appreciating the diversity in expression could allow for better attention to the things one might otherwise miss.

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If creativity and imaginative play are important, how can they become part of the everyday educational landscape within the learning community? Everyone has thoughts, feelings, and perspectives unique to their own lived experiences, and through self-expression and exploration of these ideas, supporting the advancement of imagination and creativity can be fostered. If imaginative play and creativity are placed with lesser importance, a less encouraging atmosphere is created. The risk from this is that students bottle up their feelings, thoughts, and connections, for fear of being wrong. Instead of experimenting with being innovators, the message conveyed is that students have nothing of value to offer in their own learning journey. Thus, they keep these personal experiences and wonders to themselves. How many have fallen victim to the containment of one's own natural curiosities, and how might this be changed for future generations?

One can choose to look at things from a very literal perspective or to look beyond it to see the possibilities on the horizon. It is the creativity and imagination in the background that produces what is in one's foreground. It means digging deep into our interpretations of what is thought, what is known, and what is conjured up into being. There is a very personal component to imaginative play and creativity, thus encouragement through regular chances to explore can only lead to more possibilities for new insights and ideas. Sometimes the strangest and most bizarre creations from the mind are the most ingenious.

Final Thoughts

One of the greatest ways to determine the calibre of a society is to observe how it chooses to approach creativity. Imagination and creativity allow one to make sense of the world and to extend from that sense toward new beginnings. It is also through creativity and imagination that many find solace and a sense of comfort, a connection between one's inner being and the outer world. At a time when there are many unknowns, it is creativity and imagination that embrace us in the solitudes and uncertainties.

Many of the pictures I chose for this pedagogical reflection portrayed the cold, linear conformity which I believe represents education in the absence of imagination and creativity. It was through these photos that I reflected upon the possibilities that waited to be created if only allowed to tap into an inner childlike wonder. Through the injection of imagination the ability to play, explore, create, and advance could come into being and create a world of possibilities.

Acknowledgments

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Using (Counter)stories to (Re)shape Our Communities and World(s)

Amanah Eljaji

Abstract

Drawing upon my experience as a Canadian Muslim woman, scholar, educator, and mother, I share and inquire into my stories of experiences alongside youth. Thinking narratively, I weave my experiences using and teaching with/about single stories and counterstories alongside students to (re)shape the multiplicity of our selves, relationships, and communities. This article will provide windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors into my school and familial curriculum-making experiences alongside Muslim youth. I hope that it will also provide insights into the experiences of diverse Muslim children, youth, and caregivers/families.

We Are Story(ies)

> *We are all story. That's what my people say. From the moment we enter this physical reality to the moment we depart again as spirit, we are energy moving forward to the fullest possible expression of ourselves. All the intrepid spirits who come to this reality make that same journey. In this we are joined. We are one. We are, in the end, one story, one song, one spirit, one soul. This is what my people say. ~ Richard Wagamese (2011, p. 1)*

Wagamese's words inspire me to consider, share, and inquire into my stories of teaching and learning as a way to inspire others to do the same. Maybe then we can attain "the fullest possible expression of ourselves" and ultimately change the world, "one story, one song, one spirt" at a time.

Fig. 1: I will be threading students' artwork throughout this paper (with their permission). This piece, for me, speaks to the importance of attending to students' experiences and stories they carry.

You tell me your story and I'll tell you mine
As we learn to walk together in good ways
Children, family and community hand in hand
Where family stories to live by bump against my school stories
I am transported to my younger self trying to figure out
who I was, what my goals were and what kind of person I was becoming?

My narrative, my name, my identity
It was mine and only mine now
For so long, I felt like I was part of both worlds, yet part of neither
tensions of living in two differing curriculum-making worlds
is not limited to myself
but the very students I teach every year
who struggle with their own identity
time to attend to embodied tensions

Gifted with the lives of youth
As they are an "amanah"
"Amanah" in Arabic means fulfilling or upholding a trust
As my students call me Ms. Amanah,
I am constantly reminded of my moral responsibility
I can only do this by attending to their experiences
and the stories that they carry in their being
so that they will not be misunderstood
in my journey of teaching and learning

One of the first stories as a student that I carry with me was when I was around six years old in grade one. I remember desperately wanting to be Ukrainian, as I lived in Two Hills, which is a small town in northeast Alberta that has a predominantly Ukrainian population. Even from my earliest moments, I didn't understand why my family spoke Arabic, and not Ukrainian, ate fatayer (meat pies) and tabbouleh, and not pierogies, celebrated Eid, and not Easter with pysanky. All I knew was that I was different from everyone, but I longed to be the same. I wonder why I so desperately wanted to be like everyone else? Was it just because of the community I was immersed in, or were there other factors? At that age, I was unable to "realize that there cannot be a single standard of humanness or attainment or propriety when it comes to taking a perspective on the world" (Greene, 1993, p. 212). I just wanted to be like everyone; so much so that I remember when we were painting life-size drawings of ourselves in grade one, I painted myself to look like a Ukrainian folk dancer, rather than a traditional Arabic dabke folk dancer, or even a belly dancer, which was more familiar to me.

This reminds me of Greene's (1993) sense of Pecola Breedlove in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye,* who desperately wanted to have blue eyes like Shirley Temple, "since the culture has imposed on her the idea that only someone blue-eyed partakes in the human reality" to illustrate the power of "official stories (or master narratives) in dominating consciousness" (Greene, 1993, p. 219) The influence that culture imposed on Pecola Breedlove is very much relevant today in my world. As I try to help raise confident Muslim children and youth, including my own and those I teach in a private Islamic school, I understand

that Muslims feel anguish with Islamophobia just as other communities in (Canadian) history and in the present face discrimination and prejudice.

Through my position as a grade nine teacher in Social Studies and Language Arts, I have been fortunate to retell the stories of people who have been discriminated and marginalized, including those of Japanese Canadians, Chinese Canadians, Ukrainian Canadians, Uyghurs in China, Black Americans, Palestinians, and, most importantly right now, Indigenous communities that are still grappling with the effects of forced assimilation into what was referred to as "Canadian culture." However, this "Canadian culture" and our lives and their pathways are not fixed in time or place; instead they are shaped and continually reshaped by the stories I and others live by, with, and in (Saleh, 2019). How we understand, share, and think with the stories of our and one another's lives matters.

As I am awakened to the layers of my own stories, I continue to write and rewrite, live and relive, tell and retell through a "metaphorical three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, with temporality along one dimension, the personal and the social along a second dimension, and place along a third" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50). I have come to recognize that my identity is undergoing constant reinvention fueled in part by the human need for understanding. This is especially evident in our struggle to live and relive, tell and retell the colonial roots of our Canadian narrative, and upon closer reflection, how I am learning to re-envision the stories I tell about myself. I used to frame my thinking of experience and story as fixed just as I teach a short story and Freytag's Pyramid (plot diagram with exposition, conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution). I was unable to see past the traditional borders of a story. That is, until I learned to inquire into my own stories and engage in conversations with stories, for "it is in the inquiry, in our conversations with each other, with texts, with situations, and with other stories that we can come to retelling our stories and to reliving them" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998, p. 251).

Fig. 2: This mural speaks to this students' belief in the need for spaces for world travelling.

As I traveled into my narratives, travelling inward, outward, backward, forward, and situated within place, I began to inquire into the present, past, and future of who I am and who I am becoming in the worlds I inhabit as a mother, daughter, teacher, sister, friend, and student. Lugones (1987) referred to the fluidity and multiplicity of identity as "a plurality of selves" (p. 14) and how my inquiry has shown me my multiple selves are in "world travelling" in all teaching and learning environments.

Saleh (2019) further shaped my understanding of world travelling when she wrote about how Lugones (1987) makes her evaluate who she is, who she has been, and who she is becoming in the worlds she inhabits. Lugones reminds me that world travelling can occur with varying levels of ease. While I acquired the ability to travel to, within, and among the worlds I inhabit, there have, at times, been worlds where I was constructed in ways that did not fit my construction of myself and where I felt misunderstood (Saleh, 2019, p. 3).

Like Saleh, many Muslims can relate to the notion of being misunderstood. This sentiment is eloquently found in Yusuf / Cat Stevens' cover of the song, "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood," which I regularly play in my classroom: "But I'm just a soul whose intentions are good/Oh Lord, please don't let me be misunderstood" (Benjamin et al., 1964). Maybe I played it too much, as it inspired a student to create a breathtaking piece of art based on the song. This song helps me to think and wonder as I imagine possibilities for (re)shaping our communities and world(s) (Lugones, 1987) and walking in good ways alongside others (Young, 2005). As the next section makes clear, it was particularly salient as I recently engaged in an inquiry journey with a group of youth in grade nine.

Fig. 3: This canvas was gifted to me by a student at the end of the year.

Awakening to Single Stories

What happens when we only hear one story about a particular person, people, place, and/or situation? If we only hear about a person, people, place, or situation from one point of view, we risk accepting one experience as the whole truth. We face the danger of a single story (Adichie, 2009). Adichie asserted, "The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story." Instead, she suggests, we must seek diverse perspectives—particularly the importance of telling the stories only we can tell about our experiences, hopes, and fears, because doing so helps break down the power of dominant stories and stereotypes.

Therefore, "what better way to grapple with making sense of our rapidly changing world than through the study of stories?" (Casey, 1995, p. 240). This story begins where my journey of formal teaching began, at Edmonton Islamic Academy (EIA)—a place that is a companion of my heart and mind (Basso, 1996). I want to share some of my experiences at EIA because it is mainly the place where my narrative inquiry of who I am, who I have been, and who I am becoming as a teacher (and ongoing learner), is composed. The EIA was established in 1987, in the basement of the Al-Rashid Mosque with only 21 students. Today, more than 1,200 students attend from Preschool to Grade 12.

For me, what really makes the EIA stand out is that it is a place where hundreds of Muslim students, teachers, and school staff start the day alongside our non-Muslim colleagues with a school-wide morning assembly, making supplications to ask our Creator to protect us.

Fig. 4: School-wide morning assembly is held every morning to share any important news and recite supplications. Please note that this photo was taken before the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the afternoon we meet again with our hearts and heads bowed to the ground to our Creator in one of the five prescribed prayers of the day. As I bow my head in prayer every day, I think about the peace and

beauty of this daily congregational practice and experience, and I wonder about how the dominant narratives about Muslims have shaped the lives and experiences of the diverse Muslim students I come alongside every day.

Fig. 5: Students praying the afternoon prayer known as Salat al Dhur in Arabic. Note: This photo was taken pre-COVID-19.

Bumping Up Against Single Stories as a Teacher and Narrative Inquirer

Drawing upon my experience as a Canadian Muslim woman, scholar, educator, and mother, I now show my autobiographical narrative inquiry into my experiences alongside Muslim youth at the EIA. Over time, my life experiences and experiences in education have made "no single story" the theme of my grade nine language arts and social studies classes for the last five years. It never fails to surprise me the ways that students make sense of their experiences through Adichie's (2009) "The Danger of a Single Story."

However, for the last four years, I decided to be more mindful of the questions I asked students before viewing Adichie's TED Talk. I asked all grade nine students the same question as a previewing activity: "What is the story of a Muslim?" After 10 to 15 minutes of students sharing their ideas, I recorded their answers on the whiteboard. In this process, as described by Connelly and Clandinin (1988), students were drawing on their "personal practical knowledge," that is, their personal knowledge and experiences as knowing beings which supported them to reconstruct their past situations and future intentions as they inquired into the "exigencies" of their present situations.

Fig. 6: Student answers recorded on the whiteboard to the question, "What is the story of a Muslim?"

With great shock, I began to notice the major trend of the storyline the students were following. I realized that the words were getting more negative as we continued, and that the students were struggling to think of any positive words. I began to wonder why their "personal practical knowledge" would have such a negative single story of Muslims since they were Muslims themselves. The mind map that we ended up with included words such as terrible, violent, extremists, oppression of women, and heartbreakingly, terrorists. In response, I gave students time to reflect on their words and expressed that they could put an X through any words they felt were irrelevant or inappropriate. Upon closer inspection of the above photo of the whiteboard, one can see that none of the words were crossed out as not even one student believed any of the words were irrelevant or inappropriate.

As I startlingly began to notice the trend of the storyline the students were following, I simultaneously became deeply troubled and I tried to travel to their worlds. Once again, I refer to Lugones' (1987) concept of "travelling to someone's 'world' as a way of identifying with them," and "understanding what it is to be them and what it is to be ourselves in their eyes" (p. 17). As I attempted to travel to their worlds of possible personal, social, institutional, cultural, and familial stories, I wondered how else I could better understand how they storied Muslims and, more importantly, themselves. I realized that I "need to stay wakeful to the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space" (Huber et al., 2013, p. 227). Only if I stayed wakeful to the "temporal, social, and place dimensions and interactions within and among all of the stories, all of the personal, social, institutional, cultural, familial, and linguistic experiences lived out" (p. 227), would I be able to imagine some sort of narrative coherence (Carr, 1986) to the plotlines they seemed to be naming and following.

The students were generally around 14 years old. As a result, they were born after the horrific events of the morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001. Shortly after, the United States began the "War on Terror," which led to an increase in Islamophobia (fear or hatred of Islam) across the globe. This increase in Islamophobia was, in turn, reflected in the way media outlets addressed and stereotyped Muslim populations. While some deliberately framed Islamic coverage positively in an attempt to counter Islamophobia, many of the portrayals of Muslims contributed to the formation of harmful Islamic media stereotypes (Gudel, 2002). These harmful Islamic media stereotypes created a new dominant narrative of Muslims, a deficit and dangerous narrative that seemed very alive in the minds and hearts of the students.

These negative stereotypes are significant, since these are what they have been bombarded with through various media outlets since birth. As Arsalan Iftikhar, an American lawyer and writer who blogs at TheMuslimGuy.com said, "When Hollywood dealt with Muslim characters it was completely one-dimensional" as we are portrayed as "seething terrorists, without any sort of humanizing attributes" (as cited in Burke, 2014, para.17). These stereotypes assume the marginalization of Muslims and neglect to consider the diversity of Muslim lives, experiences, and places. Unfortunately, it was commonplace that the students "have experienced the harm of shame at having their religion being used to justify violence" (Mattson, 2013, p. 4). Furthermore, they have been held responsible for the actions of the extremists, so every time someone mentioned a negative word, they did so with their heads lowered and voice saddened.

In Canadian school contexts, Amjad (2018) noted that, "some Muslim students [in her research] perceive most of their teachers not only as ineffective in combatting racism, discrimination and Islamophobia, but also as promoting injustice through their teaching methods and curriculum" (p. 327). Several others have written (and sounded the alarm) about Islamophobia in relation to schooling (see: Bakali, 2016; Elkassem et al., 2018; Hindy, 2016; Zine, 2001, 2003, 2006, 2012). How could my students, who are being educated in an Islamic school context, carry these stories so deeply within their bodies? Clearly, as educators, we all have work to do to ensure that all students, including Muslim students, feel fully accepted in all of who they are in our classrooms, schools, and communities.

Fig. 7: This watercolor represents the one-dimensional stereotype that is too often associated with Muslim men and women.

Adichie reminds us, "Show people as one thing and one thing only over and over again and that is what they become," and that is the consequence of the single story about a person, place, or issue. As a result, I asked students to reflect on our stories as Muslims as we watched Adichie's TED Talk "The Danger of a Single Story." As they watched the first time, they were asked to watch and answer the following question: "What is a single story?" After viewing, I asked them what they understood the single story represented. The students understood it as a stereotype. Once they understood the basis of what a single story meant, they watched it again and filled out a listening comprehension worksheet. Then they went into small groups to share their thoughts.

After the small group discussions, we reflected on the idea of the single story. After much discussion, I asked the students to reflect on the idea of the single story and write a personal response to "The Danger of a Single Story," relating it to themselves, another text, and the world. It was my hope that through this reflective process the students would experience "telling, retelling, and reliving of the experiences and tacit knowing" (Huber et al., 2013, p. 228).

When the students came back with their personal responses a week later, I asked them to highlight their favorite part of their response. I then asked students to form small groups of two to four students. I asked

them to share their highlighted part or any other ideas because, after all, this was a work in progress, and is still a work in progress as we continue thinking with our stories even today.

Although all the student submissions moved me, there was some writing and reflection that really stood out. One student wrote: "When I was 12 years old, I had no experience of hate or prejudice but the fibres wrapped around my head were enough to label me as someone to be scared of, and open to be a victim of prejudice."

Another student wrote:

> It may be difficult to understand a religion that you only hear ferocious things from. Well as a Muslim since birth, I can confirm the peacefulness of Islam through my personal experience, knowledge, and faith. It's important for us to remember the truth behind what we believe in and the peace it truly represents, even if it is sometimes difficult to fully grasp your identity when there are so many outside forces trying to change what you believe of your identity. One poignant sentence that really stood out for me was: "Words spoken are dangers in themselves, but words not spoken are the greatest dangers of all."

Fig. 8: This canvas represents the danger of single stories that students have learned to internalize and accept as a dominant narrative.

I realized that my students were living with a contradiction of the love they have for Islam in conjunction with the guilt and, even self-hatred, that dominant narratives have inspired. The idea of a violent, extremist, terrorist Muslim isn't foreign and has sadly made many Muslims—including my students— accept the fear of others towards Islam as their own fault. This is the danger of a single story, as it stems

from the concept of looking at a group from one point of view and judging them based on that . . . a story that can become internalized by members of that very group.

Yet there was hope, as one student wrote: "After listening to Adichie's talk, I captured three main lessons from it for myself: do not judge anything at all based on a single story, stories have power, and that stories can change anything."

It was through their responses that I also came to better understand what Huber et al. (2013) meant when they stated that, "each story, whether personal, social, institutional, cultural, familial, or linguistic, is alive, unfinished, and always in the making; stories continue to be composed" (p. 227). I knew then that we needed to continue composing our stories (and understandings of them) as we dealt with the trap and tensions of the single story of Muslims.

Fig. 9: This collage speaks to some of the competing and conflicting single stories this student feels she is living through.

Imagining Counterstories

At this point, I realized that we all needed to step outside the dominant and deficit stories of Muslims. I began to turn my attention toward the counterstories emerging in the students' stories of their lives. Thinking narratively is central in shaping counterstories (Lindemann Nelson, 1995) that disrupt dominant narratives. Lindemann Nelson describes counterstories as "narratives of resistance and insubordination that allow communities of choice to challenge and revise the paradigm stories the 'found' communities in which they are embedded" (p. 24).

Discussing this idea with the students, we realized that to change the story the world had of us, we had to "imagine other possibilities, restorying our own and our relational stories" (Huber et al., 2003, p. 344).

We were on the journey to "map out an alternative understanding of resistance on school landscapes" (Huber et al., 2004, p. 193) that involved the students and I co-making a narrative inquiry as pedagogy space, and through this negotiation possibly the potential remaking of our lives.

This was illustrated when we moved back into a large group discussion about the dangers of a single story and the tensions of their/our identity(ies) being negotiated. I then asked the students to consider three specific questions in our discussion:

1.   How can we change the story of what a Muslim is?
2.   What do we need to do to change these stories and highlight the diversity of Muslims?
3.   How can we challenge the negative single stories of Muslims?

What came next astounded me. The students wanted to create a new mind map in response to my original question, "What is the story of a Muslim?" They came up with a new name: "Muslims: Version 2.0 in Real Life." The students decided to co-create their own "counterstory…a narrative told within a chosen community that allows the teller the ability to reenter and reclaim full citizenship within the found community of place in which the teller lives" (Lindemann Nelson, 1995, p. 229).
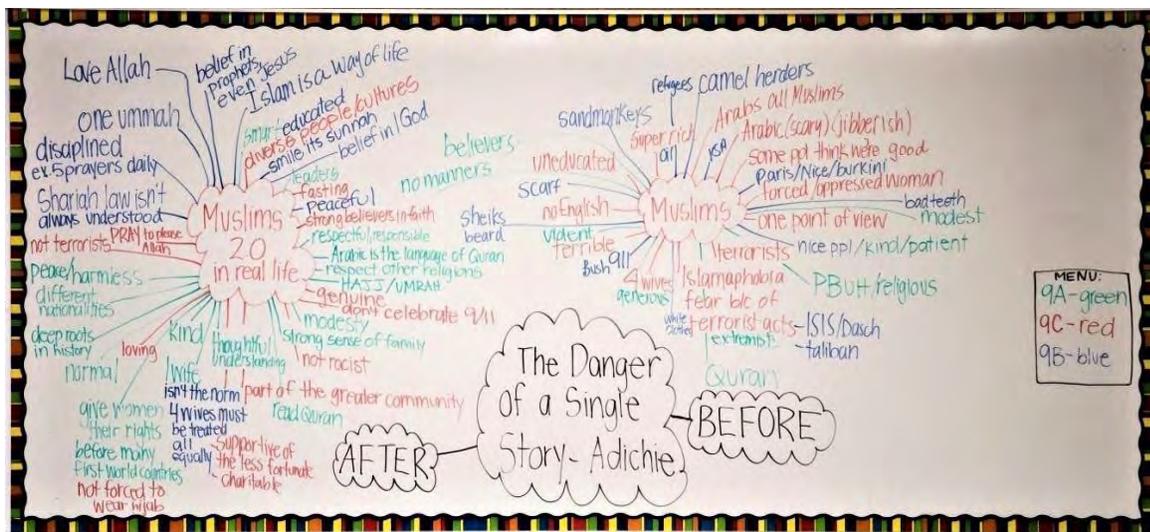
Fig. 10: Whiteboard showing students' thought processes before and after watching Adichie's (2009) "The Danger of a Single Story."

The picture that illustrates the outcome of their thoughts is labelled AFTER. This time, however, students brainstormed the words *peaceful*, *disciplined*, *modest*, *diverse*, and, of course, *misunderstood*.

These mind maps were a way for the students to map out their understanding and resistance of the dominant narrative. The mind maps were symbolic of their tensions and negotiations with the single dominant story of Muslims against their *lived* stories as Muslims. Through their "counterstory" they were imagining possibilities to (re)shape their communities and world(s), as they felt empowered to reenter and reclaim full control of their narrative and challenge the negative single stories of Muslims. The words of Adichie certainly resonated for students at this point. They realized: "Stories matter. Many stories

matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity."

(Re)Presenting Counterstories

The grade nine students wanted to repair, empower, and humanize Muslims by disrupting the dominant story and creating their own stories. In the midst of becoming, they created their own personal counterstory constructions through different mediums. Words do not do justice in describing their multiple formats, such as writing stories and poems, prezis, trifolds, digital presentations, posters, canvas paintings, pencil drawings, cartoons, skits, 3D flowers, suitcases, and more. However, hopefully the images below and throughout this article give a sense of their beautiful resolve.
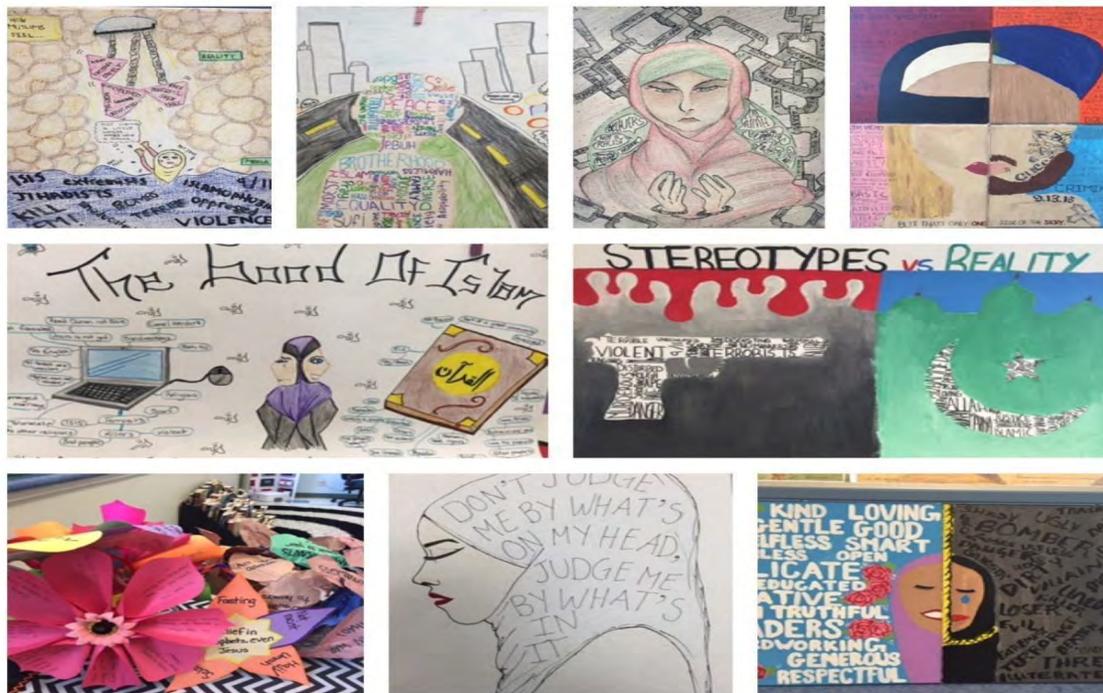
Fig. 11: Collage showing examples of student work that illustrate their counterstories through different mediums.

Clandinin and Connelly define "image" as a component of personal practical knowledge based on the narrative unity of an individual's life. "The calling forth of images from a history, from a narrative of experience" ... opens potential for the images(s) "to guide us in making sense of future situations" (Clandinin, 1985, p. 363). As I thought about this important internal process, I was reminded of my six-year-old self who drew herself as a Ukrainian dancer. I came to realize that the image was like a "glue that melds together a person's diverse experiences, both personal and professional" (p. 379). Images of student work (Figure 11) illustrate "possibilities for imagining counterstories; stories that hold tremendous potential for educative reverberations in lives, in and outside schools" (Huber et al., 2013, p. 229).

Amplifying Our Voices and Stories

On this landscape, I hope, like my Muslim sister Muna Saleh, that "educators, researchers, and community members from within and across Muslim and other Canadian communities… will listen to, foreground, and amplify our voices rather than presuming to speak to, about, and/or for us" (Saleh, 2019, p. 288). But how do you do this? How we can amplify the voices of young Muslims was something that I had to really contemplate. This task is very difficult but important for me. However, it is important to articulate and increase understanding to amplify the voices of Muslim youth and children, through providing mirrors, as well as windows and sliding glass doors (Sims Bishop, 1990).

Fig. 12: Mural symbolizing the need to amplify the voices of young Muslims rather than presuming to speak to, about, and/or for them.

It is vital that we provide many mirrors for children and youth to see themselves, as well as windows through which other diverse worlds can be viewed. As educators, it is also important to be mindful about single stories of the Muslim experience. Muslims in literature are usually only seen in the context of Islamic communities, rather than in cross-cultural spaces and interactions. It is important that Islam is portrayed as a natural part of a child's life, rather than some exotic and foreign religion, and that it is only *one* part of their multi-layered identity, because what is excluded is often as telling as what is included. Sims Bishop (1990) asserted, "when children cannot find themselves reflected…, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part".

What I take away from this profound experience is that as an educator, I am learning as I co-compose my being and living curriculum with students, and co-compose my being and a lived/living curriculum with students in which we are each continuously in a process of becoming. Teaching and learning is a

fluid process which is unfinished; my guiding principle is to always engage in inquiry into "experience and to follow where it leads" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 188) as I continue to come alongside students, families, teachers, and administrators. As I have come alongside students in this way, I have experienced their deep acknowledgement that there are no single stories, and too their openness to world travel. I wonder, in the broader social contexts where the students are also composing their lives, if the people with whom they interact are also seeking to move beyond single stories of them, and to travel to their multiple and diverse worlds.

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Amanah Eljaji has 20 years of teaching and leadership experiences in Canadian and International school contexts. She began her journey teaching junior high Language Arts and Social Studies for eight years. Amanah then spent five years working in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia where she had the opportunity to work with students from diverse backgrounds. Eight years ago, she returned once again to Canada to serve as a Humanities Coordinator. Her passion for learning, stories, and counterstories led her to pursue and earn her Masters of Education at the University of Alberta.

Strangers No More: Collaborative Inquiry Through Narrative as Teacher Reflective Practice

Elia Gindin, Meaghan van Steenbergen, and Douglas L. Gleddie

Abstract

Two teachers and a professor engaged in collaborative inquiry through narrative as a form of reflective practice, pedagogical growth, and practitioner research. Using a Deweyan lens and elements of narrative inquiry, we consider our stories of teaching through a supportive, growth-based sharing process. Viewing pedagogical experiences through this lens enabled us to enter each other's worlds and engage in reflection—together. Our work speaks to the situations that arise when expectations conflict with reality. The process of reflecting and re-reflecting led us to the conclusion that engagement in this fashion is a valuable reflexive method for teacher professional growth.

> *Looking forward to more discussion—putting these stories to paper is so therapeutic...it is seriously so difficult to stop writing when you are reflecting and connecting once you get going... (Elia)*
>
> *Working with you and Elia has taken me down a path that I didn't expect my Master's experience to ever take, and I know I'm speaking for both of us when I say that this path has been both career-changing and incredibly educational. (Meaghan)*
>
> *It was so good to finally meet you both, have a good long chat and continue working together! I also feel quite blessed and am excited to keep this project going. Re-reading your monthly posts was so inspiring—thanks to you both for all of your dedication and commitment to the project. (Doug)*

Our journey began as two graduate students and a professor together in an online course on reflective practice. As working professionals, we shared an acknowledgment that understanding, and even growth, is somewhat limited when one participates in individual reflection. We felt affected by past professional stories and recognized that participation in narrative-based research of a collaborative nature could have a positive impact on our future professional experiences. Our contexts, experiences, and lives are different, which we believed would have a positive impact on discussion and analysis. This paper emerged out of a final project where Elia and Meaghan shared key teaching moments with each other electronically and engaged in a form of inquiry (reading, reflecting, responding, and repeating) through narrative. Doug was so moved and impressed by their project that he asked if they might be willing to keep it going, and add him to the process. We put a formal plan in place and called it *collaborative inquiry through narrative*.[1] Elia and Meaghan would share one story a month (through Google Docs) for a span of four months, with each of us reflecting, responding, and re-reflecting in the document. The title of the paper comes from the fact that although we connected online and only actually met in person once (after working together for eight months), our reflective journey continues now as colleagues, teachers, and friends.

Elia Gindin, Meaghan van Steenbergen, and Douglas L. Gleddie

Reflective Practice and Narratives in Education

"Teachers cannot separate their personal identities from their professional ones" (Estola, 2003, p. 181).

Narrative inquiry, as a methodology, uses collected stories as the means to understand experience and is "…increasingly used in studies of education experience [because] the main claim for the use of narrative in educational research is that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 3). Schaefer and Clandinin (2011) explored the connection between teachers' visions of what they expected teaching to be, and the experiences that presented themselves. In the middle ground, we find our stories and, according to Dewey (1938), room for growth. As practitioners interested in exploring our own personal and professional landscapes, we found ourselves drawn to narrative-based research.

Inquiry through narrative separates itself from "typical story sharing" and transcends peer relationships. It involves a deeper reflection and level of inquiry into the narratives. Therefore, the aim of our paper is to share how we used collaborative inquiry through narrative as a method to reflect on personal experiences in our day-to-day lives as practitioners. We hope to encourage teachers "to resist the establishment of classroom control [by instead becoming] reflective practitioner(s), continuously engaging in critical reflection, consequently remaining fluid in the dynamic environment of the classroom" (Larrivee, 2000, p. 306). We also hope to emphasize the transformational nature of using elements of the narrative inquiry process as practitioner reflection. In our context, reflection became the lens through which we, as a collective, began to examine the intersections of our personal and professional experiences.

> Reflection is not an end in itself but a tool or vehicle used in the transformation of raw experience into meaning-filled theory that is grounded in experience, informed by existing theory, and serves the larger purpose of the moral growth of the individual and society. (Rodgers, 2002, p. 863)

Rodgers' (2002) ideas of reflective practice are compounded with the notion that teachers must learn from these stories amidst the critical examination of their practice: by seeking the advice of others, drawing on educational research to deepen their knowledge, sharpen their judgment, and adapt their teaching to new findings and ideas.

Reflection in practice allows educators to improve by reflecting deeply on their challenges, successes/errors, and accomplishments, while creating stories based on everyday experiences. The stories that we shared with each other, and following responses and re-reflections, began to change and shape the way we were viewing our practice. The stories we might have at first been reluctant to share, were quickly becoming integral pieces to our professional development journeys. The new perspectives through which we were viewing the challenging experiences in our classrooms allowed us to begin to understand the relationship between the authentic experiences that we lived each day, with that of inquiry and the stories we were ready to share. By the end of the first reflective experiences, we were becoming improved inquirers due to the in-depth explorations of our teaching experiences and the desire to assist each other through continuous reflection. As Patton and colleagues (2013) state,

we engaged in, "Carefully orchestrated [professional development] with purposeful steps used by facilitators to aid teachers in becoming independent and life-long learners" (p. 456). Therefore, one might call our process of collaborative inquiry through narrative a type of community of practice (Parker et al., 2012). Our reflective community acts as a learning group that promotes a supportive and safe environment for all (Parker et al., 2012) as we inquire together to shift our practice.

The way we have structured our reflective practice has truly enabled us to "…better understand why we are who we are; why we do what we do; [and] why we believe what we believe" (Gleddie & Schaefer, 2014, p. 3). Even further, we used inquiry through narrative as a methodology to share and analyze our thoughts and everyday encounters in our schools, since expressing our experiences as stories allows for a pragmatic ontology leading to action. The stories of our experiences are the foundation of our inquiry, and, in turn, the inquiry itself has provided us with the necessary process to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences in our classrooms and schools.

Although our work is not "true" narrative inquiry, we accessed aspects of the methodology as a foundation on which to base our experimental work in reflective practice. For example, we used Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional narrative space as a way to structure our reflective interactions (see next page). As reflective practice is deeply entrenched in Dewey's experiential theory (1938), it implies that pedagogical learning is most effective when teachers are able to live through personal experiences and reflect back on them as the basis for professional learning. Therefore, we ground our conceptualization of reflection with Dewey (1964), who explained that reflective practice "…is important not only as a tool for teaching, but also as an aim of education, since it enables us to know what we are about when we act." (p. 211). As such, reflection as a method of questioning is extremely important in teaching, and provides the basis for the work of this paper. Dewey (1964) defined what reflective practice was for a teacher in such a way that inspired and promoted a movement of self-awareness and the critical evolution of professional development through story. Teachers today are coming to realize that in order to better understand themselves in the classroom, they need to see their "…knowledge in terms of narrative life stories" (Clandinin & Huber, 2002, p. 161).

Methods

The purpose of our reflective journey was to grow as professional educators. Schaefer and Clandinin (2011) describe what we have done as a "bumping"' (p. 283) of stories. They argued that teachers' styles bump against what is expected of them. Our experiences shape our original expectations of what the profession will bring, and as our careers progress, we monitor and adjust to new circumstances (Farrell, 2016). In more traditional narrative inquiry settings, authors often share a context as colleagues in the same school or as part of a professional cohort. In our case, we came together first as strangers— united by our common experience of an online course on reflective practice. Meaghan and Elia taught different grades and worked for different school boards. Each had unique experiences with students, parents, administration, and professional development. Both had prior experiences outside the city, but in vastly different areas of the world. Doug taught for 14 years, but has been a professor for the past 11.

The final class assignment required the development of an open-ended "reflective practice project," which Meaghan and Elia ended up collaborating on. When we considered our stories, we were already familiar with our own associated thoughts and emotions. We wanted to explore the impact of those stories through a wider lens, which we hoped would come from working alongside one another. Through monitoring the development of the project and assessing the final product, Doug was drawn further into Meaghan and Elia's worlds through their stories, reflections, and analysis. As a result, we agreed to continue the project (with Doug on board as an additional "reflector" and "connector") through another term as an independent study, and planned to share our collaborative process and learning journey.

Following Greene's (1995) suggestion that, "One must see from the point of view of the participant in the midst of what is happening" (p. 10), Meaghan and Elia each chose and shared a story from their teaching experiences. We then read the shared stories, looking to understand the writer's feelings and context, but also bringing our own experiences to the table. The final step was a collaborative reflection, a "back-and-forth" examining the experience through shared reflections. Each month, we shared a different story and embarked on a new reflective process. A relationship of friendship and trust was built and strengthened with every new story. In a profession that usually only allows the individual teacher to consider events in the classroom, the invitation to read each other's stories and reflections opened the door for support and mutual mentorship.

We structured our reflections around Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three dimensions of narrative inquiry space: the personal and social (interaction) along one dimension; past, present, and future (temporal) along a second dimension; and place (situation) along a third dimension. They define this process by explaining that,

> Using this set of terms, any particular inquiry [can be] defined by this three-dimensional space: studies have temporal dimensions and address temporal matters: they focus on the personal and the social in a balance appropriate to the inquiry: and they occur in specific places or sequences of places. (p. 54)

Personal growth develops from reflection of the nature of relationships with others and in mind with our personal expectations and stories. This marks the personal/social dimension, and our stories in this paper will demonstrate the natural connection to the place dimension. The temporal dimension describes a continuity from past to present to future. This dimension is vital to the reflective process as it is where we engaged with the concept of understanding and growth, and prepared us for the next cycle of reflection.

We cannot possibly share all the stories, reflections, and analysis here. Therefore, we chose a story fragment from both Meaghan and Elia (along with a snapshot of the accompanying reflective process/analysis we went through) as exemplars to illustrate our journey. The future is marked by growth as we draw connections between past and current events, the pieces coming together to form our own unique puzzles (Gleddie & Schaefer, 2014).

Elia's Story

Every day from 12:45-1:00 pm, all students in my school have 15 minutes of uninterrupted silent reading time to read quietly for pleasure. In the first week of school, much to my surprise, I actually heard a student (male), who didn't bring a book, say to another boy, who was quietly reading, that "reading was for girls!" I absolutely cringed. I know it was only the first days of school, but what was I doing wrong? Did I not foster an inclusive classroom in these early days? Were the kids not connecting with me (or each other)? My single job on the first days of the new school year is to promote an environment of acceptance and friendship amongst my students, and I was obviously failing.

The boy, now in tears, left the class. When I approached him, he said to me, "Teacher, you don't know me yet, but reading is all I got. I am not good in the gym like most boys. Reading is my thing!" He was right—I didn't know him well at all yet and I felt defeated, on this, the very first days of the school year!

I brought the issue of reading and boys to the staff room and it was especially intriguing listening to my colleagues discuss the perils of trying to get boys to enjoy reading; some believed you needed to "let boys be boys" and have them read for pleasure without pressure, while others suggested to not have them read at all because "they'd eventually find something to read, or not." But as an educator, I could not sit idle and allow kids who can read choose not to when those who probably cannot read, only wish that they could.

This situation left me with more questions than answers, especially as a non-PE teacher with a student who believed they were being judged for not being athletic, and how can I help promote a healthy definition of masculinity in my classroom for those boys who want to excel academically, but do not think they can simultaneously succeed in PE class.

As the year progressed, I realized that I had to cultivate an open-minded classroom where the kids who liked to read would be valued as much as the kids who were athletic, just as my teachers did for me when I was in junior high where there should be no judgments on abilities or disabilities, likes or dislikes. I remember that I too was once in a similar situation as the awkward teenager who wasn't as comfortable in the gym as he was in the Language Arts classroom, and although I persevered, I was constantly made fun of for doing the things that "girls liked."

That kid who cried on the first day of school now commands quite the audience as he describes the kinds of books he reads weekly—other students are in awe of how he reads two or more books a week! Furthermore, I was astonished that the same kid who proclaimed that he couldn't do sports, was playing badminton in gym class and throwing a football at recess. Perhaps I wasn't failing as his teacher after all?

Meaghan's Response

This story demonstrates how the three dimensions are relevant when we consider the narratives of teachers. It seems more difficult, however, to define these when we are speaking about teenagers. In the first days of any school year, a teacher has a solid foundation for what their place is. They have spent time organizing their classroom, meeting new colleagues, creating lesson plans and seating charts. Yet, that same place is not defined at all for our students. They walk into the room anxious to be told where to sit and what to do. They define their new place by what it was to them last year, yet their new teacher will soon influence their present interpretations. For the boys in the story, both had preconceived ideas about Elia's classroom. The reader was comfortable and likely looking forward to his year in Language Arts. The subject area had been a comfortable place before, and he used that past

experience to create his expectations for the current year. Unfortunately, it was to the point that he believed that the Language Arts class was the only place he could be comfortable.

For the other boy who teased the reader, the reverse was true. He found comfort in Gym class, and none in Language Arts. Formed by past experience, his discomfort was so intense that he felt like he didn't belong in Elia's class and wouldn't risk trying to fit in. He faced a clash of past expectations and present experiences when he was seated next to a boy who was not only comfortable participating in class, but was actually enjoying it.

The future that these boys have in front of them is not theirs alone, but everyone's who is in Education. The sociality of the associations with various subject matters needs to change. Just as Elia guided the reader on his transformation into being a well-rounded student, it is our obligation to help all students develop confidence and a sense of belonging, no matter which classroom they find themselves in.

Doug's Response

This one hit close to home for me. As a male who likes BOTH physical education and reading I struggle to understand how we are still fighting these gender stereotypes in 2016! I was immediately reminded of a "place" in my house growing up where the reading box went. Every two weeks we went to town to get groceries and also hit up the library—the books would go in the reading box. Invariably, I would end up reading mine and everyone else's over the two weeks. My family never teased me because we were all readers. Elia, you have made your class into that "place" where reading is accepted and encouraged.

Creating places is hard. It takes time. Meaghan makes a great point about the difference between teachers and teenagers when it comes to the place that is a classroom. Elia, you know that you have created a safe and nurturing environment. It takes the students a little longer to buy in and make it theirs too. Socially, it also takes time for students to adapt and adjust to the social norms in your class (reading is NOT masculine or feminine—it is human!). The initial negative interaction gave way to the class culture that was initially created and facilitated by you—then adopted and internalized by the students.

Finally, I am hit by the temporal aspects of your shared story. When Meaghan talks about the future of these boys belonging, in a way, to everyone—she nails it. We can't possibly know all that went on in these kids' pasts. Sometimes as teachers it feels like we barely know their present state… I do know that regardless of what educative or mis-educative (Dewey, 1938) experiences YOUR students have had with reading in the past, in the present, they will be reassured that reading is for boys. And girls. And teachers. And that will have an immeasurable impact on their future.

Meaghan's Story

When I was 22, I accepted my first teaching job teaching a three-grade split in a rural Canadian town. Nervous, yet excited, I knew the job would be a challenge, but I wasn't prepared for the reception from the community. When I got there, I discovered that it was generally accepted for newcomers to be completely ignored by the adults in the town. Even standing in line to pay for my groceries, I wouldn't be served until there was a line behind me. The kids were different. They filtered their parents' jadedness. The school was our safe spot. Everywhere else I went, I felt uncomfortable. Being a single, young woman didn't help me feel safer. The RCMP detachment in our town was one of the busiest in

the country, with sexual assault being a common charge, fueled by a level of alcohol and drug abuse I had never seen before in my suburban upbringing.

Sometimes, it infiltrated our classroom. One morning, I was in the middle of teaching when a student's father, Dallas (a pseudonym), walked into my classroom. I could tell that Dallas was inebriated right away and I convinced him that we should talk in the hall. I felt the pain of his child's embarrassment, seeing his father stumbling into his classroom in such a state. Dallas wanted to have an impromptu parent-teacher conference. He was persistent. This man, bulky and outsizing me by at least twice my weight, was well known for getting into trouble with the RCMP. I wasn't about to purposely make him angry. I thought about a professor I had in university, who once said, "Parents will try and march into your classroom to talk to you. Remember that you are a professional. You can't walk into a doctor's office and demand to see the doctor right away, and the same rule applies to schools."

As a naive preservice teacher, I thought that was some really good advice, optimistic that the metaphor had just the right wording to turn any stubborn parent into an understanding one. Now, being in the very situation my professor warned us about, I didn't think that Dallas would be so understanding. Lecturing him for being inconsiderate would not work, and neither would denying him the right to talk about his child. With a classroom of unsupervised teenagers waiting for me, I needed to end this conversation. I forced a smile and championed Dallas for being such a great father who cared so much about his son. When I pointed out that his son wasn't learning anything if I was standing in the hallway, I was able to convince him to come back after school. At least then, I could guarantee that my principal would be close by.

Elia's Response

When I think about the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, I am drawn to the temporality of your story and how this experience might have affected your current and future interactions with the parents of your students. We know that when we reflect on events in our professional past, our thinking and how we function pedagogically can philosophically change—the question becomes how that change is regarded and acted upon. After all, "events and people always have a past, present, and a future (and) in narrative inquiry it is important to always try to understand people, places, and events as in process" (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 24). Therefore, I would be interested in hearing further reflections one day about how this particular experience may be entrenched in your practice; do you think about this incident often? Did you ever contemplate switching professions as a result of this occurrence?

Considering the dimension of place, I immediately thought to myself how uncomfortable you must have felt being in a new and almost foreign setting. The remoteness of the rural Canadian school in which you were based at the start of your teaching career seems daunting and taxing. You were already at a disadvantage being in a completely new geographical space without the support system you would have had at home, so the determination and fortitude you displayed in the situations you endured, absolutely amazed me. However, it did make me wonder if when you were told, "they won't look at you because they think you'll be another teacher gone in a year," if you ever began to regret your decision to move and teach there in the first place? I also think to the specific place of you and Dallas meeting in the hall and if between your professor's past words and the classroom of "unsupervised" students gave you the confidence needed to persevere in this awkward situation you found yourself in, or, were you frightened into finding a quick solution—the families of our students should be part of our educational team, not our adversaries.

Personally, what struck me most in this reflection was when you shared about being ostracized by the community. It made me feel isolated, as well as made me question whether or not I'd have the confidence to walk into that classroom every day knowing that. I find that teaching requires a certain amount of self-assurance, and although teachers tend to "give it their all," there are so many pedagogical impediments we face every day, let alone knowing that the teacher, the person who is supposed to lead the class, is already one step behind. Also, even though "Research suggests that parental involvement in the educational system fosters intellectual and emotional growth in children" (Silbergleid, 1998, p .4), if you don't have the support of the parents in the first place, then the relationships with families that teachers are supposed to make, become even more difficult to make. Additionally, since (on average), "Almost a quarter of entering public-school teachers leave teaching within their first three years" (Boyd et al., 2008, p. 1), it is beyond praiseworthy that some teachers are still teaching after all they go through.

Doug's Response

Courage. That's the word that came to mind first when I read your story. It takes courage to teach somewhere "out of your element"; to think of the child first; to look past behaviour to acknowledge a father. Like Elia, I am intrigued by the dimension of temporality in your story. Your first year of teaching—a tough year anywhere—but even tougher as an outsider in a small rural town. You reflect back to the time of teacher education and recognize, very succinctly, the disconnect you felt in that present time. How much of that first year teacher is in your teaching today? I can only assume that the wisdom you displayed back then has been further tempered by experience and plays a (daily?) role in your interactions with parents today.

Places also have a key role in your narrative. The place of preservice education—a space where professors are safe to say things that fail to match the reality of teaching places—present and future. Your teaching place, where your safety was emotionally and physically threatened. How do those places now manifest themselves in where you are now? Your class, your school—the parents in these places? Do you think of that first year often? I also wonder how long you stayed in that place and how much of it did you take with you when you left?

It is hard being "the other." Interesting that the kids were more accepting than the adults—even though they are the ones impacted (hurt?) the most by those that leave. From a social perspective, I wonder if the parents in that community harden their hearts because they have been taught by experience to not open up to those who will not stay. They harden their hearts because their kids (all kids) can't—it's not in the nature of kids to think too far in the future, but the parents have to. The courage you showed in this situation is one that puts relationships, and the preservation of those relationships, first. You acted out of concern for the child in your class and also for the family. Again, I would guess that this commitment to "people-first" has stayed with you and manifests itself daily in your current teaching role.

Discussion

The characters from our past stay "…alongside us now as we make pedagogical decisions in our classroom" (Gleddie & Schaefer, 2014, p. 11). The stories that we chose to share with one another were purposeful because even though these events happened in the past, they resonate with us to this day. As we saw in Elia's story, his role was inspired by events from his adolescence. In Meaghan's story, we saw a beginning teacher struggling to equate her reality with her preservice expectations. Through sharing

our stories within the three-dimensional narrative space, we acknowledged the importance of temporality within our stories.

From personal reflection, the stories have taught us lessons and guided some of our actions; yet by sharing them with one another, we discovered another level to our pedagogical path. Meaghan was giving voice to her silenced younger self. Elia took action on injustice and guided students on their own journeys. The environments that we found ourselves in demonstrated the sociality aspect. Elia's connections with his students, his desire to guide them on their journey of self-discovery, demonstrate how his relationships with his own peers as a student represent themselves in his classroom. For Meaghan, the desire to present herself as a professional was challenged by the relationships she formed with her students' parents. In both stories, the outcome was guided by our relationships.

Place also acted as a dynamic character in each story. As Casey (1997, as cited in Ellis, 2005) notes, "place is not viewed as having a fixed or single meaning, essence, or structure" (p. 55). For each character in the story, place plays a different role. For Meaghan's students and their families, the small town was home, one that they were protective of. Their story of an outsider entering their home community may be a completely different story than the version Meaghan shared. Elia made his classroom a place where reading is cool—for everyone—and invited his students to become part of that place.

When we came together to do this project, our initial instinct was to write about stories that had already been resolved, the stories with the happy endings. It turned out that we found more meaning from sharing stories that represented the successes we had to fail through, and fight for. Having never worked together before, the three of us were able to draw meaning out of the stories without it being marred by a context that we suspect would infiltrate a relationship between colleagues from the same school. Stories were taken as they were presented and reflections were genuinely directed at the storyteller, and not their context. Collaborative inquiry through narrative allowed us to story our teaching lives, share those stories, reflect and then engage in re-storying, re-sharing, and re-reflecting. We freely gave of ourselves and also were given permission to freely take from one another—as colleagues, then friends.

When Meaghan and Elia wrote their initial stories, both of them noted the value of participating in a genuine discussion of events that, to an outsider, may seem germane. Yet, the stories are transformative and indicative of our future choices and direction. As an education professor, the project was also valuable for Doug as it gave him a window into the worlds of two in-service teachers. The stories, reflections, and re-reflections allowed him forge a connection with Elia and Meaghan that was based on his own teaching experiences, but also educational research and teaching practice at the university.

The process also provided many immediate and long-term benefits to our teaching practice. First, we instantly created a pedagogical bond where we could very quickly engage with each other on a variety of in-school topics, without judgment, and seek feedback for personal and professional growth. Four years later, we are still in contact, still continuously storying, sharing, and reflecting as we grow in our practice. Both of us have transitioned into different grade levels and roles within our schools, which further provides us with constant conversation about teaching and learning. A consequence of this

experience would be that we are not direct colleagues, and we work in different school boards, so there are times that we might not have the same teaching or administrative procedures, which then diminishes our ability to assist each other with the same expediency we would if we were direct colleagues. Nevertheless, this process is easily transferable to those that we come in direct contact with daily, providing new opportunities for reflection.

Collaborative Inquiry Through Narrative as Reflective Practice

In developing a collaborative team working in different school districts as well as different grade levels, we have been able to support, encourage, and advise each other despite only meeting recently through graduate school. Narratives have been an essential conduit for us to be cooperative in this journey, as our reflections took on new meaning as inquirers, graduate students, and even as asynchronous community builders. Thus, the more that we reflected, the more we became a community of reflective practitioners. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) explain this idea of community and collaboration in narrative inquiry, as something that is not practiced nearly enough in education. We immediately noticed this gap as we began to reflect on our past through the process of storytelling and re-storying. As such, our process evolved into an authentic and genuine means of sharing, allowing for a heightened level of mutual problem solving.

As graduate students who were also full-time teachers in schools, the process for Meaghan and Elia provided immediate and long-term benefits. First, we instantly created a pedagogical bond where we could very quickly engage with each other on a variety of in-school topics, whereby we knew it would be a safe space to seek feedback for personal and professional growth. This translated seamlessly into long-term benefits, since four years later, we are still in contact, continuously storying, sharing, and reflecting as we grow our practice.

Through sharing possible solutions to classroom problems, not only did we become more confident in what reflection could do for our practice, but our students also began to reap the rewards of our pedagogical reflections. Johnson and Golombek (2002) best summarize this effect on students when they explain that, "…when teachers reflect on, describe, and analyze the factors contributing to a classroom dilemma, they confront their emotions, their moral beliefs, and the consequences of their teaching practices on the students they teach" (p. 4).

At the core of our inquiry are a variety of insights on what has worked well for us as colleagues wanting to improve practice and solve problems in the classroom. Our process has directly influenced the relationship we have with our students as well as the collegiality we've developed with our peers in our school. As we begin to spread our new learning and discoveries, reflective practice becomes ever more relevant and engaging. It is now difficult for us to say that reflective practice cannot and will not permeate itself through the educational instances in which we operate, and even further, how "…our efforts [will be] powerfully motivated by the potential of reflective practice [in creating] effective teaching" (Jay & Johnson, 2002, p. 85).

Collaboration and community building between teachers and professors in education can also create many positive results for teacher education practice. Doug's interaction with two in-service teachers helped him to stay grounded with the field, learning and growing along with Meaghan and Elia. As a result of this research, he has been further convinced of the efficacy not only of reflective practice for emergent teachers, but also of the importance of building communities of reflective practice. Although Doug has been using a narrative inquiry process with his students that encourages them to engage in reflective practice (Hennig et al., 2020), the results of this research have allowed for a renewed focus on community, interaction, and the creation of safe spaces for sharing, feedback, and growth.

Future Possibilities

The work that we have done in becoming collaborative, reflective practitioners is by no means complete. Sharing experiences and reflecting together on them is an ongoing event in education; one that not only improves practice for teacher and student, but also enables teachers to deeply be in contact with their peers for pedagogical support. Moving forward, we will share our learning with colleagues. Perhaps those teachers and support staff that are already highly reflective could find quick and expedient ways to improve their practice. Starting where we are allows us to further explore the nuances, benefits, and challenges of a professional learning community in our own spaces.

Note

1. We are intentionally NOT using the term *narrative inquiry* for our work. Although we certainly drew from that methodology (among others), we do not feel that our work truly fits the *narrative inquiry* paradigm. Hence, our cobbled together term of *collaborative inquiry through narrative*.

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Building Allies and Sharing Best Practices:
Cultural Perspectives of Deaf People and ASL Can Benefit All

Debbie Golos, Annie Moses, Elaine Gale, and Michele Berke

Abstract

Societal views of Deaf people typically stem from a medical or deficit perspective, which then informs educational practices. In contrast, educational settings that embrace a cultural perspective provide visual language and strategies that can benefit all students. This article will address three common myths about American Sign Language (ASL) and Deaf people, and share research-supported pedagogical practices and recommendations on how to be an ally on behalf of Deaf people.

A greater focus on developmentally appropriate practice, including culturally responsive practices, have led educators to adapt curricula to meet the varying knowledge, beliefs, experiences, and contexts of children (e.g., NAEYC, 2020). However, misunderstandings and myths about some children's capabilities and culture persist. For example, for multilingual language learners, there has been a misunderstanding that "learning two languages during the early childhood years will overwhelm, confuse, and/or delay acquisition of English" (Espinosa, 2013, p. 5). Misunderstandings and myths apply to Deaf children's capabilities and culture as well, particularly in language learning (Humphries et al., 2012).

In this article, we first present varying perspectives on educating Deaf children. Then, we share three common myths and facts about Deaf children's language and literacy development. Finally, we present research-supported practices that educators can implement to counter these common myths and be(come) a hearing ally. This includes incorporating American Sign Language (ASL) to benefit all students, and how educators can promote positive perceptions about Deaf people in their classrooms. For the remainder of this article, we will use the term "Deaf" as an inclusive term to refer to individuals of varying hearing levels (see Table 1), diverse backgrounds, experiences, and identities (e.g., race, culture, gender).

Varying Perspectives on Educating Deaf Children

As schools embrace more inclusive environments, it is becoming common for public school teachers to have a Deaf student in their classroom (Office of Research Support and International Affairs, 2015), and those students may or may not use technologies such as cochlear implants or hearing aids. Just like all

students, Deaf students often have diverse backgrounds, strengths, and needs. However, educators may not realize that they also vary in hearing level (i.e., mild to profound) and home languages (i.e., sign or spoken languages). They also vary in their language and literacy skills, with some having significant delays and others achieving grade-level (or above) expectations. A Deaf child with any of these characteristics could join a general or special education classroom, and teachers must consider how to plan and implement effective practices that will benefit Deaf learners as well as other students in their classrooms. In addition, even if they never have a Deaf student, educators can become an ally and share knowledge about Deaf culture and ASL as a part of a culturally responsive curriculum.

Practices, beliefs, and recommendations for teaching Deaf students or about Deaf people are just as varied depending on the guiding beliefs and theoretical perspectives (Humphries et al., 2012). The more typical societal views of Deaf people are from a medical or deficit perspective, which focuses primarily on their hearing; how to fix or mold them to fit into a hearing world (Lane et al., 1996). Decisions about their education are often informed, in turn, by this perspective. For instance, recommendations typically stem from best practices for hearing children, such as developing spoken language and/or learning literacy through sound-based approaches (e.g., Wang et al., 2008; Fitzpatrick et al., 2016). In fact, sign language is not used with the majority of Deaf children (Office of Research Support and International Affairs, 2015). Despite being a popular practice with very young hearing children (baby sign), some still argue that sign language can delay spoken language development (e.g., Geers et al., 2017).

In contrast, educators aligning with a cultural perspective do not view being Deaf as a deficit; rather, they value Deaf Culture and recognize how Deaf people contribute to society. This concept is known as Deaf Gain (Bauman & Murray, 2014), and it recognizes Deaf individuals as visual beings with their own language and culture, including a rich history of art, theater, sports, and language (ASL in the United States; see Table 1 for this and other related terms). From this perspective, researchers and theorists suggest that a visual language, like ASL, and visual strategies, benefit all children. These are the same strategies and language Deaf adults use with their own Deaf child(ren) and/or students in the classroom, helping children make connections between ASL and English (e.g., Moses et al., 2018). Researchers also recommend access to Deaf peers and Deaf adult role models, including Deaf professionals, from the early years and on (Gale, 2020; Moses et al., 2018; Cawthon et al., 2016). Children with a range of hearing levels, including hearing children, can learn from interactions with culturally and linguistically diverse role models (Cawthon et al., 2016; García-Fernández, 2014).

Table 1

Terms commonly used by the Deaf Community (adapted from NAD, n.d.)

ASL	American Sign Language is used by the Deaf community in the United States and parts of Canada. (Other countries have their own sign language(s).)
Deaf	Capital "D" refers to members of the Deaf community who use sign language (e.g., ASL, Black ASL) as their preferred language of choice; including people with multiple identities and varying hearing levels who identify as part of the Deaf community. While "person first" language is acceptable, it is also acceptable to call someone "Deaf." This term is sometimes used as an all-encompassing term to include Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind and DeafDisabled populations.
Hard of Hearing[1]	A person with a mild-to-moderate level of hearing who identifies as hard of hearing and may or may not choose to have cultural affiliation with the Deaf community.
deaf	Lowercase "d" deaf used to define a medical condition designating the inability to hear.
Hearing	A person recognized as a member of the hearing community at large, someone who typically is able to hear.
Hearing level	The cultural description of what level someone can hear, contrasts the medical term "hearing loss," which is perceived as a negative term (profound level of hearing vs a profound hearing loss).
Inappropriate terms	The terms "hearing impaired," "deaf-mute," and "deaf and dumb" are not acceptable terms to describe someone who is deaf or hard of hearing.

However, a recent survey of educators of both hearing and Deaf children revealed that such linguistic and cultural models are not usually incorporated into educational settings, such as early childhood programs (Golos et al., 2018). This may be due to educators focusing more on sound-based approaches to learning (Fitzpatrick et al., 2016). These are missed opportunities to build upon Deaf children's visual strengths and connect to cultural needs. Teachers with or without Deaf students can invite Deaf adults into the classroom, incorporate ASL, and use visual strategies to benefit all students. Before implementing these practices, teachers should first consider what research shows and clarify misconceptions about Deaf individuals' learning and development.

Myths and Facts: Language and Literacy Development in Deaf Children

Although signing with hearing babies is quite popular, myths persist about the importance of sign language for Deaf children. Here are three prominent myths related to Deaf people, ASL, and language and literacy development as well as evidence to counter them.

Myth 1: *If Deaf Children Learn Sign Language, They Will Not Learn How to Speak Well*

There is a long-standing debate in Deaf education about the value of sign language that dates back to the late 1800s (Burke, 2018; Traynor, 2016). More recently, Roberta Cordano, J.D. (2016), the current president of Gallaudet University—the world's first and only liberal arts university for Deaf students—addressed this myth. She pointed to the research showing that learning sign language does *not* negatively affect language or academic skills, including spoken language development (e.g., Allen et al., 2014;

Mayberry et al., 2011). On the contrary, early exposure to ASL encourages Deaf children, including those with cochlear implants, to excel in many domains (Dammeyer, 2014; Davidson et al., 2014). Even hearing children's language and literacy skills can improve from learning sign language (Moses et al., 2015; Brereton, 2008; Daniels, 2004).

Yet, sign language continues to be undervalued. There is a critical period for language acquisition (Penicaud et al., 2013; Petitto, 2009), and children who are exposed to a fully accessible language from birth can develop both first and second languages on an expected timeline (Skotara et al., 2012). For Deaf children, a fully accessible language is usually a visual one, such as ASL. Without it, children may experience severe delays socially, linguistically, and academically (Huber & Kipman, 2011; Mayberry, et al., 2011). Many families, however, are advised to focus on spoken-language development only and that their children can learn sign language later if they are unsuccessful with spoken language (Geers et al., 2017; Fitzpatrick et al., 2016).

If, however, families and teachers wait to see if the Deaf child will succeed with spoken language before exposing them to ASL, the child may miss the critical window for language acquisition (Allen et al., 2014; Petitto, 2009). Speech may never be accessible for some Deaf children. Even Deaf children with cochlear implants may not have complete access to spoken language and may not be able to function independently without support (Punch & Hyde, 2011; Schafer & Cokely, 2016). Without the foundation of a fully accessible language, they may experience "language deprivation" (Glickman & Hall, 2018; Gulati, 2019; Hall et al., 2017). Early exposure to ASL can help mitigate the impact of language deprivation, and there is no harm in doing so (Lange et al., 2013). Teachers should not hesitate to incorporate ASL into the classroom (Hall et al., 2019).

Myth 2: *The Definition of Sign Language Includes All Manual Communication Systems*

Often, people use the term "sign language" to encompass both natural sign languages, such as ASL, and manual communication systems (e.g., Signed English) (Fitzpatrick et al., 2016; Geers et al., 2017). However, there is a significant difference. ASL is a natural language with its own syntax and grammar that is distinct from spoken English and is based on principles of visual communication (Perlmutter, 2001). When people talk and sign at the same time or use signing that follows the structure of English word order, they are not modeling a language but manual representations of spoken English. These systems or modes have little meaning to students unfamiliar with spoken English, and they do not receive a complete message in either ASL or English when these systems are used (Tevenal & Villanueva, 2009). Yet, using ASL (rather than manual communication) can increase student learning and engagement (Schick & Gale, 1995). As Hall et al. (2019) describe, "We are not aware of anyone who would argue that such communication systems confer the same benefits of a natural sign language" (p. 270).

Hall and colleagues (2019) also write that claims made in studies like Geers and colleagues (e.g., 2011; 2017) and Fitzpatrick and colleagues (2016) should be read with caution. For example, researchers collapsed all forms of sign into one definition when assessing participants' language use. This does not accurately portray their authentic exposure to sign language nor their sign language use and/or abilities.

Furthermore, unless evaluators are knowledgeable of ASL structure, they cannot accurately assess or make data-informed decisions about children's sign language or other academic skills (Simms et al., 2013).

Myth 3: *Deaf Children's Language and Literacy Skills Will Be Delayed if They Do Not Have Access to Spoken Language*

There is a long history of Deaf children graduating from high school with severe delays in literacy skills (Mitchell & Karchmer, 2004). Some have attributed this to the lack of access to spoken language (e.g., Geers et al., 2017). This helps to explain why current practice for Deaf children most often relies on one route to literacy, through spoken language (i.e., listening and speaking) connected to print. More often than not, the push is to use sound-based approaches for teaching literacy (Wang et al., 2008).

An alternative explanation for delayed literacy skills relates to language deprivation, as described earlier. In fact, when Deaf children are exposed to ASL from birth, they can develop critical early literacy skills prior to conventional reading and continue to develop literacy skills on or above grade level (Caselli et al., 2021; Hrastinski & Wilbur, 2016; Scott & Hoffmeister, 2017). Deaf children with cochlear implants who had higher ASL skills also had higher language and literacy skills, compared with children with cochlear implants who had little to no ASL skills (Allen, 2015; Dammeyer, 2014; Davidson et al., 2014).

Thus, adults should not wait to engage with ASL and print with Deaf children, even if they are just beginning to learn to sign. They can use strategies to help Deaf or hearing children make connections between ASL and spoken or written language (Lange et al., 2013). They also can utilize supplementary methods (e.g., gesture, acting out stories) and materials (e.g., literacy-related apps or DVDs in ASL; see Appendix) to expose children to different types of text while they are learning to sign (Snoddon, 2015).

Countering Myths by Be(com)ing a Hearing Ally

Research in Deaf education offers suggestions for strategies and activities that align with a cultural perspective and the guiding principles of hearing allyship (http://www.hearingallyship.org/). Much like considering other aspects of identity such as race, ethnicity, and gender, any educator can be an ally for Deaf people and foster future allies in their students (e.g., Brown & Ostrove, 2013), especially those who interact with Deaf students in inclusive settings. The following suggestions are evidence-based practices educators can use to integrate ASL and visual strategies into classrooms for all students and also foster understanding and positive perceptions about Deaf people (Bauman & Murray, 2014; Cawthon et al., 2016; Freel et al., 2011; García-Fernández, 2014; Holcomb, 2013).

Incorporating ASL and Visual Strategies Benefits All Students

As already highlighted, all students, including Deaf students with cochlear implants and hearing students (Most et al., 2009), can benefit from visual supports to access the world around them. For example, they may use alternative pathways to literacy such as ASL instead of, or in addition to sound, to access English print (McQuarrie & Abbott, 2013; Mayberry et al., 2011). In fact, researchers have found increased scores

in children's vocabulary and reading when teachers incorporated ASL into literacy instruction with hearing children either live (e.g., Brereton, 2008; Daniels, 2004) or through media (Moses et al., 2015). These findings suggest that using a visual language like ASL can uniquely support all children, including those who struggle with sound-based approaches or cannot access sound.

Thus, all teachers may enhance student learning by incorporating ASL and visual strategies. Teachers do not have to be fluent in ASL to begin to incorporate effective strategies into homes or classrooms. The following examples are drawn from research on Deaf adults' engagement with Deaf children at home (Berke, 2013) and school (Stone et al., 2015; Allen, 2015; Allen et al., 2014; Ramsey & Padden, 1998), reinforcing that all students can benefit from using ASL and the following strategies:

- Incorporate ASL in the classroom. For example, if a teacher has a word wall, they can show the ASL sign and/or fingerspelled word with English print (along with print in other languages; see Fig. 1). This also models respect for and equity for both languages while providing visual learners with additional support for word learning.
- Wait for the student. Deaf students and visual learners may need to attend to a book or other object and then look at the adult either before or afterward. This sequential (rather than simultaneous) joint attention allows children to explore and make connections between the language and the object.
- Use chaining or sandwiching. Each strategy is particularly effective to target vocabulary when reading books with students. Adults define the word, point to a written word, sign the word, fingerspell the word, and then show the printed word again (i.e., chaining; see Figure 2) or sign the word, define the word, fingerspell the word, and sign the word (i.e., sandwiching). Teachers can use multiple combinations of these strategies as they are defining new words.
- Encourage shared reading opportunities. Shared reading is associated with positive literacy outcomes. Adding ASL can only increase the benefit for all students by providing multiple routes to literacy (see Appendix for stories in ASL). While it is important for all students to have exposure to books, for Deaf students, it is especially important to have access to shared reading in ASL (see Figure 3).

If educators do have a Deaf student in their classroom, in addition to the above, consider the following:

- Provide access to fluent models of ASL and equal access to communication and education (e.g., closed captioning on all media materials).
- Have and effectively utilize an ASL interpreter. Encourage the school to ensure that the interpreter is highly qualified and certified. Interact directly with Deaf students even in the presence of an interpreter. (For more information about working with an interpreter, see Moses et al., 2018).
- Acknowledge that Deaf students need time to read or view visual information (e.g., on a screen or board) before shifting their gaze back to the teacher/interpreter. Also consider that there might be a time delay between the teacher's spoken word and the interpreter's interpretation.

Fig. 1: This is an example of a vocabulary word displayed in picture, English print, and fingerspelling.

Fig. 2: Graduate students modeling chaining with preschool children (Captured here is the process of transitioning between fingerspelling the letter "i" and "g" after pointing to the printed word and signing "pig").

Fig. 3: A Deaf adult and Deaf child share a book together in ASL.

Promoting Positive Perceptions About Deaf People

Perceptions of others and one's own identity develop quite early in life. These perceptions are constantly being molded throughout their schooling. Therefore, the experiences children have influence how they come to perceive themselves, others, and the world around them (Cawthon et al, 2016; Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010; Leigh, 2009; García-Fernández, 2014). For educators and families, it is never too early to start building self-awareness or future allies to Deaf people, and these practices should continue throughout schooling. Yet, cultural perspectives of Deaf people are rarely included within the curriculum for Deaf or hearing children. To do this, consider the following:

- Have high expectations. Understand Deaf students (and some hearing students) as "visual learners" with multiple intersecting identities (e.g., race, gender, culture, hearing level) and showcase all that Deaf people can achieve.
- Encourage others (i.e., educators, students, families, administrators) to learn ASL (see Appendix for free resources).
- Provide opportunities for interactions with Deaf and hearing peers. Social interactions are equally as important as interacting in academic language.
- Reach out to members of the Deaf community with diverse backgrounds (i.e., race, gender, culture, hearing level, languages). Invite them into the classroom, to share their experiences living as a Deaf individual, and best educational practices. For example, they can sign stories in ASL as well as suggest ways to improve lighting, seating, and space for visual learners.
- Incorporate both informational resources and stories, such as books and media in ASL with Deaf people/characters, that portray positive messages about Deaf people from varying backgrounds throughout the curriculum and environment (e.g., Moses et al., 2018; See Appendix). Make sure to "call out" that they are Deaf.
- Review materials ahead of time and consider the messages conveyed as many books/media do not portray Deaf people from a cultural perspective (see Moses et al., 2018, for a review of books and media with Deaf characters)
- Help educators, administrators, and particularly families with Deaf children find accurate information about language, literacy, and identity development. Assist them in connecting with people and resources from the Deaf community.

Teachers also can provide ongoing interactions with Deaf adults and Deaf peers from diverse race, gender, and cultural backgrounds (Bat-Chava, 2010; García-Fernández, 2014).

Conclusion

Educators can shift from a deficit viewpoint to a cultural perspective by focusing on what Deaf people can do rather than what they physically cannot do. Regardless of whether educators ever have Deaf students in their classroom, *all* students can benefit from learning about ASL and Deaf people from a cultural perspective. Educators and families can align with a cultural perspective by valuing who Deaf people are as visual beings, including their cultures (i.e., Deaf and additional family cultures) and

languages (i.e., ASL, English and other spoken, written or signed languages in the home) (Bauman & Murray, 2014). Then, their strategies, activities, and materials may be used to build upon a Deaf student's assets by way of visual strategies. Deaf adults given this foundation learn the various ways of "being" Deaf in a hearing environment and pass down these culturally based solutions for effective living (Holcomb, 2013).

With exposure to diverse Deaf role models, ASL, and visual strategies, Deaf and hearing students' language and literacy skills can improve (Allen et al., 2014; Cawthon et al., 2016; Freel et al., 2011). In addition, Deaf students may grow to embrace their strengths and develop a stronger sense of self-worth (Cawthon et al., 2016). Hearing students may grow to have a deeper understanding of the Deaf cultural perspective, value Deaf people as visual beings and, eventually, become allies.

Note

1. We recognize there may be more than one definition of Hard of Hearing. As such, children might be labeled hard of hearing based on hearing level rather than their preferred identity.

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Appendix A

Recommended Resources for Best Practices

To learn more about research and professional resources, check out the following:
● The **Visual Language and Visual Learning (VL2) research briefs** from Gallaudet University are an excellent resource to learn more about ASL and visual strategies: http://vl2.gallaudet.edu/research/research-briefs/
● The National Association of the Deaf has offered **advocacy efforts and materials, including position statements** for over 130 years: https://www.nad.org/about-us/position-statements/
● **Deaf Education teacher preparation programs** offered across the country. For contact information, visit: http://www.deafed.net/Knowledge/PageText.asp?hdnPageId=120.
● **The Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center** offers **professional development** workshops and resources for educators: http://www3.gallaudet.edu/clerc-center/learning-opportunities/on-site-training.html
These are multimedia materials available for free to teach ASL, early literacy skills and/or include Deaf role models:
● **The Bravo Family** offer free beginning courses in ASL: https://dcmp.org/series/5-bravo-beginning-asl-videocourse
● **ASL nook** is a Deaf family modeling storytelling and teaching ASL): www.aslnook.com
● **Hands Land** includes a series of interactive, researched-based video clips to teach ASL Rhyme and Rhythms, developed by an all Deaf team: www.handsland.com
● *Peter's Picture* comprises of free interactive, research-tested children's series and app that fosters language, literacy and knowledge of Deaf culture through ASL: https://app.peterspicture.com/
● **VL2 Storybook Apps** provide stories in ASL and English https://vl2storybookapps.com/
● **Signed Stories app** provides stories in ASL and English https://www.signedstories.com/apps
To build on the information shared in this article about best practices for teaching and interacting with Deaf children, check out these free resources:
● **Best practices** for reading with Deaf children: http://www3.gallaudet.edu/clerc-center/learning-opportunities/online-learning/fifteen-principles-for-reading-to-deaf-children.html
● These websites provide information on how to create **Deaf-friendly space**:   ○ https://www.gallaudet.edu/campus-design-and-planning/deafspace   ○ http://www.raisingandeducatingdeafchildren.org/2018/04/02/organizing-classrooms-for-deaf-and-hard-of-hearing-learners/

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Elaine Gale is an Assistant Professor and Coordinator of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Teacher Preparation Program at Hunter College, City University of New York (CUNY). She is Chair of the Deaf Leadership International Alliance (DLIA); infusing diverse deaf adults throughout early intervention programs from decision-making to service provision. Her research examines joint attention, theory of mind, and sign language development. Currently, she is co-principal investigator for "Family ASL: Bimodal Bilingual Acquisition by Deaf Children of Hearing Parents" supported by the National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Michele Berke currently works at the California School for the Deaf in Fremont as the Principal for the Early Childhood Education department. Her experience includes directing Gallaudet University's western regional office, coordinating a US Department of Education funded development of an ASL Assessment tool, and teaching college-level Linguistics of ASL courses. She completed her doctoral studies in Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences from the University of Colorado in Boulder. Her research explored the shared reading practices of Deaf and hearing mothers and their pre-school children. In addition, Michele holds DHH teaching credentials in multiple subjects and is an educational specialist in California.

Teaching Novice Science Teachers Online: Considerations for Practice-Based Pedagogy

Allison J. Gonsalves, Emily Diane Sprowls, and Dawn Wiseman

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has required educators at all levels to pivot instruction online. In this article, we consider methods we adopted to engage novice science teachers in approximations of teaching, online. We describe the principles of our science teacher education program and provide a rationale for the core feature of our science teaching methods course: practice-based pedagogy. We then discuss adaptations we have made to engage novices in ambitious science teaching practices online, and the affordances and constraints the virtual context posed to these practices. We conclude with a discussion of considerations for online practice-based pedagogy.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on teaching at all levels. In an attempt to contain the spread of the SARS CoV-2 virus, schools have closed around the world, affecting hundreds of millions of learners (UNESCO, 2020). In Canada, postsecondary institutions have almost universally pivoted to online learning. We are instructors for science teaching methods courses at two postsecondary institutions in Quebec. Like all educators, our roles have been challenged by the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have had to shift to remote instruction for novice teachers and adapt our approach to teacher education, which relies on interactive pedagogies of practice (Grossman et al., 2009; Jao et al., 2018). In our science teacher education programs, this has meant offering highly interactive methods classes in a virtual environment, finding tools to both adapt to the online space and to offer opportunities for novice teachers to learn and practice skills that will be used in face-to-face instruction. Online instruction in the context of a global pandemic requires many considerations that go beyond the question: "How do we adapt for remote learning?" We also need to consider challenges to the core features of our science teaching methods courses. In this paper, we outline these core features and discuss how they are affected by remote instruction. We then detail the adaptations we made to move our methods courses online and provide reflections on these changes and the ongoing challenges the virtual learning poses to science teacher education.

Background: Ambitious Science Teaching and Model-Based Inquiry

The goals of our science teaching methods courses are to develop novice teachers' understanding and practice of *ambitious science teaching* (AST) (e.g., Windschitl et al., 2012; Windschitl et al., 2018)— science teaching that deliberately aims to enable students to understand big science ideas, participate in the discourses of the discipline, and engage with ideas of science in meaningful and authentic ways. AST opens up science to the breadth of student experiences because it begins with students' experiences of the world and then requires that students "talk out" their thinking with teachers and peers in ways that

entail *co-thinking* and *co-constructing* with others to make sense of scientific ideas (Windschitl et al., 2008). AST outlines a research- and practice-based approach to teaching. It has been shown to support educators (both pre- and in-service) in developing practices that engage students in real-world questions (inquiry) and problems (problem solving); base teaching in big ideas of science and technology (Harlen, 2010; MELS, 2006); and develop scientific and technological understandings, skills, and language over time. It is thus a solid foundation for science and technology teacher education that aligns with the related competencies of the science programs within the Quebec Education Program (QEP). More specifically, the AST framework breaks the processes of science and technology teaching into four practices: 1) Planning for engagement with big scientific and technological ideas; 2) Eliciting student ideas and prior knowledge; 3) Supporting ongoing changes in student thinking through engagement with data and data collection; and 4) Drawing together evidence-based explanations based on data (Windschitl et al., 2018).

Planning to teach in the manner suggested by AST parallels the process used to design and implement *Learning Evaluation Situations* (LES), the assessment method favoured in the QEP (MELS, 2006). Once novice teachers have experienced ambitious science teaching in action, they are expected to build an LES based on anchoring phenomena. Each LES is developed using backwards design, where students write a complete explanation for the phenomenon to help them identify disciplinary understandings and how they are related in ways that help explain the phenomenon. This explanation and identified disciplinary understandings then serve as the basis for developing the scope and sequence of lessons within the LES—one of which will be rehearsed and enacted in the methods course.

AST anchors learning around natural phenomena and essential questions related to the phenomena. Anchoring phenomena are observable in the real world, but require developing understandings across scientific disciplines in order for students to explain what is happening at both the macro (observable) and micro (unobservable) levels. For example, an anchoring phenomenon could be a video of a tanker car imploding accompanied by a story of how the tank had been steam cleaned, but the valve had been sealed immediately following the cleaning, and then left in the cold temperatures overnight (see Windschitl & Thompson, 2013, for details). The related essential question might be, "Why did the tanker car implode?" In order to explain this phenomenon, students need to pull together understandings about how matter and energy interact through phase changes of water, to yield a story that details the relationships between temperature, volume, and pressure and how they interact with the strength and integrity of materials. The exploration of this phenomenon occurs over several lessons so students can collect data and move towards evidence-based explanations of the phenomenon. In this way, students develop conceptual understandings of progressions of learning related to matter, phase changes, gas laws (temperature, volume, pressure, etc.), and materials, and can also connect those understandings to related phenomena that draw on similar big ideas, such as the deflation of bicycle or car tires in the winter.

To support changes in student thinking, we use a specific form of instruction called "Model-Based Inquiry" (MBI: Windschitl et al., 2008). In MBI, students construct models of the phenomenon (usually by drawing) to facilitate their understanding, and to identify both observable and unobservable events taking place in the phenomenon. MBI begins in small groups, and then the instructor convenes the whole group to establish a "consensus model" which brings together understandings from all students in the class

towards a collective understanding of the underlying reasoning for the phenomenon. The process of instruction is highly collaborative, involving interactions between the instructor and students (eliciting student thinking), and between students (to generate collective understandings).

Throughout AST practices there is emphasis on student and teacher discourse, written and oral expression, connections to mathematical reasoning, modeling, and ongoing assessment of students. AST also assumes that practices are modeled by the teacher educator, then rehearsed and enacted by novice teachers as a means of developing their understanding of what this approach actually looks and feels like in the classroom. Given the emphasis on eliciting students' thinking and prior knowledge, and supporting changes in student thinking, a focus of our science teacher education courses is on learning and practicing responsiveness to student thinking. That is, noticing and responding to student thinking as it arises, and then using appropriate core practices (McDonald et al., 2013) that are likely to support students in developing enduring understandings of science. This requires that novice teachers learn specific *discourse strategies* (e.g., probing, pressing, wait time; Windschitl et al., 2018) to elicit students' understandings of scientific ideas, and then scaffold students' understandings by pressing for evidence based on data students have generated. The role of the teacher in an AST context is not to deliver information, but rather to facilitate student talk and to negotiate understanding among students. Learning to engage in this very interactive and student responsive form of teaching requires novice teachers to observe and deconstruct practices modeled by their instructor(s) and to rehearse those practices with peers. In the following sections, we describe aspects of practice-based pedagogy in our science methods courses that facilitate these opportunities, followed by our reflections on pivoting to online learning and teaching.

Practice-Based Pedagogy in Our Teacher Education Programs

Our approach to science teacher education is guided by the following principles:

- Teaching is a complex craft that can be learned and developed over time.
- Teaching is learned best through practice and connecting that practice to theory.
- Part of learning to teach is reflecting on and critiquing your own practice based on evidence of student learning.

We elaborate on these principles here, since we wish to consider the complexities of retaining these core principles as we have changed our course offerings to online environments.

We try to convey through our courses that good teaching is learned over time and with practice. A core feature of our courses thus focuses on building in opportunities to practice teaching in a setting of reduced complexity, within a community of professionals and learners (Grossman et al., 2009). These teaching opportunities are "approximations of teaching" (Grossman et al., 2009), as they provide scaffolded opportunities to learn and try out practices known to elicit students' thinking and make student-responsive instructional decisions. To introduce novice teachers to AST, as teacher educators we first demonstrate core instructional practices and student responsiveness through the enactment of an instructional activity in which novice teachers act as students. Throughout the teaching demonstration,

the teacher educator pauses to explicitly define a practice (e.g., eliciting students' prior knowledge, or representing student thinking), points to decisions made in the moment (e.g., how student thinking is being responded to), and reflects on evidence of student learning. The teacher educator also talks through responses to student thinking, or pedagogical dilemmas (e.g., what to do with a student's idea that doesn't "fit" with the instructional goals) to demonstrate how to make instructional decisions that authentically respond to students' ways of thinking (Kavanagh et al., 2020).

We then construct situations where the novice teachers plan and rehearse their own instructional activity in a classroom of their peers. We regard these rehearsals as approximations of practice because they require novice teachers to plan and teach lessons where they enact practices (such as discourse moves to elicit student thinking), but the setting involves considerably fewer distractions and complications than a real classroom. The goal of the rehearsal is not just to rehearse practices—it is also to learn how to notice and respond to students' thinking (e.g., Lampert et al., 2013), and to make instructional decisions in response to dilemmas that arise in teaching (Kavanagh et al., 2020) in the moment. The role of the teacher educator in a rehearsal can be to interject if the novice teacher veers off course, to remind them of their instructional goals, to help them to deconstruct a practice, or to understand how to respond to students' thinking in authentic ways. Novices are not evaluated on their teaching practice. Rather, we emphasize that the opportunity to engage in approximations of teaching is entirely a learning process, and provides material for reflection, both individually, as co-teachers, and within their community of learning. We provide many opportunities for novice co-teachers to receive feedback on their teaching from the teacher educator and from the peers in their class, and their rehearsals are video recorded so they may engage in structured reflections of their own practice.

The move to online learning raised concerns for us about how we would model and rehearse practices that elicit student thinking, but moreover, how we would build in opportunities for novice teachers to learn and practice activities where students are participants in developing understanding, rather than recipients of knowledge (Moje, 2015). In what follows, we describe the settings in which our courses took place, and then we detail two practices (demonstrating and rehearsing instruction) and the modifications we needed to make to enable a student responsive environment. We discuss the affordances and limitations the online environment provides for this form of teacher education.

Context

In this paper, we offer perspectives of online and hybrid instruction from one single secondary science teaching course, co-taught by Allison and Emily, the first and second authors. We work in collaboration with Dawn, the third author, who teaches elementary and secondary science methods courses at a different institution. Here we offer perspectives that come from collaborative instruction: Allison and Emily's co-instruction of the course, but also the co-design of the course in collaboration with Dawn, with whom we consulted regularly as we all worked to pivot our courses online. As none of us had ever taught online courses prior to this pandemic-related shift, we frequently shared strategies and concerns as we planned and taught our courses in the summer leading up to the fall term, and during the fall term. We collaboratively analyzed the affordances and constraints of our course adaptations, but to streamline

our discussion here, we describe the most salient changes from one course only. While we situate our discussion in one course as an example, our concerns and reflections emerge from our collective planning and conversations across both courses and institutions.

Our secondary teacher certification program is offered at both the Bachelor of Education (BEd) level and the Masters of Teaching and Learning (MATL) level. Both programs have small secondary science teaching cohorts of approximately 9-15 students. The course we discuss in this paper is offered to the MATL science teaching cohort, a group of 10 novice teachers who have not yet completed a field experience in schools and who have varied practical experiences teaching in context. Some of the novices in this course are currently working as uncertified secondary science teachers, while others have not entered into a secondary science classroom since completing their own secondary education. All of them have at least bachelor-level science degrees already. None of the novices in this group had any exposure to AST methods, MBI, or even the QEP-based learning and evaluation situations. The classes we describe here are those where we specifically demonstrate ambitious instruction (week 4) and the rehearsals done by the novices (weeks 10-12). All lessons were synchronous, and took place via Zoom, an online meeting tool which is integrated into our university's learning management software. We also recorded all lessons on Zoom, so that we could reflect on them after the course, and for any novices who were unable to attend synchronous classes.

Demonstrating Teaching Practices

In our programs, we typically introduce novice teachers to AST practices by demonstrating them via an instructional activity, and at the same time we "pause" instruction to deconstruct and analyze practice (e.g., Jao et al., 2018; Lampert et al., 2013). In this course, we elected to offer this practice in a hybrid fashion, demonstrating instruction in person for only a few novice teachers (four) and offering synchronous online and recorded instruction to the remainder of the class. Thus, we had a video camera and a microphone/speaker set up in the classroom to project instruction and classroom discussions online, and to involve those at home in the discussion by projecting their online presence onto a screen in the classroom so students in class and at home could have discussions while observing the demonstration of practice. Research has demonstrated that actually drawing out visual representations is critical for enabling model-based reasoning (e.g., Quillin & Thomas, 2015; Stieff & DeSutter, 2021). Therefore, as we wished to retain this collaborative practice, we used an online whiteboard (Google Jamboard) for modeling, where novices were asked to talk about their important science ideas and collaboratively sketch them using the drawing tools on Google Jamboard.

Hybrid Instruction

Hybrid instruction requiring access to laboratory equipment proved challenging. To maintain social distancing and hygiene practices, each student had to work independently and have their own sets of equipment. This meant precisely planning out activities, including all movements within the classroom. No experiments could be conducted for which the instructors had not anticipated the needed supplies, and no tests that involved novices having to congregate around a workstation. The instructor also had a

set of equipment, on which the video camera was directed for the novices observing the class from home. Novices at home were provided in advance with an equipment list of materials commonly found at home if they wanted to follow along, however none of them did. As we were demonstrating a phenomenon and testing out variables, novices working from home were able to make suggestions to the instructor for variables to test, while those novices in the classroom were able to test their own ideas. We collectively recorded data on a Google Jamboard, so that novices in class and at home could participate in data collection. Any videos or slides that were used to supplement the lesson needed to be provided to novices ahead of time for those joining at home.

Collaborative Tools

Online whiteboard tools like the Jamboard provide opportunities for students to contribute to consensus modeling in real time. As all novice teachers were logged into the Jamboard (both at home and in class), they could all contribute their claims and evidence to the model as we talked through our understandings of the phenomenon. An example is provided in Figure 1. This was a "consensus model" for the puzzling phenomenon, "What caused the tank car to implode?" In this consensus model, we could agree on the parameters of the diagram (e.g., before, during, and after), and one novice was assigned to draw. Other novices could type in observations and hypotheses as they became relevant and add sticky notes with questions as they arose.
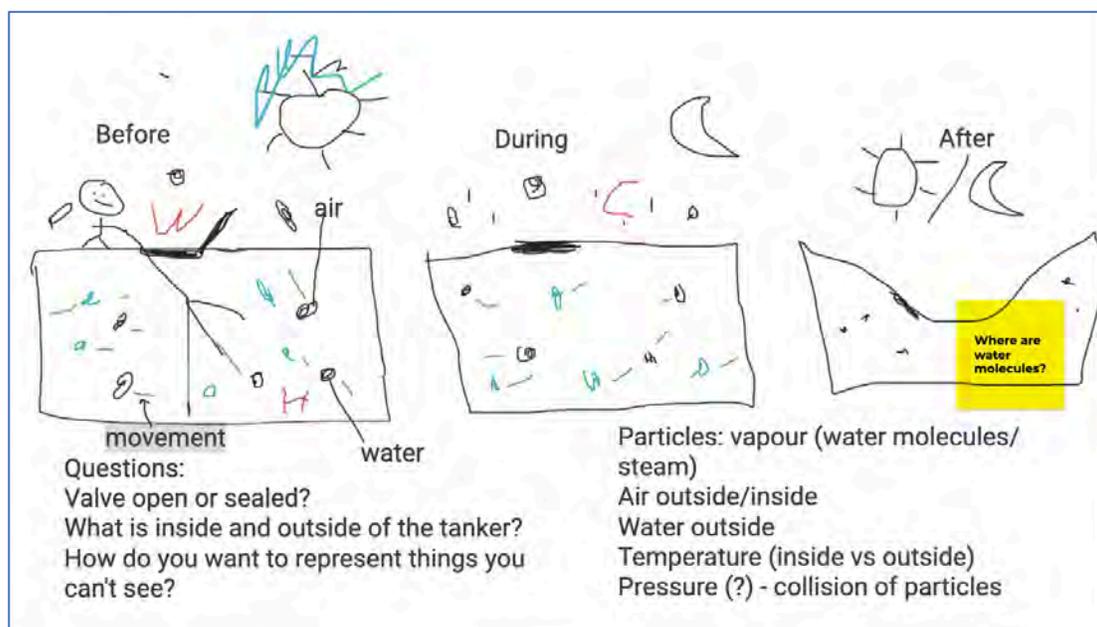
Fig. 1: Consensus modeling online. Teacher educator and novices can collaboratively contribute to collection of evidence, question posing, and representing student thinking.

As the class was hybrid, we also made use of physical whiteboards in the classroom, to represent and keep a record of student thinking (e.g., Jao et al., 2018). On the classroom whiteboards, we recorded observations and novices' initial explanations or hypotheses related to the phenomenon. This practice

was useful for the novices who were present in class, but it was challenging to see for those at home. We addressed this by taking photographs of the whiteboards, and uploading them to the Jamboard, so that novices online could also have a record of student thinking (see Fig. 2).
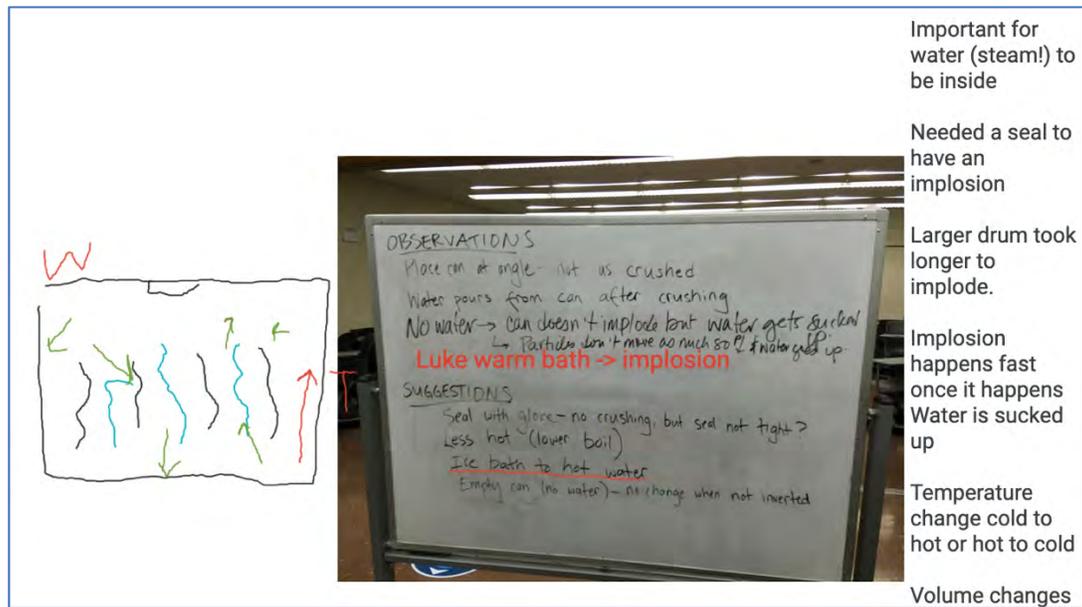
Fig. 2: A whiteboard within a whiteboard. Integrating in-class whiteboards into online whiteboards to represent student thinking.

Reflections on Hybrid Instruction

There were many moving parts to the lesson. We juggled demonstration with equipment, in-person novices testing with their own laboratory set-up, novices at home recommending tests, collective data collection, small- and whole-group discussions. The teacher educator was constantly moving between in-person conversations with novice teachers and online conversations, and thus it was challenging to address our primary instructional goal of facilitating "student talk" in this context. As we watched the recording of this class, we noticed that the teacher educator spent the majority of the time talking. The teacher educator used a lot of wait time, which sometimes generated responses from students online, but the majority of interjections from novice teachers happened from those who were present in the classroom. Comments from novices online only came when the teacher educator specifically addressed them. Those in the room who were constantly in the view of the teacher educator tended to contribute to classroom discussion more spontaneously. Hybrid practice thus raised questions about how attentive the instructor was to all students, as the in-person students gained more attention from the instructor, and conversation was more fluid in the classroom context than in the virtual context. Additionally, this activity is meant to demonstrate teaching in an environment of reduced complexity (Grossman et al., 2009). The hybrid format described here created a number of complexities that may have detracted from the goals of the activity: to demonstrate discourse practices that elicit student thinking, and to model opportunities to make instructional decisions based on students' ideas. Further, by the point in the

semester when novices were ready to conduct their own rehearsals, tighter COVID-related restrictions limited in-person teaching, so their rehearsals happened entirely online. We describe these next.

Rehearsals as Approximations of Teaching: Adaptations for Online Practice

The lesson rehearsal is the main approximation task of the course, which requires novice teachers to engage in practices that elicit and respond to student thinking about science phenomena. Planning for the rehearsal requires selecting a puzzling phenomenon that illustrates a big idea of science (Harlen, 2010), and that requires students to spend time modeling and discussing to develop consensus explanations. In the online rehearsals, novices had to select phenomena that they could easily show on camera, or a video that could convey the phenomenon. A typical rehearsal is already constrained by time (usually 30 minutes) and thus anchoring activities need to be "doable" within that time frame. This short timeframe is one of the ways the rehearsal approximates teaching. However, the online setting poses additional pedagogical hurdles.

Representing Student Thinking

Typically for in-person rehearsals, novices make use of whiteboards and document projectors in the classroom, as well as the projector for any slides they may wish to show. Whiteboards are used to keep a record of student thinking, such as observations, prior experiences, and initial hypotheses. Document cameras can be used to project small group paper and pencil-drawn models to the whole class, as students share initial ideas and begin co-constructing understanding. In the online environment, novices are limited to using online tools. This requires additional planning and rethinking about how they wish to represent student thinking. There are numerous tools available for novices to use to represent student thinking: online whiteboards like the whiteboard featured in Zoom allows for drawing, while Google's Jamboard provides possibilities for students to draw or to post sticky notes. More elaborate whiteboards, like Limnu or Mural, provide more possibilities for organizing students into groups, and to thematically organize student thinking. The sheer number of possible online tools meant that novice teachers needed to think carefully about their instructional goals in order to choose an online tool for instruction. They needed to know exactly how they wished to represent students' thinking, and what they wished for students to be able to do in their own whiteboard spaces. We see this requirement for backwards design as an affordance to conducting rehearsals online, as it means that novices needed to be very clear about what their instructional goals were for each portion of the lesson, and to ensure that the tools they selected would help them to meet these goals.

Practicing Routines of Interaction

In the rehearsal, novices are expected to practice routines of interaction (e.g., Lampert & Graziani, 2009) that require them to enact specific discourse moves, for example eliciting student thinking using probing questions, or pressing students for deeper explanation based on the data they have generated. These routines also require novices to exercise professional judgment, for example, to diagnose misunderstandings, or to learn when it is appropriate to revoice students' ideas to more clearly

communicate their intent. In this way, we encourage novice teachers to not only try out new discourse strategies or productive questioning, but also attend to developing the skill of responsiveness. Novices plan for these interactions by anticipating what questions they might ask students and what responses students might give. They have "back pocket questions" on hand to stimulate discussion and to respond to student thinking, as appropriate. In the online space, we found that novices were able to give additional time to these interactions, as the focus of their instruction was very much on interactions and not, for example, optimizing a demonstration or tinkering with equipment.

The role of the teacher educator during the rehearsal is to focus attention not just on the core practices the novices are engaged in, but also how they practice responsiveness to students' ideas by occasionally interjecting to point out opportunities to respond to students, or to remind novices of their instructional goals. Rehearsals in person take place as a free flow of teaching and interjection by the teacher educator, as well as feedback from other novice teachers in the class. Often these discussions can happen mid-rehearsal; for example, in response to a student's question we might pause the rehearsal and discuss what to do next or reflect back on the novice's instructional goals. A limitation of online instruction is that conversation is often stilted as overlapping talk is incomprehensible, video or audio feeds often freeze, and participants are often muted to avoid excess noise. This posed a challenge for us as teacher educators and caused us to reevaluate our roles in the approximation of practice. This meant that we refrained from interjecting during the rehearsal, and rather kept notes to share with the novice teachers and students at the end. This likely contributed to some "Zoom fatigue," as we noticed that contributions from fellow novices were limited towards the end of the rehearsals.

As we were using Zoom, we asked the co-instructors to take a smaller group of students into breakout rooms to engage them in modeling, and to orchestrate small group discussions. The teacher educator in this case remained in the "main room," rather than jumping back and forth to breakout rooms. This provided opportunities for novices to try out discourse practices on an even smaller scale, and without the looming presence of the teacher educator, but meant that we could only provide feedback after we had watched the novices' recordings of their breakout rooms. However, seeing that the teacher educator could not provide feedback to the novice teacher, we found that those novices acting as students often provided their own feedback to the instructors in the breakout room. This was an unanticipated affordance that stepping back from some aspects of the rehearsals provided. Peers began to act more like critical friends (e.g., Curry, 2008) and specifically discussed practices that worked or needed developing in the small group context.

Another affordance of the online environment was that novices often used virtual whiteboards to facilitate their modeling in small groups, and thus the teacher educator could monitor the modeling process without interrupting the small group discussion and get a sense of the progression of student thinking throughout the modeling process. A challenge of doing this modeling in separate breakout rooms was that when students came back to the whole group, the novices who were co-teaching with a peer needed to take a short break during the rehearsal to consult about what was discussed in their own small breakouts.

Tensions Inherent in Remote Instruction of Teaching Methods

We have discussed details of a science teacher education course involving a new cohort of novice science teachers, whose teacher education program has been experienced entirely online. They have been learning about what teaching science should look like in school classrooms; yet ahead of their field experiences, they have been practicing their teaching entirely online. This is a tension in our programming, as these novice teachers will not have experienced modeled instruction in person, nor will they have practiced teaching in person, yet they will be expected to do so on their field experiences. For example, the novices in this course immediately moved on to participate in their first field experience, during which they are teaching online every second day. As novices move into their first field placements, this tension is compounded by the uncertainty created by pandemic-related closures of school buildings and classroom quarantines, on top of requirements for secondary students to be learning online half the time. These are exceptional circumstances in which to learn the practice of teaching, especially as many teachers in secondary schools have had to shift to hybrid forms of instruction. As educators continue to experience and adapt to changes in instructional formats at every level across elementary, secondary, and university contexts, novice teachers will similarly experience a shifting mix of practices in their own learning, in their rehearsals of instruction, and in their field experiences.

Our model for practice-based pedagogy was developed based on in-person instruction, even though novices are now learning how to do this virtually. Practice-based pedagogy, while helpful for novices in a teacher education program, is not intended to replicate actual classroom conditions. As discussed, rehearsals are approximations of teaching, deliberately reduced in complexity to focus on learning and rehearsing core practices. Class sizes are generally unrealistic, and novices are learning to teach towards an unrealistic student population. As teacher educators, we have experienced a tension in our creation of a simplified approximation of teaching for the purpose of rehearsing core practices (see Jao et al., 2018), but we now add a whole new dimension to this complexity. Virtual instruction with different class structures, unfamiliar conversation dynamics, and a variety of online tools, has increased the complexity of how we focus on the important practices of eliciting and responding to student thinking. Implementing practice-based pedagogy online augmented the perennial tension between flexible, responsive instruction, and structured, planned lessons. Because of the limitations of fluid conversation while videoconferencing, novice teachers were not able to engage with each other or with the instructors with the same level of spontaneity that emerges in face-to-face discussion. On the other hand, students were able to observe and rehearse structured dialogues and nonverbal discussions (e.g., digital whiteboards); practices that facilitate more equitable participation among students than verbal discussion alone.

A similar tension exists in the fact that our online science teaching methods courses do not currently provide resources for novices to learn about online science teaching practices. In our move to online instruction, we sought to maintain the overall objective of AST for student engagement with big ideas in science, despite the necessary shift in focus from in-person activities (e.g., hands-on activities or demonstrations) to online activities (e.g., videos, simulations, and message board discussions). This shift in mode of instruction revealed new possibilities for novice teachers to demonstrate responsiveness and flexibility, even while they were planning increasingly structured instructional activities. Despite having

little exposure to online teaching practices, we observed that novices exercised creativity in planning and meaningfully incorporating online resources. In preparing their lessons, novice teachers critically examined educational videos from a range of sources (e.g., online games, simulations, public broadcasting, TikTok) for ways that they might elicit student thinking and provide evidence to engage student modelling.

Future Considerations

In reflecting on our experiences pivoting our science teaching methods courses online, we offer some considerations for future implementations of online practice-based pedagogy. One consideration for future teaching is the role of the interactive functions of videoconference platforms (e.g., chat boxes, polls, reactions) in lesson planning and instructional practice. We noticed that students were less likely to speak during online instruction, but often felt very comfortable using the chat function. One modification for future online approximations of teaching might be to incorporate the use of the chat to elicit and respond to student thinking. If instruction is happening in co-teaching pairs, novices could divide out the labour of facilitating the chat and leading the discussion. This could allow for spontaneity where it is otherwise limited in whole group discussions, as well as create spaces for participation by students not participating in verbal conversation.

We also note that while there are specifics to teaching science, novice teachers do not take science methods courses in isolation, and many core practices apply across disciplinary areas. There are opportunities to coordinate and collaborate across disciplinary, cross-curricular, and seminar/capstone courses in ways that may address some of the limitations identified above. For example, at Dawn's institution, novice teachers (both elementary and secondary) practiced synchronous teaching in their science methods course, while working to use similar core practices in the development of an asynchronous LES in their capstone courses. This practice was facilitated by the two courses being taught by the same instructor at the elementary level, and close collaboration with the capstone instructor at the secondary level; a situation we acknowledge does not always exist. As with synchronous instruction, the asynchronous planning and teaching requires significant consideration of what combination of platforms and apps better support the kind of responsiveness that is key to AST.

In conclusion, the principles and practices of AST and MBI are important to both in-person and online learning. However, teaching these practices in new virtual settings is not a simple matter of translating them to the online world. Reflecting on the core principles of our courses has challenged us to consider whether and how we have continued to teach in ways that foreground those principles, and indeed, whether they still hold true for virtual teaching environments. This process has required us to make the adaptations we discussed above, but has also afforded us the opportunities to rethink and reflect on our core practices in consideration of the shifting learning contexts of our students. We hope that the details of our first forays into online science teaching methods will invite others to reflect with us on practices of pedagogy as educators continue to face the ongoing challenges of hybrid, online, and in-person instruction alongside novice teachers, in the new virtual landscape of instruction.

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Sensory Arts-Based Storytelling as Critical Reflection: Tales From an Online Graduate Social Work Classroom

Alison Grittner and The Social Justice Learning Collaborative

Abstract

Drawing upon Heron and Reason's (1997) participatory inquiry paradigm and extended epistemology, this article explores how six Master of Social Work (MSW) students engaged in sensory arts-based critical reflection concerning their social location, identities, social justice, and social policy. We share our process for creating sensory arts-based stories, the stories themselves, and pedagogical reflections. We elucidate how sensory arts-based storytelling allows learners to draw upon their strengths, unique perspectives, and experiences in the world, generating transformative understandings of social justice. Sensory arts-based storytelling holds potential as an interdisciplinary mode of critical reflection, generating inclusive learning environments oriented towards social change.

In this article, we explore how six Master of Social Work (MSW) Students in an online learning environment engaged in sensory arts-based critical reflection concerning their social location, identities, social justice, and social policy. We share the assignment process, sensory stories, and our reflections on the assignment compared to traditional written forms of critical reflection. Ultimately, we demonstrate how critical reflection pursued through sensory art develops complex understandings of personal identity and social justice in both its creators and audiences. Sensory arts-based storytelling offers a potent interdisciplinary means of cultivating empathetic understandings of power, privilege, and justice, as learners and educators collaborate to disrupt the growing global inequity.

We begin by exploring critical reflection in social work, highlighting this disciplinary practice and its potential for interdisciplinary adoption. We then explore sensory arts-based modalities and situate their potential within critical reflection practice. We follow this with sharing six multimedia arts-based stories created by the MSW students on their identity, social justice, and social policy. Finally, we finish by discussing potentials for integrating these types of assignments into learning environments across disciplines, as well as possibilities for social work practice.

Our Location

We possess multidimensional identities and lived experiences as a learning community. Educated as a historian, visual artist, and architect, Alison led the class and is currently a PhD candidate and social work instructor. She has engaged in arts and community-based research for over a decade, with her current research focusing on engaging communities in participatory and sensory arts-based modalities to understand and cultivate social justice (Grittner, 2019; Grittner & Burns, 2020). Alyssa, Janelle, Jena, Jeremy, Sarah, and Veronica came to their MSW program possessing varied backgrounds in Law,

Criminal Justice, Sociology, Physical Education, and Development Studies. No one had previous postsecondary experience in Fine Arts. We came together as a group in their first semester of a two-year foundational MSW program, open to learners without a prior academic social work background, although admission to the program requires extensive experience in the human services. We offer our sensory and arts-based stories as an avenue of possibility for deep critical reflection, connecting identity and embodied experience with social justice.

Extended Epistemology Theory

We locate sensory arts-based storytelling within Heron and Reason's (1997) participatory inquiry paradigm and extended epistemology, which proposes that, "experiential encounter with the presence of the world is the ground of our being and knowing" (p. 276). Within this perspective our social positions and lived experience create our worldview. Heron and Reason suggest that an individual "articulates a world" (p. 280) via four interwoven means: experiential, presentational, propositional, and practical knowing. Experiential knowledge is created through direct encounter with a feeling, an imaginative vision, or a specific person, place, or artefact. Experiential knowing generates presentational knowledge, conceived of as multimodal art that symbolizes a person's "felt attunement" (p. 281) with their world and experiences. Propositional knowledge describes and conceptualizes our experiential knowing through theory, language, and text and can also be embodied, reflected, and cultivated through presentational knowing. Practical knowing amalgamates and generates action from experiential, presentational, and propositional knowledge, and is a political act "in practical service to people's lives" (p. 288).

Understanding that knowing emerges from these four different but iterative and interconnected modalities, we explore how experiential (sensory) and presentational (arts) knowing offer a revelatory critical reflection process that moves beyond the academy's widespread rootedness in propositional knowing. This expansion is a place of struggle and tension across academia, which "often disadvantages, marginalizes, or excludes knowledges from other places and perspectives" (Massaquoi, 2017, p. 295). We position sensory arts-based storytelling as one strategy for broadening knowledge creation to include experiential and presentational ways of knowing, asserting that experience and creativity are bases of knowledge. This expansion recognizes multiplicity and difference within classrooms by offering multiple approaches for learners to explore their diverse strengths, experiences, and ways of knowing.

Social Work and Critical Reflection

The critical use of self, positionality, and reflection within research, theory, and practice are foundational to social work (Brookfield, 2009; Heron, 2005). Critical reflection begins by understanding that all knowledge and action is political. Reflection unravels how our identities, beliefs, and experiences influence our understanding and behaviour in the world. Heron and Reason (1997) term this, "critical subjectivity," whereby persons strive to define and understand "the ground of all [their]

knowing" (p. 282). This begins with all social work students exploring their social location, relationship with knowledge, motivations for practice, and connection with the world.

Critical subjectivity is embedded in critical reflection, which Brookfield (2016) defines as: "the uncovering of power and hegemony... [demonstrating] how ideological manipulation forces us to behave in ways that seem to make sense, but that actually keep us powerless" (p. 1). Together, critical subjectivity and critical reflection prompt social workers to critically interrogate our own beliefs and assumptions concerning our identities, social locations, and cultural context as a key first step towards pursuing social justice. A core component of competent social work practice, and thus social work pedagogy, is understanding our own social positions and how we experience intersections of oppression and privilege (Morley et al., 2017). Critical practitioners continually analyze power differentials, asking how beliefs, assumptions, social location, and embodied experiences affect our reflexive relationship with the world (Etherington, 2007).

While critical reflection is a core disciplinary practice of social work, it is also a focus of critical pedagogy, which posits that educational processes can advance social justice. Education is conceived of as a praxis involving theory, action, and reflection with the overall goal of liberation (Breuing, 2011). Consciousness raising is central to critical pedagogy, in which learners explore the existence and role of oppression, socio-structural power, and strategies for social transformation (Weiler, 2001).

We propose that sensory arts-based storytelling is a critical reflection modality that can be used across disciplines interested in generating inclusive and critical learning environments. The importance of this as a cross-disciplinary practice is highlighted in the ever-widening gaps in global inequity, sharply illuminated during the present COVID-19 global pandemic, the Black Lives Matter and MeToo movements, and Canada's ongoing violence against Indigenous persons. Understanding hierarchies of difference and countering processes of oppression become more important every day. We believe that sensory arts-based storytelling is one means of answering Guattari's (2005) call to action of "[warding] off, by every means possible, the entropic rise of a dominant subjectivity," and embracing "new social and aesthetic practices, new practices of the Self in relation to the other, to the foreign, the strange" (p. 68) as a strategy of resistance against dominant modes of knowledge creation and power.

Sensory Arts-Based Storytelling

Sensory arts-based storytelling uses arts-based (drawing, photography, music, movement, performance, new media) creations to understand, explore, and share multidimensional stories of being in the world. Sensory storytelling challenges traditional Eurocentric approaches to knowledge that privilege the ocular, words, and text, by emphasizing "dynamic interactions among sounds, tastes, odors, touches, senses of place and of belonging and exclusion" (Culhane, 2016, p. 11).

Sensory practice views the division of the senses as a Western construct (Pink, 2011; Howes, 2019). Instead, all senses are understood to be part of the sensorium, which highlights the shifting boundaries and different combinations of the senses across cultures and groups (Howes, 2019). Sensing involves

whole body perception; aural and visual stories evoke different aspects of the senses within a holistic multisensory system, emplacing audiences in the sensory story (Pink, 2015). Individuals are understood to be sensing subjects situated within specific cultural and environmental contexts (Howes, 2019). Scholarship is increasingly demonstrating the sensory nature of our life-worlds and identities (Culhane, 2016), and sensory storytelling is a growing tool to share embodied experiences of the world, understanding that, "culture does not reside only in objects in representations, but also in the bodily processes of perception" (Csordas, 1999, p. 146).

Pink (2015) observes that sensory creations facilitate an embodied and active role for their makers and audiences, offering contemplative and reflexive processes for empowered learning. Creative sensory modalities allow learners to consider and reflect their knowledge and experiences in the world in a manner more closely aligned with how we experience life: embodied and sensorially immersed (Pink, 2015). As sensory practices are also related to power—Howes (2016) writes that "sensory critique is the beginning of social critique" (n.p.) as the senses are intermixed with experiences of classism, ideology, and inequitable distribution of resources and opportunity—attending to the senses is one avenue for explicating social justice.

One means of uncovering and exploring sensory experiences is through arts-based methods: creating visual, aural, and kinesthetic records is a holistic bodily process involving the entire sensory system. Sensory arts-based storytelling is a situated practice within arts-based methods that embed critical reflection in the creation process, generating an artifact that communicates knowledge visually, symbolically, and imaginatively (Wang et al., 2017). Dissanayake (1988) observes that the arts represent "embodiment and reinforcement of socially shared significances" (p. 200). Definitions of arts-based practice recognize it as creating meaning "through multiple senses and medium" (Desyllas, 2014, p. 478), while exploring, understanding, representing, and challenging our lived experiences and views of the world (Baden & Wimpenny, 2014). To draw and create visually based art involves being rooted in the environment with concentration, positioning our bodies to sense, translating the surrounding context through our bodies onto paper and canvas (Taussig, 2011). Drawing, painting, mapping, and collage are acts of sensory transmission, interpretation, and creation: the body is an intermediary between experience and record. Creators engage their senses while expressing emotions and cognitive processes during artmaking (Hass-Cohen, 2008; Mallay, 2002). Creating sensory art-based stories connects embodied experience to the external world, linking externalities with more abstract dimensions of experience including emotions, memories, and senses (Cele, 2006). Artmaking provides learners opportunities to reflect and express their interior emotional world and relational experiences, generating new ways of seeing themselves and their environments (Capous-Desyllas & Bromfield, 2020).

Arts-based practices explore the substance and relationship between power, dominance, and oppression (Sinding et al., 2014; Sitter et al., 2016). Leonard and colleagues' (2018) systematic review of the arts in social work education found that arts-based approaches effectively fostered connections between micro and macro practice among learners. Through the arts, students integrated learning of how individual experiences are connected to socio-structural issues of power. Further, arts-based modalities were identified as having three benefits: 1) expressing "socially messy, problematic emotions and experiences"

(p. 12); 2) generating empathy concerning difference; and 3) confronting hegemonic beliefs of the world (Leonard et al., 2016). Thus, telling stories in artful ways holds a pathway to transformation. As Kovach (2018) observes: "story is experience held in memory and story is the spark for a transformative possibility in the moment of its telling" (p. 46).

Creating a sensory arts-based story allows deeper understanding of our own socially contextualized experience, while witnessing another's story deepens our empathetic understandings of our shared world. This process of telling and listening is particularly transformative when the stories involve voices of marginalized identities challenging dominant narratives: "to counter oppression, stories must be told, listened to, and acted upon" (Zusman, 2018, p. 80). Sensory arts-based storytelling in the classroom allows learners to draw upon their strengths, unique perspectives, and experiences in the world to generate deep critical reflection surrounding social justice, reminding us that we are all political actors (Alexander-Floyd, 2012).

Educational Context

This sensory arts-based assignment was completed as part of a graduate course titled, "Social Policy and Social Justice." At the last minute, this course was delivered online due to the COVID-19 pandemic; the assignment was designed to provide students space for critical reflection and learning away from their computer screen. The course took place within the compressed structure of four full-time weeks with 32 enrolled students.

At their end of their first week of class, students created sensory essays that critically reflected on their relationship to social justice and social policy. Key learning outcomes associated with the assignment involved: understanding theory in relationship to social justice; demonstrate understanding of the roles that ideologies, values, and worldviews play in relationship to social justice; demonstrate critical thinking and reasoning in analyzing complex social situations; and apply critical thinking to identify and address structural sources of injustice and inequalities. Students were encouraged to use experiential and presentational knowledge to develop their awareness of identity and embodied experience, then connect these ways of knowing to social and cultural contexts, spurring critical reflection. As the first assignment in the course, it created the foundational understanding necessary for learners to analyze social policy and make recommendations for policy change rooted in social justice and critical reflection. Figure 1 is the assignment instructions, collaboratively revised by all the authors to enhance future learner experience. The assignment instructions are deliberately open and fluid, seeking to not limit creativity, exploration, and learner agency, as well as encouraging heuristic learning. As the instructor, Alison responded "Yes!" to any learner proposed variations, ideas, or formats.

Fig. 1: Sensory arts-based essay assignment instructions

We are excited to share five sensory arts-based stories created by Alyssa, Janelle, Jena, Jeremy, Sarah, and Veronica. Each story weaves together visuals, sounds, and narrative in an immersive video format that embodies critical reflection surrounding their identity, lived experience, social justice, and social policy. Following each creator's video is an accompanying textual statement written four months after completing the course. These statements explore their creative experiences, providing direct experiential insight concerning how sensory art-based knowing can enhance dominant forms of propositional knowing within critical reflection processes.

Adventures in Sensory Art

Alyssa

https://youtu.be/aiKfG48VrOQ
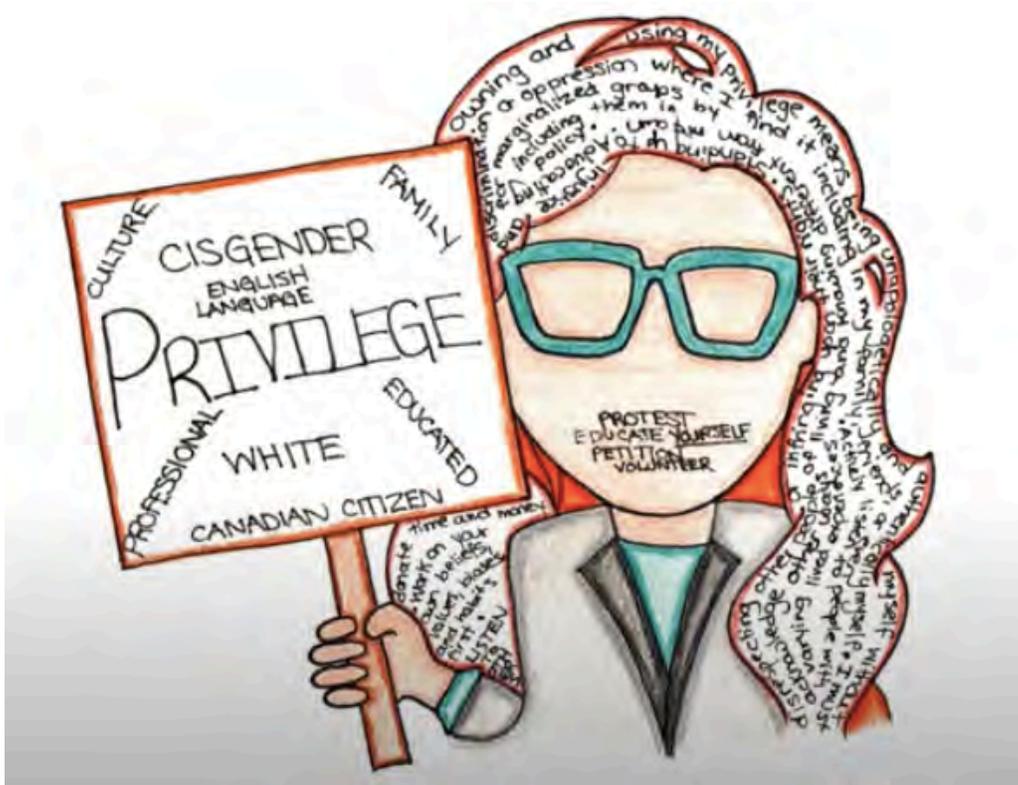
When I first heard that we were doing an academic assignment formatted as a creative art project, I was beyond nervous. My previous six years in academia were centered around exams and essays. I was not sure I even had the ability to create something anymore. However, I quickly came to realize that not only was I more engaged with this assignment than any previous essay or exam, but I evaluated the topic and integrated it more fully into my thought process and daily life. I was able to thoroughly examine my social location, how others perceive me, and the ways in which my experiences could contribute to positive social action and social justice.

Janelle

https://youtu.be/XvDrQnqlPQA

This sensory essay was very exciting for me, and novel in its combination of creative arts and school project. It was both humbling and confronting, it provided space for introspection pertaining specifically to future work. The social climate under the Black Lives Matter movement with the privilege of education during a pandemic meant that the project was a timely and welcome form of documentation. Visually recording moments of my life removed any concessions or distractions from presenting my social location, as the pictures invite the viewer to see things exactly as I do, with my exact interpretation of those moments.

Jena
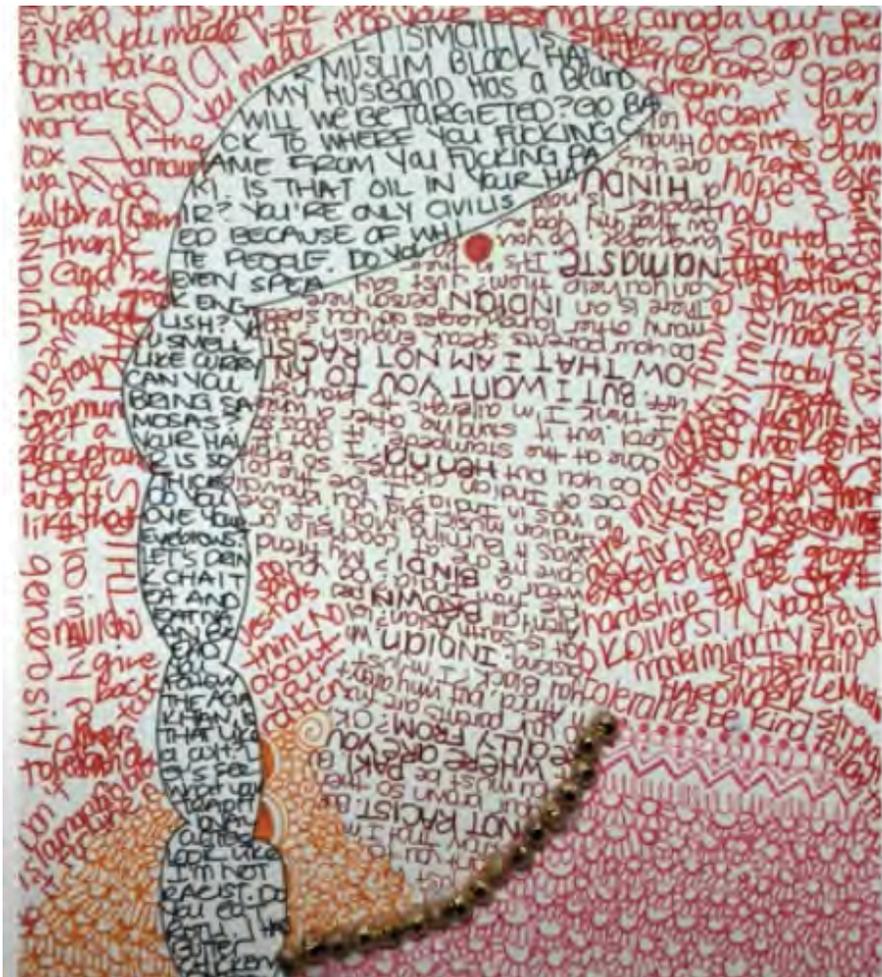
https://youtu.be/EpKAYGSF_FQ

The sensory essay assignment was really unique and different from a traditional assignment, as I was able to add parts of my identity. Through my assignment I was able to be creative and explore aspects of my culture that I cannot type into a Word document. The visual and artistic aspect forced me to think about my South Asian heritage differently, and how I wanted to demonstrate my social location to my class, visually. I have never been challenged in academia this way and it was a therapeutic activity that made me feel that my identity as a child of immigrants is valued in my educational experience.

Jeremy

https://youtu.be/-pNqVp5XLao

When I first read the "Sensory Essay" requirements I was filled with anxiety for not having done one before, but then filled with embarrassment and fear. This embarrassment and fear stemmed from the details of the assignment that involved exploring my social location, applying concepts of social justice and social policy in connection to my personal identity. I immediately thought of my home growing up, and reasons why we had to leave. I began to think: what would my Professor, my cohort, and my family think of the pictures? I was conflicted, thinking of my social location and my willingness to share it. The more I thought about my social location, the more I realized that it was an Indigenous social justice issue that just didn't affect me, but Indigenous people across Canada, resulting from oppressive policies like the Indian Act.

My Indigenous social location, along with many Indigenous people in Canada, includes racism, discrimination, oppression, and hegemony. I realize now that the conflict I had in my willingness to share my social location stemmed from my internalized racism. I look at the picture of my home and remember the times as a kid spent watching 500 Nations, along with having many conversations with my father and mother, watching movies and documentaries that all helped me gain an understanding of my culture and gain a sense of pride in who I was. Becoming more reflective throughout my studies in the Calgary MSW program, I am becoming more aware of the importance and the need to tell my story as an Indigenous person. The sensory essay allowed me to do so.

Sarah

https://youtu.be/dR7RPhfjP7k

I had never done a sensory essay before, but with all the online learning, it was a welcome opportunity to unplug. The challenge was starting. I spent a day exploring different ideas and felt like I was getting nowhere. Finally, I just had to start. I had some rough ideas and decided I would start by drawing me: a generic sort of image that would also represent all women. I did not know what would unfold as I began, but I knew to trust the process and give in to the flow. I immediately struggled, for one or two hours even, on drawing a female body that felt 'right.' I was forced to reckon in a new way with how political our bodies are. I was frustrated and angry with the process that had barely begun, saying to myself: "I can't even draw a woman's body! What does that say about being a woman in this world?" I think this offered the entry point and allowed me to get lost in the process and I started to go with whatever came up.

What became apparent to me through doing this sensory essay, is of the multitude of dimensions or layers to learning, one of them seems to be time. When I think of the time it takes to truly integrate social justice learnings so that it becomes not just intellectual knowledge but

felt and lived understanding, it seems like a lifelong project. After just a weekend of working on this project, I felt different. This sensory story helped me to integrate course content, but more importantly, it helped me become a better human. That piece will forever be a part of me and it's much more impactful to look at on my wall than any paper.

Veronica

https://youtu.be/6QEjwPEF5NE

When I heard about having a "sensory project" I had mixed emotions. I was nervous and excited at the same time. During the activity, I became aware of my social location. I am originally from Mexico. I am part of a multicultural family and I was not mindful of the privileges I received and challenges I faced. In Mexico, I was not fully aware of the injustices that we were/are still experiencing due to colonialism and a patriarchal society. Sometimes in a world with oppression, it is easier not to look at the unfairness, the injustices. Through this assignment I saw my life like different pieces of a puzzle that led me to social work and social justice advocacy.

Alison

As a social work educator, I read hundreds of traditional text-based critical reflections every year. Comparatively, the sensory and arts-based stories from this class embodied far greater complexity and depth of critical thinking, particularly concerning social location and identity. My affective viewing experience lingered: watching the stories sensorily emplaced me, allowing me to "empathetically imagine" (Pink, 2011, p. 9) the learners' experiences.

Months after the course finished, I kept revisiting these pieces of art, my own life transformed, and perspective expanded through these stories. I returned to Alyssa's position of the space in between as the ongoing pandemic emphasized ableist discourse surrounding comorbidities and age. Janelle's story of confronting racism while holding educational and class privilege echoed within me while I marched in Black Lives Matters demonstrations. Jena's experiences of the colonial gaze returned each time I ordered chai in a café, prompting me to examine my complicity in corporate and cultural colonization. Camping and hiking in the Alberta prairies I recalled Jeremy and his family's disrupted connection to land and ruminated on my power and position within settler-colonialism. Sarah's expressive painting performance returned to remind me of the complexity of gendered experiences in patriarchal waters as I listened to friends' struggles with childcare and the COVID-19 "she-cession." The very personal connections Veronica drew to Mexican foreign temporary workers resurfaced as I became increasingly aware of Canada's exploitation of foreign labour and the ideological underpinnings within Canadian politics that allows this practice. I considered revolution. Learning with Alyssa, Janelle, Jena, Jeremy, Sarah, and Veronica through sensory arts-based storytelling was a powerful experience of Freire's (1970) process of "conscientization": my everyday awareness of differences of power and privilege increased, as did my commitment to social justice advocacy and education.

Discussion

Sensory Arts-Based Storytelling in the Classroom

Opportunities abound for sensory arts-based storytelling as a form of critical reflection in the classroom. This creative medium allows learners to incorporate additional modalities within their stories, including performance art (e.g., dance, music, or theatre) (Hamera et al., 2011) or soundscapes, which record ambient noises of places and experiences (Droumeva, 2015). The growing ubiquity of smartphone technology for audiovisual recording, as well as access to editing software, broadens opportunities to incorporate these approaches within online environments. Increasing digitalization of our world is improving academia's potential to engage in socially relevant and popular means of communication and dissemination (El Demellawy et al., 2017). When designing the assignment, Alison was concerned that learners might spend excessive time struggling with technology as they composed their pieces. However, as a group, they produced much more nuanced and complex compositions than the assignment required: unprompted, most students chose to combine multiple modes of sensory expression and art.

The complex and nuanced level of these pieces of sensory art does not mean that the creative process did not provoke anxiety. As Alyssa, Janelle, Jeremy, Sarah, and Veronica share, the assignment provoked

bewilderment. A number of educators who examine the how and why of critical reflection within pedagogy term this family of experience as a "felt difficulty" (Ixer, 1999, p. 515) or a "disorienting dilemma" (Brookfield, 2009, p. 295). Brookfield (2009) explains that creating a stark discrepancy between assumption and encounter—in our example, between traditional expectations of what an academic assignment involves vs. processes of experiential and presentational knowing—generates emergent and transformative learning. Through this process "the tacit forms of knowledge that undergird one's habitual responses emerge as assumptions in need of scrutiny" (Trevelyan et al., 2014, p. 13). In creating sensory arts-based stories as a mode of critical reflection, learners are forced to move beyond academic training that emphasizes translating thoughts and experience into academic text, moving towards Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) call to decolonize knowledge processes. Wrestling with new sensory and creative modalities challenges assumptions, beliefs, and knowledge concerning their identities and relationship to the world, instigating intense and complex critical reflection.

Recognizing and embracing the potential uncertainty of this assignment requires building space to discuss hesitations, fears, and expectations into the course. From the beginning, Alison emphasized that the projects would not be graded on artistic representation skills; this was included in the assignment instructions and repeated in class discussions. To address emergent concerns, we scheduled drop-in time for learners to discuss their ideas with both Alison and their colleagues. This additional space for discussion and reassurance that the assignment was about individual process and exploration, as well as providing a forum to discuss creativity and ideas, was essential. A dedicated time to brainstorm these forms of assignments is recommended and will be incorporated into future iterations.

Practice Potentials

Sensory arts-based stories' promise is not limited to the classroom. They are also a potential tool for critical reflection and social change among social work practitioners and clients. For practitioners, the arts are a means of engaging groups to work towards a collaborative vision (Newton, 2011), a key goal of community development (Parada et al., 2011). Capous-Desyllas and Morgaine (2018) write that a merger of arts-based and anti-oppressive practice is one strategy for challenging hierarchies of domination and generating "creative responses to challenging and changing social contexts" (p. xv) that mobilize imaginations towards social change. Creative exploration of social change is critical, otherwise the "future flattens out into uncritical extrapolations from the present" (Knight, 1981, p. 28). For practitioners, creative explorations both critique the present and offer alternative ways of being, instigating the possibility of social transformation.

Sensory arts-based storytelling is vulnerable, ambiguous, and messy, just like lived experience; this form of storytelling is a nuanced medium to deepen understandings of clients' perspectives. Sensory arts-based stories transcend the limits of language, communicating aspects of experience and meaning that are embodied, visceral, and often befuddling. Scholarship shows that arts-based dialogue can improve understanding of clients' needs. Malchiodi (2018) used art as an explanatory recovery tool with her care team after a traumatic brain injury, while art installations were used to educate social service providers and the general public on the challenges vulnerable individuals experience when attempting to access

social services in Los Angeles (Reshetnikov et al., 2018). These forms of arts-based storytelling generate social empathy—defined as the ability to understand others' experiences and life situations (Segal, 2011)—among both practitioners and the general public. Segal's scholarship argues that social empathy spurs action towards social justice, as countering misinformation and stereotypes dissolves rationale for inequitable social conditions and catalyzes individuals towards social action. Sensory arts-based stories are an innovative medium to cultivate relationship-building and perspective-sharing, foundations of social empathy and social change. This will also assist in ethical practice, which requires analyzing what perspectives and knowledge are guiding practice decisions by framing social issues and understanding clients' experiences (Strom-Gottfried, 2008).

Creating these sensory pieces of art facilitated deep critical reflection and awareness among the learners of their social location and connection to larger socio-structural issues of power. For Alison, viewing these pieces was a transformative experience that prompted her to reconsider aspects of her own identity and expanded her understanding of our shared cultural context. Together, we share these pieces and our creative learning experience as a prompt towards social transformation, embracing Lorde's (1984) teaching that, "the quality of light by which we scrutinize our lives has direct bearing upon the product which we live, and upon the changes which we hope to bring about though those lives … carved from the rock experiences of our daily lives" (pp. 36–37).

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Pedagogy in Theory and Practice

Gunita Gupta

Abstract

Pedagogy can be understood as methods and practices of teaching, and/or a way of being with children. In this paper, I use critical exposition and narrative to reflect on Max van Manen's (2012) theory of pedagogy as a relationship between adults and children. My writing is organized into alternating sections of exposition (theory) and narrative (practice) to illustrate the interplay between thinking and doing that typifies pedagogical relationships, and to demonstrate how pedagogy unfolds in the unpredictable, unexpected, unprecedented, and unique actions each of us perform in the relational events of our being with children.

Background

From Latin and Greek, in ancient usage, a pedagogue was a slave who took children (boys) to and from school. Currently, pedagogy is understood as methods and practices of teaching, and/or a way of being with children. In this paper, I use personal narrative to reflect on Max van Manen's (1982; 2008; 2012) theory of pedagogy, which he defines by a relational commitment between adults and children. Using alternating sections of critical reading and story, I show how pedagogical theory becomes incarnate in the unpredictable, unexpected, unprecedented, and unique relational events of our being with children.

Pedagogues

In Theory

"The pedagogue," Max van Manen (1982) writes, "is the adult who shows the child the way into the world" (p. 285). By this definition, as a parent I am a pedagogue to my own children. But, I am also a teacher: an adult to whom a roomful of other peoples' children look for guidance almost every day at 8:05 a.m. The origin of "teacher," as one who teaches, comes from an Old English word which means to show or instruct and can be conjured in the image of a person standing at the front of a room full of children, hanging map pulled down, using a long stick to point out, "You are here." I am sure you can imagine this scene.

The pedagogue is one who leads; the teacher is one who shows. Or, better yet, the teacher is a pedagogue who leads *and* shows the children in her care where they are, as they go. The crucial differences between the two positions being attention and intention: a heeding and a leading with purpose and care. But not simply leading them—taking them by the hand and pulling them along—but, walking with them, stopping here and there to point, to notice.

I am a pedagogue: a teacher. I lead my students and they follow me—sometimes even literally.

And Practice

I was not one for whom the call of teaching was a loud cry in my head or heart. In fact, the decision I made to enter teacher education was more pragmatic than anything else. I was 37 years old and had accomplished almost everything I had set out to accomplish—professionally speaking, at least—and had found myself at somewhat of an impasse. But, in order to progress, I needed to build on my meagre education. As a one-year program, in addition to my undergraduate degree, teaching education was the natural answer. It seemed like the best application of my experience, diverse skill set, and talents.

My first assignment was covering for a maternity leave in a small school (750 students) with a predominantly South Asian population. I learned so much in those six months, and, what's more, I was hooked on teaching high school.

I finished out my first year of teaching in a special-needs classroom in a brand-new middle school. I was completely out of my comfort zone in that classroom, but I adapted. This is part of that skill set I knew I brought with me to teaching: I am a quick learner. Besides, it was only two months.

Year two began with another two-month contract in another, decidedly less affluent, middle-school, teaching Resource. By this point, I was itching to get back into a high school. I missed banter with young teens and helping the older kids negotiate life. I missed teaching different things in different blocks to different kids. But the job market was saturated, and my actual work experience was minimal. I simply wasn't competitive. So, I took a job teaching grades 6/7 for the rest of the year. The. Rest. Of. The. Year. What was I thinking?

At the time, I am sure I was thinking, "I can do this! How hard can this be? This is just a slightly younger grade than I am used to…" Let me tell you: teaching elementary school is IN NO WAY even remotely similar to high school. Talk about out of my element! I was SO out of my element I was in an entirely different periodic table!

Those eight months were the longest eight months of my life. Between negotiating parents who were younger than I was, demanding to know how I was going to teach their kids how to multiply when they couldn't; students who cried, were dirty, or both; and the various "parties," "assemblies," and "special occasions" important to eleven- and twelve-year-olds; I was ill-prepared, to say the least. Each morning, as I drove over the Trans-Canada Highway to that little, old school, I looked east wistfully and wished I could just pull off the road I was on and drive away.

It wasn't that I didn't enjoy myself each day. I did. And the students and I easily fell into a routine. Every morning, rain or shine, after the bell rang, we all trooped back outside and did numerous one kilometre laps of the schoolyard. Some kids ran. Some kids ambled. Many followed behind me. And a few walked with me and chatted the entire time. Back in the classroom, I also soon figured out what needed to be done and how to do it. I was a quick learner, after all.

The issue was the teaching itself—the professional aspect of the job. It wasn't what I wanted it to be, which was…what, exactly? I am not even sure. But it wasn't it. It seemed like I spent more time juggling personalities and tween-age crises than actually teaching anything. There was nothing wrong with this, but it was not what I signed up for, and I looked forward to moving on.

When the year finally ended, I could not get out of there fast enough. I had a yearlong contract teaching in a high school the following September and I was thrilled. Finally, I would get to experience all I had imagined teaching would be.
Then, around August of that summer, a funny thing happened: I missed the kids. Immensely. Like, tears in my eyes kind of missing. I couldn't believe it! I quickly reminded myself of how exasperated they often made me with their pointless stories and non-sequiturs. And yet, here I was, barely six weeks later, reminiscing. Suddenly it occurred to me what a privilege it was to teach those kids, and I realized that I was honoured that I had been trusted with their care and education.

The complicated feelings that resulted from my temporary assignment as an elementary school teacher would prove to have profound effects on how I conceive what it means to be a teacher. Indeed, these feelings were the catalyst that prompted me to become more critical of the calling I had chosen and to pursue graduate studies. Soon, I began to consider seriously the difference between schooling and education, what it means to be a teacher, and what it means to teach. Who, I wondered, is a teacher and how do we recognize them?

It has crossed my mind more than once that it might be nice to return to elementary school and the challenge of being a teacher in a situation for which I was never prepared. It's not as though I now feel more prepared. On the contrary, as the gap (Levinson, 2018) between me and younger students increases, I am actually less likely to understand them. But, understanding kids does not a teacher make. In much the same way content knowledge does not instantly give one the ability to teach.
I suppose what I now possess, that I did not then, is an appreciation of my job as an entity with blurred boundaries. To be a teacher, I learned, is to be in constant flux, ever-changing, always new, and wholly dependent on the children in the schoolyard—some running, some ambling, some chatting, all following.

Pedagogy

In Theory

Pedagogy is what a pedagogue does, and, by this, pedagogy might then be anything and everything any adult does in relation to a child with respect to leading them, showing them, or introducing them to the world.

Pedagogy resists theorizing, in van Manen's (1982) views, since it exists not in philosophy or theory, but in the world of people being with one another. Throughout his writing, van Manen (1982; 2008; 2012) describes the goodness or rightness of pedagogical contact and the meaning inherent in the pedagogical relationship: "Pedagogy is the most profound relationship that an adult can have with a child" (p. 290) and "[p]edagogy involves us in distinguishing actively and/or reflectively what is good, life enhancing, and supportive from what is not good or damaging in the ways that we act, live, and deal with children" (p. 10). He describes the nature of pedagogy as "elusive" (1982, p. 287) and compares it to love and friendship by saying it, "is to be found in the experience of its presence"—that it, "is here and here and here, where an adult does something right in the beginning of a child" (p. 284). But, what if I don't always do something right?

I can choose to choose my words carefully, with care, caring to wonder about how they will be received. I can be deliberate with my teaching and speaking with these children to whom I am bound. I can

deliberate my pedagogical being and be deliberate with that being. And even still, my human being and acting with them can have unintended enormous negative consequences—the likes of which I may never witness.

> [I]t is important to realize that the explicit and the implicit influence may have enormous consequences. We simply cannot predict in childhood how the latency of pedagogical influence is felt and realized throughout life—even when the child has become an adult. (van Manen, 2012, p. 10)

I know that at the end of a busy day of teaching, I will reflect on all the moments when I was short or snappy with my students, and I will regret the things I said, or the tone in which I said them. Or I will regret the things I did not say and obsess over how I could have been kinder/more understanding/more compassionate/gentler…better. I don't always do "something right," and I fear this makes me a bad pedagogue but a human, nevertheless. Can I be both?

And Practice

She was tall, even at 13, towering above my measly five feet, four inches. She had the teenage girl trifecta: she was a natural athlete, intelligent and kind, and beautiful. She was also shy and, in the one term I had her, I only got to know her a little bit. She was, however, the kind of kid one impresses without letting on she has been affected. But when she showed up in my class a couple of years later, she was all smiles.

"Ms. G, you are one of my favourite teachers," she told me. "I am so happy to be in your class."

Of course I was pleased, who wouldn't be? But I didn't feel I had earned this title. Once again it struck me how much a teacher makes an impact on students—both positive and negative—without even knowing it, or meaning to. van Manen (2008) puts it well when he writes, "In everyday life in classrooms, the thousand and one things that teachers do, say, or do-not-do, all have practical pedagogical significance" (p. 1). In this sense, pedagogical significance is understood as an adult having an effect on a child. Obviously, I had affected her, and this had led her to my class all these years later. I was happy to see her, and I looked forward to getting to know her better. Since her class was small (21 students), and we had the whole year to become well acquainted, I looked forward to the challenge.

I can't quite recall the month it happened—though I am positive she recalls it perfectly. As I write this, it occurs to me that it must have been just before Christmas. For, in the affluent socioeconomic neighbourhood in which I teach, it was not unheard of for students and their families to take advantage of off-season rates and abscond to sunny locales before the winter break officially began. Regardless, at the time of the occurrence, she had been away from class for about a week, and I had not heard anything about whether she was taking an impromptu vacation. Such behaviour was unlike the conscientious student I knew, and I was feeling a bit put out by her unscheduled absence, when, one day, she was suddenly back.

It was a lab day, the day when students get to cook a recipe that they had watched me demonstrate. We went through the class as usual. Her class was the last block of the day and, after I had dismissed them, I went over to the demo-table sink and proceeded to do the stack of dishes I had waiting for me.

As I began to wash, she walked up to me, and somehow it occurred to me she was going to give me her excuse for being away without notice. I was actually about to preempt her apologies with a snarky comment, but something held me back.

Instead, as she stood beside me, I simply said, "Hi…haven't seen you for a while…" I purposely wasn't looking at her as I spoke. Then she responded.

"Yeah, I know. I'm sorry, Ms. G. My mom died."

Time stopped. I finally looked at her. She had tears in her eyes. But, in that moment, I had no idea what to say.

Actually, that is not entirely true. A multitude of things ran through my head, not the least of which was the intense desire I had to take this five-foot-eleven, 15-year-old in my arms and hold her. In fact, I felt that, given the look on her face, physical contact was not just warranted, but necessary. But, what did I do? I faltered as I frantically ran through all the possible responses I could give, trying to find the one I should give.

As I write this, I don't even recall what exactly I said. I know I asked how (fast-acting cancer, one month from diagnosis to death), and how she was coping. I also know that I realized that I knew embarrassingly little about her family…about her. I felt like a fraud—both because I felt I had failed her as her "favourite teacher," and because I had failed myself by balking when she told me her mother had died suddenly. What bothered me the most about this last part was that, when the time came to behave like a human being, I was more worried about what was appropriate for the role of teacher I was in.

Now, you may not know me too well, but propriety is not something to which I give too much thought or reverence—which is not to say I go out of my way to push the envelope. Rather, as a teacher, I tend to view conventions critically. I prefer to determine what is best for all involved in a situation, as opposed to resorting to rote method or common expectations, especially if and when such behavioural expectations contradict the urging of one's humane inner voice.

In my practice, Parker Palmer's (1998) concept of the undivided self influences so much of what I believe about being and teaching. Palmer writes, "In the undivided self, every major thread of one's life experience is honoured, creating a weave of such coherence and strength that it can hold students and subject as well as self" (p. 15). This concept was, I thought, the cornerstone of my teacher identity. I was proud that I expertly traversed any division between my vocation and my self—that I had merged the two, and lived and breathed both my self and my teacher self. It was all one and the same, or so I believed, until that moment when I faltered. As I recount this, I am ashamed to conclude that when events outside my being finally called upon me to be present and authentic in my interactions with others—to be my whole self—I hesitated.

Yet, I am sure she did not even notice. Indeed, subsequent interactions between us have only been positive. She is a lovely and gracious child, and, with time and space, I believe I have been able to make up for my perceived inadequacies in that moment at the sink. But I can't deny it happened, and that it bothered me. It still bothers me—even though it likely has not crossed her mind since. But maybe this is a good thing?

Perhaps van Manen's (2012) ideas about pedagogy and reflection are relevant to my inability to let this go. He writes, "The mother, father, teacher learn to understand themselves in new ways as they are prompted to reflect on themselves and the children for whom they care" (p. 10). While embarrassing

and regretful situations abound in a teacher's practice, the biggest mistake we can make is to let such situations fade into the past without reflection.

Pedagogical Relationships

In Theory

van Manen writes (1982) that, "childhood is something one must grow out of (*educere*: to lead out of)" (p. 285), implying that what flows from the pedagogue is education—that a pedagogue is an educator (even if not a teacher by profession) by virtue of the fact of her continued life and relationship to a child. He goes on, "[a]nd so my adulthood becomes an invitation, a beckoning to the child (*educare*: a lead into)," further implying that the simple fact of a life lived beyond childhood—and *amongst* children— necessarily lends itself to the *being* of a pedagogue:

> So, in spite of what we think parents or teachers do, pedagogy is something that is cemented deeply in the nature of the relationship between adults and children. In this sense, pedagogy is defined not so much as a certain kind of relationship or a particular kind of doing, but rather *pedagogy is something that lets an encounter, a relationship, a situation, or a doing be pedagogic*. All our pedagogic being with children is a form of speaking with them. (p. 285, emphasis in original)

To summarize, then, if I live long enough—most likely due to the diligence of (a) pedagogue(s) in my own life—to exist in the world as an adult with other, smaller, younger beings *and* I speak with them, then my *being becomes pedagogic*. This is not over-simplification. In the world there are both children and adults. Because children are not born with an innate ability to care for themselves, or understanding of the world, adults are charged with leading them such that they survive into adulthood themselves, and can do the same for the next batch of children in their wake. And since humans have language as the mediator between themselves (their *selfs*), speaking with one another is necessary to the relationship. The proof, if you wish to look for it—though van Manen (1982, p. 290) does not feel the need exists—is in the *thing* itself: in the provenance of the human civilization as a series of relationships between adults and children; and in all the things that are said, remembered, and said again.

Through my reading and reflection, I understand that pedagogy is not necessarily a choice but, rather, a response to the children with whom I share relationships. My position as pedagogue results as much from my choice to be around them as it does from the chance interactions I have with kids in my everyday being. And pedagogy is a result of that choice…that being. There is no pedagogy when one is alone. van Manen (1982) is right: pedagogy is *pretheoretical* (p. 291). I cannot sit at home at my desk, determine pedagogy, and then go and make it so. I can only act in concert with, and in response to children. I can then reflect on what I have done by attempting to approach the being/doing/saying in remembrance, and use the understanding I glean to inform my actions in the future.

And Practice

In the year that I became a secondary school teacher, I also became a stepparent. The kids were 6 and 8 the summer their mother and I moved in together. When I first met my partner and she told me she had kids, I was pleased. While I never wanted to have them myself, I enjoyed children and looked forward to parenting. Indeed, I had turned to teaching after over a decade working with adults in varying capacities, because I imagined that spending my days with kids would allow me to be my enthusiastic and energetic self—something my peers often found odd or tiring. Plus, I looked forward to nurturing the ideals of the young in an effort to stave off any inevitable negativity for as long as possible. I looked forward to the same with my new charges at home, as well. I imagined sweetness and light. But it was not to be. At least not at bath time!

One of the many new duties I had as a parent was bathing the kids. We had a routine whereby they would take a bath before bed every night. This was both to wash off the day and to prepare them for bed by lulling them into a slight stupor using hot water and lavender-infused bath products. I often opted to bathe my 6-year-old stepson because he was smaller and, therefore, it seemed to me it would take less time.

Initially the task was pleasant (as long as one didn't expect to stay dry) and it gave me time both to chat with him about his day, as well as teach him how to bathe himself. As I washed his hair, for instance, in addition to assuring him (repeatedly) that I would not get shampoo into his eyes, I also explained to him exactly what I was doing. My thought was that after a few times, he would slowly be able to take over this part of the bathing process.

However, it quickly became apparent that, though I would verbalize my movements whilst washing his hair numerous times over a period of weeks (and then months), whenever he was asked to mimic the motions, he seemed unable to do much more that drop most of the shampoo off his hand into the tub. If he was successful in getting some of it to his head, he would then proceed to massage it with just his fingertips into only the crown of his head for approximately six seconds, before plunging under the water to wash it off. Not that there was much to begin with. On the days he washed his own hair, as I was drying him off, I often sniffed his head to determine its state of cleanliness, and every time that funky door of young boy and playground dirt remained.

We went through this routine almost daily for what seemed like years. As he inexpertly washed his own head, sometimes I would joke, other times I would instruct, and often I would huff in total exasperation. It was amazing and disappointing to me that he just wasn't getting it. I thought perhaps I was explaining it wrong, so I tried different vocabulary and phrasing. I showed him my hands on my own head and let him feel them on his. I showed and explained to him how to keep his cupped palm level so the shampoo wouldn't drop into the tub when we filled it. Failing this, I squirted the shampoo directly onto his head—which succeeded somewhat—but he still refused to use his whole hand to work it into his hair. He seemed physically incapable! When I said, use your whole hand, he would then proceed to flatten them and move them like two paddles, rubbing only where his ears would be if he were a cat. It was enough to drive me insane. I did feel insane! Why was this so hard and why was it taking so long?!

And then, one day it happened. Suddenly, he could wash himself by himself. In fact, he even graduated from a bath to a shower. I don't even know exactly when it happened, the change was so gradual. He just kind of grew up and into his new role. As I write this, it seems obvious that this would happen. Indeed, at 12-years-old now, it seems like he has been bathing himself forever. But, clearly this is not true. There had been a time in the recent past when bath time was an annoyance we both had to endure.

To be fair, the annoyance was all mine: I was annoyed that bath time was not more efficient, and I was annoyed that he couldn't or wouldn't learn to wash himself after repeated instruction. But, mostly, I was annoyed with myself for becoming annoyed because I knew that this was just one part of our parent/child relationship that would change over time, and I was not helping by being annoyed.

At the beginning of every new school year, I always go over the math of the year with my students. On the whiteboard I explain that there are 180 instructional days in a school year, that, in a linear high school, we meet for roughly half of these, and that at 70 minutes per meeting (give or take), all told, they will spend about 100 hours in my class. We then proceed to look at those 100 hours in perspective. I explain that 100 hours is about two and half weeks in a full-time job. It always surprises the kids to realize that the amount of time they spend in school, while it may seem like forever, amounts to very little in terms of their full, waking lives.

I go through the math partly to alleviate any students of unrealistic expectations they might have for themselves. I also go through it to demonstrate to them that 100 hours can be spent well or less well, but, that regardless, I will be there with them through it all. I tell them that, even though I will teach them many things, they, inevitably, will decide what they learn and when. I then tell them the story of my son learning to wash his own hair and ask them to recall their own graduation to self-sufficient bathing. To a child, no one ever quite remembers when it happens. Using the bathing story, we talk about how sometimes teaching can be deliberate but learning just doesn't follow—at least not right away—but that, if you give it time, eventually it comes. And by then, of course, something new to learn has replaced the old, and the cycle starts all over again.

I am ashamed to say that, while I know and teach this to my students, I struggle with it at home. I still get exasperated with my kids when it takes them years (it seems!) to learn to do something simple like turn off the lights when they leave a room, or write legibly. I find myself thinking them careless or thoughtless, even though I know they aren't being deliberately uncaring or unthinking. I have to remind myself continually that learning to be a fully functioning adult takes time, and that, at 12 and 14, they are not even remotely close. Moreover, I have to remind myself that I am there to help them as best I can, each and every time, for as long as it takes.

Conclusions: Pedagogy of Story

I began this paper by writing that pedagogy can be understood as methods and practices of teaching, and/or a way of being with children. Hopefully I have made clear my alignment with the latter definition. But, as the title of this piece suggests, pedagogy may also be construed as a theoretical stance that informs methods and practices, often in a disembodied way—pedagogy per se, if you will.

In his moving and thoughtful work, *The Courage to Teach*, Parker Palmer (1998) writes, "*good teaching cannot be reduced to technique*" (p. 10, emphasis in original). Yet, this is what we do when we construe pedagogy as a "packet of information at the end of an educational transaction" (p. 94) between teachers and the pedagogical course they take or theories they read.

Max van Manen's (1982; 2008; 2012) work, however, describes a theory of pedagogy that resists methodologizing or reducing to a list of instructions. He implores us to attend to the singular context of moments and the individual bodies that inhabit them in order to recognize them as pedagogical. Recognition means to know something based on previous experience. By noticing one's "everydayness

and our immediate participation in daily life" (Meyer, 2012, p. 86), and then by telling stories about this interaction and reflecting upon them—only in this way do we recognize (our) pedagogy, and ourselves as pedagogical.

In 2021, as we embark on yet another year of living, teaching, and learning, where all of these things look starkly different to what many of us imagined when we first became students, teachers, and parents, we may be tempted to turn to theory for answers to our most pressing questions about how best to be pedagogical in the midst of a pandemic. My hope in writing this paper, is to show that theory alone is never enough.

Hannah Arendt (1993) writes that education "is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world, and leave them to their own devices" (p. 196). Taking Arendt's definition and marrying it to van Manen's theory: pedagogy, then, lives in the moment(s) when we decide *how* to practice that love.

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Slowing Down and Digging Deep:
Teaching Students to Examine Interview Interaction in Depth

Brigette A. Herron and Kathryn Roulston

Abstract

Teaching students to become critical consumers of interviews, which often serve as influential sources for learning and interpreting world events, is important in today's information-rich world. This paper outlines an approach to teaching in-depth interviewing in which students examine excerpts from interviews (e.g., archival collections, oral histories, or media interviews) using the tools of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis to "slow down" and "dig deep" into the social aspects of interviews. Using two case examples from undergraduate and graduate classrooms, we illustrate how this approach helps students to notice how question-answer sequences unfold and encourages critical consumption and participation in interviews.

Background

At some point in our lives, we are likely to find ourselves participating in an interview. Broadly speaking, interviews are seemingly mundane social interactions where people ask and answer questions for a particular purpose. In their many forms—from media interviews, celebrity interviews, job interviews, medical interviews, to forensic interviews—interviews are ubiquitous social interactions we often take for granted to help us access information we need. Undergraduate and graduate students alike will encounter multiple opportunities to observe and participate in interviews in order to learn or share important information. Regardless of a student's particular field, area of interest, or career goals, recognizing the social actions at play in various interviews is a valuable part of professional development and an important life skill.

We often do not take the time to notice what is going on in interviews. By slowing down and engaging in repeated viewing of interviews in a systematic way—we suggest using the tools of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis—students can begin to think critically about the way questions are posed and answered to communicate specific meanings, represent particular identities, and influence what can be discussed next. By systematically examining what goes on in interviews, students can strive to make intentional decisions about how they ask and answer questions, and what information they derive from interviews available through various media sources.

Some scholars have argued that interviews have become so ubiquitous we actually live in an Interview Society (Atkinson & Silverman, 1997; Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). Yet the proliferation of interviews as a primary source for both knowledge and entertainment obscures the intricacies of interactions and the challenges of conducting a "good" interview. Surprised by what happens in interviews, novice

interviewers often struggle with artfully asking questions of research participants (Roulston, deMarrais, & Lewis, 2003). Scholars have described a variety of approaches to teaching research interviewing. For example, Hsiung (2016) described how archived interviews could be used to introduce students to interviews. Literature on teaching qualitative interviewing focuses on *practice* in class, assignments, or authentic projects (e.g., Charmaz, 1991; Chenail, 2011; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Wellin, 2007), and *reflection on practice* (Hsiung, 2008; Uhrenfeldt et al., 2007; Roulston et al., 2008), or some combination of the two (Lippke & Tanggaard, 2014; Sattin-Bajaj, 2018). In order for students to learn how to interview effectively, scholars have written on multiple aspects of the research process, including:

- developing reflexive awareness and the skill of critical observation;

- learning how to listen;

- learning how to design research studies, conduct interviews, and practicing those skills; and,

- learning how to interpret and analyze interview data (Roulston, 2012).

This article examines the development of critical observational skills. We do this through the act of slowing down and digging deep in examinations of interview interactions with the tools of ethnomethodology (EM) and conversation analysis (CA). Concerning the idea of the philosophy of slowness, Ulmer (2017) has suggested possibilities for scholars to find slower ways of scholarly being, through writing a Slow Ontology, or "a state of being in which scholars chose to live writing and research through locality, materiality, and artisanal craft," (p. 201). We are inspired by the concept of Slow Ontology, which explores alternatives to hurried, mechanical assembly-line writing. We see the examination of interview practice as another locality where students may be encouraged to slow their way of scholarly being, using specific tools that encourage an in-depth look at interview interactions to nurture critical observation skills.

Our pedagogical approach is grounded in the scholarship of teaching interviewing, particularly strands encouraging student reflection on interviews, whether their own interviews or those conducted by others (Roulston, 2012). We ground our approach in a constructivist view of teaching and learning, which focuses on being learner-centered, designing learning encounters that are active and contextualized, and de-stigmatizing mistakes (Shah, 2019). This aligns with approaches to adult learning that emphasize fostering critical reflection with adult learners (Mezirow, 2000). Elsewhere, we have written about our approach to fostering critical reflection on interviewing by teaching with media interviews and other sources from cinematic society (Roulston & Herron, in press).

We explore two examples of an initial activity for undergraduate and graduate coursework to orient students to the complexities of asking and answering questions in open-ended interviews. The classes where we used this approach were both interdisciplinary—one a first-year seminar on *The Art of Interviewing*, and the other a graduate course on research interviewing. Although we focus on undergraduate and graduate contexts, we believe these teaching strategies and the pedagogy of slowing down and digging deep can also be used with various learners including high school students and adult learners in general. This requires a creative and inclusive approach by educators to address diverse learning needs and can be accomplished by carefully choosing interviews or interviewing practice

assignments that are appropriate for specific teaching and learning environments. We argue that using the tools of EM and CA in teaching can help students notice and make choices about how to conduct interviews, participate in interviews, and interpret interviews in scholarly and critically minded ways. We first define what we mean by EM and CA, before describing the methods we used to inform our pedagogical approach.

Ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodology is an approach to research developed by the sociologist, Harold Garfinkel (1917-2011). Garfinkel's early work examined the organization of the everyday—how people ("members") make sense of one another to accomplish social actions, or what he termed "members' methods." Garfinkel used unorthodox approaches to examine how people make sense of one another (Garfinkel, 1967), encouraging his students to engage in breaching experiments to bring the "seen but unnoticed" background features in everyday encounters into visibility (p. 36). For example, he prompted his students to see what happened when they genuinely responded to the question "How are you?" (which contradicts the norm in Western society to typically treat such questions as "greetings," rather than literally). His students' written examples of what followed indicated that interactions were marked by conflict and problems when people departed from social norms.

In this article, we draw on EM to outline an approach to teaching qualitative research that helps students to bring to the fore what is "seen but unnoticed" about interview practice. By keenly observing others' interview practices as an initial activity, we argue that students will begin to develop the skills to examine their own interviews (Roulston, 2016).

Conversation Analysis

Harvey Sacks (1935-1975) met Garfinkel at Harvard University when the latter was on sabbatical from University of California, Los Angeles. Sacks went on to complete his PhD in Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley in the early 1960s, and remained in touch with Garfinkel. When Garfinkel and Sacks began looking at tape-recorded telephone calls from the Center for the Scientific Study of Suicide where Sacks served as a fellow (Sacks, 1995, Introduction, xiii–xv), they were both surprised at the "degree of order exhibited" (Garfinkel, 2006, p. 11) in the talk. Sacks began to focus explicitly on the social organization of talk.

Sacks went on to describe the basic principles of turn-taking with his colleagues, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson (Sacks et al., 1974), along with phenomena such as "repair," "recipient design," and "preference structure"—all basic concepts used in CA. Since that time, the field of CA has grown, with practitioners working all over the world in diverse fields. Researchers typically provide detailed transcriptions of talk-in-interaction, including pauses, overlapping utterances, and other features of talk (e.g., speed of talk) using conventions first developed by Gail Jefferson (Atkinson & Heritage, 1999). Using tools from CA, researchers have examined diverse topics, including medical interaction (Heritage & Maynard, 2006), and in workplace contexts (Drew & Heritage, 1992), among others.

Using EM and CA to Examine Interviews

For over 35 years scholars have used EM and CA to examine the construction of interviews, including news interviews (Clayman & Heritage, 2002), standardized survey interviews (Houtkoop-Steenstra, 2000; Maynard et al., 2002; Suchman & Jordan, 1990), and qualitative interviews (Baker, 1983; Hester & Francis, 1994; Roulston, 2006, 2019). The argument for using EM and CA to examine interview talk rests on the idea that interviews are organized social activities that take place as part of everyday life. This is equally true whether the purpose is generating data for research, spectacle for entertainment, or fact-based information for news reports. From an EM perspective, there is no "time out" from the lived experience of making sense of others' actions and utterances. For these reasons, educators may find using the tools of EM and CA useful in teaching their students, at various levels and across disciplines, to examine interview talk.

Organization of Paper

The strategies we discuss enable students to become more aware of how interaction is accomplished to inform their own practices as interviewers, and help them critically interrogate interviews they encounter. Using two examples, we draw on the tools of EM and CA to help students examine interview talk systematically, where they can "slow down" and "dig deep." The selection of the types of interviews used for these classroom activities serves as a place for educators to connect with students in meaningful and authentic ways, for instance by selecting topical media interviews, or by allowing students to participate in the selection of interviews examined.

We begin with an example from an introductory level course with undergraduate students. This provides an example of how interviews featuring controversial or timely topics can be used with students and how educators can use the tools of EM and CA to support deep thinking about asking and answering questions without having to explain the intricacies of EM or CA to students. Next, we increase the complexity of utilizing EM and CA in a subsequent case with graduate students, who were encouraged to engage in complex reflections on interview practice.

Case 1: Asking and Answering Questions About Controversial Topics

As educators working with an interdisciplinary group of undergraduate students, we wondered if students could be encouraged to examine interview interaction without having explicit knowledge of EM and CA. Thus, as an initial activity in a first-year undergraduate class, *The Art of Interviewing*, we selected an interview with Martin Luther King Jr. conducted on November 2, 1967, by Mike Douglas and Tony Martin on the *Mike Douglas Show*—a televised daytime talk show. In this example, we were working with undergraduate students in the southern United States who were very familiar with the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. as an icon of the Civil Rights movement. We selected this clip to align with the upcoming MLK Jr. Day of service, in which students were encouraged to spend the day volunteering and serving the community in some way. This connected the interview activity to the students' lives in an

authentic way. In this interview excerpt, the interviewer (Douglas) and another guest (Martin) confront King on his views on the war in Vietnam, and his standing amongst the African-American community. Rather than providing a transcription of the talk, we relied on students' repeated viewings of the video clips (see Appendix 1 for URLs and further interview details).

After repeated viewings, we asked students to select and write down several of the questions posed as part of a reflection paper. Students were not required to use CA transcription conventions but were asked to critically examine how questions were posed and how King oriented to these questions. There is precedent in the literature for using an ethnomethodological approach to examine talk in police interrogations in which the talk is not transcribed in detail (David et al., 2018). The power of these scholars' analysis of police interrogations lies in their focus on *how* interrogations are handled by speakers, and what the implications are for the parties present. In this case, we encouraged students to consider *how* speakers co-constructed the King interview by looking at the same sorts of interactional details noted in Case 2. The focus of this assignment was to have students critically analyze the questions posed (what in CA parlance is the first-pair part of an adjacency pair), and then what happens next (the answer, or second-pair part of an adjacency pair) (Sacks, 1995).

After viewing the first excerpt in class, we modelled how one might critically examine how questions are asked and answered. Following this in-class demonstration, students were assigned the following homework prompt:

> *Watch the other two sections of the MLK Jr. interview from class and write out the questions posed. Next, write a two-page, double-spaced reflection paper about your impressions of the remaining two sections of the MLK Jr. interview (2/3 & 3/3) that focuses on:*
> *1) What are the questions posed to MLK Jr. in the interview?*
> *2) How does MLK Jr. orient to and take up these questions?*
> *3) How does the interviewer follow up?*

Student Responses to the Activity

We found that students capably analyzed both the interviewers' and interviewee's actions. Below, with students' permission, we include some of their responses, which demonstrated their ability to observe the adversarial moments that occurred in interaction and how these were downgraded. Specifically, students commented on:

1. The changing tone across the interview interaction and how that was accomplished by speakers.
2. How interruptions on the part of the interviewers contributed to aggressive lines of questioning.
3. How King's orientation to aggressive questions worked to downgrade tension and forward interaction.
4. How King repeatedly declined to offer defensive responses to questions, thereby demonstrating his exceptional oratory skills in pursuing nonviolent interactions.

These excerpts from students' reflections illustrate the kinds of observations that were generally made across the class.

Changing Tone Across the Interview

The first excerpt features a student's description of how King artfully manages a critical question about his relationship with President Johnson in a way that avoids responding to the question and changes the tone of the interaction.

> *On another occasion, the interviewer cites Dr. King's relationship with President Johnson, asking whether or not their relations have fluctuated in light of Dr. King's remarks. King chuckles, lightening the solemn tone of the interview and creating a more casual environment. He also somewhat avoids the question, taking attention away from himself and turning it towards President Johnson with his response, "Well, I guess the president would have to answer that question".*

Another student commented on King's ability to influence the overall tone of the interview in a way that was lighthearted, and dispelled tension.

How Interruptions Work in Interviews

The following student excerpt provides a clear description of how King deflects interruptions that challenge his standing within the Civil Rights community by continuing his line of thought and agreeing with the assumption in the question posed by the interviewer.

> *When asked about Dr. King's thoughts of militant leaders taking over his movement, his responses were interrupted with questions about the approaches of Stokely Carmichael and H. R. Brown [activists in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the 1960s]. King said he disagrees with their views philosophically before being interrupted again with, "Do you have disagreements with them?" King said, "Definitely, I know them both very well-" and was interrupted asking, "Do they agree with you?" Dr. King ignores this and goes on to explain that both Carmichael and Brown are in on the movement and probably disagree with him quite a lot.*

How King Orients to Aggressive Lines of Questioning

In the next excerpt, another student provided an analysis of how Douglas posed a question directly confronting King. The description notes the pivot in the interview interaction in which King disagrees with the interviewer's quoted assertion about his own standing that discredits King's efforts.

> *During his interview with Mike Douglas and Tony D. Martin, Martin Luther King Jr. is frequently on the defense concerning his actions involved with the African-American community and the implications of these actions during the Civil Rights Movement…Whereas earlier in his interview Dr. King remains relatively impartial in his defenses and avoids both agreeing and disagreeing, a switch occurs in his response to this question. He immediately states, "I'm sorry to disagree, [but] I stand with my original statement that people who have been alienated as a result of standing against the war have been alienated anyways."*

Here, the student observed the way King avoided defending himself from the outside critique packaged by the interviewer, instead using his response to reiterate an earlier assertion, and reframe the direction and his approach to answering questions in the interview.

King's Use of Excellent Oratory Skills to Manage Interview Talk

In the final example, we include a student excerpt describing King's management of the overall interview interaction where he is asked difficult questions and interrupted by the interviewers.

> *Although some of the questions posed to Dr. King were very difficult to answer with grace, and despite several interruptions, he managed to answer more powerfully than one could imagine. Many of the comments and questions given by Douglas and Martin had an attacking tone and felt as though they were trying to corner Dr. King. He had to disagree with many of their comments, but his excellent oratory skills and powerful views never waver. Another fault of the interviewers in my opinion is the repeated interruptions of Dr. King. I believe that if you are asking someone a question, you should wait and give them respect until they have finished answering that question. Dr. King did an excellent job orienting to the difficult questions and using both statistics and quotes to strengthen his thoughts and arguments.*

Notable in this reflection is the student's critical analysis of how the interaction was a collaborative production and the application of her observations to evaluate the interview practices. This activity could be expanded by having students write about what they have learned about good interview practice, and how this might affect their future conduct as both interviewers and interviewees.

In the next section, we discuss our experiences having students work with a detailed transcript of a media interview featuring a difficult interaction between the interviewee and interviewer.

Case 2: Examining Difficult Interactions

In this case we examine the use of a publicly available media interview in a graduate-level qualitative research class focused on interviewing. We wanted students to gain experience examining more detailed transcriptions than are typically used by many researchers (e.g., pauses, overlaps are included, along with comparative volume and speed of talk), and reflect and relate this exercise to their own interview practice. By having students work systematically through a transcript we provided, we alerted them to possibilities occurring in their own interviews worth a "second look" (Baker, 1983). We selected a well-known interview of film director, Quentin Tarantino, conducted by journalist Krishnan Guru-Murthy of Channel 4 in the UK, where, shortly into the interview, Tarantino refuses to follow Guru-Murthy's line of questioning. The excerpt demonstrates how the formulation of interview questions is crucial for considering what comes next, and how the interviewer and interviewee might pursue different agendas. This excerpt shows Tarantino promoting his latest movie, and Guru-Murthy claiming to pursue a "serious" line of questioning, while simultaneously instigating a "difficult interaction."

We began the session having students reflect on their own interview practice (Appendix 2). After discussion of students' reflections, we examined the example of a "difficult interaction" exhibited in

Tarantino's interview. Students were guided through an analytic process outlined by Pomerantz and Fehr (1997), where they were asked to identify various features of talk that occur in the interview using the transcript we generated and provided for students. The full sequence for analysis involves the following steps:

1. Select a sequence.
2. Characterize the actions in the sequence.
3. Consider how the speakers' packaging of actions, including their selection of reference terms, allows certain understandings of the actions performed and the matters talked about. Consider the recipients' options that are set up by that packaging.
4. Consider how timing and turn-taking allows for certain understandings of the actions and the matters talked about.
5. Consider how the ways the actions were accomplished implicate certain identities, roles and/or relationships for those involved (Pomerantz & Fehr, 1997).

We selected this sequence (Step #1) because it provided a provocative example of what can happen when problematic interactions transpire. Later, students could examine interactions from their own interviews. With basic definitions of various conversational objects and resources, students began by characterizing utterances in the transcript under the following headings (Step #2).

- Questions
- Answers
- Formulations (in which a speaker sums up what was said in a way that deletes information, adds something, and transforms a prior utterance) (Heritage & Watson, 1979).
- Accusations
- Agreements/Disagreements
- Repairs (clarifying or restating what was said in a way that sorts out misunderstandings)
- Delays

The following excerpt is an example from the longer transcription (which is available from the authors; the URL for the interview is found in Appendix 3).

Excerpt 1.

46.	IR	=but why are you so sure that there's <u>no link</u> between
47.		enjoying movie violence and enjoying real violence
48.	IE	I don't I well I'm n-gonna tell you why I'm so
49.		sure don't ask me a question like >that I'm not gonna<
50.		I'm not biting (.) I refuse your question=
51.	IR	=∘$why?∘
52.	IE	>because I refuse your question I'm not your slave
53.		and you're not my master<
54.	IR	I JU-

55.	IE	you can't make me dance to your tune [I'm not a]
56.		[I can't make]
57.		[monkey]
58.	IR	[you $I] can't make you answer anything$ I'm just I'm
59.		asking you interesting questions=
60.	IE	=and I'm saying I'm saying I refuse

In line 46, the interviewer pursues a response from Tarantino regarding his view on the link between film violence and actual violence (this interview was conducted soon after the school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in the U.S. in December 2012). At lines 48-50, Tarantino refuses to respond to the question. Again, the interviewer pursues a response—this time asking for a rationale for the refusal to respond. Here, Tarantino provides a response, with noticeably faster talk. At line 54, the interviewer begins a response, but lines 55-58 show overlapping talk, as Tarantino abruptly interrupts the interviewer's utterance. This short excerpt shows how responses to questions do not always answer the questions posed, as well as illustrating an accusation and denial. The disagreement evident in this excerpt is marked by several interruptions.

Students then examined how the talk is "packaged" (Step #3) and how this contributes to the trajectory of talk using the following headings.

- Louder talk/Softer talk
- Extreme case formulations in which speakers use "extreme" words such as "never," "always" and so forth as a way to legitimize claims (Pomerantz, 1986)
- Faster/slower talk
- Downgrades/upgrades (in which speakers present a revised version of what has already been said in ways "downgrading" or "upgrading" claims)

The following excerpt provided an example of the text students used to examine the packaging of the talk.

Excerpt 2.

89.	IE	I-I IT'S <u>NOT MY JOB to flesh it out</u>
90.	IR	>no it's my job my job to try and ask you [to that's<
91.	IE	[and I'M
92.		SHUTTING YOUR BUTT DOWN [heh hehhehheh
93.	IR	all [and that's entirely that's
94.		entirely your your right
95.	IE	<u>this is a commercial for my movie</u>

In Excerpt 2, we see louder talk, as Tarantino asserts his right not to respond to the interviewer's questions. Here, the interviewer responds with agreement and an extreme case formulation ("entirely"). However, we see a difference in agendas—with the interviewer pursuing what he later asserts at line 206 are "serious themes," while Tarantino claims the interview is a "commercial" for his movie, *Django Unchained*.

As noticeable in Excerpts 1 and 2, students located points in the talk in which timing and turn-taking were made visible via the close transcription of talk (Step #4), using the following headings.

- Overlapping talk
- Silences

Finally, students were encouraged to consider the membership categories (Baker, 2002) employed by speakers, and the implications for the identities produced by speakers (Step #5). Students observed how Guru-Murthy produced the identity of a serious interviewer, while Tarantino performed the identity of a producer promoting his movie. By identifying the membership categories and identities in interview talk, students began questioning the multiple purposes that interviews serve and readily identified the conflicts resulting from different interviewing agendas. Through this examination, students gained preparation to look more closely at their own interview practice. This is useful for examining motivations underlying research interviews and the power dynamics involved in interview interaction. Student reflection on the ethical implications of interview interactions were further encouraged by having students write responses to a series of reflection questions (see Appendix 4). A detailed example of considering membership categories employed and identities produced by speakers is found in Herron (2019).

This is an introductory-level activity to prompt students to examine how interview interactions rely on collaborative achievement in order to generate research data. In particular, difficult interactions in interviews are good places to encourage students to "slow down" and "dig deep" as they provide a clear, interesting, and informative entry point. In our experience, we have observed students actively engage in this activity, and readily identify what goes on in the talk. This activity may serve as a useful scaffolding activity to get students to reflect on interviews as conversational interactions that serve more purposes than simply the generation of information.

Discussion and Conclusions

In Case 1, we provided an approach to working with students that does not explicitly use EM or CA, but encourages students to analyze interview interactions critically while considering various interactional and interpersonal issues that arise. In Case 2, we illustrated how we used a transcript of difficult interactions from a media interview, using methods drawn from CA as a way to examine the kinds of social actions that can occur in interviews. This encourages students to reexamine their own interviews with a view to understanding unexpected interactions and surprises. When students view a news interview with a politician or world leader, we hope they take the time to think about how the questions asked set the tone for the answers that follow. We hope they slow down to question the motivations and

intended messages that are communicated, with an eye toward examining the actions accomplished when people ask and answer questions.

Threaded throughout these cases are moments where students are invited to reflect further on implications for their own interview practice and participation—whether for the purpose of conducting and participating in any number of interview types (i.e., job interviews, journalistic interviews, oral history interviews, clinical interviews, and research interviews). For example, how might students be encouraged to deeply reflect on the kinds of actions that go on in interviews, such as the use of interruptions to pursue an agenda, in Case 1? How can novice researchers be encouraged to consider the ethics of their pursuit of an interview agenda which is not aligned to that of the interviewee, as in Case 2?

We encourage educators to use these strategies as a starting point for getting students to slow down and dig deep into interviews, and to use their own creativity to expand and develop these tools in ways that serve the needs of their particular student populations. For instance, educators might choose to select interviews that will resonate with issues that are important to their students or have the students themselves select interviews. Through consideration of the variety of interview styles and actions disseminated in contemporary society, we hope educators can draw from these strategies using EM and CA to encourage students to critically analyze the information derived from interviews they view, along with those they participate in as interviewers and interviewees.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix 1: Interview Details for Cases 1 & 2

Case 1:
Martin Luther King Jr. on the Mike Douglas Show.
Part 1:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9SfH2uMayks
Part 2:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_FQIlE-WlM8&t=2s
Part 3:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvB5a9_XJ3I

Case 2:
Interviewer: Krishnan Guru-Murthy
Interviewee: Quentin Tarantino

https://www.channel4.com/news/quentin-tarantino-im-shutting-your-butt-down

Appendix 2: Reflection on Interview Practice

What was it like for you the <u>first time</u> you transcribed your own talk?

What did you notice about your own conversational mannerisms?

What did you notice about your interviewee's conversational mannerisms?

What aspects of talk were challenging for you to transcribe?

How did you deal with these transcription challenges?

Have you changed your interview practices since that first interview? If so, how?

Appendix 3: Transcription Conventions

The following transcription conventions were used in the creation of the transcripts referenced in this paper.

?	Rising intonation
,	Slightly rising intonation, or incomplete intonation contour
↓	Downward fall in intonation
↑	Upward rise in intonation
:	Elongated syllable or sound
CAPITALS	Louder volume than surrounding talk
[	A single left bracket indicates the point of overlap onset
]	A single right bracket indicates the point at which an utterance or utterance part terminates vis-à-vis another
( )	Researcher notes about activity
(0.5)	Timed pause, half a second
(5.0)	Timed pause, 5 seconds
(.)	Untimed pause, short, beat
Don't	Underline indicates stressed word
=	No space between utterances, latching
°	Utterance parts bracketed by degree signs are quieter than surrounding talk
< >	Right / left carets bracketing an utterance or utterance part indicate speeding up
#	Creaky Voice/ Vocal Fry

Adapted from the following:
Liddicoat, A. J. (2007). *An introduction to conversation analysis.* Continuum.
ten Have, P. (2007). *Doing conversation analysis, a practical guide* (2nd ed.). SAGE.

Appendix 4: Reflection Questions

- What is this interview about?

- What questions are asked? (write down as many questions as you can)

- How does the interviewer show that they are listening?

- Does the interviewer make additional comments that are not questions? If so, what?

- How would you describe this "interview" (e.g., conversational, confrontational, structured, unstructured)

- What is the context in which this interview is conducted?

- What is the purpose of this interview?

- How successful do you think the interviewer was in achieving his/her purpose?

- In what ways did the questions posed facilitate (or not) an effective interview?

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Preservice Teachers and the Kairos Blanket Exercise:
A Narrative Inquiry

Sandra Jack-Malik, Janet L. Kuhnke, and Kristin O'Rourke

Abstract

This narrative study inquired into the experiences of preservice teachers who participated in the Kairos Blanket Exercise. During research conversations, participants shared stories that demonstrated an expansion of their knowledge and awareness. Three themes emerged: the Blanket Exercise and the research conversations were spaces where participants felt safe to ask questions; some participants began to rewrite their understanding of the history of relations; and some participants began to consider how they might contribute to decolonizing. Moreover, participants enriched by the experience were more ready and able to deliver related curricular outcomes, engage reflexively, and consider allyship.

Background

The Department of Education at Cape Breton University (CBU, 2018) has as part of its mission and core focus to "prepare teachers, who will be knowledgeable, skillful, flexible, research-minded, culturally responsive, caring pedagogues" (p. 1). As part of their efforts to meet this focus, the department created a professional development series for its preservice teachers: the *Pre-practicum Professionalism Series* (O'Rourke, 2017). The series, now a tenet of the CBU's Bachelor of Education (BEd), was designed to complement and enrich the experiences of preservice teachers. Guided by Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education (2015), which states Treaty Education must be part of the grade primary to 12 curriculum, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (TRC, 2015), the Kairos, Blanket Exercise (KBE) is part of the professionalism series. Participation in the KBE provides opportunities to develop, deepen, or shift understandings of the shared history of relations between settlers and Aboriginal people,[1] while thinking about how said history continues to influence students, communities, teaching, and learning. It also affords participants opportunities to explore white privilege, "a built-in advantage, separate from one's level of income or effort" (Collins, 2018, para. 13).

Description of the Kairos Blanket Exercise

> The Kairos Canada, Blanket Exercise, utilizes a participatory methodology. The goal is to build understanding about our shared history as Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada by walking through pre-contact, treaty-making, colonization and resistance. Everyone is actively involved as they step onto blankets that represent the land, and into the role of First Nations, Inuit and later Métis peoples. By engaging on an emotional and intellectual level, the Blanket Exercise effectively educates and increases empathy. (Kairos Canada, 2020, para. 2)

The Kairos, Blanket Exercise includes descriptions of historical and current-day events. Participants are invited to read aloud or listen as brief descriptions of the events are shared. This reading, listening, and responding provides opportunities for the participants to reflect on what they know and how they learned it. As participants move through the KBE experience, they are afforded opportunities to think about, and later, during the Talking Circle, discuss what they learned and what their learning means to them as individuals and soon-to-be teachers. Somers (1994) helped us to understand this process when she wrote, "all of us come to be who we are by being located or locating ourselves in social narratives" (p. 606). The KBE supports preservice teachers as they work to understand who they are and who they might become within reconciliation narratives and soon to be teachers, charged with delivering Treaty related educational outcomes.

On the day of the KBE, the facilitation team arrives early to thoughtfully engage in creating a physical space (See Figure 1) that supports the text and evokes responses, while also being safe. Because we have worked together on numerous KBEs, we understand participants' reactions and comments, while normal, can be wide ranging and impactful. We appreciate our quiet conversations as preparation and as time to shore ourselves up as individuals, and as a team to be fully present in our efforts to facilitate the creation of a safe and caring space.

Fig. 1: Together we place coloured blankets on the floor. We do this slowly and reverentially, knowing they represent northern Turtle Island (present-day Canada). The facilitation team is led by Aboriginal colleagues and supported by settler allies (Regan, 2010).

Participants remove their shoes, step on the blankets, and enter the dynamic precontact world of Aboriginal People. They are handed cards, scrolls, and artifacts and invited to "perform" the experiences of Aboriginal mothers, fathers, or family members. The performance is purposeful in that it "draws our attention to what matters" (Fels, 2011, p. 340). The narrator commences by describing events endured by Aboriginal People at the hands of colonizers. Some of these events include loss of land, children being forced to attend Indian Residential Schools, forced relocations, loss of language, culture, family, and economies. Some of which results in death. When a death occurs, participants are directed to step off Turtle Island. As the exercise continues, the land inhabited by Aboriginal people shrinks dramatically, as does the population. Interwoven throughout the narratives of loss, the narrator shares stories describing efforts by Aboriginal people to interrupt the ravages of colonization.

Fig. 2: Participants remove their shoes and step on the northern part of Turtle Island. Facilitators distribute handmade dolls representing the children who were forcibly removed from their homes and sent to Indian Residential Schools and/or children who died from disease. Some participants hold numbered scrolls, which they are invited to read when the number is called. The scrolls contain information about the history of the relations.

At the completion of this section of the KBE, participants are directed to recall Turtle Island and the number of people who were on the blankets at the beginning of the exercise. They are asked to hold the image in their mind as they look at the dramatically decreased and non-connected landmass, which is represented by reserves, tracts of land set apart for Aboriginal People (See Figure 2). After moments of quiet reflection, participants are invited to join a Talking Circle led by the Elder in Residence who introduces and explains the tradition of a Talking Circle.[2] As well, he graciously shares his story. The Talking Stick is then passed around and each participant is afforded the opportunity to share.

Why the Kairos Blanket Exercise

Understanding and acknowledging the shared history contained within the KBE provides preservice teachers opportunities to "challenge racial constructs and boundaries [and] face challenges in a society in which racial categories have profound meaning" (Diangelo, 2018, p. xvi). Moreover, Taiaiake (2010) argues, "non-Natives must struggle to confront their own colonial mentality, moral indifference, and historical ignorance as part of a massive truth telling about Canada's past and present relationship with the original inhabitants of this land" (as cited in Regan, 2010, p. x). As educators of preservice teachers, it is our responsibility to include opportunities for students to explore and reflect on their beliefs, deepen their understanding of our shared history while preparing to teach it.

Theoretical Underpinnings

We were interested in understanding the experiences, the stories to live by of preservice teachers before and after they participated in the KBE. We were interested in their stories because we understand, "if we change the stories we live by, quite possibly we change our lives" (Okri, 1977, as cited in King, 2003, p. 153). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) used the term "stories to live by," as a narrative term for identity. Clandinin (2013) wrote stories to live by, "allows us to speak of the stories that each of us lives out and tells of who we are, and are becoming" (p. 52). We inquired into stories because "narratives are the form of representation that describes human experience as it unfolds through time" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 40). We held this notion in our minds as we thought deeply about the stories and the wonders preservice teachers shared. Dewey's (1981) notion of experience guided us: "things and events belonging to the world, physical and social, are transformed through the human context they enter, while the live creature is changed and developed through its intercourse with things previously lived" (pp. 256–257). Moreover, Dewey's (1938) notion of continuity of experience informed the work. It helped us understand how early familial[3] and school curriculum-making[4] stories were shaping influences on who participants were, and who they imagined they might become (Greene, 1977). Another Deweyan (1938) notion that informed this work was the idea that an experience is educative or mis-educative; it helped distinguish between experiences "that have the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience" (p. 25), and those that supported the preservice teachers as they worked to shift their stories to live by, expanding their knowledge of our shared history.

Methodological Framework

Narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) is a relational, recursive, reflexive, and qualitative research methodology and a way to understand experiences narratively. It is grounded in the view that humans individually and socially live storied lives (Clandinin, 2013). "To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomena under study" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 375). The stories of preservice teachers before and after they experienced the KBE was the phenomena under study.

Leaning into Huber and colleagues' (2013) notion of narrative inquiry as pedagogy, Jack-Malik and Kuhnke (2020) pushed their thinking to include narrative inquiry as andragogy, the art and science of helping adults to learn (Mews, 2020). This was purposeful because much of what happens in classrooms is focused on pedagogies to support students to achieve learning objectives, leaving little time for teachers to participate in and learn from reflexivity activities related to their own practices (Finlay, 2012, 2017). Naming narrative inquiry as andragogy, the authors were purposeful in their intention for the research methodology to include opportunities for participants to engage in reflexivity, and thereby encourage them to understand the importance and value of continuously knowing themselves as learners, and subsequently making time for inquiry and self-reflection into their learning. Decolonization, including efforts to create counterstories to existing, often hegemonic institutional narratives, are complex processes. Lindemann Nelson (2001) described counterstories as "narrative(s) that take up a shared but oppressive understanding of who someone is, and set out to shift it" (p. 95). The methodological framework therefore was carefully and purposefully selected to allow participants to deeply engage with the subject matter, while also allowing opportunities to reflect on who they are as preservice teachers and who they might become.

Our inquiry utilized the metaphorical three-dimensional narrative inquiry space[5] (temporality, sociality, and place), allowing us to think through the three-dimensional space to understand the experiences of the participants. Four preservice teachers, Justin, Mitt, Rick, and Marg,[6] were invited to participate in research conversations, six months after they participated in the KBE and having just completed their 16-week practicum experience. During the research conversations, they shared stories, including those from early school and familial curriculum-making experiences (Murphy et al., 2012). We attended to the temporality of the stories, when they took place, the contexts in which they occurred, the sociality, and physically where they took place. Specifically, we inquired to understand how the stories were shaping participants' understanding of the history of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and their privileges. Stories included tensions, which became places of inquiry (Clandinin, 2013). Tensions occurred during practicum, while reflecting on early home and school curriculum making, or when attempting to compose future-looking stories of who they were becoming as they moved from preservice to practicing teachers.

Conceptual Framework

Connelly and Clandinin's (1988) notion of personal practical knowledge—the experiential, moral, emotional, embodied knowledge teachers hold and express—helped us understand the narratives that participants shared. Furthermore, their concept of "stories to live by" helped us understand how the stories reflected their identities as teachers in the making.

The Importance of the Work

This work is important because it inquired into stories, shared by preservice teachers about how their knowledge and awareness related to the shared history of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

people and was influenced by their participation in the KBE. It is also important because it investigated implications for teacher educators within the framework of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) and the Nova Scotia Teaching Standards (2018).

Our Positioning

The authors are tenure-track, assistant professors at CBU. They identify as settlers and allies (Regan, 2010), working to decolonize themselves, their practices, and the academy. Jack-Malik also identifies with her maternal L'nu[7] relations. Working with an Elder in Residence and Aboriginal colleagues, Jack-Malik and Kuhnke help to facilitate the KBE. O'Rourke is the designer and course instructor of the Pre-Practicum Professionalism Series.

Mitt[8] Shares:

> I had not done the KBE before. I had heard of it, and I had heard of the Africville kit. And I know the Africville Kit has nothing to do with the history, the KBE explores; however, it has the same concept of getting kids physically seeing the changes. It touched me more than I thought it would because you physically got to see the blankets taken away and people getting pulled off the floor, which meant they died. And some people got tuberculosis. Seeing how at one time the Mi'kmaq people had this huge plot of land and then they were down to little crumpled up blankets, scattered around put it into perspective, how much trauma they went through. (*Research conversation*, May 2019)

Inquiry Into Mitt's Story

Fels' (2011) notion of performative inquiry is a way of "drawing our attention to what matters" (p. 340). What mattered to Mitt was making links to his preexisting knowledge of the Africville Kit (Africville Museum, 2020), an educational resource designed to increase awareness of 150 years of resistance and protest by African Nova Scotian families. His comments focused on the participatory nature of the two experiences and how they are good for kids. Moreover, he described tensions (Clandinin, 2013) as he "saw" Turtle Island shrink, and "saw" Aboriginal people dying from tuberculosis.[9] Mitt's participation and observations allowed him to deepen his understanding of some of the historic trauma endured by Aboriginal people. Furthermore, thinking like a teacher, he made pedagogical connections between the experiences. He commented on the benefits for children; however, he stopped short of making connections to the ongoing, systemic racism, suffering, and injustices endured by Aboriginal peoples and the need for individual decolonization by settlers (Regan, 2010). Mitt did not make connections to self, nor did he use the opportunity to engage in decolonization of self. Rather he reflected on "safer" pedagogical concerns for future students. Richardson et al. (2017) helped us understand when they wrote:

> The path to participation and accountability may be long, and in its early days, but it must continue in the post Truth and Reconciliation Canada. And while many learners are prepared, at various points, to take up a stance of "giving back" or living differently, not everyone is ready to make a social justice commitment. (p. 340)

Moreover, Regan (2010) sheds additional insight when she wrote:

> That settlers fail to see the importance of accepting responsibility for the IRS (Indian Residential Schools)[10] is hardly surprising. Maintaining a comfortable intellectual, psychological and emotional distance from the harsh realities that the system engendered enables us to retain an identity as well-intentioned, humane citizens - benevolent peacemakers. (pp. 42–43)

Mitt made links; however, he did not use the KBE experience to interrogate his positioning and privilege as a white male. The question that lingers with us is: Can a settler educator teach the history of relations between settlers and Aboriginal people without having begun the process of interrogating their own privilege? Richardson and colleagues (2017) described the importance of work done by allies to interrupt ongoing narratives of racism:

> The victims of racism are not responsible for stopping it; that is ally work where White folks from the dominant culture can help their brothers and sisters when they go off track. She asks us to "lean in", and not away, when one of our group members behaves badly, both including the person and challenging the person's unethical or dangerous behaviour. (p. 340)

How will Mitt be able to do this in his classroom if he has not begun to interrogate his beliefs and privileges? We don't think he can; however, we remain hopeful because of his willingness to participate in the KBE and the research conversations (voluntary activities). We also understand the importance of creating teaching and research spaces that are experienced as safe. We are therefore reluctant to describe Mitt's inability to draw himself into the decolonization process as a failure. We understand if we are to continue to make progress, we must remain open to all openings, not only those we label as the most educative (Dewey, 1938). Mitt engaged with us, shared his thinking, made links to his developing pedagogies; these are steps forward on his path to decolonizing.

Justin Shares:

> I am the height of privilege being a white, native English-speaking male. I was the third person exiled off of 'my' blanket during the KBE and that was a feeling I have never felt before. We talk about the importance of differentiating between one's privileges (whiteness, male, native English speaker) and one's personal story (my mental health issues). In a social, public environment, being exiled was something I had never experienced. I felt the exclusion in personal ways. In terms of being in a group of people and then all of a sudden, being told to 'book it', that is something that has never happened to me. However, if I were black, it wouldn't have even had an impact on me, maybe. My reaction was a very powerful feeling and I thought 'oh my gosh, this is crazy that I'm being excluded in the KBE!' I also had a physiological thing that happened in my throat when I was exiled. In other situations, I have felt excluded in personal ways because of my mental health. I don't know if that's an appropriate link. I think it's different but I think empathy can come from that. I am not trying to equate experiences of Mi'kmaq people with my mental health; however, it has helped me see through a more empathetic lens. (*Research conversation*, May 2019)

Inquiring Into Justin's Story

Justin begins by stating his privileges (Kendall, 2002) and positioning. However, the moment he was directed to step off Turtle Island resulted in what Applebaum (1995) described as a "stop"—a moment when his privileges came into tension (Clandinin, 2013) with the role he was enacting. Justin did not appreciate this. He had a physiological reaction. Regan (2010) states:

> Viewed in this way, settlers' questions, especially the difficult ones that spring to mind as we listen and that we might try to suppress, are precisely those that most urgently need our attention. Settler response to Indigenous testimonies, our questioning, may reveal themselves not only, or even primarily on an intellectual level, but in the feelings and physical reactions that such testimonies engender. (p. 190)

Justin struggled to temporarily perform the role of an Aboriginal person. His reactions were grounded in tensions that resulted when his privileged positioning came into conflict with the racist, exclusionary experiences endured by the Aboriginal person he was asked to enact as part of his participation in the KBE.

The inquiry that follows is complex and dichotomous. Justin stated a Black participant of the KBE would not have been affected by being asked to step off. This indicates an awareness of hierarchies related to skin colour. As well, it speaks to messages he internalized about the lives of racialized individuals. Justin is able to name racialization as hierarchical; however, he does not connect his whiteness and unearned privileges as part of the issue. Moreover, Justin's language choice was repeatedly harsh, including terms such as "exiled" and being told to "book it," when in fact the script reads, "will you please step off the blanket" (Kairos Canada, 2020, p. 3). As well, he names the blanket "my blanket," suggesting ownership of the blanket and the land it represents. Justin's comments have us asking questions about the messages he inculcated and internalized about racialized people and their lived experiences, alongside messages of white superiority, resulting in unearned privileges.

As educators inquiring into Justin's research conversations, we experienced a stop (Applebaum, 1995). We reflected in dialogue, quietness, and with the research literature. We felt ourselves engaging in dangerous conversations[11] (Le Fevre & Sawyer, 2012). Applebaum (1995) helped us to frame our stop and our conversations when he stated:

> The stop hides in a most hidden place. This is a place that is both near and obvious. As if being of the same polarity, our habits impel the gaze toward what is distant and complicated. To gaze is in fact to look far off, toward the unapproachable, the not-at-hand. It is a look of dis-satisfaction, peering behind, around, in back of, rather than directly at what is in front. It is an averted look. The habit is of ignoring the call of the personal, cultural, and human...That what lurks might hold up a mirror to the self and its fears and desires is a repugnant possibility. (p. 16)

Greene (1995) described this as seeing big and seeing small.[12] We understand from Justin's position of power—possible because of his privileges—he was able to see small, from a distance. He was not however able to see big—close up, personal, from the lived experiences of the Aboriginal person he was invited to perform. In some ways we felt implicated by his comments, as if we failed to support him to

interrogate his privileges. Diangelo (2018) guided our thinking when she wrote, "racism is so deeply woven into the fabric of our society that I do not see myself escaping from the continuum in my lifetime however [as educators, we want to be] actively seeking to interrupt racism" (p. 87).

When Justin spoke, we did not follow up with questions about his comment as to how a Black participant would have experienced being asked to step off Turtle Island. We did not name this a racist comment, nor did we support him to engage in self-awareness (Greene, 1995). We now understand this as a missed opportunity to support his decolonizing journey. We also understand this as a moment of tension between self as educator and researcher (Clandinin, 2013). Moreover, we understand this as part of our privileged positioning (Regan, 2010).

Justin was able to describe his uniqueness as one who lives with mental health issues. He described his ability to connect this uniqueness through empathy to the lives of people marginalized. He was also able to name the unearned privileges he enjoys. However, he was not able to suspend his unique self-perception to see the wider impacts of societal racism and the suffering endured by marginalized individuals and communities, and how he is implicated as a member of the white people group.

Marg Shares:

> I enjoyed the opportunity to reflect on my KBE experience during the Talking Circle and while holding the Talking Stick. It was interesting to hear the comments from my classmates as we passed the Talking Stick around. Everyone's comments and reflections helped me in my own process of taking in knowledge and reflecting on the KBE. The Talking Circle experience allowed me to take time to concentrate, reflect, and learn from others' perspectives of the KBE experience.

> It has been over 10 years since I graduated from high school. We definitely learned about different things that happened to Aboriginal people in Canada and there was a timeline set up, but the KBE was more extensive and different from what I was taught in high school. History was definitely not presented so that we understood traumatic colonization is ongoing, still happening today.

> I have always tried to be aware of who my students are, what traditions are celebrated and to what extent, because it varies from family to family and from school to school. I think I will bring my awareness of Aboriginal histories to my classroom. I will ask what are the traditions in this country, or, what are the different family backgrounds represented in my classroom. (*Research conversation*, May 2019)

Inquiring Into Marg's Story

Marg speaks about the value she experienced as part of the Talking Circle. Mehl-Madrona and Mainguy (2014) describe the Talking Circle as follows:

> A Talking Stick is held by the person who speaks... When that person is finished speaking, the Talking Stick is passed to the left...Only the person holding the stick may speak. All others remain quiet. The circle is complete when the stick passes around the circle one complete time without anyone speaking out of turn. The Talking Circle prevents reactive communication and directly responsive communication, and it fosters deeper listening and reflection in conversation. (p. 4)

We understand participation in the Talking Circle as performative inquiry (Fels, 1998). The performance allows time to explore, reflect, and learn; to develop knowledge of the history of relations between settlers and Aboriginal people. The listening and reflecting time allowed Marg to rewrite her knowledge of the trauma endured by Aboriginal people. Specifically, she shifted what she knew as historical events to a knowing that trauma and systemic racism are not things of the past. She came to understand that Aboriginal people continue to experience trauma, exclusion, and suffering (Regan, 2010).

Marg previously worked as a teacher at an international school. We were not surprised therefore when she applied what she learned from the KBE experience and "imagined up," how she would implement her learning in an international classroom. Greene (1995) helped us to frame Marg's imagining when she, leaning into Dewey's (1981) work, wrote:

> When it came to the meeting of past experiences with present ones... [Dewey] emphasized the ways in which the formed matter of an aesthetic experience (Marg's KBE and Talking Circle performances) could directly express meanings also evoked when imagination begins to work. (p. 76)

Marg's imaginings allowed her to describe a desire to pay more attention to children and their families. Specifically, she talked about acknowledging and including individual customs and traditions.

We understand her imaginings through three lenses. First, the performative inquiry of the Talking Circle and KBE allowed Marg to rewrite her understanding of relations between settlers and Aboriginal people. Next, she began to imagine up what her new understanding would look like pedagogically in an elementary international classroom. And finally, she imagined one further step in that she described a desire to be more informed about the cultures and traditions of her future students and their families (Lemaire, 2020). Greene (1995) stated, "the role of imagination is not to resolve, not to point the way, not to improve. It is to awaken, to disclose the ordinarily unseen, unheard, and unexpected" (p. 28). We understand these three steps as Marg's awakening, moving from seeing small, to seeing big (Greene, 1995). And as her focus shifted from seeing small to big, the potential for her to come alongside[13] the children in meaningful and educative ways also grew (Dewey, 1938).

Discussion: Interrupting Privileged Narratives Is Possible

Regan (2010) helped us understand the shaping influence of the KBE and the stories participants shared during the Talking Circle and the research conversations when she wrote: "under what circumstances would those who are beneficiaries of colonialism stop denying and choose to act differently" (p. 66). Holding this wonder, we began to understand the KBE as one tool to nudge participants towards calling out unearned privileges, and acknowledging a history of relations that accurately reflects what occurred. Moreover, participants' performance (Fels, 2011) during the KBE, their engagement with the Talking Circle, and the research conversations, created andragogical spaces where they felt safe to engage complex subject matter and have difficult conversations (Le Fevre & Sawyer, 2012). They described privileges they enjoy based on "their whiteness." Participants "question[ed] colonialism as an ongoing system that establishes unfair and wide-spread domination and privileges" (Lemaire, 2020, p. 308).

Diangelo (2018) helped us to understand how white appearing regularly results in an individual benefiting from ongoing colonialism, including experiencing unearned privileges. The KBE and we would argue narrative inquiry as andragogy, creating circumstances where participants, through self-reflection, questioning, discussion, and performance, were, as Regan (2010) suggested, able to shift narratives of denial and unawareness. They experienced a stop (Applebaum, 1995). Fels (2011) described the experience of a stop as follows:

> ... a moment of risk, a moment of opportunity. Applebaum's stop moments are those moments that interrupt, that evoke new questioning, that make visible our habits of engagement, our biases, issues we have overlooked or have never considered. It is through our questioning and reflection of these stop moments that new learning becomes possible. Such moments of recognition are those moments when we see a situation or issue from a new perspective, and while we may or may not embody this new learning within the role drama, it may influence us in future interactions. A stop is a moment that calls us to attention; a moment of recognition when we realize that there are other possible choices of action, other ways of being in engagement. (p. 341)

Having experienced a stop, participants were then able to, as Laenui (2000) described, engage in imagining up future educative (Dewey, 1938) stories that include a time when "the full panorama of possibilities is expressed, considered through debate, consultation, and building dreams on further dreams which eventually become the flooring for the creation of a new social order" (Laenui, 2000, p. 155). For preservice teachers then, their participation in the KBE was educative (Dewey, 1938), in that they engaged in imagining future stories that include Aboriginal perspectives, while engaging in more meaningful relationships with Aboriginal students, colleagues, communities, and nations.

Conclusion

Narrative inquiry as a research methodology resulted in andragogical spaces (Jack-Malik & Kuhnke, 2020) where participants felt safe to listen, ask questions, trouble their understandings, and share their stories related to the history of relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Within these safe spaces they also began to imagine future stories reflecting an increase in confidence to deliver Treaty Education outcomes within classrooms where students feel included. This is important because, like Okri (1977, as cited in King, 2003), we understand changing our stories can result in changes to our lives and to the lives of our students. As we look backward on our individual decolonizing journeys, we understand the truth-telling content embedded with the KBE, the participatory engagement, the resulting feelings, and the hoped-for subsequent actions must be known as a single experience upon which educators can choose to scaffold future learning (Lemaire, 2020). The KBE must not be framed as a one-time professional development experience that results in teachers becoming decolonized allies. Regan (2010) reminds us, "without a truth telling in which we confront our own history and identity, and make visible how these colonial practices continue today, there can be no ethical or just reconciliation with Indigenous peoples" (p. 235). Moreover, it is therefore important to learn more about other teaching and learning activities that help preservice teachers and teachers to continuously learn about the shared history, while becoming and nurturing allyship. Finally, if the intention is indeed to train preservice teachers to become allies,

then provincial teacher competencies must include statements to this effect. Currently, Nova Scotia Teaching Standards (2018) do not include a single reference to Treaty Education. This "story" will have to change if we want to nurture decolonization (TRC, 2015; Call to Action 44) and reconciliation stories (TRC, 2015; Call to Action 53 iii), while building strong and enduring allyship (Battiste, 2013).

Notes

1. In this paper we lean into the nomenclature suggested by Battiste (2013) when she wrote: "I try to use [the word] Indigenous when considering the people beyond Canadian borders and use Aboriginal or First Nations, Metis, or Inuit for students in First Nations programs in universities" (pp. 13–14). We therefore make use of the word "Aboriginal" when referring to people who inhabited what is now referred to as Canada, prior to colonization. **Content Warning:** decolonization.

2. Elder Lawrence Wells leads by example, and is always ready to participate in activities with children and youth that incorporate the sacred in everyday life. He is a noted wood and stone carver and has crafted pipes for prayer. Lawrence is perhaps best known for his positive attitude, his generosity with his time, his knowledge of the Seven Sacred Teachings and ways we can heal ourselves, and for his affinity for nature. He does not believe in barriers and is available to students for support as needed (Unama'ki College. CBU, 2021). "Elders are recognized because they have earned the respect of their community through wisdom, harmony and balance of their actions in their teachings" (Indigenous Elder Training, 2020, para. 1). (Indigenous Corporate Training, 2020, para. 1). https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-elder-definition.

3. Familial curriculum making is the curriculum making in which children engage with members of their families and communities (Clandinin et al., 2012, p. 9).

4. School curriculum-making is the places where the lives of children, families and teachers intersect and overlap (Clandinin, 2013).

5. Narrative inquirers and participants are situated within a "three-dimensional space with temporality, sociality, and place" serving as the three dimensions...thinking narratively means thinking through the three-dimensional space to understand lived experience (Clandinin, 2013, p. 38).

6. Pseudonyms for the four preservice teachers who engaged in follow-up research conversations.

7. Augustine (2016), states L'nu are "people of the earth," Mother Earth, and so we call ourselves Ilnu (p. 21).

8. Participant direct quotes are edited for clarity.

9. The occurrence of tuberculosis remains disproportionately high in First Nation, Inuit, and Metis peoples (Jetty, 2020). https://www.cps.ca/en/documents/position/tuberculosis-among-first-nations-inuit-and-metis-children-and-youth

10. Over "150,000 Indigenous children were removed and separated from their families and communities to attend Indian Residential Schools (IRS). While most of the 139 IRS ceased to operate by the mid-1970s, the last federally run school closed in the late 1990s. In May 2006, the IRS Settlement Agreement (SA) was approved by all parties to the Agreement. The implementation of the SA began in September 2007 with the aim of bringing a fair and lasting resolution to the legacy of the IRSs" (Government of Canada, 2019, para. 1). https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100015576/1571581687074

11. Le Fevre and Sawyer (2012), state: "We began by discussing the meaning of the concept of dangerous conversations: What did the topic mean to us, and how could we locate ourselves and our research questions in it?" (p. 262).

12. Greene (1995) wrote about seeing big. She argued that by seeing big, we refuse epistemologically to consider people as objects; rather we view them embodied in the particularities of their lives. From this standpoint, Greene believes we can see people in the midst of their living and if we are attentive listeners, we can be privy to their plans, initiatives, and the fears they face.

13. Alongside: our ontological commitments shape how we live in the world…and come alongside participants. These commitments include attending to "the lives, the experiences, of those with whom we live in relation. Our commitments…are to the lives of the people involved" (Clandinin et al., 2015, p. 23).

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Coming Into Mindfulness: A Practice of Relational Presence to Cultivate Compassion in One Rural School

Sonal Kavia and M. Shaun Murphy

Abstract

This narrative inquiry explores personal and professional stories of two educators, nurtured and supported by their school leadership, in a rural school setting, who have had diverse experiences with the contemplative practice of mindfulness. Our research primarily focused on the following wonders: How does the experience of mindfulness practice shift teacher identity and awareness, and the quality of time educators spend with children and youth? As educators, how can the practice of mindfulness expand our experience of listening, loving kindness, and compassion within educational spaces? We explore how their unique experiences of mindfulness are woven into the fabric of their school and a mindful pedagogy.

Vignette ~ A Warm Welcome

The soft and playful flowers on the wall welcomed me into the front doors of the school. Not sure what to expect, I felt compelled to move slowly into the small circular entrance where I see three words on a plant pot:

grateful, thankful, blessed

My head turned, and what I saw next was a beautiful visual canvas sharing an artful definition of the word 'family',

family: people who share a common start and grow to share a common heart.

I instantly shared my feeling with Shaun, my coresearcher; a feeling of warmth one often feels when they are home. I even said it already reminded me of the sanctuary of the schools I had once worked in with kindred spirit educators in the distant past. My heart space felt open so quickly in this new space and I remember saying, "My people are here!"

A few moments later, down the hall, on the way to the gym, the principal smiled and said to one of the children, "This is my new friend Sonal," I felt welcomed.

At the gym, we met a young man who regularly practiced mindful yoga with the children. There was giggling and smiles and high fives as the kids walked in and found their space. The process of arriving in the gym seemed soft and joyful. The first to come patiently waited as the last ones trickled in. The principal welcomed all adults and children with her smile and found her seat also on the floor with the children. I remember smiling at this unfolding process.

The mindfulness teacher rang the bell, invited us to close our eyes and take a deep breath. I witnessed a slight raise in the chest of many children around me as their lungs expanded, and then the deep let down of the chest and shoulders. I remember feeling my own shoulders relax and shift down away from my ears, as the children relaxed. There was a collective sigh and I remember feeling a sense of peace as I became aware of my breath.

It was clear, the intention was to make children and community members feel welcome. It occurred to us that the symbol of a flower invites young people to come in and bloom. Even strangers like us, upon entering the school, know that there is something kind here, something seemingly soft and nourishing. The ease we felt coming into this place was unusual. Seeing the words "thankful, grateful, blessed" alongside a definition of "family" offered the sense that connectedness was important here.

Sonal was careful and cautious as she and Shaun spent time in the front entrance. This was a mindful way to enter, whether into a building or into an experience with another person. As we moved into an unknown environment, we observed the language of space, the power of words, and the actions of others to make sense of that which we once did not know. Inside this rural school, in which this narrative inquiry unfolded, we instantaneously felt welcomed and at home. As visitors, any caution and care quickly turned into curiosity and intrigue. Sonal realized she moved slowly and carefully, when she moved from outside/outer to inside/inner spaces. The power of language all over the walls and the behavior of the principal, secretary, staff, and children all set an inclusive tone for the visit.

The mindfulness experience in the gym, involving the whole school, had us in the most intimate of explorations, breathing life force slowly in and out of our bodies in a kind and gentle way. A gathering this big, and in this way, is a significant happening, especially in this mindful way of learning to breathe together. Iyengar (1999) stated that, Pranayama, a breathing practice, "is a conscious prolongation of inhalation, retention and exhalation" (p. 10) and that "the practice of Pranayama develops a steady mind, strong will-power and sound judgment" (p. 10). Sitting and breathing brought us all together in a moment of time. Hanh (2015) suggested, "when we breathe mindfully, we reclaim our territory of body and mind and we encounter life in the present moment" (p. 17). Sonal's first impression and observation of this school was certainly affected by the commitment of the leadership and staff to the development of the whole lives of the children. Their actions were reaching towards wellness for themselves and the children.

In her own teaching and learning journey, Sonal had come into mindfulness years before while teaching at an elementary school in an urban centre. She had been exploring breath awareness and yoga in her personal life when the principal at her school sent out a short clip about mindfulness in schools to all the teachers. The principal had been developing an understanding of how to nurture teachers to experience such practices for themselves and, furthermore, to understand how children's well-being might be enhanced. At that time, in her work, Sonal was considering how to nourish the inner awareness of children, because she realized that outer awareness was predominantly encouraged. Sonal realized that teachers often lack the ability, time, experience, and education to honor children's experience in a holistic manner. She began to learn what mindfulness was and why it mattered in education.

What Is Mindfulness?

As she developed an understanding of mindfulness, Sonal came to increase her own practice of bringing her attention into the present moment. Kabat-Zinn (2005) shared that mindfulness can be thought of as, "an openhearted, non-judgmental, present-moment awareness, the direct, non-conceptual knowing of experience as it unfolds, in its arising, in its momentary lingering, and in its passing away" (p. 128). Barbezat and Bush (2014) suggested that, "mindfulness is being aware in the present moment, not judging but accepting things as they are" (p. 98). Over time, Sonal realized she felt more present and attuned to others and her environment. She also felt more connected to her breath. Sonal felt the quality of her personal and professional relationships became significantly more meaningful. The following quote by Kabat-Zinn (2013) highlights the true essence of mindfulness:

> When we speak of mindfulness, it is important to keep in mind that we equally mean heartfulness. In fact, in Asian languages, the word for "mind" and the word for "heart" are usually the same. So if you are not hearing or feeling the word heartfulness when you encounter or use the word mindfulness, you are in all likelihood missing its essence. (p. xxxv)

Murphy-Shigetmatsu (2018) suggested that a mainstream image of mindfulness is "that it means being self-centered, yet we can better reframe our inner work as a collective, communal, and connected way of being" (p. 13). The harmony of inner experience with outer awareness leads to a sense of well-being that can be holistic, preventative, integrative, and compassionate (Yeager & Howle, 2013). We realized our research school had undergone changes over time and they were trying to prevent children, teachers, staff, and people in the community from feeling disconnected. They had been building a language of mindfulness based on the experience and understanding of the principal and wellness educator, and felt kindness and compassion was central to their community building. In our multiple visits to this school, we witnessed and became familiar with the diverse layers of experience and intentions of the research participants and how they came into mindfulness.

Here We Are…In This Place

Sonal came to understand that this small rural school, G. F. Meyer Elementary,[1] two hours away from a major city centre, was home to leadership and a group of educators who based their learning and teaching in the practice of mindfulness. By the end of the first day of Sonal's initial visit, she had had conversations with two educators and the principal. Although the encounters were brief that first day, Sonal recognized the diversity of experience with mindfulness that the participants possessed. The place reflected a quality of interrelatedness of a thoughtful group of people. A young teacher (Russell), the wellness educator (Willa), and the principal (Patti) shared their unique story of coming into mindfulness. This narrative inquiry primarily wondered about the experiences of Russell and Willa, inquiring into how each of them came into this practice and way of being. We briefly share details of the principal, Patti, to give a richer picture of the supportive nature of the leadership at the school. Additionally, conversations with other staff members formed a fuller picture of how changes took place at this school over time.

G. F. Meyer Elementary School is a home for 199 kindergarten to grade 6 children and 26 staff. There are 15 teachers who teach in 11 classrooms. It is a small community-based school with a strong sense of inclusion, connectedness, and relationship building. The children at the school enjoy a wide diversity of experiences as a result of the generous vision of a leadership and staff who aim to make well-being a part of their careful work. Sonal smiled much of the time as she observed, interacted, and took part in the happenings of the day.

Understanding Beginnings

As Sonal spent more time with the research participants, Patti, Willa, and Russell, it was clear that significant, thoughtful attention was being placed in the environment, the learners, and teachers. It became evident that a commitment was made to learning about mindfulness and to engaging in practices of mindfulness. A language and dialogue around mindfulness had been built over time with teachers, administrative staff, caretakers, and the larger community. All members of this community engaged and stepped into the process as they felt comfortable.

Patti, the principal, seemed especially gifted in the art of creating a safe and comfortable space for explorations for the educators, staff, and children in the school. She was strong, energetic, and loving. In a first interview regarding mindfulness, she exclaimed that she could see the possibilities of mindfulness and a mindful way of being in her personal and professional life, and we spoke of unconditional love in leadership. Patti's message to her staff, and especially the young teachers, was, "that I will love you no matter what, and I know there is going to be hard days, whatever I can do to help, I will help. I tell them it will all work out" (Patti, March 9, 2018). Her vision grew and expanded from inside out, and she definitely wanted her "family" at the school to feel supported by her. We found out that, over time, the school came to flow more easily at a relational, pedagogical, and communal level as mindfulness was explored over numerous years. Personal and professional explorations of our research participants affected the happenings in the day-to-day lives of adults and children at the school. Our research interests in these personal and professional shifts were guided by narrative inquiry research.

The Narrative Inquiry Method

This research was designed to gather the storied experiences of teachers and an administrator who came into mindfulness on a personal or professional landscape. Narrative inquiry, the research methodology used within this study, is, as suggested by Connelly and Clandinin (2006), "the study of experience as story" (p. 477). The stories of the research participants, as told through interviews and dialogue, provided a base for understanding the experience of the participants and the school community from the "three commonplaces of narrative inquiry – temporality, sociality, and place" (p. 479). These three commonplaces allow an understanding of each participant in a holistic and expansive manner. Temporality, having to do with the notion of time, allows the researcher to understand participants' lives as in a process of change, and flowing between past, future, inward, and outward, "simultaneously in

these four ways" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50). Sociality, having to do with relationship, attends to the personal and social situations of both the participant and researcher (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Lastly, place has to do with the location in which the experiences occurred. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) viewed place as storied and "having a history with moral, emotional, and aesthetic dimensions" (p. 2). Clandinin and colleagues (2013) shared that narrative inquiry allows for inquiry into the lived experiences of participants, and may also be attentive to "social, cultural, linguistic, familial, and institutional narratives" (p. 45). Finally, in a narrative inquiry, we try to understand significant personal, practical, and social justification (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). We, as researchers, engage in the questions "So what" and "Who cares?" to understand why this particular narrative inquiry research can be significant on a wider societal level (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006).

Sonal's original research puzzle questioned: How does the experience of mindfulness practices shift teacher identity and inner awareness and promote compassionate educational communities? She was interested in the quality of time spent with children and youth, and the relational aspects of listening, loving kindness, and compassion within that time. The three commonplaces of time, sociality, and place unfolded within our inquiry in which the participants told their stories during five visits over five months. In listening to the stories of the participants, these questions developed our understanding of their experiences as related to our research puzzle: How did Russell and Willa come into mindfulness? How did they come into new understandings and ways of being? What was it about them that was making relationships flow and bloom at the school?

In their personal lives or within the school landscape, Russell and Willa had come into an understanding or experience of mindfulness in their own way and at significantly different times or circumstances in their professional lives. Each participant storied their experience, and within those stories an understanding of the tensions that affected their identity and awareness became clear. Clandinin et al. (2010) suggested these are the stories of "who they are and who they are becoming as they interact with children" (p. 82) and shared that they came "to see tension as a central component in understanding the experience of people in relationship" (p. 88). In hearing the stories of the participants, similar and variant threads of the participants' experiences of coming into mindfulness emerged, as did the tensions each felt with their new and growing knowledge, a blend of the personal and the professional. This combination of the personal and practical is understood by Connelly and Clandinin (1988) as personal practical knowledge, which is described in the following manner:

> [It is a] term designed to capture the idea of experience in a way that allows us to talk about teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons. Personal practical knowledge is in the teacher's past experience, in the teacher's present mind and body, and in the future plans and actions. Personal practical knowledge is found in the teacher's practice. It is, for any teacher, a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions of the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation. (p. 25)

The participants told of impacts on their lives personally and professionally and it became apparent that their "personal practical knowledge" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 25) had changed the landscape of their school. The unique tensions that were present in each participants' journey of coming into

mindfulness were catalysts for shifts in identity, knowledge, and awareness. These tensions encountered by each participant were important in how their personal practical knowledge unfolded. In telling their stories, considerations of sociality, temporality, and place are given attention (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006), as are the tensions they experienced.

Russell

Russell, a young beginning teacher, was hired the day he finished his practicum in Eastern Canada. When asked about his introduction to mindfulness, he said it was the principal that introduced it to him one August afternoon when they met in person for the first time. He had not heard of mindfulness before he came into his work as a beginning teacher.

He was in his third year as a classroom teacher at the time of our first interview. At Russell's first interview, we asked him what his understanding of mindfulness was, and he responded that he would now describe it as, "in the most basic terms, and like I said, this is constantly changing for me, just being in the present moment and being aware" (Russell, March 9, 2018). As we interacted with Russell, it was apparent that he was deepening his knowledge and experience of mindfulness practices with support. We observed that Russell was open, eager to share, and thoughtful while sharing his experiences about how he came to know about mindfulness, new understandings of curriculum, and his own shifts, as he moved through his first years of teaching.

Understanding Mindfulness as Unspoken Curriculum

We recognized a tension of teaching mindfulness in relation to mandated subject matter. Early that first year while going through his timetable, Russell noticed a block for mindfulness time. He engaged in a conversation with his principal inquiring into what mindfulness was and why they included this practice in their school day. Driven by provincial government mandated curriculum, Russell had many questions.

Russell shared that during his early teaching days his time was "purely allotted to curriculum" (Russell, April 19, 2018). He would teach right up until the bell and felt he had to use all the time to teach the mandated curriculum. Russell found the concept of mindfulness abstract, which posed a nervous tension around teaching it to students. It was beneficial for him to have the wellness educator, Willa, come into his class to teach these sessions. Russell was reflective after these sessions in which the wellness coordinator worked with the children. He was developing his ideas of how these practices might be valuable to children:

> If we can slowly introduce this to kids it will be so important in understanding their emotions or feelings, kindergarten all the way to grade 6 here, and they can slowly pick up the pieces. It's going to be so important to them…being in the present moment, it could be huge for them, especially with all these problems going on right now, I think with bullying or mental illness, or whatever right? (Russell, April 19, 2018)

Russell understood why the principal, coordinator, and other staff were working towards a language of mindfulness at the school and his idea of curriculum was evolving over time. There were both small ways and big ways that shifts had happened for him. In the classroom, it was in the way he felt more relaxed about what he felt should be happening and allowing things to unfold as they did. Russell had shared that he saw his relationships in the classroom and in his personal life change over time. He was clear that he had noticed the way that he responded to others was evolving in his classroom and even in his personal life with his family.

Understanding how to best bring curriculum to life in the classroom is a challenge and journey for any new teacher. Russell's idea of what to teach and what not to teach was changing. He shared, "there were more important things to teach than the curriculum at times" (March 9, 2018). The *more* he was referring to has been highlighted by theorists as "implicit" or "hidden curriculum" (Inlay, 2016, p. 24), "*inner curriculum*" (Ergas, 2018, p. 78), and "curriculum-as-lived-experience" (Aoki, 1986). Inlay (2016) stated, "every school has an implicit curriculum of messages sent by every structure and process, and by every person in the school's environment" (p. 24). When a school or educator also takes time with an inward focused curriculum, it can privilege what Owen-Smith (2017) described as "*connected knowing, interiority*, and *engagement with the self and others*" (p. 25). In this new time of coming into and making meaning out of mindfulness practices, classroom management, and making connections within curriculum, there was a period of becoming for Russell. He was becoming familiar with a wider, more expansive life curriculum. He was also becoming less driven by provincially mandated curriculum, noticing growth in his own capacity to be empathetic and compassionate.

Slow Evolution—Shifting into Compassion and Empathy

Russell's ideas of what a classroom and a school should be began to change over time. He experienced tensions around what a traditional classroom or school should look like. When asked the question: "What if you didn't find mindfulness?", Russell answered:

> Well, I certainly know, the type of teacher I would be, I would be a very, for lack of better words, a traditional teacher. You know we would be sitting in our desks, there would not be tons of collaboration, there would not be flexible seating, it would be 'sit down - be quiet' you have a job to do. (Russell, March 9, 2018)

Russell felt he was developing a greater relational capacity to empathize and care for the children because of his mindfulness experiences. He shared,

> [a] shift has happened, by being mindful, and being aware and empathizing and caring…three years ago, I would have said the most important part of teaching is connecting with the curriculum…and that shifted for me and I honestly believe it is because of the building I am in. I'm not saying teaching curriculum is not important, but I think giving students what they need is sometimes more important. (Russell, March 9, 2018)

Burrows (2011) stated, "relational mindfulness can help educators to address the management, teaching, and emotional challenges of classroom and school environments more successfully" (p. 24). Kyte's (2016)

suggested, "with teachers gaining inner strength, they become more present and responsive to their students' needs, thus becoming more effective teachers, role models, and guides to healthy behaviors" (p. 1147). What we learned from Russell is that mindfulness is a way of attending to the child. The other things are extras and not the focus of Russell's work with mindfulness. Through his words we came to understand that this work helped him pay attention to their lives, and curriculum then became something more than a sole focus on subject matter.

Russell grew through the challenge of questioning the un-traditional mindfulness blocks; he continued to participate in the mindfulness sessions that were offered to his class; and he began to take part in staff professional development, some of which involved mindfulness sitting practice and a weekly staff gathering for gratitude practice. In the following passage, Russell remarks on the support that he received from the principal:

> Then it slowly started to evolve into what it means to me. As [the principal] gave us PD or we practiced with our kids, it's something that is ever changing for me. Something that has actually become very important in my classroom actually, which I would have never said three years ago. (Russell, March 9, 2018)

Russell shared about shifts he noticed in himself as time went by. He noticed how others worked with mindfulness practices and saw that the school had become a place of compassion. Bai and Cohen (2007) highlighted that educators "teach others by being an authentic and living embodiment of what they deem to be valuable and potentially meaningful to learners" (p. 52). Inlay (2016) shared that, "the affective and overt behaviors of individuals within the school's culture, convey messages of the implicit or hidden curriculum of a school that subtly but powerfully influence the school's culture" (p. 23). As a researcher attentive to the impact of the introduction of mindfulness on a beginning teacher in a school, wonders arose for Sonal: What if Russell had been introduced to mindfulness practices during the course of his higher education experience in university? What if he had the opportunity to explore and embody a practice before he began teaching? Russell was just one participant that shifted the essence and fabric of the school. He acknowledged his experience was affected by another research participant, Willa, the wellness coordinator, who role-modeled mindfulness experiences with the children in his classes.

Willa

Willa holds the wellness coordinator role at the school and collaborates with the teachers and leadership to integrate possibilities for wellness experiences for children and adults. Of the three research participants, Willa has been at the school the longest and works closely with Patti, the principal, in building the culture of the school. Her position arose historically out of a need that the local school board deemed important. Wellness coordinator positions were created for many schools within that division. In Willa's 10 years, she has been able to observe changes in her role and the school, in her words, "evolve over time" (Willa, March 9, 2018). There were times when she was unsure of what this role should look like.

Willa began a personal contemplative meditation practice nine years prior to our conversations with her. A mindfulness practice had benefited her personal life in various ways, and she recognized possible benefits to young people. She explained that to her, mindfulness was like "a process and journey for oneself in kind of being gentle with yourself everyday" (March 9, 2018). A tension in Willa's story involved her questioning *how* she could meaningfully bridge her personal learning of mindfulness and meditation into her professional offerings. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) "developed the notions of personal practical knowledge and professional knowledge landscape, both narrative educational concepts, as a way of understanding teacher knowledge" (p. 3). Willa shared, "for me it's so intertwined, I can't just talk in a school sense, because they intertwine" (Willa, March 9, 2018). She was expressing that her ways of being in personal contexts and professional contexts were weaving into each other. Willa was questioning how what she knew [her mindfulness practices and learning] informed her teaching practices and her identity as a teacher. In the following interview excerpt, when asked what the value of the practice was for her, she tells us that her practices of mindfulness are connected to her identity:

> I guess because I feel like if I don't practice my life is going to get out of control! [laughs]. So maybe it is not a hard question, it's a simple answer. I don't think I can rate it, or put it on a scale because it has just become who I am. I can't even say that I have, it's just a part of me. (Willa, March 9, 2018)

Willa is situated in a supporting and impactful role and her relationships with teachers and children have changed over time. Clandinin et al. (2013) suggested that lives are composed as a process of change, involving the "temporal unfolding of their lives in different places and in different relationships" (p. 48). Willa expressed that her relationships, with regards to herself and others, had shifted as a result of coming into mindfulness. Although she does not recall the moment she was introduced to mindfulness, she shared, "I have seen a big shift…that my role has shifted" (Willa, March 9, 2018). Goldman-Schuyler et al. (2017) stated, "a radical shift is needed for most people to develop a conscious, sustained effort toward being mindful in the context of work" (p. 87). Willa shared that a significant personal shift happened in her experience of taking a Mindful Schools course online. She began identifying herself within the school as someone who could share some of the practices. Willa was developing a "story to live by" in the context of her school (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p. 4). A story to live by refers to identity and is "given meaning by the narrative understandings of knowledge and context" (p. 4). When asked, "What if you didn't find mindfulness?", Willa shared: "I would be, you know, constantly searching for something, and with this practice I don't feel like I'm searching for anything in this job, I really feel like mindfulness is such a base foundation" (Willa, March 9, 2018).

Willa was finding purpose in the practices of mindfulness to inform her time with children. Byrnes (2012) stated, "teachers' transformative experiences have the potential to develop and enhance their ability to teach with compassion, integrity, and mindful awareness" (p. 25). Willa was developing her understanding of how mindfulness could be a base foundation from which to engage, and she highlighted deep listening as beneficial to her teaching journey.

Deep Listening…Receptivity

Willa's significant shift in deep listening strengthened her attunement to others. Siegel (2017) shared, "interpersonal attunement is the focusing of kind attention on the internal subjective experience of another" (p. 227) and "two differentiated individuals to become linked in that moment as a *we*" (p. 228). Willa was deepening her connection to others and her moment-to-moment awareness was her practice. Barbezat and Bush (2014) stated, "deep listening is a way of hearing in which we are fully present with what is happening in the moment without trying to control it or judge it" (p. 137). Willa said, [mindfulness] offers her the tools to "be responding instead of reacting" (Willa, March 19, 2018) within her personal and school relationships. She further told us that being responsive versus reactive, "was like a practice to me, a practice of deepening my listening practice." (Willa, March 9, 2018). She felt adults and children would benefit as she herself had benefited from a mindfulness practice that gave her tools and strategies that were empowering for her to listen well within her life relationships. Willa's personal practice consisted of practicing meditation both by herself and in community (she lived in a neighboring city) and to continue to explore being open and present in her daily interactions. Willa said that, over time, she has noticed her ability to respond versus react had grown. She and the principal of the school were exploring mindfulness through personal experience and practice, books, and each other. There was no local community group offering a gathering to practice mindfulness meditation. She identified this deep listening as something that contributed to her receptiveness in her school relationships. Hruska (2008) described being receptive as entailing, "being still, open, looking, listening, perceiving, and waiting" (p. 32). Development of receptivity, which is a slow process, often involves a deep listening when reflecting both outwardly and inwardly. Willa recognized receptivity as important for both adults and children in the culture of the school.

Vignette—Inner Voice in Education

I followed Willa to her small office attached to the library. I noticed a lamp was lit and there were pictures on the walls. There were books on peace and mindfulness on the counter. It was quiet. It felt like a place to pause and seemed a quiet sanctuary within the school. As we sat together, she shared that she felt like children need to have time to spend with themselves. She explained that she herself had spent much time listening for her own inner voice in this space and wanted this to be a space for the children to do the same.

Willa described her intentions to hold space so that children can have time for quiet reflection. Willa shared the following,

> We are always telling kids to go find an adult, and talk about things, and that is a great strategy, but I really feel like kids need to start spending time with themselves, reflecting and listening to that inner voice that I feel we don't talk about in education. (Willa, March 9, 2018)

She saw herself as a means to which some of the children would have "a chance to listen to their inner voice" (Willa, April 19, 2018). Willa's story involved the tension of something missing in our educational spaces. She alludes to the sense that our inner voices are not attended to, acknowledged, or given space. She shared that, "mindfulness practice gives answers or ease maybe to the internal dialogue or the

internal struggles" (Willa, April 19, 2018). Byrnes (2012) reminded us, "contemplative education begins with the most intimate relationship possible—relationship with oneself" (p. 36) with a movement "both outward into the world and inward into one's own mind, body and heart" (p. 37).

Willa was attending to her own inner voice by being receptive and deepening her listening abilities. We observed that she was reaching towards whole experiences for the young and trying to create space within the context of her professional offerings. Willa was engaging in her own personal and professional development by honoring the ontological question: why is contemplative pedagogy important for holistic education? Willa recognized, from her own experience, the importance of "teaching kids more about themselves as a whole" (Willa, May 16, 2018) and being a facilitator for experiences to unfold for young people which encourage "social and emotional needs" (Willa, April 19, 2018) and well-being. The harmony of inner experience with outer awareness leads to a sense of well-being that can be holistic, preventative, integrative, and compassionate (Yeager & Howle, 2013). Willa shared her understanding that children and others want to be around "somebody who is calm and somebody who is not going to react to what's being said in that moment and that builds that trust" (Willa, April 19, 2016). Her intuition and intent were strong in her explorations with mindfulness practices and her impact on the development of these practices within the culture of the school.

Profundity of the Gift of Compassionate Presence

We realized what these research participants had come into by expanding their experience of mindfulness. It was *presence*. The participants themselves did not use the word presence to describe their experiential evolution. Rather, these words came to us as we stepped back to consider common threads in their stories and experiences. Compassion and receptivity were common threads. This presence we speak of here was the expression of the unique effect of mindfulness practices that each had experienced over time. A profundity of the gift of compassionate presence is that mindfulness is not being reached for or sought out as an integration into the school, but rather that it is an embodiment of various qualities of awareness by the very people that bring the space alive.

Merriam-Webster's (2011) Canadian dictionary defines presence as "the fact or condition of being in a certain place" (p. 330) Connelly and Clandinin (1999) suggested, "matters of professional identity are intimately interwoven with spatial and temporal borders on the professional knowledge landscape" (p. 112). We realized the research participants had both spoken about the spaces of their classrooms and the unfolding of their awareness over time. Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) defined this "presence in teaching" as

> a state of alert awareness, receptivity, and connectedness to the mental, emotional, and physical workings of both the individual and the group in the context of their learning environments, and the ability to respond with a considered and compassionate best next step. (p. 265).

Boccio (2004) described mindfulness as a "*lived* understanding" (p. 20) and goes on to share that compassion is cultivated so that there is "no sense of separation" (p. 20). Teachers in this compassionate

presence would see themselves in others and recognize their connectedness to others. The experience of coming into mindfulness occurred for both these participants after they began their practical knowledge building in the classroom and school. They were both given the space and time to attend to the nuances of cultivating compassion, receptivity, and presence into the school culture. The qualities of deep listening, present moment awareness, direct perception, and empathy are imperative for enriching our teaching and learning spaces. The teacher participants in this inquiry, with the pillar of support of the leadership, were given the opportunity to experience and explore a relational mindful pedagogy.

Conclusion

This small rural school has become a positive centerpiece of the community as a result of experiential shifts. The participants have grown and developed in ways that contributed to a common language or foundation of mindfulness. It was beneficial to have the opportunity to engage with both a seasoned teacher practitioner and a beginning teacher. It is worthwhile to continue investigating our wonders: What if beginning teachers were introduced to mindfulness practices during the course of their higher education experience in university in a safe and supported way? What if they had the opportunity to explore and embody a practice before they began teaching? University and college teacher education classes, which include an understanding and practice of mindfulness, would allow for a platform for insight and growth *before* young teachers figure out "a way of relating that requires time, attention and care" (Schneider & Keenan, 2015, p. 12). The shifting identities of these teacher participants over time create the possibility that mindfulness practices can have an impact, not only on the lives of children and adults, but also on the culture of a school.

Note

1. All names of places and people are pseudonyms.

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Unlocking Creativity:
6-Part Story Method as an Imaginative Pedagogical Tool

Warren Linds, Tejaswinee Jhunjhunwala, Linthuja Nadarajah, Antonio Starnino, and Elinor Vettraino

Abstract

This article emerges from an approach to transformative learning where students are challenged to explore taken-for-granted assumptions about their experiences in the world. We outline the 6-Part Story Method (6PSM), which uses abstract images to provide a structured storytelling process that enables reflexive learning. This is documented through conversations between a university teacher and three Masters students about the method used in their course on practical ethics in process consulting. Using individual stories that emerged from a common set of cards, we illustrate how the method enabled us to critically explore our practices as teacher and student consultants.

Background

This article emerges from the assumption that, as a transformative learner, the practitioner can "work through experiences that challenge his or her tacit, taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs, values and expectations" (Graham Cagney, 2014, p. 789). In our work, we have used the 6-Part Story Method (6PSM) to aid in this process. We document this through a dialogue between a teacher and three Masters students about the method used in a course on practical ethics in process consulting. A collective autoethnographic case study illustrates that the practitioners found that the method enabled us to "become more open, transparent, flexible, authentic and capable of change" (p. 789).

Specifically, the 6PSM is used as a pedagogical tool to enable reflection amongst students on their own approaches to ethical practice. It draws on three student consultants', and the professor's, reflection after using this tool. Using a collective set of cards, we include here the four stories that responded to the prompt, "reflect on the use of the cards as a pedagogical tool." In the process of telling these stories, "each card has its particular place and purpose so building the story enables participants to layer experiences and engage in reflection as the story is created" (Linds & Vettraino, 2008, para 31). Transformational learning emerges through our lived experiences with these cards and structure.

The 6-Part Story Method (6PSM)

The 6PSM originated from collaborative work between two dramatherapists, Mooli Lahad and Ofra Ayalon (1992, 2013), who worked with children traumatized by conflict in the Middle East. The purpose of the 6PSM was to act as a diagnostic tool for therapeutic assessment of trauma-coping methods, and

the model has its roots in the work of Alida Gersie (1997), Lahad's dramatherapy instructor, who developed the Story Evocation Technique (SET).

The 6 PSM framework is similar to Gersie's original model, which contains a particular structure:

1. A character.
2. A task the character has to accomplish.
3. A helpful force that will help the character undertake the task.
4. A hindering force that is an obstacle or stops the character from accomplishing the task.
5. Action where the character goes about coping with the challenge or problem and/or doing the task.
6. The ending to the story. This is not necessarily a conclusion but a way of understanding what happened to the character once their problem or task has been dealt with.

In Lahad's implementation of the original SET model, he would ask participants to draw an image for each of the six elements of the story. In later versions (see Dent-Brown, 1999; Vettraino, 2017), picture cards were used instead of drawings, and this process was retained and adapted for the exploration of pedagogy in this article. The reason for this relates to working with adult participants, rather than children. Adults feel significantly less free from judgment when it comes to artistic expression, and particularly drawing (see Kowalchuk & Stone, 2000; Miraglia, 2008; McKean, 2000). Elinor had commissioned the cards from a local artist. The only parameters set were that the images had to be abstract rather than of specific people, places, or things.

Warren's Story of Learning About the Method

I had known Elinor from meeting her at various Theatre of the Oppressed conferences in the United States. During a sabbatical in 2012-2013, I was having an online conversation with her about her research. She was in the middle of doing her D.Ed. Psychology research into the 6PSM where, through Image Theatre (Boal, 1992), she was exploring with educational professionals their own teaching and professional lives. They engaged in embodied storytelling—creating, telling, listening, and embodying their own, and each other's, fictional stories. The purpose of the research was to examine how an embodied process could aid the experience of "reflexing" (reflexively processing in action). So, she asked me to participate in that research at a distance.

One of my approaches to continuing to develop my own pedagogy is to learn new tools and experience new approaches to teaching. I am an experiential learner in that I have to experience something "from the inside" in order to learn a new approach. The introduction to 6PSM during a year off researching and writing was fortuitous and intriguing. When I returned to teaching, I began to apply the 6PSM to my teaching and research work, experimenting with it, and adapting it to new contexts and circumstances.

The program in which I was a professor, and Tejaswinee, Linthuja, and Antonio were graduate students, integrates theory, values, and skills in organization development and a systems approach to intervention. The program is designed to develop the expertise of students as process consultants (Schein, 1999) for future organizational leaders and consultants who are interested in facilitating change processes within human systems. An understanding of this approach to consultation evolves through developing a learning

community where students engage with theory in order to reflect on their experience and interaction with others.

The professors who developed this cohort program, based on Schein's approach, write that the purpose of intervention "at a process level is to enable the client system to catalyze its own learning and renewal, to change normative patterns to be more proactively adaptive; that is, to become a learning system" (Taylor et al., 2002, p. 361).

In the course I taught, the design is rooted in the concept of "ethical know-how" (Varela, 1999), which means that the development of an understanding of our values requires us to become attuned to, and act appropriately in, our environment. Through repeated engagement, our ethical know-how is identified and, through feedback, modified. What we experience is determined by what we do, and what we know how to do is determined by what we are open to doing. We further understand this when we approach this process through enactive and embodied knowing. Enactive knowing means that ethics develops not only as principles, but also emerges collectively through engagement with others in joint and shared action, involving embodied knowing. This means our ethical practices depend upon being actively attuned to, and in, the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Varela et al., 1991).

The 6 PSM is used particularly in the final class in this course as a way for students to reflect on their journey "into'" ethical practice, and on all the questions that emerge for them.

Reflecting on the Method Through a New Story

About six months after the end of the course, I invited students who had used the 6PSM in their final papers to collaborate with me on a reflective process well after the experience of using the cards. This reflective process led to this article.

One of the first things we did was use the cards as a way into "reflexing" on the cards as a pedagogical and reflective tool. So, using Elinor's cards and picking random cards, then turning over the cards one by one, we found ourselves creating four different stories from the same set of cards:
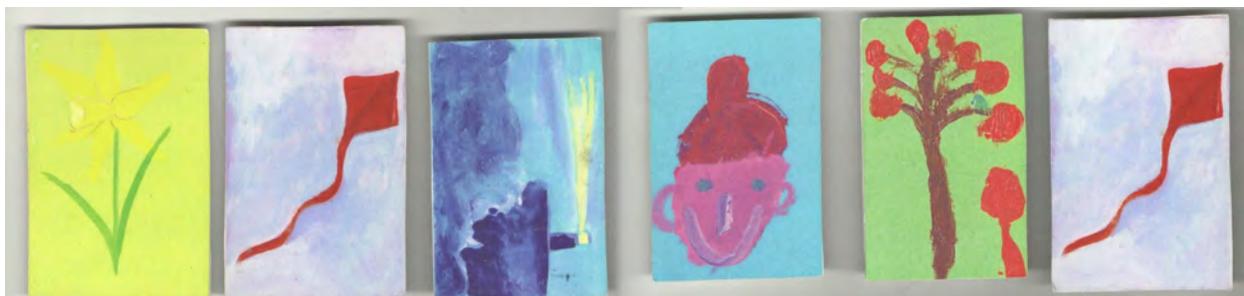
Fig. 1: Cards drawn for our group to make stories from

Warren's Story

I was a small seedling just popping out of the ground. Someone had watered me, but I didn't know who they were, but I sensed I had been nourished carefully, but I did not know who or what had done so.

As slowly my leaves sprouted out of the ground I saw a kite high in the air and I wanted to fly free like the kite but still be tethered to the ground because I had come from the ground and needed it as a connection to my history of being this seed waiting to sprout. But I did not know how I might rise up into the air flowing with the winds.

I looked for something to guide my way. There were many such things around me but how do I choose between them all? I would see something like a light and follow it with my gaze and then wonder if it was the right light to follow.

I feared that people would look at this plant still growing from the ground and wonder why my gaze was looking ever upward. People laughing at me scared me because I knew there were others that might be laughing or discounting my quest.

Then I smelled something, and I looked around and saw high up a forest of fruit bearing trees that smelled so heavenly.

I knew then I was not alone; there were others on the same quest but taking different forms and movements.

These fruits would then drop seeds that would then become new seedlings that would then engage in the quest to fly.

Tejaswinee's Story

One fine day, this little child sprung out of bed like a daffodil rises out of the darkness in the early weeks of spring. She wanted to climb greater heights, where she hadn't been before, to get a different view of her world, a broader view. She wanted to be a full-grown flower! The early sunlight dispelled the darkness, allowing this little flower to see in the darkness—and so she set out on her mission.

She had only taken a few strides, when fear came crawling into her mind, completely uninvited. This fear limited her, just like it did when I first looked at these cards. One limitation with these cards is what our mind does with them, but this limitation can also be a strength if we choose it to be. This little flower wanted to stand taller, to see more, but worried what others may think if she stood out. Would they laugh at her for being too tall, too different? What if she wanted to be something else? What if she wanted to be a fruit tree, and not a daffodil anymore? "That's it, I'm going to be a magical fruit tree!", she said. "I'll stand tall, I'll see the world, and I'll spread my seeds and encourage others to be what they want to be, not what they're told to be." She finally saw what she never could have imagined—views limitless and wide, massive and microscopic, and monotonic and vibrant. Smiling at herself, she realized—how tiny we all really are!

Linthuja's Story

She was grounded … oh so grounded, to the extent where her roots were interconnected with and wrapped around all those who were sharing her space. The ground, the dirt—that's all she ever knew, and the sky, the earth, that's all she ever felt. Her dream was to dive deep … deep deep into the ocean where she was forbidden to be—to dive deep and swim besides the red jellyfish, who so stunningly glows amidst the dark and stands up to the test of time. The winds were strong, and the tides were heavy—just strong enough to possibly swift her into the sea with her friends to explore the unknown. It wasn't at all easy, as easy as it seemed to be, for no matter how deeply she was rooted, the power of touch is all it would take to guide her off her path. She reaches her neck out to her neighbors, who were slightly taller and stronger than her. "Help me," she asks. "Help me travel to the sea, that's where I wish to be." The ground, the dirt—that's all she ever knew, and the sky, the earth, that's all she ever felt. Her dream was to dive deep … deep deep into the ocean where she was forbidden to be…

Antonio's Story

I am a growing being.
I am for new understanding and new heights.
A light shines a way forward onto me. I feel warm, whole.
But this is fuzzy, I have no control. This is not a game, it's serious.
But what if it was. So I let go and imagine. I play in the unknown
And I see. Me.

Analysis

We are writing about transformational learning through our lived experience of working with these cards. The story is inspired by the cards we pull, so we don't know the story until we write it.

As we see above, there are different patterns in the storytelling. Some of us wrote in the first person; some in the third person. Each strategy is a reflection of self. Struggles emerge through the storytelling process.

There is also an interplay between the literal and the abstract. Some stories are quite descriptive; others use the cards as jumping off points that spark something, which may not be directly related to the cards. Even the kind of story points to the different ways people think and work. Even if the stories are different and differently told, we see overarching themes of growth and fear.

Warren: *I see my story as a journey into my subconscious mind and bringing its thoughts to the surface through words. There's a playful element to my story that has engaged my inner child that may be helping him to learn and unlearn how to confront fears and challenges.*

The idea of "ending" the story with a climax helped me think beyond just a moment or a feeling in the story. It forced my mind to go a step forward. This was an empowering element that enabled me to be able to create my own story/narrative. When I think of that, I think of how I might enable students I work

with to do the same with regards to "dealing with" ethical dilemmas in their professional and personal lives.

Tejaswinee: The storytelling was a way of re-inventing myself through a narrative offered to me by my "subconscious" mind. In some ways, it enabled me to uncover the person I knew I was longing to be. Without necessarily knowing it, the story I told is the story I needed to tell, perhaps even a story I knew all along, but may have been afraid to accept directly. Similar to how we often learn through resonating with others' life experiences and stories, the characters in my story are who I resonated "with," even though these characters were created by me and were a mirror of myself all along.

Linthuja: The story I told enabled me to create my wishful, ideal state. It expresses a longing for community and a breaking away of social and psychological barriers. The cards bring me to a place of deep imagination and the ability to write freely without overthinking on what my mind may be percolating. This method allows my pencil to write before my mind fully builds its thoughts. The capacity to unleash myself from my daylong thoughts, processes, and tasks, allows me to enter a realm of creativity to build a story where I am who I want to be. In deeper reflection, these free-flowing thoughts are not truly free, they are in fact pieces of me that are often submerged deeply in my subconscious. The cards act as my vessel to release me from me.

Antonio: The theme that emerged so far for me is reaching out—breaking free, going above and beyond by dispelling myths about myself. It enabled me to go beyond the limitations of the mind and a way to project/externalize ourselves from our own life to take a conceptualized view. By seeing myself through the characters I was able to get in touch with how I was truly feeling about the situation. The pull to "desire" a certain outcome as it was unfolding was something I could become aware of and focus on. I was able to draw on many of the myths and artifacts from stories I heard around me but turn it into "my narrative," rather than something that exists separate of me. I realized I didn't want my story to have a clear ending. That it was in the uncertainty that I still had a desire to stay in, and that it was the experience of exploring the question that much of my learning was coming from.

As we see, the comments of the authors point to themes of looking at ourselves through these fictional worlds.

Reflection

Our graduate program is oriented to enabling student practitioners to reflect on their own learning selves. In particular, we draw on Chris Argyris and Donald Schön's (1974) use of the terms "single and double loop learning" to distinguish between deepened forms of reflection. This idea in part is based on Gregory Bateson's (1972) notions of "levels of learning."
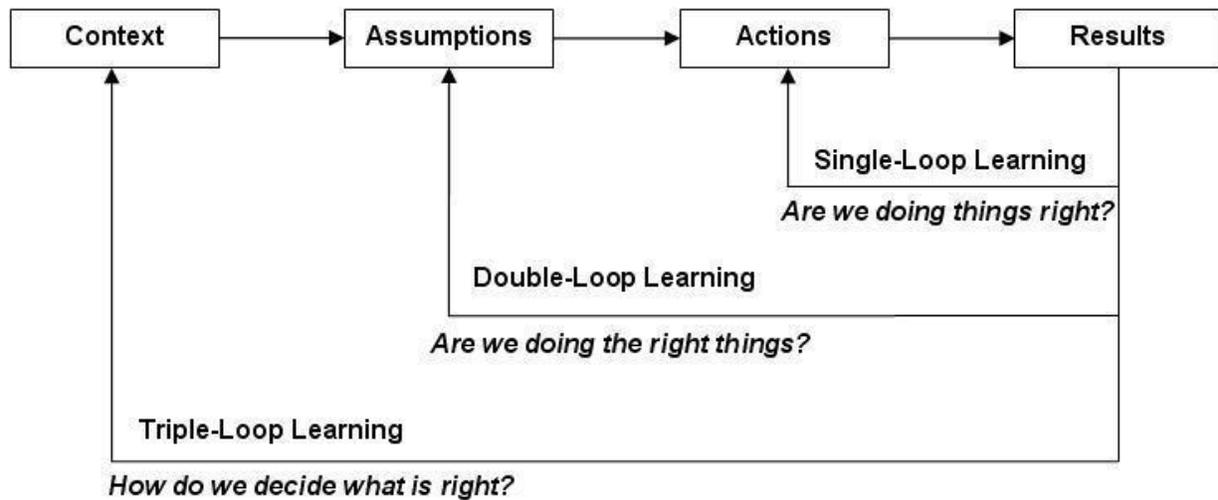
Fig. 2: Sokolov's (n.d.) description of Triple Loop Learning

The first loop occurs "whenever an error is detected and corrected without questioning or altering the underlying values of the system" (Argyris, 1999, p. 68). This involves doing things better without necessarily challenging our underlying beliefs and assumptions. The goal is improvements and fixes that often take the form of procedures or rules.

In the second loop, one not only learns but also simultaneously learns how to learn by questioning what one learned in the single loop. Thus, individuals are able to reflect on whether the "rules" should be changed, not only on whether deviations have occurred and how to correct them. This kind of learning involves more thinking outside the box, creativity, and critical thinking. This often helps participants understand their operating assumptions, so that they become observers of themselves. "To learn to double-loop learn implies learning to carry out the reflection on and inquiry into the governing variables, values and norms underlying organizational action" (Tosey et al., 2012, p. 5)

The third loop (which was inspired by Argyris and Schön's work [1974]) concerns underlying purposes and principles: "a corrective change in the system of *sets* of alternatives from which choice is made" (Bateson, 1972, p. 293). The realizations, emotions, and implications that this entails represent an entirely new set of alternatives. This involves "learning how to learn" by reflecting on how we learn in the first place, going beyond insight and patterns to context. The result creates a shift in understanding our context or point of view. We produce new commitments and ways of learning.

Gregory Bateson (1972) proposes that this level of learning is "beyond the reach of language" (p. 302). It is generative learning that is unpredictable, emergent, and, by definition, not controlled. Bateson emphasized the role of the unconscious and aesthetic, saying that learning entails a "double involvement of primary process and conscious thought" (Brockman, 1977, p. 61).

6PSM speaks to this notion of single-, double-, and triple-loop learning. The challenge is to understand how one makes the shift between loops. What might enable these changes? The cards show you possibilities that you wouldn't be able to see in other ways, like enabling you to see a blind spot we

otherwise wouldn't notice. In driving instruction, one is told to always check one's blind spot when changing lanes. This is done by using a "shoulder check." In some ways, the 6PSM is that shoulder check. It is a bit like an interruption or disruption of the circuitry and facilitates the jump to reconnect the circuitry.

In some senses 6PSM taps into both the second and third loops of learning. In order to investigate this further as a group, we looked at our stories derived from the same set of cards. The first level of reflection we did was for each of us to read each other's stories with the following questions in mind that would help us shift from loop to loop:

1. What are the overarching themes that these stories are telling us? What are they telling us about transformative learning?
2. What questions about transformative learning and change/new ways of knowing emerge for you?
3. What are the consequences or effects of this method of looking at learning?

Warren: *I find the process is a way for the subconscious mind to surface. The cards and the process bring up uncooked thoughts, beliefs, wishes—what could be, what I would like to be, what my vision for the world is. They serve as things that are complementary, or compensatory to what already exists in our lives, for example, what there's maybe too much of, or not enough of. Dilemmas emerge.*

There is also a playful element to these cards that engage our inner child—that may be helping learn and unlearn where we confront fears and take on challenges. It also enables insecurities or unresolved moments from one's past to emerge. I think the process of the ending with a climax helps think beyond just a moment or a feeling. It forces the mind to go a step forward and provides an empowering element where we are able to create, and have a hold on, our own story/narrative.

Tejaswinee: *What I find especially powerful is what happens when you give voice to your subconscious mind to express itself, without consciously imposing a problem statement when embarking on this method. The theme that seems to be emerging so far is a reaching out, a desire to break free and to go above and beyond what binds us at the "event" levels of our life. The process helps me dispel myths and labels about myself, moving past the limits of the mind. Taking this step away from our own life to take a meta or macro view on it allows for and has often helped me review the gap between when I think I was doing, versus how I might have been showing up to others.*

Linthuja: *I find the cards and process create a wishful ideal state where our longing for community takes form as we break away from social and psychological barriers. It allows me to access moments that I've unintentionally or intentionally hidden in my mind, and the process allows me to build a story of an alternate reality. These alternate realities reflect a version of me that exists and does not exist, all at once. What I find to be the most moving about this process is that the story cannot be created twice. Each moment, each time—a different story unfolds, one card at a time. It is almost as though the process mimics reality, in that no two events are truly ever identical, regardless of how much you try to retrace steps. It allows me to reflect on where and who I'd like to be versus who I am today. It allows me to*

reflect on why this story, and why now? It helps me to create meaning around events in my life as the images allow me to externalize the issue or challenge. All the cards—all those parts of me suddenly become much easier to speak about—to write about. That is the power of the 6PSM. I feel that it is magic, allowing you to slowly uncover yourself, so differently each time.

Antonio: *I found that I didn't know the story until I told it. Uncovering each card meant that I wouldn't know the full story until all cards are uncovered, uncovering one's true self and allowing me to become comfortable in my own skin. This enables me to reinvent myself as this fictional character in this fictional world, but coexisting in the Unexpected. It also gave me a sense of control in my actual life. Like if I could dictate the story through these cards, maybe my own life isn't so out of my control, maybe I do have more power over the "narrative" unfolding around me. Much of the value I personally gained through this method came through these more "meta" realizations.*

In our experience, our stories were dependent on the circumstances when we were telling or writing the story. This storytelling method does raise questions:

What provokes the story? Is it just the cards? The environment? The moment? Your day prior to seeing the cards? The people you are surrounded by?

You have the story pretty clear in your head before you open your mouth and release it, and as you release it, it starts to shift and move, creating something new in the telling. How much of the story shape shifts in the telling?

In attempting to explore these questions, we turn to the notion of the "enactive" pedagogical environment. Jerome Proulx (2010) writes that

> the concept of fitting is not a static one in which the environment is constant and only the species evolves and continues to adapt. Darwin explained that species and environment co-evolve; Maturana and Varela (1992) add that they co-adapt to each other, meaning that each influences the other in the course of evolution. In other words, the fit is an evolving one, with both parties evolving, leading Capra (1996) to assert that this creates a shift from evolution to co-evolution (p. 56).

This co-evolution is called structural coupling by Maturana and Varela, because both environment and organism interact with each other and experience a mutual history of evolutionary changes and transformations. Both environment and organism undergo changes in their structure in the process of evolution, and this makes them adapted and compatible with each other. From this notion it follows that the environment is a "trigger" for the organism to evolve, much as the organism acts as trigger for the environment to evolve in return.

If we take this idea and connect it to the storytelling, the learner or participant is not necessarily triggered by the cards, but the story co-emerges within the reflection that is in the story itself.

The cards thus become a process of "occasioning" (Davis et al., 2000), which is where possibilities arise when things are allowed to fall together. To occasion something is to bring something about, but not always deliberately, through changing the conditions of interaction.

These notions have significant implications for the use of "tools" or "activities" in pedagogical contexts. As Proulx (2010) points out, participants' learning and change are not seen as causal events determined by an external stimulus (even though they are triggered by that external stimulus). Rather, learning and change arise from the participants' own structure as it interacts with its environment. This underlines the importance of the "learners" in the learning situation as they influence how storytelling may unfold.

Conclusion

Throughout the experience, a number of key themes arose from the work, namely safety, difference between want and need, and creative exploration. Reflecting here on these themes, we will consider next steps for the work. We will each explore the themes of safety, the difference between want and need and creative exploration that emerged for us.

Safety

Elinor: For me, the theme of safety relates to the way in which distance is created through the fictional storied process. Given that the stories being created are "of me but not me" (Boal, 1995), there is an important element of aesthetic distance being created that enables the creator/teller to explore an experience as one step removed from it. The reality with transformational learning experiences is that they are borne out of a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2008) and this is not necessarily a comfortable event. The use of the story process and the images in particular, creates both a temporal and an aesthetic space in which the learning can take place.

Warren: The question has emerged for me after using the cards multiple times: what happens when we tap into the subconscious with visual images as we often don't know what the impact will be? There should be a certain level of trust in the group so that it is what I call a "safe enough" space for each person. I say safe enough because it was safe enough for each individual at that time. This brings me to the question about scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978) the use of this card process. Elinor used this process over several months in her research; I have used it several times with different purposes in the class environment. Each time I have seen new possibilities.

Antonio: Drawing off of Warren's comments of safe enough, I could see how the 6PSM facilitated my ability to be vulnerable in the face of a situation that felt ethically ambiguous, with no clear path forward. As the cards and story method externalized this process for me, I felt more comfortable bridging the gap with how I was truly feeling about the situation. The tension of pulling a card that forced you to confront a reality you may have been trying to ignore is something that challenges your own integrity on whether it makes sense to step into that space or not.

Difference between "want" and "need"

Elinor: Often when I worked with this process in the past, the story that individuals would come to the experience to tell was not the one they wound up telling. There was a difference between the story that a teller wanted to share and the one they needed to share.

Antonio: While the awareness I gained from the 6PSM was a gift and it also pushed me to have to let go and trust in the story that emerged. The question always would arise, up that the random nature also meant there may be a limitless number of possible new interpretations of our stories. I continuously struggled with the uneasiness between wanting to hold the belief that the story that needed to emerge will come through in this method. As I look back I realize that this also developed my capacity to trust not only the process but myself. That what I discovered was "right," reminding me of the concept of equifinality, that the same place can be arrived at from many different places. While the cards facilitate many different branches, the end place is one that gave me the awareness I needed in the moment.

Linthuja: Although the process is random, each time I've used the 6PSM, it has allowed me to tell a story I thought I never would explore. These stories often represented pieces of me that needed to emerge, but in a way that was implicit. It helped to not use my voice in the first person, and it helped not to exploit the challenge or the issue I was having. It was easier to tell my story through the cards and reflect on what that meant to me. Why this story and why now? Each story represents a root part of me, and it cannot be explored as separate from me, but as a part of me. As I continue to evolve, my reflection and emotions from the story, from the time I drew the cards, continue to evolve as well. The stories themselves feel like seeds—seeds of me deeply planted in the ground, that continue to be nurtured and watered the more I reflect and retell the stories. In doing so, I become more and more aware of that moment in time and it no longer feels like a story "out there," but a story that defines me. Suddenly, I become one with my roots, while also holding the awareness of the complexity and layers that exist in all of my stories, since no one story or instance can be defined without the telling of another story.

Creative exploration

Warren: Gregory Bateson (1979) introduces the idea of learning as emerging from dual stochastic processes. By this he means that creative thought relies on some initial randomness, which is then assimilated into a preexisting system of beliefs according to a requirement of coherence or rigor (which is a nonrandom process). In the 6PSM, the cards that are turned over one by one to enable the building of the story are totally random. The teller must then improvise through engaging with the cards as they are turned over, as well as the mindspace environment which the prompt for the stories has provided. (For example, in my class, the prompt might be "think about your experience exploring ethics in this class"). But the story structure is nonrandom and very structured. Without the randomness, nothing new would emerge and creativity wouldn't be able to wander. Without the linear structure, the process of storytelling would lack reference to the world of the storyteller.

Several times when this process has been used in class, a student would shout out, "how did the cards know my story!?" This interplay between fiction and reality has enabled that student to experience transformative learning. A transformative learning approach helps us to become aware of, and change, our frames of mind and action. In the 6PSM the story enables us to 'see' our original frame, and the process of recognizing that gives us the opportunity to reframe.

Antonio: I draw inspiration from the roots of the word exploration, "explorare," which mean to investigate, or search out (Online Etymology Dictionary, n.d.). While unexpected and random in nature, there is a quality of searching I found myself experiencing. While I am hesitant about making a comparison with "tarot," there is a quality that I was discovering in the "future story" of a "past experience." With the drawing of each card both giving me awareness while also helping me rewrite the story of an experience. I was making meaning in the moment, with the difference being it was not a meaning that emerged from an external source, but rather socially constructed rooted in my own context and interpretation (Gergen, 2001).

Tejaswinee: What or how we're thinking could be based on the intensity of emotions and the circumstances we're experiencing in those moments. If the cards are being used with a specific thought in mind, an "in the moment" story card use may look very different than if you are in a more reflective space, thinking back to an event that happened a while ago. I think the same applies for when we use the method to just tell a story, tapping more into the subconscious mind and trying to uncover what may be happening there.

Either way, we have found that the cards provide a space of learning, introspection, and reflection. When used with children and adults alike, I have found it to be an effective way of plunging quickly into a creative space by distancing ourselves from our own stories just for a little while.

When I initially came across this method, I found the structure challenging and limiting. I then asked myself, "Is the structure limiting you or are you limited by the structure?" Through using the cards a couple more times, I realized that in fact the structure the method offered was helping me create and articulate novel stories from my subconscious that I didn't know I was capable of. Instead of my mind going everywhere and nowhere, the pictures provide a branch for my leaves to spring from, and sometimes make beautiful buds, flowers, and fruit. Then when I look back at my stories, I most often find them to just be a mirror of my internal condition, even though I rarely start with that intention in my mind.

I find this method, like some other imaginal approaches, helps my very divergent mind flex muscles in sensing, articulating, and meaning making, all of which are key in the systems-change work I often find myself engaged in. I have also recently started using it with individuals and teams I work with. I look forward to collectively reflecting with them on how they are experiencing the process.

Linthuja: Each card, each turn, invites a new story to be told. Despite the structure that is created in the 6PSM, the options are limitless with the turn of every card. The process itself creates a little rigidity in me—not knowing what might come next, what if it's a trigger that opens up a story that I hadn't thought

of for so long? The beauty of this process is exactly that—the ability to sit in a quiet space to tell a story I have never told myself before. The process allows me to make meaning of stories, from the past or future state. It allows me to become aware of my emotions and those of people around me, from when something took place to a space several years later as I reflect using this process. The same event, involving me, is being explored by me in two different spaces and times. It is as though I open a door, and a flood of possibilities enter with the cards. Beyond my imagination that slowly awakens with this process, I feel as though my emotions and awareness awaken too. I am able to relive an experience, but differently, and I am able to feel my emotions, but differently.

Elinor: *Reflecting on Warren's experience of the impact of images led me to consider that the creation of new knowledge is not always a comfortable process or experience. The emotional connection with the stories told means that there is a vulnerability that occurs for some participants in the process. This in itself is not surprising; a number of theorists have explored the link between trust and vulnerability, and the opening up of personal experiences through storytelling (for example, Corlett, 2012; Gersie & King, 1990; Stuart, 2001). However, the collective and communal nature of the process of engaging in the 6PSM offers a depth of shared experience that enables participants to work almost as a team through the stories told. This requires trust in each other, and in the facilitator of the experience, to recognize the creation of a safe space in which to work.*

This safety can in part be built by the model itself. The structured approach to the creation of a story puts parameters around the work done, although the linearity of the model can often be disrupted in the telling. Participants will move in and out of the structure itself, telling the story more as an ante-narrative (Boje, 2001, 2006), something that grows and changes through the insights and commentary offered by the listeners. Each sharing of a story gives new knowledge to the creator/teller and also to those listening who can bootstrap their experiences onto the world evolving in the story being heard.

Note

The images used from the 6PSM in this article cannot be reproduced without permission from Elinor Vettraino.

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Rehumanizing Education:
Teaching and Learning as Co-Constructed Reflexive Praxis

Ellyn Lyle and Chantelle Caissie

Abstract

Teaching and learning are profoundly personal experiences, yet systems of education often prioritize ubiquitous agendas that alienate rather than engage. Creating space for individuals and their lived experiences has the capacity to transform the classroom from a place of containment to one of expansiveness. Resisting the tendency of education to think dichotomously about teaching/learning, theory/practice, and self/other, we engage here as two learners who happen to have shared a graduate program, one as teacher and one as student. Influenced by *post-qualitative inquiry* (St. Pierre, 2017a; St. Pierre, 2017b) and *post academic writing* (Badley, 2019), we engage reflexively to consider the experience of this shared learning journey.

Context

Teaching and learning are profoundly personal experiences, yet systems of education often prioritize ubiquitous agendas that alienate rather than engage. Beginning from a place that recognizes the inherently subjective entanglements that come with constructing knowledge (Bochner, 1997; Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Clandinin, 2015; Connelly & Clandinin, 2000; O'Grady et al., 2018; Palmer, 1993, 1997, 1998, 2004, 2017), we revisit the experience of our shared learning journey. We begin from our individual entry points and move through the ebb and flow of reflexivity as we explore practices that nurture both the individual and the collective. As we approach the conclusion of this shared journey, we consider possibilities for a re/humanization of education that positions teaching and learning and co-constructed reflexive praxis.

Ellyn's Entry Point

An island girl —
an island
in between
two sisters and two bodies —
of water -
of a farmer and a teacher

a creature of the land
guided by relationality
and responsibility
to place -

to each other -
intimately aware
how we effect
and inform

crafted from red soil
sustained by saltwater
yet traded fields
of rippling barley and blossoming potatoes
for the field of education

with the exchange,
a promise —
to grow a praxis guided
by lessons on the land.

Chantelle's Entry Point

Cracked beneath the weight of my own conditioning.

I cautiously walk,
trembling towards the unknown
with the fragments of a broken heart
stored beneath the lid of a warped
and dusty shoe box.

I emerge,
a voiceless learner,
a wannabe scholar,
a skilfully skill-less educator.

without warning,
I begin to run.

painfully vulnerable,
and stripped of my armour,
I run fearlessly,
towards the field of education

breaking free from a world of intellect,
towards a praxis of vulnerability
with only my broken heart,
and a dusty shoe box.

Our individual entry points intersect at a collective aim—the reflexive exploration of teaching and learning practices that are undergirded by lived experience. As such, we are firmly situated, both pedagogically and practically, in a place that acknowledges the constructivist and integrated nature of both teaching and learning (Clandinin, 2015). We are guided by the belief that each of us comes to learning with varied experiences that inform not only what we know, but also how we know. Despite

these deeply human entanglements that characterize teaching and learning, much of education continues to prioritize dehumanized, decontextualized, and disembodied ways of knowing. Resisting this trend, pockets of educators have moved toward social constructivist conceptualizations of knowledge, which have, in turn, led to the rise of pedagogical approaches that resist *monologic telling* in favour of dialogic co-inquiry (Grimmett, 2016). Theoretically influenced by the work of scholars who advocate for co-construction of meaning (see, for example, the work of Dewey, Bakhtin, Freire, and Shor), dialogic pedagogies embrace a fluid and reflexive approach to meaning making (Edwards-Groves et al., 2014). Within this approach, knowledge is positioned as intensely personal and transient, all the while being negotiated within sociopolitical contexts (Grimmett, 2016). This impermanence of knowledge is a great equalizer in education as the teacher is no longer assumed to be the expert. Rather, each of us is respected as the authority on our own lives and agents of our negotiated understandings. This bringing together of self and society is inherently reflexive, as it requires us to look inward and outward in tandem as we struggle to make sense of the world and ourselves in it. By encouraging critical introspection of self in relationship with social context, reflexivity insists that we take responsibility for our perspectives and actions within a relational system (Oliver, 2004). In making this accountability central, reflexive approaches interrogate agency while probing philosophical notions about the nature of knowledge. By its very design, then, reflexivity disrupts normalized assumptions about how we come to knowledge, and presents essential questions about our capacity to account for our evolving understanding of lived experience (Cunliffe, 2016; Lyle, 2017). Reflexivity is not to be engaged casually. To be reflexive is to live with an empathic heart and redirect the onus of responsibility from *i* to *we* with the intent of fostering deeper debate and critical questioning (Brookfield, 2017; Cunliffe, 2016).

Successfully facilitating such a pedagogical shift requires a personal willingness to extend the boundaries of our own comfort zones. Even as we acknowledge the important foundational work in landscapes of teacher professional knowledge that created the fertile ground on which these new conversations could grow (see, for example, Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Connelly & Clandinin, 2000), we find ourselves drawn to Elizabeth St. Pierre's work advancing post-qualitative inquiry (PQI), specifically that which challenges conventional qualitative inquiry (2017a, 2017b, 2018). PQI resists methodological enclosure. In its refusal to be contained by empiricism, it emerges at/tending to the strange and deeply intimate ontological aspects of living in real time (St. Pierre, 2018, 2019). PQI is always becoming. It does not arrive completed, having followed step-by-step instructions, and it cannot be measured (St. Pierre, 2018, 2019). Rather, this experimental inquiry evades the structured and conceptual order of conventional research, enabling inquirers to follow rhizomatic pathways toward a world of living that draws focus "not on things already made, but on things in the making" (St. Pierre, 2018, p. 604). Shifting away from the traditional landscapes of insights lost within parenthetic references, she advocates for the unpredictable and seemingly organic spirit of writing (St. Pierre, 2018).

Drawing on these unpredictable encounters with the organic forces of PQI, Elizabeth St. Pierre's (2019) advocacy for all forms of writing as inherently epistemological led us to the scholarship of Graham Badley (2017, 2019, 2020a, 2020b) who champions post-academic writing. He maintains that, too often, as academic writers, we fail to extend ourselves beyond objectivity and, as a result, we litter our pages with

academic jargon that no one understands, pulled from a place that no one can relate to, and where the author has simply disappeared (Badley, 2019). As self-expressive beings, we acknowledge that writing carves a new pathway that dares us to take risks and to welcome new adventures in thought (Badley, 2020a).

As a framework, PQI begins wherever we find ourselves to be, and the conditions of its emergence enable the opportunity to re/connect and re/construct new pathways of knowing (St. Pierre, 2019). The fluid and intimate nature of PQI provides a strong foundation to explore the raw and vulnerable spaces of human *being*. Situated, then, in post-qualitative inquiry and challenging the inaccessibility of traditional academic writing, we engage poetry to explore pathways to wholeness in our teaching and learning lives. Without a particular destination in mind, we consider how poetry can help us access things deeply held that might otherwise be inaccessible (Wiebe, 2015).

Poetic Un/Certainty: Emerging Conversations With the Text and Each Other

Sean Wiebe (2015) tells us that poetic inquiry enables the richness of lived experience to be shared in *"fierce, tender, and mischievous"* ways (p. 152)—ways unimpeded by academic traditions of proving. Instead, poetic inquiry encourages us to explore "meaning in living and being" (p. 153). Engaging poetically in the context of academic study is also engaging autobiographically, a channel through which Maxine Greene (1995) says we can achieve "freedom in an expanded sphere" and "act…to transform…what alienates people from themselves" (p. 27). But such *expanded spheres* require courage to navigate the inevitable vulnerability (Lyle, 2018; Lessard et al., 2018; Snowber & Wiebe, 2009). Acknowledging that, "poetry reaches out to and from the human heart, embodying through artistic form what it means to be alive," we must be prepared for inquiry that "pulls us out in brave ways" (Finn, 2015, p. 5). As our conversations with each other and the texts continue to emerge, we notice two recurring themes as we endeavour to re/introduce humanness to teaching and learning: vulnerability and relationality.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability is an emotional risk that leaves us feeling exposed as we are pulled beyond our comfort zones. One of the most widely accepted myths is that vulnerability correlates with weakness. Society has weaved together a dangerous and collective denial of vulnerability, associating it with shame and disappointment (Brown, 2012; Finn, 2015). Teaching and learning, though, *are* acts of vulnerability because we project the condition of our souls onto each other, as the complexities of who we are become entangled in our subject and ways of being together (Lessard et al., 2018; Palmer, 2017).

Sarah MacKenzie (2012) maintains that learning is autobiographical, situated in our experiences, and central to shaping our perspectives of self, others, and the world. Our experiences, though, are often regarded as unreliable and hopelessly subjective within the sphere of academia. Parker Palmer (2017) states that, as educators conditioned to minimize vulnerability, we often take shelter in so-called

objective ways of knowing. The *silencing discourse* of academia often closes the door on lived reality and forces us to compromise our experiences of [im]perfection for theoretical considerations and sterile language (Bochner, 1997; Clandinin et al., 2009; Thomas, 2018). M'Balia Thomas (2018) argues that within an "entrenched system of linguistic norms [and] unitary language" (p. 328), we never truly become acquainted with our whole being because we wrap ourselves in silence hoping to mask our vulnerability. Challenging academic giants who have prioritized these sterile ways of knowing is often regarded as academic suicide (Yoo, 2019), but we must resist academia's incessant need to separate our humanity from our work (Richardson, 1988).

Teaching and learning from a place that values lived experiences contributes to connection and mutual recognition of one another (Brookfield, 2017). However, taught to separate the personal and professional, we drag the roots of our failures and traumas to the depths of our unconscious minds. The failure to explore our humanity, then, alienates us from ourselves and misinforms our praxis. Vulnerability enables us to write what matters, at/tending to the constant and courageous emergence of who we are. Writing poetically creates room to find magic in the hurt and compassion in the chaos (Finn, 2015). Education does not need more standardized tools or assessments—it needs to learn how to be hospitable to the fragility and beauty of our vulnerability (Clandinin, 2015; Finn, 2015).

> *I've missed you.*
>
> *I am so sorry,*
> *I know I have been gone for a very long time.*
>
> *I didn't know where to find you,*
> *I was scared,*
> *scared that maybe, maybe you didn't want to be found.*
>
> *Do you remember me?*
>
> *Do you need me,*
> *Want me?*
>
> *I know you're hurt,*
> *I know you've been hurt.*
>
> *I'm hurting too.*
>
> *But maybe,*
> *maybe we could hurt together?*
>
> *— My inner child, I am so deeply sorry for your wounds.*

Neither of us identifies as poets; however, in the midst of chaos and fear, words find us, easing our minds and slowly lulling us into a poetic understanding of how and who our beliefs and assumptions serve. Poetry offers a space to examine our experiences through words, creating a window into our thoughts that identifies the source of our attachments and fears (Faulkner, 2012; MacKenzie, 2019). The challenge

of exposing our vulnerability often lies in the fear that accompanies it (Kenyon, 2019). The failure to acknowledge this fear, though, further contributes to disconnectedness (Kenyon, 2019; MacKenzie, 2019). As educators, we often enter the classroom with assumptions about how we think teachers and learners should behave; however, the complexities of culture, experience, politics, and consciousness that converge in teaching and learning often blur our perception of the effect we have on each other. We explore this effect as *relationality*.

Relationality

Celeste Snowber and Sean Wiebe (2009) refer to the body as home to living and breathing text, suggesting that the body offers invaluable insight into who we are and how we teach. So much of what we encounter throughout life—those experiences that write themselves on our being—we don't talk about (Snowber & Wiebe, 2009). The adventurous style of *writing dangerously* (Yoo, 2019; Badley, 2020b) may appear provocative and reckless upon first glance; however, it enables us to inhabit its space, helping us see and hear the text, not from our minds, but from our hearts. Exploring the restricted section of self can break open the page and invite our vulnerability to exist in the company of others, connecting and commanding a communal transformation in learning and living (MacKenzie, 2019).

> *Writing is magic.*
>
> *and no,*
> *not the kind of magic you read in fantasy novels*
> *or see in movies.*
>
> *No, this magic awakens the soul.*
> *You feel it in your bones.*
>
> *Like lightening, it strikes you.*
>
> *This magic had you sneaking out past curfew,*
> *driving through vacant parking lots.*
> *This magic was found on track 4 of your cd mixtape,*
> *windows down,*
> *and volume on full blast.*
>
> *This magic was found in the front seat of a broken-down station wagon -*
> *singing, laughing, and crying with your best friend.*
>
> *This magic was innocent,*
> *Fearless,*
> *Seventeen.*
>
> *Writing is magic.*
>
> *This magic held your gaze,*
> *inviting you into its warmth as it gently brushed your lips,*
> *intoxicating you with its kiss.*

This magic took you by the hand,
danced with you –
moved you to the melody of your heart.

This magic was love,
this magic was the one.

Writing is magic.

This magic screamed,
manipulated –
brought every inch of you to the brink of fear.

This magic humiliated you,
left you bruised,
naked.

This magic had you triple checking that the doors were locked,
it had you sleeping with a night light on.

This magic –
this darkness –
was drowned with a stiff drink, or 10.

Writing is magic, you are magic.

Discomfort is inevitable in writing our teaching and learning lives and, often in the wake of our vulnerability, we feel alone in our unveiling. However, writing communicates, resonating with the rich complexities of life (Yoo, 2019). Writing ushers us toward real encounters with life, such as illness, violence, and death—encounters we may not have explored without writing. Through *writing dangerously*, we awaken our fears but, more importantly, we awaken our humanity. In her writing, Joanne Yoo (2019) offers reassurance, maintaining that the writer is already within each of us, prepared and willing to connect, if only we create the space. Writing and living poetically creates space for uncertainty and utilizes words as a springboard to foster connection and hope—it is through our vulnerability and relationality that we inspire and re/instill hope in our learners (MacKenzie, 2019).

Poetic inquiry offers a teaching and learning space that invites uncertainty and allows for creative exploration that fosters conscious awareness of how we come into being (MacKenzie, 2019). We write about our experiences and relationships in hope of gaining a sense of understanding that allows us to position education as a more liberating experience. Creating a brave space to invite our humanity to join us in our teaching and learning experiences enables a vulnerable interchange that breathes life back into curriculum (Snowber & Wiebe, 2009). Ruth Behar (2009) explained that writing from a place of vulnerability attracts vulnerable readers who seek shelter from the intellectual world. Dangerous writers become our companions, then, and together we grow collectively, learning and reconstructing our lives from each other's words (Yoo, 2009).

Co-Constructed Praxis

As teachers and learners, we are critical data sites, and our experiences offer a window into the behaviours and actions that contribute to education as a profoundly human endeavour. Engaging approaches to reflexive consciousness, like poetic inquiry, allows us to explore the inner terrain of self. At the heart of this approach is supporting learning as an evolving understanding in the context of relationship with others. Poetic writing offers an avenue that invites uncertainty and allows for creative exploration that fosters conscious awareness of how we come into being (MacKenzie, 2019). Poetry values the individual by examining our humanity from a holistic and ever-emerging lens. Through poetic writing, we become more resilient when confronted by traditional learning practices that perpetuate dehumanization. In living and learning, we crave connection; poetry constructs a space that permits multiple meanings to surface through language and fosters a sense of hope in the midst of uncertainty (MacKenzie, 2019).

Prioritizing and attending to the realities of our lives infuses our writing, learning, and teaching with warmth and authenticity (Badley, 2019). Breaking free from the scripted or sanitized versions of our lives unveils our [im]perfect being, crafted by experiences and seasoned with stories that expose the nature of teaching and learning (Harkins et al., 2009). Operating beyond linguistic borders creates a space to playfully re/negotiate text, extending our voices to the ears of the majority, demanding they listen to what we have to say (Thomas, 2018). It is through experimentation that we encounter authentic voice. Our capacity to engage in difficult or dangerous writing challenges the often-inaccessible language of academia (Badley, 2020a).

We acknowledge that this way of being is both personal and political as it stands to resist dehumanized systems of schooling in favour of claiming education as a space where critical and reflexive practices can drive social change. To achieve this goal, we endeavour to engage in ways that are grounded in both individual and collective humanity with the intention of supporting relevant learning, such that the effect of education is felt long after students leave formal schooling.

Deconstructing teaching and learning through poetic inquiry has provided us with the space to identify the characteristics and assumptions that have structured and influenced our praxis. Freire (2005) argues, "only dialogue truly communicates" (p. 40), which speaks to the significance of creating healthy and reciprocal relationships within the classroom.

>*Words are like musical notes,*
>*each word represents a pitch —*
>*a duration of sound.*
>
>*Words, when played together, create harmony and depth.*
>
>*Our words can be happy, upbeat, and playful to the soul*
>
>*Or*

Romantic and gentle,
as they tuck us in closer to their warmth on a chilly September night.

Or

Our words can be tragic, shattering our perception of the world and scaring the inner
landscape of our innocence.

Our words correspond to the song playing in our hearts.

In/Conclusion

As educators, we are not solely responsible for creating a safe space for our learners; we are also responsible for creating a safe space for ourselves. Embracing humanity within a learning space invites dialogue and extends an opportunity for individuals to speak a new language of creativity and knowing beyond a world of objectivity (Bochner, 1997; Lyle, 2018). Our experiences provide a window of opportunity to become re/acquainted with the new and changing seasons of our lives. Often as educators, we become disenchanted as systemic hegemony works to impede our efforts to re/negotiate or re/form our practices (Duenkel et al., 2014; Palmer, 2017). The ability not only to cultivate new perspectives, but also to act upon new-found insights, is a necessary constituent of transformative learning among current and prospective educators (Liu, 2015). Embracing the fragmented pieces or broken paradoxes that have framed our perceptions of self and others, fosters creative space for existing narratives to become dismantled or rewritten (Lyle, 2018).

Writing/living/teaching/learning poetically has provided a safe and creative space for us to begin unravelling the critical and fragile aspects of our humanity. We maintain that nurturing a trusting relationship between the student and teacher does not begin until we learn how to trust ourselves. With/in this space resides a gentle but unrelenting call to resist the dominant discourse that would write our stories for us.

Own your story —
take all the broken shards
* and assemble them*
with your trembling hands,
* piece by piece,*
gaining confidence
* in the reconstitution*
*   of you.*
Whole once more,
* polish yourself to a shine*
that illuminates
* all those around you*
so that they cannot
* help but to see.*
*   — transcendence*

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Ellyn Lyle is an avid gardener and ardent reader of life and lived experience. Intensely interested in creating spaces for learners to engage meaningfully with their studies, she is drawn to inquiries that seek to overcome compartmentalized, fragmented, and dehumanized approaches to education. Having joined the academic community full time in 2011, she is currently Dean in the Faculty of Education at Yorkville University. The use of critical and reflexive methodologies shape explorations within the following areas: intersections of self and subject and their implications for teacher and learner identity; praxis and practitioner development; lived and living curriculum; and undivided ways of knowing and being.

Chantelle Caissie, an Alumna at Yorkville University, has a rich and diverse background in health and community services, with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology and a Graduate Certificate in Addictions & Mental Health Counselling. Her compassion for marginalized populations and advocacy for social justice led her toward achieving a Master's Degree in Education, specializing in Adult Education. As a health professional transitioning into the education sector, Chantelle has challenged dominant academic discourse, hoping to encourage a shift away from objectivity toward exploring the tender and vulnerable spaces of our interior lives imperative to our growth as both working professionals and human beings being.

Moving Toward Decolonizing and Indigenizing Curricular and Teaching Practices in Canadian Higher Education

Julie A. Mooney

Abstract

In this reflective paper, I interweave autoethnographic personal narrative and critical self-reflection with theoretical literature in order to engage and wrestle with decolonizing and Indigenizing my teaching and curricular practices in Canadian higher education. Acknowledging that walking this path is challenging, I seek multiple trailheads in an effort to access my hidden curriculum, my complicit knowledge, and unsettling moments that have the potential to transform me. My objective is to critically interrogate myself to prepare for respectfully and appropriately moving toward reconciliation in my relationships with Indigenous colleagues, students, and communities, and in my work as a curriculum maker.

Research Question

As a non-Indigenous academic, how can I begin the work of Indigenizing and decolonizing my teaching and curricular practices?

Methodology

This study uses autoethnography and autobiographical writing and critical self-reflection to explore my stories of experience, as I wonder and learn about decolonizing and Indigenizing my teaching and curricular practices. Through this work a process model developed—Settler Starting Points—that may support non-Indigenous postsecondary educators interested in decolonizing and Indigenizing their own teaching and curricular contexts and practices (See Mooney, unpublished manuscript).

Autoethnography

"Stories [are] complex, constitutive, meaningful phenomena that [teach] morals and ethics, introduce unique ways of thinking and feeling, and help people make sense of themselves and others" (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 274). Autoethnography is a research methodology that uses self-reflective, autobiographical writing to facilitate the researcher's exploration of their own personal stories of experience, in order to gain insight into cultural experience (Ellis et al., 2011). Among other qualitative methodologies, autoethnography privileges subjectivity and emotion, and acknowledges that the researcher influences the research (Ellis et al., 2011). In this study, I am not seeking "the Truth," but rather I am exploring my stories of experience, as I recall them at this time, in order to examine what meaning I make of them and what that reveals about my tacit and complicit knowledges. Understanding these taken-for-granted ways of

knowing will help to reveal, to me, my hidden curriculum and, potentially, move me into unsettling moments (Easton et al., 2019) and towards personal transformation.

Methods

The autobiographical narratives presented in this paper were written iteratively and separately over a period of three years. Reading scholarly and grey literature, that is now woven into these narratives, facilitated my critical self-reflection and supported my ongoing reeducation about Indigenous realities. Initially, these narratives were written as stories of experience. With each review and revision, I incorporated my "for now" analysis—prompted by further self-questioning—into the narratives. The Settler Starting Points process model[1] that grew out of this autobiographical writing process is represented in Figure 1, and sample questions to facilitate the Settler Starting Points process are provided as prompts in Appendix A.

Context of the Study

As an educational developer, curriculum designer, and teacher in Canadian postsecondary education for nearly 15 years, and as a non-Indigenous settler scholar, my institutional educational experiences have privileged settler-colonial systems, languages, cultures, epistemologies, and ontologies. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its final report, raising an alarm for Canadian educational institutions (among other sectors of society), through 94 Calls to Action that urged us to learn the truth about the Indian Residential School system and its genocidal legacy against Indigenous people, their families, and communities (TRC, 2015). In response to these Calls to Action, many Canadian universities and colleges developed strategic plans to "Indigenize" their campuses.

Problem Statement

Institutional strategic plans to Indigenize do not identify specific tasks or procedures for implementation at the level of teaching and curricula. These strategic documents have been criticized for glossing over the Calls to Action with token responses that fail to engage in the deeper transformational work of decolonizing education and eliminating racism on campuses, at interpersonal and systemic levels (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Pidgeon, 2014; Todd, 2018). Teaching professors and educational developers, who are largely non-Indigenous people in the context of Canadian higher education,[2] must find our way into this unfamiliar landscape of decolonizing and Indigenizing our teaching and curricular practices. As non-Indigenous academics, who have often been educated exclusively in Western educational institutions, we are not only unfamiliar with, but likely ignorant and mis-informed about Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies. Further complicating the problematic, "because Indigenous scholars are a minority within Canadian postsecondary institutions, they are often over-relied upon to be the experts on Indigenization" (Mooney, unpublished manuscript). Reconciliation needs to be a process for repairing the broken relationships between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples. Settler scholars, like myself,

need to recognize the ongoing settler-colonial system from which we continue to benefit, to attend critically to the history of extractive and exploitative settler-colonialism, and to take responsibility for our reeducation.

Who Do You Think You Are?

Before I began exploring Indigenization and decolonization, I tried to stay safely in a less contested, less complicated, and less controversial area of research. I feared the alienation and disruption such research might cause. I feared I was bound to offend, fail, or cause further harm by exploring this challenging subject matter. But settler silence supports the theory of the perfect stranger (Dion, 2007). "Dominant stories that position Aboriginal people as, for example, romanticised, mythical, victimised, or militant Other, enable non-Aboriginal people to position [ourselves] as respectful admirer, moral helper, protector" (p. 331). Through reading and reflection, I realized that my silence, too, has the potential to offend, fail, or cause further harm. Nobody ever said this would be easy.

Since deciding to engage in this research, I have experienced resistance from some Indigenous and settler academics. Settler colleagues who resist this work warn me that it is not valued and it may damage my career prospects. Indigenous colleagues who resist my engagement with this work have asked questions along the lines of, "Why should you have access to our knowledges, our land-based learning, our stories, our pedagogies, our Elders? They belong to us. Who do you think you are?" These are legitimate questions of critical importance for settlers, like myself, to ask ourselves. Exploitative and extractive research by Western academics in Indigenous communities has demonstrated a lack of respect and care for Indigenous peoples and has had damaging effects on settler-Indigenous relations (Hunt, 2018; Kuokkanen, 2007). Moreover, Indigenous scholarship, feminist, antiracist, and critical theories all contest the Eurocentric arrogance that assumes we can know the "other" (Kuokkanen, 2007).

Who *do* I think I am to write about Indigenizing curricular and teaching practices in Canadian higher education? As a woman of Irish-Scottish ancestry, I am a settler in Canada. Throughout Canada's history, Celtic people have migrated from Ireland and Scotland (and elsewhere) to these lands to make a new life and to prosper in ways that were not possible in our ancestral homelands. While some of my family members and ancestors experienced and (some) fled English colonialism in our homelands, Irish and Scottish people also benefited from settler-colonialism that made way for waves of Celtic people to arrive and settle on these lands. Moreover, Celtic immigrants continue to benefit from the ongoing colonial project that privileges whiteness (white skin), English-language, Christian heritage, and Western institutions and knowledge systems.[3] Conversely, I must also ask myself, "Who am I *not* to work toward reconciliation?" Isn't it my responsibility, as a settler, to contribute to repairing and rebuilding the broken relationships between settlers and Indigenous peoples in the territory where I live, learn, and work?

In What Sphere Do You Have Influence?

Professionally, I identify as an educator, researcher, and educational developer in the higher education sector in Canada. I have, along with many others, capacity to contribute to the re-visioning and reshaping of postsecondary education. Decolonizing and transforming higher education is especially important in response to the damage that was done to Indigenous peoples and communities through the Indian Residential School system (TRC, 2015). I understand it necessary that I engage in this work alongside Indigenous colleagues, so as to be led by them, and simultaneously not allow the burden of this work to be carried by them alone. "Discouragement and burnout prevail in the meager sprinkling of Indigenous faculty in Canadian universities" (Battiste et al., 2002, p. 92).

How Can I Decolonize My Mind?

Mis-education

As a child, I was mis-educated (Dewey, 1938) about Indigenous peoples and their cultures. The French Immersion curriculum of my generation and in my eastern Ontario community presented "les autochtones" (Indigenous peoples) as warriors, sensationalizing their tactics of war. I remember emphasis on Iroquois scalping practices and the violence that was inflicted on Jesuit priests. The stories were taught from French-Canadian and Québécois perspectives, with such a skimming over of other regions of Canada, that I didn't have any consciousness of the different histories and cultures of Indigenous communities in Western and Northern Canada, and very limited knowledge about those in Central and Eastern Canada. What's more, the curriculum made no mention at all of contemporary Indigenous peoples and their (at the time of my public school education) 20th century realities.

In 1990, when the Mohawk people defended their territory and the Canadian Army was sent in to stop them, I was working as a Junior Forest Ranger in Northern Ontario, completely cut off from television, radio, and newspapers. I didn't hear about "the Oka Crisis" until the end of the summer, when I went home to Ottawa, and my Dad joked that I went into the bush for the summer and our country nearly went to war. Though he tried to reassure me, I knew there was some truth in his comment. I wanted to know more about this near-war between Canada and the Mohawk people. I searched newspapers, but information was not digitized like it is now. Information was spotty and I struggled to figure out what the crisis was really about. Even though the Oka standoff continued through September that year, I have no recollection of any teachers discussing it in my public school classes.

As I write my foggy memory of the Oka protests that took place nearly 30 years ago, over the past few weeks, new Indigenous blockades have been established on rail lines across Canada in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs, in northern British Columbia, who oppose the construction of the Coastal GasLink natural gas pipeline[4] approved to be built across Wet'suwet'en territory (The Canadian Press, 2020). This morning an iconic image of the Oka Crisis was front and centre when I opened the news online. The caption reads, "Sept 1, 1990: Canadian soldier Patrick Cloutier and Saskatchewan

Ojibway Brad Laroque alias "Freddy Kruger" come face to face in a tense standoff in Kanesatake which began as a land dispute with the municipality of Oka, Que. (Shaney Komulainen/Canadian Press)" (CBC Radio, 2020, webpage). As I read the article, I learn that the Oka protests in 1990 were in opposition to the planned expansion of a golf course (CBC Radio, 2020). Now, 30 years later, Indigenous peoples continue to struggle for respect and recognition of their territories and their laws. Has settler-colonial Canada learned anything in the past three decades?

Slowly, I am working to undo my mis-education, to unlearn my ignorance, and gain understanding about Indigenous struggles for sovereignty and self-determination. What started in my youth as a search for information, has grown into a feeling of personal connection to the issues that matter to Indigenous peoples. I am starting to understand that we are all interconnected and dependent on the land. Without healthy, thriving ecosystems and biospheres, we are in trouble as a species. I was learning those lessons while I planted trees and built salmon spawning beds in the forests and rivers of Northern Ontario, as a Junior Forest Ranger 30 years ago. Now I see that those issues of environmental sustainability can serve as a site for understanding and connection between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Perhaps this common ground is a place to start a new relationship with one another, to start the work of reconciliation.

Roadblocks to Ally Engagement

From 2013 to 2016, I coordinated the establishment of a centre for peace education at a Canadian college. Around the same time, a group of colleagues at the college started discussing and acting on the dearth of supports available to Indigenous students and, shortly thereafter, the TRC calls to action were released (TRC, 2015). I saw the work of improving Indigenous student experiences as consistent with the values and mandate of the peace centre. But when I suggested collaboration between these two initiatives, one of the college's senior leaders, a woman of European ancestry, told me that the Indigenization project is not for me. Aware that such initiatives must be led by Indigenous peoples, I was nevertheless surprised by and did not understand what motivated her exclusionary stance. Decolonizing and Indigenizing postsecondary curricula can be "frightening and counterintuitive" (Regan, 2010, p. 19). "The vulnerability required to reveal to colleagues our ignorance on a subject is not well-practiced in Western academic traditions" (Mooney, unpublished manuscript, n.p.). Nevertheless, settlers need to engage in this work alongside Indigenous people, to earn their trust, to earn the honour of the ally role (Chung, 2019), and thereby contribute to the peaceful and just healing of Indigenous-settler relations.

How can I decolonize my mind and my way of being as a settler in Canada? The obstacles I faced in my youth and, then again in my work with the peace centre, have challenged me, but not stopped me from pursuing my own reeducation. I realize I am deeply embedded in and formed by a settler-colonial society. It is, indeed, difficult to separate myself from Western values, culture, and structures in order to see the world from another perspective, but I need to try. I need to listen to the stories of experience of Indigenous people, wherever and however I can access them (in person, online, in MOOC course materials, through readings, by attending talks by Indigenous scholars, etc.). I need to interrogate my taken-for-granted knowledge and experience, the epistemologies and ontologies that have made me who

I am, and that permeate my teaching and curricular practices. And, I need to allow Indigenous stories, knowledges, epistemes, and ontologies to reshape my thinking and understanding of myself and our relationships with one another.

Settler Starting Points

Integrating elements of an Indigenous holistic framework: intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical (Pidgeon, 2014) and values consistent with the four Rs: respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Marker, 2004), my autoethnographic writing and critical self-reflections led to the development of a process model I have called "Settler Starting Points",[5] shown in Figure 1. This process model is intended for settler engagement in Indigenizing and decolonizing curricular and teaching practices in Canadian higher education. Pidgeon's (2014) Indigenous holistic framework challenges Western academic emphasis on intellectual reason, by valuing a wholeness of human experiences. The four starting points—humility, relationality, responsibility, and land—appear as overlapping and interconnected circles, infused by the values of holistic engagement with mind, spirit, heart, and body. Humility, relationality, responsibility, and land are important values in many Indigenous cultures. By calling on these values as a settler, I do not wish to appropriate Indigenous cultures, but to honour them, and to emphasize these four Settler Starting Points because, as human values, they have largely been forgotten in individualistic, competitive, and capitalistic Western academic traditions. The permeable dotted line, surrounding the overlapping circles, represents Indigenous and settler individuals, communities, students, academics, knowledge keepers, Elders, and administrators working alongside one another to transform postsecondary teaching and learning.

Below are excerpts of my own self-reflective, autobiographical writing, using sample questions as prompts for this exploration. See Appendix A for a list of sample questions to prompt reflection and writing within each of the four rubrics of the Settler Starting Points process model.
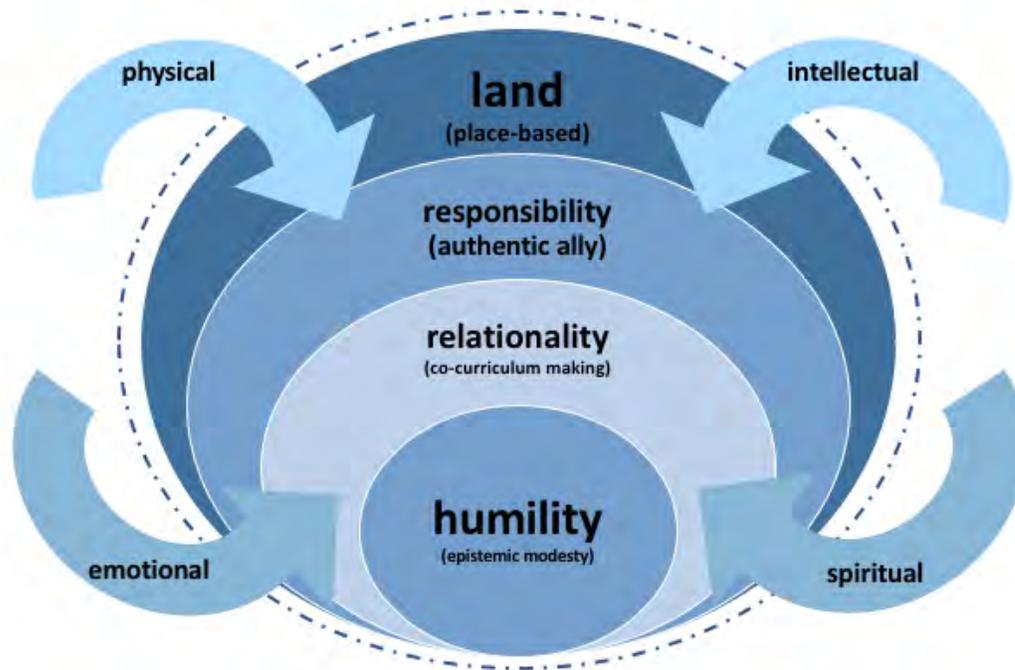
Fig. 1: Settler starting points for decolonizing and Indigenizing curricular and teaching practices in Canadian higher education.

Humility (Epistemic Modesty) Starting Point

What would happen to me if I were to suspend my critical judgment the next time I felt inconvenienced or my work was delayed by an Indigenous perspective or way of being?

While working as an educational developer at a postsecondary educational institution in Canada, I had the opportunity to lead a study of Berg and Seeber's (2016) book *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy*, for a group of faculty members from across the disciplines. During one of our group discussions, one faculty member commented on how Berg and Seeber's (2016) position reminded her of Indigenous peoples' relationship with time, a slower pace than North American ways. That comment led another book study participant to share the view that the institution's push to Indigenize was unwelcome, making comments that slowing down to accommodate an Indigenous pace is neither practical, nor desirable. The anti-Indigenization comments continued in what I felt was an overtly racist vein and, after they were made, an uncomfortable silence fell upon the group. People started shifting and fidgeting in their chairs. As the facilitator, I paused with the group, waiting, and present to our collective discomfort. I thought to myself, "Nobody wants to be called a racist. Nobody wants to *be* a racist. How can I help the group through the racist perspective that was just expressed?" I was aware that if the person who had shared that opinion were to adjust her thinking, she would need to feel accepted and safe in the group, not ostracized or shamed.

My initial response was to remind the group that it is my intention to create a safe and confidential space in this book study series, where participants can express their perspectives freely and feel comfortable experimenting with new ideas. "This is meant to be a learning space and we are all here to learn

together." I acknowledged that learning together sometimes means disagreeing with one another, and that respectful debate could prompt deep learning. There was another long pause in the group after I spoke.

Another faculty member spoke next. He shared with the group that as a gay man he has experienced being excluded on many occasions. While acknowledging that he benefits from many privileges, he began to express to the group how his experiences of oppression have given him insight into what it might be like to experience oppression as an Indigenous person. He spoke about the courage it takes to speak up and make one's presence known when one feels pushed to the margins. He spoke from the heart, in a gentle, non-judgmental tone of voice, and the book study participants listened respectfully. He modelled humility and epistemic modesty to the group, and they took heed to what he said. I wonder if the group would have responded in the same way had he been an Indigenous man speaking about his experiences of oppression and erasure. That said, sharing his experience as a gay, white man with a group of colleagues he had only just met, made him vulnerable. This vulnerability humbled me, and likely others in the group. I had and still have great respect for the way he shared his perspective. One after another, they took turns, gently speaking about their relationships to Indigenous knowledges, their relationships to time, to the Indigenization policies on campus, and about their own understandings of privilege, power, and oppression. It was a difficult conversation, one that I found stressful to facilitate, *and* one of the most profoundly meaningful group discussions in academia of which I have been a part.

When the meeting ended, people left quietly, not making eye contact. I feared that I might never see them again. We had a number of meetings remaining in the series. I worried about what would happen next, so I preemptively asked to meet with my supervisor, to report what had happened and prepare her for possible complaints. Instead of complaints, I received emails of thanks and appreciation for the depth of discussion that I had facilitated, for the respect and calm I had modelled. I was delighted when everyone returned the next week, including the colleague who had made the initial comment against Indigenization. And people kept coming back week after week for deeply engaged conversation.

As the facilitator, feeling my own discomfort, the dis-ease of the group, and the brewing potential group conflict moved me into a moment of unsettlement (Easton et al., 2019; Regan, 2010). I had to set aside my beliefs about Indigenization, to make safe space for an opponent, in order to support learning. I had to admit to myself that although I found her comments racist, I am not innocent in this racist world, in which white-skinned people, like me, continue to benefit at the expense of Indigenous people and people of colour. I still have much to learn about decolonizing my mind, and eliminating racism. Humility and epistemic modesty are a useful mindset to assume when entering into this personally challenging arena. By emphasizing that we are in a safe learning place, I challenged myself to actually embody that value, to set aside my urge to speak out against racism, and see what we could learn together, when we humbly and gently explore difficult terrain. Together we allowed our thinking to be unsettled;[6] we became vulnerable and real with one another. To learn to decolonize curricular and teaching practices, I need to face my own prejudice and racism, and to see these qualities in others, without condemning them or myself. I, along with supportive colleagues, need to create safe spaces to work through these aspects of our mis-education, in order to learn better, more just ways of thinking and being.[7]

Relationality (Co-curriculum Making) Starting Point

How might I facilitate re-centering our curriculum processes
to support Indigenous ways of curriculum making?

While working in a centre for teaching and learning (CTL) at a Canadian postsecondary institution, I had the opportunity to collaborate with two Indigenous colleagues on a workshop. After developing a solid plan, at a subsequent meeting one colleague suggested restructuring the workshop using pedagogies from his community's traditions. This would involve significant changes, including the omission of an introductory activity about which I was excited. I expressed my hesitation, but went along with the suggested changes.

When we delivered the workshop some weeks later, our plan had to change again, because at the opening of the workshop, a participant introduced a local Indigenous Elder,[8] and asked the group to make time for the Elder to speak. This Elder spoke at length, telling a beautiful story of the land and creatures that make their home in the place where we were meeting. The time that the Elder spent sharing this story enriched the workshop significantly, and I felt deeply grateful for his contribution. However, because of this change in the unfolding of the workshop, time had to be cut from other parts of our plan. Our co-facilitation team spontaneously adjusted the plan, and carried on.

When we debriefed the workshop afterwards, the colleague who had suggested the major changes to our original plan reminded me that I had initially been reluctant about those changes, but when the workshop happened, I showed that I was flexible and open to allowing the experience to unfold organically. In hindsight, reflecting on my participation in that workshop co-facilitation team, I realize that I had certain expectations of what it meant to work collaboratively and how a planning meeting should happen. But when I set aside my attachment to one aspect of our plan, when I prioritized my relationship with Indigenous colleagues and put my trust in their pedagogy—albeit with hesitation— I opened myself to Indigenous curriculum making. Thus, my understanding of what it means to Indigenize and decolonize teaching and curricular practices broadened. Indigenization and decolonization are not meant to be easy or comfortable for settlers. When we, settlers, are able to move past our discomfort with and hesitation to Indigenous pedagogies, we have the opportunity to expand our curriculum making in ways that are responsive to learners' needs and learning contexts.

This experience prompted in me the question, "How might I facilitate re-centering curriculum processes to support Indigenous ways of curriculum making?" As I continue to reflect on this question, I hope that the next time I'm in a similar situation, I might be less hesitant to let go of my attachment to an established, familiar plan and process, and open myself to another way of creating learning opportunities.

Responsibility (Authentic Ally) Starting Point

Am I appropriating Indigenous cultural practices by incorporating this pedagogy into my work?

When preparing for an academic presentation, I decided to write a fable based on my tentative theory about decolonizing and Indigenizing the academy.[9] I shared the fable as part of the presentation and received feedback that it would make a useful educational resource.

While I was writing draft versions of the fable, I had thought deeply about how to write a fable. I had wondered how I might anthropomorphize animals and give voice to the land without it coming across as or actually being cultural appropriation of Indigenous storytelling approaches. I remembered advice I had received from a Cree-Métis professor during my doctoral studies, when I wondered how to find home and feel a sense of belonging in a place that is not my ancestral homeland, and not the place where I was born. Her response was clear and direct, "Loving the land is a good place to start" (Personal communication, Cardinal, 2018). As I wrote, I made sense of my writing not as a copy of any Indigenous stories I had heard or read, but as a translation of my own tentative theory, in my own voice, and my own words.[10] I was expressing my deep love for the land where I live and work. What's more, I was writing as a settler for settler audiences, with the hope of creating a learning tool that could serve us all in our work to decolonize and Indigenize ourselves and our institutions.

However, when I shared an early draft of the fable with some of my Indigenous professors and colleagues, their feedback revealed to me some of my own blind spots. Despite my good intentions, their feedback questioned several aspects of the fable, including: the literary genre itself, my representation of specific animals that are sacred to some Indigenous communities, metaphors that, although not intended this way, were interpreted as deficit narratives about Indigenous peoples and saviour narratives about settlers, and the overall tone of the story, which reminded them of various Indigenous stories. I felt embarrassed by my mistakes and for the possibility that I had disappointed my beloved colleagues and professors. Although I was explicitly trying not to appropriate Indigenous culture and wrote deliberately to represent Indigenous people in positive ways, I had failed in my efforts.

Even though I was embarrassed about my fable and the negative messages it had conveyed, I had to keep my commitment to decolonizing myself and repair my relationships with my Indigenous professors and colleagues. One of my professors named that offering candid feedback to settlers about our mistakes is exhausting for her, but she did it for me because she believes my heart is in a good place. She compelled me not to drop this work, but to carry on and do better. And with that, I felt the weight and urgency of my responsibility in this work of decolonizing, Indigenizing, and moving toward reconciliation. I recommit myself to doing better, to not making those mistakes again, and to working to repair any harm my errors had caused in my relationships with Indigenous people.

I have since made major revisions to the fable. It is no longer a fable that anthropomorphizes animals. I am writing a new story, more closely based on my own experience of building relationship with Indigenous colleagues. I am fortunate that my Indigenous professors and colleagues, as well as some

non-Indigenous peers and mentors, are willing to review and comment on revised versions of the story, to help me develop it in a good way.

Land (Place-based) Starting Point

What are my stories of experience with this land, in this place?

Belonging Now, Here

A long freight train crossing this vast territory, thunders through the Rocky Mountains, declaring its progress, at intervals, with its haunting horn. It takes more than 30 minutes for the sound of rhythmic rolling to disappear into the distance. I sit in my room at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, reading for and writing my doctoral candidacy proposal. Chung's (2019) autoethnographic writing inspires me to set aside the methods of inquiry section and attend to my own story, here and now, in this beautiful place far away from my daily routines. Visual and performing artist Pascaline Knight's (Knight et al., 2019) interpretation pulls me to think of remote place not as "in the middle of *nowhere,"* but as *now here* or, as she translates it, *ici main-tenant,* which might translate back to *here, holding hands* or *here, hand-holding,* or *here, hand out-stretched.* I am an open hand, out-stretched, in this place where I feel a deep belonging. Like the train that lingers, now, here, out-stretched, I want to stay and sing my song, to roll in rhythm with this land, this place.

My return flight is tomorrow afternoon; just thinking of my departure from the mountains sets off a long bleat of the horn in my heart. I don't want to go. I want these mountains to envelope me every day. I want to breathe this mountain air through all her seasons. I want my feet to tread here in the darkness, snow, and silence of January, in the run-off and dirty slush of spring, in the moderate heat of summer, and the waning warmth and lingering light of autumn. I am homesick for this land and place, as I prepare to leave.

Reflecting on Place

I've had the privilege and the challenge of a fairly nomadic life. When I reached 30 years of age, I had moved 33 times in my life. Since then, I've moved many more times, and lost count. I've made home in five Canadian provinces, and at least eight Canadian municipalities; I have lived and worked in nine other countries, all outside of North America. All this moving around has challenged my sense of home. As I engage in writing and reflecting about decolonizing and Indigenizing curricula, I have been asking myself less and less, "In what land will I make my home?", and more and more, "To what land do I belong" (Chambers, 2006)? I know that my ancestral homelands are in Ireland and Scotland, and I feel a great sense of belonging in those places and on those lands. But I was born in eastern Ontario, I spent significant moments in my childhood there and in rural New Brunswick, and I have since come to feel a strong sense of belonging to the Rocky Mountains, their eastern foothills, and the vast prairie lands that stretch eastward from there. These lands, some on which treaties were negotiated and signed, some that

remain unceded, continue to be occupied and exploited by Canadian economic interests. Despite the genocidal actions of settler-colonial Canada, Indigenous people remain on their homelands. Their endurance, persistence, and resilience must not go unnoticed. They are working hard to heal themselves and their communities from all the pain and loss settler-colonial Canada has inflicted on them. They are working to recover their languages and teachings, their songs, stories, and dances, their ceremonies and their relationships to the land. I continue to seek ways that I can celebrate and support Indigenous resurgence, while also nurturing my own relationship to the land and its ancestral people, where I live and work.

Closing Thoughts

Recognizing Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation as ongoing, relational commitments, I entered into this autoethnographic, autobiographical project, writing and reflecting to find a useful way into decolonizing and Indigenizing my teaching and curricular practices. Through this study into myself, "Settler Starting Points" emerged as a process model with four possible starting points or trailheads and guiding questions to prompt reflection on humility (epistemic modesty), relationality (co-curriculum making), responsibility (authentic ally), and land (place-based). I sought to interrogate my taken-for-granted knowledge, to enter the uncomfortable, unsettling moments in my thinking and being that need to be transformed, as I work to reeducate myself and prepare myself for living reconciliation. Because this work aims to transform, it is necessarily contingent, and represents my "for now" analysis and understandings (Simpson, 2011).

In this paper, I have highlighted some of my moments of unsettlement. Through the exploration of these stories of experience, I have learned that decolonizing and Indigenizing my teaching and curricular practices is deeply personal work, and needs to occur holistically in mind, heart, body, and soul. Nevertheless, the insights that have arisen from the reflective writing process are only one part of a larger process. As emphasized by Easton and colleagues (2019) and by Yeo and colleagues (2019), I also need to engage in this work in reciprocal collaboration with Indigenous and settler colleagues and in supportive, collegial communities, committed to transformation.

Appendix A: Settler Starting Points – Guiding Questions for Self-Reflection

Humility (Epistemic Modesty) Starting Point
- How might I support the centering of Indigenous knowledges in my curricula and in the learning environments that I facilitate?
- What would happen to me if I were to suspend my critical judgment the next time I felt inconvenienced or my work was delayed by an Indigenous perspective or way of being?
- How might I enact a practice of epistemic modesty in my day-to-day interactions on campus?
- How might I support my students to learn epistemic modesty?
- How might I grow if I were to explore my area of scholarly expertise through my physical senses, emotions, and/or spiritual means?
- How might I learn to recognize and see epistemes that have been rendered invisible through settler colonial epistemic dominance (Kuokkanen, 2007)?

Relationality (Co-curriculum Making) Starting Point
- With whom am I co-curriculum making?
- Are Indigenous colleagues' curricular contributions at the centre of our curriculum making processes?
- If not, how might I facilitate re-centering curriculum processes to support Indigenous ways of curriculum making?
- What mechanisms do I have at my disposal or might I access to ensure that curriculum making is collaborative and reciprocal between Indigenous and non-Indigenous, settler colleagues?
- With what attitude and disposition do I enter into conversations and interactions with Indigenous collaborators and Indigenous students?
- Do my attitude and disposition differ in my relationships with non-Indigenous, settler colleagues and students?
- Are these differences appropriate, and do they support decolonizing and Indigenizing efforts?

Responsibility (Authentic Ally) Starting Point
- Am I appropriating Indigenous cultural practices by incorporating this pedagogy into my class?
- If so, how could I incorporate this teaching practice respectfully acknowledging the limitations of my knowledge and authority?
- Who has the required knowledge and authority to teach in this way?
- Could I invite one such individual into the learning experience to lead in this way?
- What Indigenous protocol must I learn in order to invite and welcome an Indigenous Elder, knowledge keeper, or community member to lead in my course?
- What might be too much to ask of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous colleagues?

Land (Place-based) Starting Point
- What stories of this land, in this place where I live and work, will I choose and from whose perspective will they be told?
- What are *my* stories of experience with this land in this place?
- How has this land shaped who I have become as a human being and as an educator?
- Rather than asking, "Does this land belong to me?" or "Since when does this land belong to me?" I ask: "How do I belong to this land?" and "How am I in relationship with this land, where I live and work?"

Notes

1. For further details about the Settler Starting Points process model, see Mooney (unpublished manuscript).

2. On Canadian campuses, only 1.4 percent of professors identify as Indigenous (Shen, 2018). Faculty positions in Canada are largely held by academics of European ancestry, who experience white privilege, and have been educated exclusively in Western, settler-colonial institutions (Todd, 2017).

3. It is important to note here that the English language, Christian religion, and Western knowledge systems were not originally part of Celtic cultures, but rather British colonizers brought their language, religion, and knowledge systems when they invaded and subjugated Celtic language, spirituality, and beliefs systems. Since then, Irish people in particular have had a complicated and often hostile relationship with Britain, and many Irish people in Ireland and in some diasporic communities continue working to restore and/or preserve Irish language (Gaelic), spirituality, and culture.

4. The Coastal GasLink natural gas pipeline is a key part of the $40-billion LNG Canada export project (The Canadian Press, 2020). This highly contentious project is being paid for by Canadian taxpayers, following Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's decision to fund the project, which is intended to transport natural gas from Alberta, through northern British Columbia, to the West Coast of Canada for export to international markets. Many Canadians, as well as Indigenous peoples, oppose Coastal GasLink pipeline. Its construction divides communities. On the one hand, it will create jobs in communities that are struggling economically, where people (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) need work. On the other hand, it maintains our dependence on a fossil fuel-based economy, which continues to threaten and destroy the environment, and contribute to the global climate crisis.

5. I do not wish to impose a fixed framework onto the work of decolonizing, Indigenizing, and reconciliation. Rather, Settler Starting Points is a process for consideration, that settler academics may wish to apply and adapt for their own contexts and their individual reflective practices.

6. Here I do not mean anti-racist positions were unsettled, towards affirming racism. Rather, the knee-jerk response to racist speech, the instinct to shame someone for their racism was unsettled and put on hold, to make space for a more learning-centered response to racism.

7. For an example of a safe, collegial community, in which to explore Indigenization, see Yeo et al., 2019.

8. Our facilitation team did not know in advance that this Elder would be attending our workshop.

9. This illustrated storybook is currently under extensive revisions, with plans to submit it for future publication.

10. The initial idea to write the fable was inspired by settler-identifying Robin Attas' story about a deer and a squirrel, which she shared in a presentation in Atlanta, Georgia as part of the ISSoTL Annual Conference 2019 (See Attas, 2019).

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Middle Years Teachers' Critical Literacy Practices as Cornerstones of Their Culturally Relevant Pedagogies

Anne Murray-Orr and Jennifer Mitton

Abstract

Critical literacy is widely accepted as an important element of culturally relevant pedagogy. In this article, we detail results of a study into how six teachers in rural Eastern Canada purposefully incorporated critical literacy into teaching and learning activities in their classrooms from a culturally relevant pedagogical stance. Findings highlight teachers' intentional planning that embeds critical literacy, critical literacy in the wider community, and use of multimodal practices in teaching for critical literacy. The critical literacy practices of these teachers reflect their thinking about knowledge and knowledge construction as one key aspect of their culturally relevant pedagogy.

Background

Operationalizing culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) in the classroom requires more than a particular attitude, although attitude is vital. "Culturally relevant teachers envision their students as being filled with possibilities. They imagine that somewhere in the classroom is the next Nobel laureate…" (Ladson-Billings, 2008, p. 165). Along with this commitment to seeing all students as filled with possibilities, the ability to plan, teach, and assess in ways that support this commitment are needed. Critical literacy is widely accepted as an important part of CRP. Morrison et al. (2008) used Ladson-Billings' (1995) theoretical framework to organize a synthesis of 45 research studies on how teachers enact CRP in their classrooms, finding that many teachers employed critical literacy instruction as part of a practice that "emphasizes academic success for all students…, assists students in the formation of a positive cultural identity… and guides students in developing a critical consciousness…[the three] central tenets" (Morrison et al., 2008, p. 434) of CRP Ladson-Billings outlined.

What does critical literacy instruction look like, however, in the middle years classrooms of teachers who are committed to CRP, particularly those who are experienced and knowledgeable about what it means to enact critical literacy practices as part of their culturally relevant teaching? This was one of the questions of a research study undertaken in rural Eastern Canada by the authors of this paper over nearly two school years, from September 2016 to March 2018, funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development through the Inter-University Research Network.

Defining the elements of critical literacy practices is a first step toward answering this question. Lewison et al. (2002) completed an extensive review of the literature on critical literacy and found four interwoven dimensions of teacher practice which informed their research: seeing common events or ideas from new perspectives; examining multiple and contradictory viewpoints; working to understand sociopolitical

systems that underpin existing structures; and activism for social change. Morrison et al. (2008) described "subtle variations" (p. 441) in how critical literacy was employed in classrooms across empirical studies they investigated. Similar to Lewison and colleagues, they found four common approaches in their analysis: "selecting texts with critical perspectives…providing critical thinking prompts before reading a text…allowing students to discuss controversial topics…and asking students to take a critical/political view of texts" (p. 441). With the aim of contributing to the documented evidence of how teachers practice CRP in their classrooms, and how critical literacy is an integral part of CRP, we employed the Lewison et al. framework to identify how six teachers purposefully incorporated critical literacy into planning and enacting the teaching and learning activities of their classrooms from a CRP stance.

Evident in both these critical literacy frameworks is a commitment to high academic expectations on the part of teachers. Ladson-Billings (2014), in a discussion of a "remix" (p. 74) of her theory of culturally relevant pedagogy, affirmed that expectations of academic achievement are central to CRP, and are closely linked with cultural revitalization and sociopolitical consciousness. She described the "newer concept of culturally sustaining pedagogy [as] …built on the same foundational notion" (p. 77) of belief in the assets of learners, in a statement of the "secret behind culturally relevant pedagogy: the ability to link principles of learning with deep understanding of (and appreciation for) culture" (p. 77). Further, Ladson-Billings reminds us that a focus on engaging students as active learners who will thrive when given the opportunity to employ their sociopolitical consciousness leads to students who "take both responsibility for and deep interest in their education" (p. 77).

Critical Literacy as Foundational to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

A number of scholars have developed principles of culturally relevant pedagogy over the past two and a half decades (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Embedded in most CRP models is the notion that critical literacy is a cornerstone of culturally relevant pedagogy. In fact, culturally relevant teaching necessarily includes a critical perspective, according to Norris and colleagues (2012). In an example of the integral relationship between CRP and critical literacy, Lopez (2011) conducted a study of the experiences of a Grade 12 English teacher of a culturally diverse group of students in Toronto, Canada, who purposefully redesigned her Writer's Craft course "to build cross-cultural understandings and increase student engagement through culturally relevant pedagogy and critical literacy" (p. 76). Lopez stated that, "critical literacy gives practical expression…to the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy…it is about having a critical voice that is heard, felt and understood" (p. 78). In literacy education, critical literacy is a common term among scholars, researchers, and teachers (Lee, 2011). Clarifying the term "critical" tends to generate much debate, as "confusion remains regarding the difference between 'critical' from the Enlightenment period, which focused on critical thinking and reasoning, and 'critical' from Marx as an analysis of power" (Vasquez et al., 2019, p. 300). In turn, attempts to define the term critical influence efforts to clarify the concept of critical literacy (Vasquez et al., 2019). Literacy, in this sense, is informed by acts of cooperation and collaboration, as "how teachers negotiate critical literacy practices depends very much on the affordance of their place and the students

in the room…critical literacies can be pleasurable and transformational as well as pedagogical and transgressive" (Vasquez et al., 2019, p. 300). Critical literacy plays a foundational role in CRP as it heightens awareness about how knowledge is socially constructed and the need to assess texts (in all their forms) to inform decisions in contextually responsive ways (Lee, 2011).

Support of Students' Critical Literacy Needs to Be Deliberately Planned

Alim and colleagues (2017) build upon the CRP theorizing of the past two decades with their work on culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP), reminding us that CSP "cannot and should not sustain only the aspects of students' lives that are safe or easily addressable in schooling spaces, but that they should…prepare youth to recognize, accept, and challenge social injustices" (p. 36). Finding ways to fulfill this goal calls for teachers to plan with care and thoughtfulness. Alim et al. (2020) suggest one example in their discussion of Hip Hop Pedagogies, inviting a critical focus on youth-generated texts as they note, "studies rarely look critically at how youth might reify existing hegemonic discourses about, as examples, gender, race, sexuality and citizenship" (p. 269). This example highlights one way to support youth to apply critical literacy practices to texts produced by non-dominant systems.

Souto-Manning (2009) found that first grade students eagerly engaged in critical thinking and cultural awareness, displaying insightfulness in discussing controversial topics. These discussions and learning "did not occur, however, without a deliberate starting point" (p. 52). This author chose children's books that represented social issues to engender conversations. Beyond selecting and introducing these texts, she deliberately facilitated opportunities for "critical literacy events to further the conversation" (p. 52). Souto-Manning situated her study in Larson and Marsh's (2005) definition of critical literacy, with an emphasis on challenging power relationships and seeing "texts as ideological constructions, informed by authorial intent and issues relating to power" (p. 53). Similarly, Borsheim and colleagues (2014) developed a framework called critical literature pedagogy, which includes "reading against a text…to examine how it is embedded in and shaped by ideologies" (p. 124), using non-canonical texts to emphasize the silencing of marginalized voices in the texts typically taught in high school English courses.

Morrison et al. (2008) found that teachers employed a "broad range of actions" (p. 441) to help students hone their critical literacy, such as critical analyses of texts, including course textbooks. These actions were not limited to textbooks, also involving alternative texts, classroom discussion, and writing assignments which "addressed critical questions posed by teachers and their classmates" (p. 441). Teachers incorporating these varied approaches spent time thoughtfully researching and planning in preparation for their lessons.

Teachers' Understanding of CRP Must Include a Critical Literacy Perspective

Hyland (2005) explored what happened when white teachers of black students saw themselves as good teachers, but employed some, rather than all, the elements of CRP. For example, one teacher worked to make her classroom welcoming for students and had positive relationships with families, but did nothing

to help her students look critically at the world. Hyland states that this approach resulted in unintentional racism and suggests that these teachers' partial understanding of CRP may be behind this embedded racism. Hyland calls for "critical teacher educators and researchers…to continue to find ways to work with small groups of teachers…to begin to counter the racism that is embedded in schools…and even within their own definitions of successful teaching" (p. 458). Hyland's call reflects Ladson-Billings' (2014) affirmation that cultural competence must be integrated with use of principles of learning that draw upon learners' assets and engage their sociopolitical consciousness. As noted in previous sections, these principles include provision of opportunities to engage in critical literacy practices.

Sleeter (2012) described how CRP has been marginalized by neoliberal agendas in the United States and notes that often an overly simplistic view of CRP may be enacted in schools, when CRP is "understood as cultural celebration" (p. 568). Lopez (2011) discussed challenges at the local level of the school and district, noting that, "culturally relevant pedagogy and critical literacy within a climate of standardization is challenging and complex. Some teachers…hold fast to the "canons" and see efforts at… [CRP] practices as "watering down" the curriculum" (p. 90). Flores (2007) documented the struggles of four new teachers to maintain a social justice practice that included CRP. Without the inclusion of a critical literacy perspective, these issues will continue to plague the education system.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Literacy as a Cornerstone of CRP

Ladson-Billings (1995) theorized three key areas of CRP from her research with teachers: how teachers see themselves and their students and students' families/communities; how teachers construct their relationships with students, families, and communities; and how teachers think about knowledge and knowledge construction. More recently, Ladson-Billings (2014) upheld the significance of these three areas while lending her support for the more recent turn to culturally sustaining pedagogy. In the study on which this article is based, there was ample evidence of teachers' commitment to a pedagogy that included all three areas. It is the third area, conceptions of knowledge, that is central in this paper. Ladson-Billings (1995) asserts that, "knowledge must be viewed critically" (p. 481). Therefore, we focus on critical literacy as a vital component of CRP, using Lewison and colleagues' (2002) distillation of four dimensions of critical literacy to better understand how the teachers in this study acted on their conceptions of knowledge and knowledge construction.

Ladson-Billings (1992) explained that, "culturally relevant teaching serves to empower students to the point where they will be able to examine critically educational content and process, and ask what its role is in creating a truly democratic and multicultural society" (p. 106). The connection between critical literacy and CRP is strong, as critical analysis of multiple texts invites examination of unequal power relationships and disrupting of the commonplace.

CRP is considered to have "unique roots and central emphases, [and to] share a commitment to promoting social and educational equity and justice" (Dover, 2009, p. 514) with other related philosophies. Dover (2009) created a model in which culturally relevant education is one of five distinct

traditions that are foundational to teaching for social justice. She notes that teaching practices that promote critical thinking habits are essential to "teaching for social justice [that] focuses on instruction about educational and societal oppression, equity and activism" (p. 514). Related to Dover, Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) explored the "evolution of CRP among [the works of] some of the leading scholars" (p. 66) to develop their CRP conceptual framework. The CRP framework developed by Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) is made up of five sets of concepts: identity and achievement; equity and excellence; developmental appropriateness; teaching the whole child; and student-teacher relationships. While they do not include critical literacy in their model explicitly, their description of each of the five strands, and of identity and achievement in particular, suggests that critical literacy is imperative to a CRP practice.

Also informing this study are the six strands Villegas and Lucas (2002) conceptualized as a curriculum for preparing culturally responsive teachers. Villegas and Lucas note that CRP is "not simply a matter of applying instructional techniques" (p. 27). Rather, "culturally responsive teachers have a high degree of sociocultural consciousness" (p. 27), enabling them to "cross the sociocultural boundaries that separate too many of them from their students" (p. 22). While the findings of this paper focus on the critical literacy practices of the teachers, it was a purposefulness infused with sociocultural consciousness that informed their planning and teaching. We note the interplay between their beliefs and pedagogy as particularly key to their commitment to crafting CRP in which their students could academically flourish.

Methodology

The main purpose of the qualitative research project this paper draws upon was to find common themes or trends across multiple observations in middle years classrooms, and across interviews with teachers and students, to determine the kinds of literacy practices that enable improved literacy acquisition and stronger achievement of learning outcomes for students across subject areas. We approached administrators of the two schools in which we conducted this study to work with us to identify teachers who demonstrated commitment and success in terms of literacy achievement of, and relationships with, students from racialized populations and those experiencing poverty.

Schools and Teacher Participants

The first school, New Learning Academy (pseudonym), where data was collected in 2016-2017, was a P-8 school of approximately 550 students in a community with a significant population of African Nova Scotians and students who experience poverty. Four teachers, identified by the principal, took part in the research in that school. Here are their pseudonyms and a brief description of their teaching responsibilities:

- Jackie Purcell: Grade 5 all subjects; 32 years teaching experience (TE)
- Paige Raymond: Grades 5 and 6: ELA and Social Studies; 26 years TE
- Foley Mackenzie: Grades 7 and 8 Science; 8 years TE
- Gina Sears: Grade 8 Social Studies and Art; 15 years TE

The second school, where data was collected in 2017-2018, was Highlands Middle School (pseudonym), a school of approximately 350 students with a small population of African Nova Scotian students and a significant population of students who experience poverty. Two teachers took part in the research at that school. They are:

- Marla Griffin: Combined Grade 5/6 all subjects; 4 years TE
- Jeremy Spencer: Grade 8 ELA, Social Studies, Health, Physical Education; 20 years TE

Methods of Data Collection

The following data collection methods were used in the study:

Observations

A member of our research team conducted observations in the classrooms of the teachers identified in each school once a week as consistently possible. To increase reliability, one coresearcher led data collection at each school. Jennifer led the data collection at the first school, New Learning Academy, and had three research assistants accompany her at that school. Anne led the data collection at the second school, Highlands Middle School, and had one research assistant accompany her. Field notes were taken during observations, to describe the literacy practices teachers use to promote learning. In total we conducted 54 observations in across all four classrooms in NLA from late-September 2016 to May 2017, and 30 observations across the two classrooms in HMS from October 2017 to February 2018.

Teacher Interviews

The teacher participants at both schools were interviewed twice, at the beginning and end of the data collection process, to learn more about how they plan for, teach, and assess lessons that incorporate literacy practices to promote the learning of students from racialized populations and those experiencing poverty. These interviews were audio-recorded, and field notes were taken.

Student Focus Groups

Focus groups were held with students in classrooms of each of the teacher participants at NLA twice during the study. Focus groups were held with students in classrooms of teacher participants at HMS once during the study. The focus groups were audio-recorded, and field notes were taken.

Ethics Protocols

We were granted approval to conduct the study from the University Research Ethics Board. We then applied for and were granted permission from each regional education centre involved in our study, as well as Mi'kmaq Ethics Watch. In order to respect confidentiality in the reports and documents resulting from this study, pseudonyms are used for students, staff, and schools.

Data Analysis Procedures

This study generated a data set from which we determined five themes arising from what teacher and student participants told us about the culturally relevant and effective approaches to developing literacy skills in their classrooms, and what we observed to be successful practices during classroom observations. The process of data analysis involved inductively analyzing as we read and reread the data (Creswell, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A research assistant was hired to organize the data for analysis during the summer months of 2017 and 2018. We noted themes or trends emerging across the data, highlighting teaching approaches and learning activities that supported literacy development of students from racialized populations and those experiencing poverty. The four dimensions of critical literacy, as defined by Lewison et al. (2002), informed our analysis in concert with the principles of culturally relevant pedagogy defined by Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) and the CRP theory of Ladson-Billings (1995).

Findings

Critical literacy practices were present in the practices of all six teachers in this study, and reflected their commitment to CRP throughout the time spent in their classrooms. There are three main subthemes related to teachers' planning and teaching that included critical literacy practices: intentional planning that embeds critical literacy; critical literacy in the wider community; and use of multimodal practices in teaching for critical literacy.

Intentional Planning of Critical Literacy Opportunities

As Souto-Manning (2009) noted, intentional planning is necessary for fostering critical literacy among students. The practices of teachers in this study illustrated their awareness that critical literacy develops in classrooms over time and must be consciously integrated. For example, in Jackie's Grade 5 class there was an ongoing emphasis on gender equity integrated throughout various lessons and activities. During a social studies lesson about the Middle Ages, Jackie and her students were reading a section of the textbook when Jackie took a moment to pause and consider the gendered nature of the scene being described.

> Brianna read aloud that girls during the Middle Ages tended to work with their mothers at home. In response to this sentence, Jackie intervened quickly, saying, "Just wait a minute!" She asked the whole class if this (girls only being allowed to work at home with their mothers) happened today. The students resoundingly said, "No!", and Jackie said, "Right, girls can do anything."(Observation Notes, April 28, 2017)

Gender equity was a theme that Jackie consciously integrated into the curriculum in ways that felt seamless and authentic. While this example appears nonchalant and effortless, this inclusion changed the tone of the lesson and engaged students critically with their textbooks. It was part of a continuing plan Jackie carefully included across subject areas to provide students with practice in reading against the text (Borsheim-Black et al., 2014), interrogating multiple perspectives (Lewison et al., 2002) and challenging systems of oppression (Dover, 2009).

Jeremy's approach to the Grade 8 social studies curriculum focused on Canada's marginalized populations whose voices are not featured in the dominant narrative of Canada's past. The following example is from a social studies lesson about unjust Canadian immigration policies that targeted Chinese Canadians in particular, in which Jeremy wove back and forth between classroom discussion and students reading and responding to questions in his Google classroom. The questions that students answered during this lesson correspond with two dimensions of critical literacy defined by Lewison and colleagues (2002), displacing the commonplace and interrogating multiple perspectives. During the lesson, Jeremy had students engage with multiple primary source texts he researched in his course planning, which described the impacts of Canadian policies on Chinese Canadian populations during the early 20th century (*The Empire Settlement Act of 1922; The Chinese Immigration Act of 1923; The Railway Agreement of 1925*) and answer the following questions:

1. We have looked at Canada's policy for Chinese Immigrants in 1923. Do you think that this was a fair policy? Why or why not?
2. How was the *Empire Settlement Act* different from the *Chinese Immigration Act*?
3. How did the *Railway Agreement of 1925* further discriminate against Chinese immigrants?

Jeremy challenged his students to consider how the Canadian government treated Chinese immigrants in the 1920s in relation to how they treated European immigrants at that time. Partway through this lesson, Jeremy asked his students to pause and ponder how Chinese Canadians and Chinese immigrants might feel as these primary source documents affected their daily lives during the 1920s.

> Jeremy asks students how would it feel if we were made to walk around with photo IDs all the time. Students replied that it would be sad or scary. He then points them to the date of the Act, July 1st, [now celebrated as] Canada Day. Students reply with comments like, "whoa" and "that's sad."(Observation Notes, January 18, 2018)

In this teaching moment, Jeremy challenged the commonly held belief that Canada has always been a welcoming and multicultural nation. Jeremy asked his students to consider multiple perspectives as they were interrogating primary source documents, providing a powerful example of planning to foster critical literacy among his Grade 8 students.

Critical Literacy in the Community

Critical literacy includes moving from the confines of the classroom into the wider community, and we observed how teachers in this study engaged students with important issues pertinent to their own communities. At least two of the four dimensions of critical literacy articulated by Lewison et al. (2002) were visible in the classrooms of the teachers in this study, seeing common events or ideas from new perspectives and working to understand sociopolitical systems that underlie existing structures. There were examples of teachers engaging students in learning how to access various community services, taking part in activities to understand how the voting process works, and reconsidering local heritage events.

Gina's approach to Grade 8 social studies demonstrated her commitment to critical literacy in the community. Many of her lessons involved authentic connections with events happening in the community. For example, when the town was conducting municipal elections, Gina used this as an opportunity to teach her students about the civic electoral system. In planning for this activity, Gina organized students according to their electoral districts, asked them to bring in promotional flyers from the candidates, and discussed the platforms of each candidate with the class, with the activity culminating in a class vote on election day.

Gina helped build her students' critical literacy skills through lessons on how to actively engage in the community and have a say in municipal affairs. Gina's intention was for her students to become more engaged with their community. After the actual election had taken place, Gina noted:

> Yeah, we had a good talk about that on Monday when we looked at the results and then I asked, how many of you on the weekend checked out who won? A large percentage did because they wanted to know if their vote was similar to what the town had said and they were very passionate about the mayor...I think those are the kinds of things that we need to be literate in: how to vote, and how to…how do I access different services. …We've done a bunch of work on who to call if I'm not happy with the snow removal; if my streetlight is out; if I don't have a family doctor. (Interview, October 2, 2016)

Gina's approach to critical literacy made clear to students that they can have a voice in the decisions made in their town, both through larger events like elections and in the day-to-day aspects of community life in their local context. This was part of her goal to have students learn to advocate for themselves within and beyond their communities, which is aligned with the community-oriented focus of Ladson-Billings' (1995) three pillars of CRP.

Marla's approach to critical community literacy involved engaging her students in local events such as the launch of African Heritage Month, which occurred in early February 2018. Marla, who leads an African drumming group in the community, was invited to perform at the event. To extend this event to involve her Grade 5/6 class, Marla entered her students into a poetry contest, and four poems were selected to be read at the launch. Marla explained why she brings her students to events such as this.

> It's great for some of these kids to be able to…attend events like this, because a lot of them come from socioeconomic backgrounds where they aren't able to play on expensive sports teams and do after school extracurricular activities. She said events like this make students feel as if they are a part of something. (Observation Notes, January 25, 2018)

Marla's awareness of her students' need to feel as if they are anchored in their community is evident. By providing her students with opportunities to be involved, she is paving the way for them to see these events in their town from new perspectives, honing their critical community literacy skills. Marla stated that she is "a firm believer that it takes a village…to educate a child" Taking her students out in to the community, and being active herself in the community, "is another perspective that I'm bringing to the classroom because it's not just me that's making all of these kids successful" (Interview, February 12, 2018). Marla's beliefs reflect her commitment to CRP, and in particular to Ladson-Billings' (1995) focus on teachers constructing relationships with students, families, and communities.

Multimodal Practices in Teaching for Critical Literacy

This section examines how teachers incorporated varied text and modes of expression as they taught for critical literacy. As Lopez (2011) noted, clinging to the canonical texts is no longer appropriate (if it ever was). New and relevant modes of consuming information and expressing one's ideas and opinions are part of a critical literacy approach. Within the examples that follow, there is an emphasis on access to ensure that all students can participate in an activity. Students also learned how to critically engage with media sources. We draw on two examples here. In the first, we highlight Jeremy's Grade 8 class, who were engaged in creating podcasts about a diverse variety of books that small groups had read in book club. During a classroom observation by one of the researchers,

> Two students…explained they are using GarageBand to make their podcasts, which are about the books they read in their book groups…They told me they had to complete a graphic organizer and answer 5-6 questions in their podcast to bring to life a character from their book. Jeremy noted after class that students are…[using] voices like those of the characters and creat[ing] an atmosphere like that of their book using sound effects. (Field Notes, January 24, 2018)

Through his integration of technology, Jeremy works toward ensuring equal access for his students as part of his CRP, noting that this is part of his attempt to address the digital divide between those who have access to devices and opportunities to use applications like GarageBand at home and those who do not. "If I don't use technology, if I don't have electronic sources available, they can't [be] successful" (Interview, February 26, 2018).

Marla noted the importance of culturally diverse materials as part of her CRP in her classroom.

> Making sure that they see themselves reflected in the curriculum and making sure they can see outside to the things that aren't their perspective too…the books I used [for a text features scavenger hunt] were all First Nations' content. Just like, things like that to normalize that that's part of the curriculum." (Interview, October 30, 2017)

Marla planned a multimodal inquiry unit for her Grade 5/6 class in which they explored a specific aspect of one of four cultural groups: Mi'kmaw, African Nova Scotians, Gaels, or Acadians. Before the unit began, Marla created a website with a selection of resources for her students. As she explained:

> I had made a website through Google sites, so I did a fair bit of the work for them. Just because it's hard to, the resources aren't there, so it's hard to find stuff that is pertinent to what they're looking for. (Interview, February 12, 2018)

Marla invested effort in creating a website for students to access relevant information while also having some choice in their inquiry topic. She knew that because the focus of this unit was on marginalized groups in Nova Scotia, it could be difficult for students to find information without some scaffolding. As students navigated Marla's website, they honed critical literacy skills, such as selecting pertinent texts or sections of texts from within the range of options provided, while locating information about their topic. After using graphic organizers to record information about their inquiry topics, students created posters about what they had learned. Marla's goals for this activity included having students consider the

material they gathered using critical literacy skills, and examine them from new perspectives and multiple viewpoints (Lewison et al., 2002).
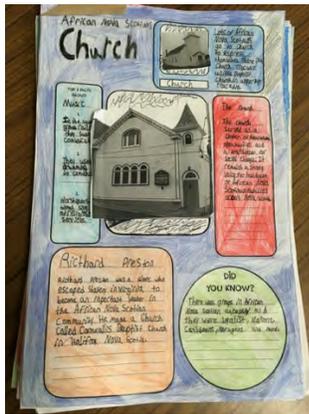
Fig. 1: African Nova Scotian Church poster, by student in Marla's classroom Feb. 12, 2018

> So not just…I guess talking about…so if it was the church for example, the African Nova Scotian church, not just talking about the church, but taking different parts of the information and tying that in and seeing how…it all kind of works together. (Interview, February 12, 2018)

Marla noted she aimed to have students tie together the information they gleaned from the resources on the website and in doing so to "see how it all works together." In the poster in Figure 1, the student wrote, "The church served as a center of educational opportunities and a trailblazer for social change. It remains a strong voice of African Nova Scotian families across Nova Scotia." This statement suggests that the student who wrote it was indeed seeing the bigger picture of the importance of the church in African Nova Scotian culture, as a space for working toward social change.

Discussion

Lee (2011) explained critical literacy as "uncovering…biases [embedded in texts] that are situated in a sociopolitical context" (p. 97) with the goal of problematizing the text, a definition well aligned with CRP's focus on sociopolitical consciousness. Lopez (2011) noted that understanding "the theoretical underpinnings of [CRP is insufficient]…teachers must be able to answer for themselves the questions of what does this look like and feel like in my classroom?" (p. 76). In this section, we consider how the critical literacy practices of the teachers in our study, described in the previous section, reflect their thinking about knowledge and knowledge construction (Ladson-Billings, 1995) as one key aspect of their CRP. We use Lewison et al.'s (2002) four elements of critical literacy as a framework.

Seeing Common Events or Ideas from New Perspectives and Examining Multiple and Contradictory Viewpoints

Jeremy's and Marla's careful planning included the selection of resources that provide students with nondominant perspectives on topics. Jeremy's intentional use of primary source documents that highlight racist immigration policies for Chinese Canadians, served to enable students to view the dominant view of Canada as a welcoming multicultural country from a new vantage point, and to question this concept. Marla's development of a website for the inquiry unit in her classroom with links to stories of successes and accomplishments of Mi'kmaw, African Nova Scotians, Gaels, and Acadians, groups that typically face and continue to face marginalization and often racism in Nova Scotia, supported her students in gaining new perspectives on the many achievements of these groups as well as aspects of the unique cultures of each group. Jackie purposefully engaged students in reading against the grain (Borsheim et al., 2014) as a way to interrogate statements in the social studies textbook that portrayed women in subservient roles in the Middle Ages and articulate the importance of gender equity in today's society.

Each of these practices reflects a sociocultural consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995) through these teachers' commitment to supporting students to gain greater awareness of multiple perspectives, and to question dominant social narratives, with a goal of disrupting the commonplace (Lewison et al., 2002). Through their actions, these teachers "problematiz[ed]…existing knowledge as a historical product" (p. 383) and took a stance as teachers who refused to be cast in the traditional role of teacher as transmitter of knowledge.

We observed teachers in this study incorporating a multimodal approach both to selection of resources and to options for students to represent their learning. Marla's invitation to students to create posters to share their learning through their inquiry unit on Mi'kmaw, African Nova Scotians, Gaels, and Acadians, as well as Jeremy's use of Google classrooms and a variety of digital tools, provided students with choices that moved away from traditional textbook reading and paper-and-pencil tasks. Lopez (2011) found critical literacy gave "practical expression" (p. 78) to CRP and urged a movement away from canonical texts. The choices Marla and Jeremy made in selecting multimodal texts that give voice to marginalized voices, and in having students represent their learning digitally and through artful assignments like posters, point to their sense of knowledge construction as "counter storytelling" (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011, p. 70).

Working to Understand Sociopolitical Systems That Underpin Existing Structures and Activism for Social Change

Lewison et al. (2002) noted that using literacy to engage in the politics of daily life is integral to bringing a critical literacy perspective to one's teaching. Ladson-Billings (1995) used the term "sociopolitical or critical consciousness" (p. 483) to describe one of three criteria she articulated as central to culturally relevant teaching. Gina's engagement of her students in the local municipal election in their area gave them a way to begin to understand the sociopolitical systems of their community and to learn how to have a voice in those systems. Marla's commitment to having all her students take part in community

events, such as the launch of African Heritage Month, encouraged them to become involved and to see themselves as engaged and active members of the community. Lewison et al., following Giroux (1993), call for a "redefining of literacy as a form of cultural citizenship and politics that increases opportunities for…[marginalized] groups to participate in society and as an ongoing act of consciousness and resistance" (p. 383). These critical literacy practices in Gina's and Marla's classrooms offer students practical possibilities for participation in society, and affirm their right to have a voice in elections and public events, their right to take up roles as engaged citizens. They also make visible how critical literacy is eminently integral to CRP, and how critical literacy can be implemented consistently in everyday practices as a way to counter the tokenistic "celebrations" approach to CRP that Sleeter (2012) decries.

Conclusion

We have described the ways teachers who participated in this study used a critical literacy approach as part of their CRP as multimodal and intentional, moving beyond the classroom into the wider community. Teachers' views on knowledge and knowledge construction appear to reflect a sociocultural consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995), as they noted purposeful planning and teaching to "disrupt the commonplace…[and] "interrogat[e]…multiple viewpoints" (Lewison et al., 2002, pp. 382–383). In the cases of Gina and Marla, they also expressed a "sociopolitical or critical consciousness" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 483), having students critically engage with events in their small town with the goal of supporting them to take on roles as active citizens who have voices in the affairs of their community. While these experienced teachers provided strong examples of using critical literacy instruction as part of their CRP, not all teachers are successful in this practice. Further professional learning opportunities are needed in teacher education "to counter the racism that is embedded in schools" (Hyland, 2005, p. 458) and to support more teachers to incorporate critical literacy into their CRP.

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Reading Aloud as a Leading Activity With Preschool Students

Pradita Nambiar and Sharada Gade

Abstract

We examine a teacher's read-aloud activity with her preschool students in India. Three vignettes show how this *leading* activity helps young children take part in socio-dramatic play, fostering their cultural-historical development. Collaborating as teacher and researcher, we consider students' use of words, instances of object substitution, and exploration of social roles in the story being read aloud, to demonstrate the development of their higher psychological activity. Moreover, we contend that read-aloud activities in preschool are crucial for developing student learning during middle childhood.

Background

Read-aloud activities for preschool children are prevalent in many schools worldwide. One can imagine a teacher sitting next to a group of children, reading aloud from large picture books. A cat here, a ball there, a parent, a tree, a friend, blue skies, and mountains fill these colourful pages with accompanying text. The children being read to are gradually introduced to various aspects of the human world they inhabit, which they start to become aware of and transform in different ways. Through reading aloud and/or storytelling with four-year-old students, the teacher is seemingly in complete control of the mood, tempo, drama, and atmosphere in the classroom. Eagerness, wonder, doubt, excitement, and priceless expressions emerge—enough to take one's breath away. It is not uncommon for a visiting parent to sit beside in silence, and learn a trick or two from this wondrous experience. However, it is the development of children's potential, which results from this pedagogical activity, that we are examining in this paper. In doing so, we draw on the neo-Vygotskian construct of a *leading* activity, which maintains that at various stages of children's development, different kinds of activity can play a vital role in awakening, bringing about, and leading cultural-historical development (Karpov, 2003). When read to by preschool teachers, socio-dramatic play, as a leading activity, helps three- to six-year-olds become interested in the world of human relations.

We examine notions of reading aloud and leading activity in the sections that follow, but first provide more context for our study. As a teacher, Pradita's read-aloud activities with preschoolers set the stage for her reflections as a practitioner. These experiences were followed by her journal entries which inform the three vignettes we present as data. As a researcher with her own understanding of child development, Sharada had opportunity to collaborate with Pradita, in line with Vygotskian cultural historical activity theory or CHAT perspectives (e.g., Gade & Blomqvist, 2015). As our collaboration as teacher and researcher developed over time, we gained from sharing experiences, discussing relevant literature, and reflecting on the various actions we would take as practitioners. Thus, we gained an appreciation of what Hollingsworth et al. (1993) call *relational knowing*. Putting Pradita's students front and centre, such

knowing drew on relationships with ourselves, each other, our lived experiences, as well as our existential reality. We used relational knowing as a valuable tool for our collaborative learning.

> Employed in the fields of teacher preparation and teacher learning, the concept of relational knowing could provide a space to help resolve the tension between acquiring knowledge of what schooling presently is and what it should and might be (the lived world and the theoretical world). (Hollingsworth et al., 1993, p. 10)

In our study of students' cultural-historical development, in which reading aloud is considered a leading activity, we first drafted sections of this paper that each of us was comfortable writing. Redrafting earlier sections along the way, we then viewed the entirety of our writing from our respective positions as practitioners. This led to the present text, which represents relational knowing and collaborative learning, and leads to the following question: "How does the neo-Vygotskian construct of a leading activity shed light on the cultural-historical development of preschool students as they participate in the pedagogical practice of reading aloud?"

Reading Aloud, Storytelling

Pradita's kindergarten classroom of four- to five-year-olds is tucked away under the shade of a gigantic banyan tree. With its well-concealed hollow and loose hanging roots, this magnificent tree has been witness to many a story read aloud to her children. Every morning, after playing a game with their friends outdoors, Pradita's students rush into her cave-like room next to the banyan tree. They leave their footwear outside and try to sit as close to Pradita as possible. This is where curiosities are aroused, fantasies come alive, characters switch roles, problems are resolved, and fears and feelings are expressed. Pradita sits on a *chowki*, or low stool, and holds up a book she has kept ready for the day. The books she chooses keep the children focused on the many creative ways in which words and sounds are used. While the plots of most of these books are simple, she looks forward to having deeper conversations with her students and listening to their interpretation of the story. Next, children look at the pictures and text of her book, resulting in enthusiastic chatter. While some students want to know the name of the story, others try to read the title. Some say they have that same book at home, while a few try to adjust their tiny bodies to get the best view of the book and their teacher. Pradita makes sure that all the students can see the book, and rearranges where they are seated, if needed. She knows that holding up the book is critical for children to make connections between the illustrations they see and the story they hear. Lasting about 20 minutes each morning, Pradita's read-aloud sessions help promote vocabulary development, phonological awareness, and the very act of reading.

Research on storytelling and reading aloud sheds light on why so much time is spent in preschool classrooms on these absorbing activities. Both activities are led by adults: the teacher at school or a parent at home. Meyer et al. (1994), however, state that while storytelling depends on the language register and speech of the storyteller, the teacher is the one who mediates the text and brings about a shared context for the young learner when reading aloud. Moreover, Ammon (1974) points out that, beyond mere entertainment, the teacher's role is to evaluate the reading progress learners make. One need not feel guilty about the pleasure of reading aloud, adds Butler (1980), as this activity motivates

children to become independent readers. She advises teachers to read at a level above children's current reading level, acknowledging that the benefits of reading aloud correlate to how frequently they are read to. As a teacher, Schmitt (2016) introduces voices, tones, and facial expressions when reading aloud and underscores their key role,

> Students who are equipped with a plethora of reading strategies will be able to comprehend any material or resource they are reading whether it's a historical fiction novel about the Great Depression, a science textbook covering a chapter on Newton's laws of motion, or a magazine article instructing how to make a delicious chocolate cake. (p. 373)

In addition, two authoritative voices weigh in on the importance of storytelling. First, is American researcher Vivian Paley (1986), who tape-recorded, listened to, and transcribed her own storytelling sessions, in order to figure out what children made of them. According to Paley, each child was attempting to answer the following questions: "What is going on in this place called school, and what role do I play here?" Paley maintains that school begins to make sense to children when they pretend it is something else. Second, is Indian academic Krishna Kumar (2011), who highlights three key aspects in relation to the pedagogical practice of storytelling: promote good listening, be a good listener, and personally experience, by proxy, some pattern, plot, or design which is satisfying in our otherwise chaotic world. He adds that a great many of life's challenges can only be met orally, for which we need to prepare our children.

Literature on the nitty-gritty of reading aloud is just as insightful. Van Kleeck (2008) stresses the need for teachers' reading to go beyond the information in the text being read, so as to guide preschoolers' development of oral language skills, which are valuable for their own reading comprehension. Where appropriate, questions such as, "Was that a good thing to do? Is that what we usually do?", help teachers to foster students' ability to infer—and provide responses to—what might be happening in any story. According to Hoffman (2011), using this strategy allows students to understand the motivation of characters in the story, a skill essential for them to participate more fully in society. Pagan and Senechal (2014) point out the opportunities students have of using words they hear during read-aloud sessions, both by direct reference to them and by inferring their meaning from the larger context of what is read. Based on their study of municipal schools, Brodin and Renbald (2020) stress that reading aloud, in itself, does not improve children's communication, unless preschool staff follow up such activities with discussions and reflections on the content. This enables children to express themselves in their own words and become conscious of their own language. Damber (2014) affirms that effective reading aloud not only promotes knowledge about language and the world at large, but also the formation of individual student identities. Meanwhile, Fox (2013), a writer of children's literature, views story-reading sessions as a way to create a collective identity, similar to that of a family, in which the members have secret joys that come from shared experiences.

Socio-Dramatic Play: Leading Activity

Through the neo-Vygotskian construct of a leading activity, Karpov (2003) draws attention to the fact that different kinds of activity can be very powerful in awakening or leading the cultural-historical development of children. By participating in a leading activity, children develop new motives, enabling them to transition from one developmental period to the next. For example, in the first year of a child's life, emotional communication with caregivers is a leading activity for infants. At this stage, children become interested in the world around them, and come to accept adult caregivers as mediators of all their relationships with the outside world. Similarly, in the second and third year of a child's life, object-centred activity is a leading activity for toddlers. By participating in this activity, children find the need to communicate about various objects, and learn active speech, which results in leading the development of all their psychological functions. They also begin to use objects shown to them by adults, such as feeding themselves and their doll with a spoon. In taking such actions, children display independence and develop symbolic thought. These outcomes prepare children to transition to socio-dramatic play, a leading activity for the early childhood period of three- to six-year-olds, in which children develop an interest in the world of human relations. With the adult world becoming more enticing, children begin to explore the many social roles that adults introduce and mediate for them. As they begin to follow the rules that come along with the roles of a doctor or train conductor, children implicitly obey social rules. They accept that postmen have to ring the doorbell to deliver mail, and that doctors wear white lab coats at work. Children thus begin to self-regulate their own behaviour and are able to align their point of view with those of others. With respect to this stage of leading activity, Karpov reiterates Vygotskian scholar Daniel Elkonin's argument, that the outcome of socio-dramatic play as a leading activity, is that children realize they are not yet adults, and must go on to study at school. Learning in instructional settings is the leading activity that middle childhood students undertake, when they learn how to organize concepts of everyday items that are familiar to them, such as bananas or grapes.

We view Pradita's read-aloud sessions and accompanying socio-dramatic play as Karpov's leading activity, where she has opportunity to mediate the world of adult social relationships that children are interested in, one story at a time. Apart from the sheer excitement that comes with roaring like a lion or tweeting like a bird, there is an opportunity for her to introduce words that students can use in relevant contexts. Her dramatization of words such as "scowl," "anger," or "red in the face," is another example of her being able to lead students' development. In a Vygotskian sense, these words are psychological tools she makes students conscious of, which they can use in appropriate ways while interacting with others in their surrounding culture. Such an ability to use words, whose meaning is acquired via didactic change over time during social collaboration, signals the development of higher psychological activity. Socio-dramatic play thus leads students' cultural-historical development. On occasion, Pradita has asked her students if they have seen an angry policeman or a happy one, or even one wearing plain clothes. In responding to such questions, students display self-regulation. Pretending the classroom to be a tiger's cave or a queen's palace while reading aloud, makes object substitution possible for students—another aspect that Karpov highlights. And then there are students whose appetite for the make-believe is quenched. Displaying boredom, their behaviour indicates their readiness to transition to the next

leading activity that is best suited to middle childhood. Vygotsky viewed children's play, including socio-dramatic play, as a rich source of awakening their cultural-historical development, enabling students to be "a head taller than themselves." Yet, it is in his focus on imagination with respect to children's play, where we find additional insight. Vygotsky (1978) asserts,

> Towards the beginning of preschool age, when desires that cannot be immediately gratified or forgotten make their appearance and the tendency to immediate fulfilment of desires, characteristic of the preceding stage, is retained, the child's behaviour changes. To resolve this tension the preschool child enters an imaginary, illusory world in which the unrealisable desires can be realised and this world is what we call play. Imagination is a new psychological process for the child, it is not present in the consciousness of the very young child, is totally absent in animals, and represents a specifically human form of conscious activity. Like all functions of consciousness, it originally arises from action. (p. 93)

These features allow us to regard Karpov's assertion that, mediated by adults, children's development turns into in socio-dramatic play, which is oriented towards the external world. When such a mediated process matures, resulting in development of new motives, students are ready to move on to their next leading activity: learning in middle school settings.

Two authors offer valuable starting points for further examining Vygotsky's notion of play. Bodrova and Leong (2015) value socio-dramatic play as make-believe play, in which preschoolers are capable of intentional behaviour on their way to self-mastery. Recognizing socio-dramatic play as a leading activity, they point to students being able to take on and act out roles, which, in turn, demands that rules associated with these roles be followed by them. Extending Paley's insights into storytelling or story-acting by preschoolers, Nicolopoulou et al. (2010) focus on the narrative dimension involved, and draw attention to preschoolers having the opportunity for gaining, as well as demonstrating, social, narrative, interactional, and emotional competencies. We argue such a collective canvas for children's cultural-historical development corresponds to what Pradita was able to achieve through reading aloud and/or storytelling with four-year-olds in her preschool classroom. We now present three vignettes rendered in her own voice, in which she refers to her students by the pseudonyms she chose, to reflect how reading aloud improved their social interactions.

Pradita's Vignettes

In my first vignette, the school year had just begun and I had 23 four-year-olds sitting on the floor around me. The children had just returned to school after a two-month summer break. Understandably, many of them were missing their parents and their home. I decided to read Jillian Harker's (2009) book, *I Love You Mummy*, since it is about a young bear whose mother teaches him how to fish, swim, climb trees, pick fruits, and play. In this story, the little bear wants to try out new experiences and doesn't want his mother's advice. But when he is unable to do things on his own, the mother teaches him everything he needs to know in order to be a well-rounded bear. I chose Harker's story to endear my students to me as their teacher, and also help them verbalize experiences they might have had at home. In addition, I wanted them to share the many things they learnt from their own mother during their recent summer holidays. Our reading went as follows:

Pradita: (Holding up the book for all to see). What did your mother teach you?
Rumi: (Standing on one leg and trying to balance) Mamma taught me to balance.
Ashok: Mummy taught me to paint.
Pradita: You know in this story, the mother bear is teaching the baby bear to play gently.
Pradita: (Reading from the book). Be gentle when you play.
Pradita: What does gentle mean?
Ajay: No fighting!
Anya: No kicking!
Shiv: No punching!
Pradita: Yes, That's right, we do not do all this when we are gentle. So then what do you do when you are gentle?
All: (Children peer into the book trying to look for a clue to respond to the question)
Pradita: What are the mother and the baby bear doing in the picture?
Ajay: They are holding hands and walking. They are also rolling in the grass and laughing.
Anya: I hold hands with my friend and walk. (She demonstrates the same for me)
Shiv: I put hands on my friend's shoulder like this. (He shows the same with his friend)
Pradita: So when you are gentle, you hold hands, put your arms around your friend's shoulder or just roll in the grass.

This reading-aloud session ended with children carrying out many actions, including those which showed me that they had understood what the word "gentle" meant, exhibited by hugging or being affectionate with one another. They even started to walk away from me, holding each other's hands, and also walking shoulder to shoulder. I had to call the children back to me, so that I could continue reading my story.

In reading Harker's book, Pradita prompts her students to consciously examine the word gentle and consider its meaning, rather than what her students thought the word was not. This helped motivate her students to animate the word by dramatizing it. Pradita's mediation of this word created a shared context with her students, who demonstrated that they understood its meaning. The creation of an imaginary situation for gentleness in her reading-aloud session allowed the children to act out its meaning with their friends and demonstrate actions they associated with being gentle. By exploring the world presented to them, her students' performance was intentional and demonstrative of having understood what being gentle meant. In addition, they were able to associate the word with a broad category of situations. When Pradita's students walked away holding each other's hands, they were co-constructing the meaning of gentle by acting it out and were exhibiting a collective identity (Fox, 2013) of being a group of gentle people. Pradita's reading aloud was thus able to awaken or lead her students' understanding of the word, which, according to Vygotsky, was indicative of their development of higher psychological activity.

My second vignette depicts the importance of children learning to make and keep friends. As a preschool teacher, I would observe children coming to school each morning and putting their bags to one side. In doing so, they would always be on the lookout for bags that belonged to their best friend. Moreover, if a child discovered that their best friend had not turned up, since their bag was not there, they were often sad for the entire day. With this in mind, I read them a story on friendship that drove home the point that one could make new best friends, too. This time, I read Klaus Baumgart's (2013) book, *Lenny and Tweek Wanted: A Friend*. This story is about a little mouse named Lenny, who puts up a tiny notice in order to

make a new friend. A little bird Tweek comes along and gives him company, and does all the things two friends are supposed to do. The story's message is that, even though you may be looking for a specific friend, those with whom you appreciate the simple joys of everyday living are also your friends. I chose to read this story while sitting outdoors on the steps approaching the classroom, to re-create the feeling of the open field that was present throughout the book. I played the role of Tweek and used my tone to tweek like a little bird, and did all the things that Tweek did with his friend Lenny. The following exchange ensued:

> Rohan: I think it's a boy because Lenny is wearing shoes.
> Pradita: But girls also wear shoes. See, Arti, Priya and Usha are also wearing shoes.
>   (Pointing to the girls in the class)
> Priya: But Lenny has short hair. My daddy also has short hair and wears a dress like Lenny.
>   (She looks at the picture and points to the dress)
> Anuj: Lenny is playing with a ball.
> Pradita: But the girls in the class wear a T shirt and shorts like Lenny and they also play with
>   ball.
> Rohan: Teacher, you can be my friend.
> Pradita: Of course, I am your friend Tweek. (I tweeked and the class roared with laughter)
> Pradita: (Finally, reading the last line) And sometimes they stay for good.
> Pradita: Lenny and Tweek became friends forever.
> Priya: (standing up and saying) Arti and I are friends forever.

In this session, a boy named Rohan spontaneously agreed to be Tweek's friend, the role I took on as teacher. His playing Lenny was not part of the story as such, but had to do with pretending that our classroom was the caravan where the story played out. Rohan was exploring the role of being a friend— a notion I mediated as teacher. The earnestness and sincerity which Rohan brought to his role seemed to convey his interest in the world of human relations. He felt free to accept his much older teacher as his friend, and the teacher's open, accepting, and encouraging response created a shared cultural identity in which she and the student became friends. As asserted by Damber (2014), Rohan was creating his individual identity as a friendly person. I also noticed that another girl, Priya, was able to use the word forever in the context of the same story and view the notion of friendship in a more extended sense of time, indicative of her own grasp of the story.

Moreover, Pradita mediated the text by presenting the social role of a friend. She tweeked like a little bird, called herself by the bird's name in the story, and emphasized the word forever, explaining its significance in relation to human friendship. Merely taking on the role of Tweek would have been inadequate and made the act immature. However, her use of forever enriched the read-aloud activity and transcended the time limits often associated with preschoolers. Pradita's reading aloud awakened, or led the development of, Priya's conscious use of the word forever. Priya's expressive vocabulary and inference of the meaning of this word was made possible via the social interaction during Pradita's read-aloud session. The inclusion of this new word in relation to the story—together with Priya's inferring its meaning and using the word aloud—were indicative of her becoming conscious of her own language (Brodin & Renbald, 2020). In addition to her communicating the meaning of the word forever, Priya's

expressing her thoughts is something Vygotsky would view as her ability to interiorize, organize, and self-regulate her own behaviour—an act he would view as being uniquely human.

My third and final vignette focuses on the importance of children finishing what they have started. This was based on observing children take part in and complete various activities, such as working with play dough, building sand castles, cutting papers and making a collage, as well as learning to read and write. However, there was a particular child in my class who would invariably leave his work half done. I spent a lot of time cajoling and coaxing him to finish his work, and decided to read the Donald Moyle's (1981) story, *The Girl Who Half Did Things*, about a girl with good intentions who left things half done. As soon as I mentioned the title of the story, the following exchange transpired:

> Ajay: I know, I know the story is about Shankar.
> Shankar: No, it's not about me.
> Pradita: Yes, it's not about Shankar, but about a girl who always did not complete her work.
> Pradita: Crash! She dropped a plate. (I read the part from the book)
> Rehan: Now her mother will shout at her.
> Pradita: What would it have been made of, that the dishes broke when they fell?
> Ajay: I think it is made of glass.
> Priya: Now it will poke the leg.
> Rehan: When my brother dropped a glass it made a lot of noise. (He covered his ears as though he could hear the sound of glass crashing.)

During this discussion, I found that Shankar, whose behaviour had prompted me to read the story, had distanced himself from the character portrayed in the story, as somebody who half did things. Fortunately, Shankar felt reassured that the story was not about him, but about another girl.

Pradita's heightened tone with the word *Crash!* conveyed a mental image of dishes falling, enabling Rehan to envision this scene and merge his personal view with that of the author. It turns out that Rehan had previously dropped and broken dishes in his own life, so he could strongly identify with the girl being reprimanded in the story. By referring to a past event, Rehan was able to infer relevant aspects based on his prior experiences, which underscored the importance of memory in his psychological functioning. Pradita's question about what the dishes were made of motivated Priya to visualize the connection between broken dishes and hurting one's legs (i.e., "Now it will poke the leg"). Thus, Priya was demonstrating an act of self-regulation. Priya and Rehan's comments show that they were anticipating the repercussions of the act of breaking a plate: Rehan imagined the broken dishes would make the girl's mother angry, while Priya felt that the broken glass might hurt her and cause pain. Such acts of imagination, thinking, and reflection display students' ability to function in a complex environment and face challenges in their future lives.

Discussion

Reading aloud to her students has allowed Pradita to collect a sizeable library from which she instinctively pulls out stories that suit her purposes. She finds the experience of reading aloud gratifying, and that it puts her in the right frame of mind for the rest of the school day. As evidenced in the three vignettes, Pradita finds that children become active participants in the stories, as if it were a game, a make-believe play in which both she and the students lose their identities and share a common surreal experience. As maintained by Paley (1986), teaching preschoolers becomes more enriching when the classroom is treated as an imaginary place in which everybody can act out different roles. Moreover, as pointed out by Kumar (2011), by listening, students experience characters and situations that they may not have previously encountered in their lives. However, participating in the activity of reading stories and make-believe play is not enough on its own. When mediated by the teacher, play is learning, interwoven with drama, modulation, the raising and lowering of the pitch of the teacher's voice, and exploring the various social roles depicted in stories. In their 2010 study, Nicolopoulou and colleagues assert that by participating in role-plays and read-aloud sessions, children develop the capacity to be gentle, make lasting friendships, and anticipate what adults might say, all of which are necessary social competencies. By reading aloud to them, Pradita's preschoolers were able to access a world that was beyond their immediate experience. She thus finds reading aloud and/or storytelling to be vital for children's development—and not an activity that should be easily dismissed in favour of what is often erroneously perceived as the *real business* of learning in preschool. At its very core, reading aloud is undeniably developmental.

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Life of a Wildflower: Reimagining Meaningful Learning Through Play-Based Pedagogy

Lisa Nontell

Abstract

The author explores tensions between teacher-centered styles of teaching and play-based approaches that invite students to be creators of their own learning. Through narrative inquiry, the author uses a metaphor of wildflowers growing in natural environments to explore a child-led process of learning through play that fosters creativity and deep thinking. Teaching Kindergarten for the first time, the author reflects on challenges of living "secret stories" in the classroom that differ from "sacred stories" of the school's pedagogical practices, feeling a need to create a "cover story" to present her pedagogy as conforming, yet capable and successful.

Today is a crisp fall day, where the sun seems to hang on to every last ounce of summer. The warmth I feel reminds me of the coy reluctance of fall to surrender to winter, yet gusts of frigid temperatures remind me winter is looming. The hares I see, startled by the tennis ball I am throwing for my border collie, scamper along the rough terrain behind my house. My four-year-old son trots behind our dog, shifting all his weight from one foot to the other, resembling a clumsy puppy himself. We return to the house, removing layers of clothing. I am thankful for the open fields so close to my home. I sit my son down in a kitchen chair, explaining to him that we are going to play "hairdresser" next. I notice that his unsymmetrical hairline has become almost as jagged as the terrain and underbrush growing in the field we just came from.

As I prepare to start, I am reminded of the days long ago when my sister and I played hairdresser for hours on end. We had a mobile stylist kit, equipped with a comb, mirror, light pink plastic scissors, and even a hair dryer that made sounds when you turned it on. I remember a shift in my interest, developing a love for other avenues of imaginary play centered on animal care, but my sister's love and devotion to becoming a hair stylist evolved with her into her teenage years. When telling our parents of her career aspirations, they responded to my sister, "You can't be *just* a hairdresser." They encouraged her to leave the "play" behind and consider a more realistic option. One that took more *hard work*, studying, and training that involved reading textbooks for hours on end. This meant success.

Holding the kitchen scissors to my son's hair, my dominant hand begins to shake. Why is this happening? I remember having such confidence exploring different styles on my dolls and Barbies, with the ease and confidence of a journeyman hair stylist. "It's *just* cutting hair," I think. It's just cutting hair, so what's the issue?

I no longer feel confident holding these scissors the way I once did as a child. My hand trembles until I begin to make the first cut, compressing and releasing the handles slowly to ensure I can hide the

damage I am sure to see. I clasp onto each piece of hair tightly in my hand as I begin to cut, watching smooth lines appear. I like it. I feel free. I seem to grow in confidence with each snip, chop, and cut my scissors make into my son's hair. I begin mimicking what I see hair stylists do when I go to a salon to get my hair done, pinching the ends with my fore- and middle-finger to snip directly into the line and create more dimension and layering.

My son, sitting in our kitchen chair, makes me feel an excitement and curiosity about how to style his hair in different ways. I talk to him as if he is an actual customer, asking about his day, his favourite things to do, and how he likes his hair styled. He is thoroughly enjoying this playful experience and our back-and-forth conversation as we take on our pretend roles. I think about my memories growing up of being completely lost in play, creating and re-creating, molding and remolding, an artist whose sculpture is repeatedly broken down and reconstructed to evolve with her. Holding those kitchen scissors, the excitement, the wonder, and the willingness to try new things unleashes a more confident, braver version of myself, one that I had lost growing up.

As children, we have an innate sense of curiosity and questioning that leads us to be natural scientists in how we explore and wonder (Montessori, 1912). Play comes naturally to children. Just as wildflowers shine their beauty in all places, spaces, and circumstances, children at play in unstructured environments are just as natural a phenomenon. Play as a method for learning—so wild, sporadic, and opportunistic— is every essence of a wildflower, whose seedlings drift where they may, and thrive at their own pace, on their own terms.

My Learning Journey

Wildflowers
Wildflowers—I envy them.
They're brave.
Seeds cast by the wind to
land where they may,
they stay
and hold
against most hot, most cold.
They persevere, roots shallow
yet fierce and free.
They epitomize to me
all that I sometimes
yearn to be.
Julie Andrews (Rodriguez, 2016)

As a child I was always a dreamer, and one that seemed to float between realms of slaying dragons with fallen jack pine branches that lay scattered across my grandmother's lawn, to watching my Dad construct various bug catchers for me out of scrap wood and screen mesh. The gentle breeze that seemed to float me from each of these possibilities throughout the summer stood still as I entered back into the world of

school. I walked to school each day in my ever-growing commuter town north of Toronto. Blankets of forest that once held trails for family hikes and shaded canopies were quickly becoming replaced with asphalt terraces and constructed city gardens that no longer provided an environment for the drooping bellflower, daisy, and thistle bouquets I would pick for my mother on my way home from school. I remember finding great joy and ease being surrounded by sporadic patches of wildflowers on my walks to and from school. I often wondered how they got there, if they were planted or happenstance, if the wind had carried the seeds until letting go.

I have few memories of Kindergarten, but I do remember often drifting between centers, observing what the other children were doing. We had a water table and there were two boys, Joshua and Ryan, who would often spill water while re-creating tsunami-like waves with various boats and scoops, among other objects. I felt fear for those boys who were not following the procedures laid out for us by Mrs. Hampson.

As my school experience grew, the amount I wandered to different spaces within the classroom lessened. In Grade 3 with Mrs. Malone's classroom, I experienced the rigid structure, high discipline, and systematic manner of teaching, with no room for movement in how the classroom was run or for actual movement outside of my desk. My memories of this year are all of moments that seemed to be spent at this desk. I do not remember any big moments, breakthroughs, or curiosities I had. I just remember wanting to stay completely out of the way, at my desk, and not to create any waves in this still environment. We were perfectly positioned as carefully chosen perennials that lay in a garden bed. Row upon row, perfectly symmetrical in every way. Soil that told us what nutrients we needed, how to grow, what temperature we could acclimatize to, and how much water we would need.

A New Beginning

Moving to a new school that was built closer to my home in Grade 5 was my fresh start. It was my new beginning of no longer being a struggling student that disappointed my teachers, despite staying at my desk as they told me to. I remember walking out to the tarmac where the other students were gathered, awaiting my name to be called by my newly assigned teacher and to follow him to our portable with the rest of the class. Despite the straps on my backpack being cushioned, I remember their sharp constraint as I dug my hands into the handles, clutching onto my last few breaths of fresh, natural air. Freedom. Lisa Lester.

My new teacher called my name, and I vividly remember my grasp on my backpack straps lessening. I remember looking at my teacher and staring longer than I knew I should have. Growing early at a young age, partly due to my father's 6'7" frame, I was taller than him. He also had his sunglasses hooked on his ears, yet they were shielding the back of his head instead of his eyes. I liked him already. He seemed different, almost kid-like, in his athletic outfits and silly placement of his sunglasses, causing me to wonder what our year together would be like. I wasn't afraid like I was with Mrs. Malone, with pre-told stories of how her day was run year to year. Later, I would learn that this was his first-year teaching. His name was Mr. Barrett, and he became my favourite teacher.

I remember it was a sunny September day, the kind of day when kids were still excited to be at school, yet eager to get outside and run, while cooler temperatures began to balance the lingering hot summer sun. Mr. Barrett explained we were going to have a math quiz to see where we were at, and he assured us not to stress as it would not be considered in determining our final grade. I did not hear the latter. Sitting straight up in my seat, I felt ready. This was my chance! I was ready to reinvent myself, Lisa Lester, a student who does not disappoint. My already tall stature seemed even taller with how straight I sat in my seat that moment. I placed my sharpened pencil symmetrical to my eraser at the top of my desk. Looking around at the other students, aligned in rows and symmetry, I felt a sense of comfort in uniformity. A garden bed of annuals, coming together in this new classroom with different experiences, hopes and dreams, yet still the same. I was blending in. I was ready.

I was not ready. Mr. Barrett began reading numbers to us and I was unsure in which notation he expected us to write them. Numerical? Written? I wrote both just in case, frantically trying to keep pace with those around me who seemed to so effortlessly write without worry. Was it happening all over again? Was I just born to be a C/D kid? A wilting perennial about to be plucked? The recess bell rang and, as my classmates rushed outside to play and release their energy, I walked up to Mr. Barrett's desk and begged for a retest. I began to cry and plead, apologizing for not properly listening to the direct instruction. He assured me this test did not mean anything at all and did not define me. Why would he, the gardener, the caretaker of our Grade 5 garden bed, respond to the needs of his individual plants? For so long I was conditioned to feel like we were all the same, requiring the same level of assistance and independence to flourish and blossom in the garden bed of a classroom.

Now as a teacher, I often think back to my school memories and wonder how the other students felt in our Grade 3 environment of rigid structure and mechanical practice. Entering the new school in Grade 5, I wonder if others were also hoping for a fresh start, a second chance, or perhaps an opportunity to show they were more than a "C" or "D"? Thinking back now, I wonder how this fresh start was an opportunity for me to gain an insight into my limitations, was a reflection of my learning, or, instead, was a window into what I could truly be capable of (Galda, 1998)? With this window of hope and promise of a fresh start, I was able to feel safe in an environment that offered me the opportunity to explore new ideas, fail, and try again, that offered far more than the prescribed opportunities presented to me by Mrs. Malone. Mr. Barrett's philosophy seemed to match ours as students who were craving engagement and experience, and our classroom began to open up from a garden bed to a whole field of possibilities. In school ways, it mirrored my experiences portaging through Algonquin Park, blanketed in vast beech, birch, and hemlock canopies, following dense paths with my father. It mirrored my sense of family and community where I spent endless nights in the care of my aunts and uncles during my parents' shift rotations, learning to contribute, collaborate, and compromise with others my age and not. I think about my early elementary years and wonder about the possibilities that would have been presented if I had been more exposed to an open-ended classroom, one that valued play, movement, and individuality; one where failure did not completely uproot someone. What if my earlier school experiences allowed for the dispersal of roots and the grounding of various seedlings, and provided endless avenues for

replanting, regrowth, and flourishing? Wildflowers, looking so different and natural, demand our attention through their natural beauty.

Teaching How I've Been Taught

My early years of teaching always seemed to look the same in September. A new year of new beginnings for my students and me, with classrooms that were covered in laminated word walls, inspirational quotes, and learning strategies to help my students succeed. This past year, I began my sixth year of teaching at a new school in a grade I had never taught before. I was excited to teach Kindergarten; the magic, wonder, and playful curiosity that I experienced with my own four-year-old son at home led me to feeling excited to share a similar experience alongside my students. My school, located in a small, rural town outside of Saskatoon, is known for accomplishments, particularly in literacy. By Grade 3, students who attend our school are expected to be reading at grade level or higher, which is tracked through the Fountas and Pinnell (1996) reading program.

Our schools carry "sacred stories" (Crites, 1971) of how to measure learning and success. Crites explained that a sacred story is often artfully designed and reflective of a certain culture, being one that "informs people's sense of the story of which their own lives are a part, of the moving course of their own action and experience" (p. 295). The idea of a sacred story is applied to schools by Murray Orr (2005), who explained this term is used to represent the unspoken, yet powerful, grand narrative of what the school landscape should look and feel like. For me, I continued to struggle with the tensions that arose from my belief in imaginative play as an authentic and valuable form of learning for Kindergarten, as the sacred story of school did not offer a script that allowed for my vision to be acceptable on the school landscape in which I was situated. This school emulated a Cinderella story, a story of successful reading scores being realized with the same limited number of teachers, educational assistants, and resources as other schools. There was tension between the story I brought with me of how I envisioned children learning, arising from my own narrative history and from my playful experiences with my son, and a story that valued early intervention, routine testing, and rote learning.

It was late fall, and there was a sense of excitement in the air as my Kindergarten class began to sense the wonders that accompany the changing of seasons. Transitions in and out of our classroom became more hurried and congested, as lockers that once held backpacks were now being filled with ski pants, winter jackets, toques, and mittens. I noticed a growing interest among the children in animals and caring for them as discussions within our imaginative playtime often involved caring for pets, herding farm animals, and pretending to be the animals themselves. A corner of our classroom became a pet hospital, lined with cartooned pictures of hospital personnel who would be there ready to help with any sick animal patients. While engaging in this play with them, I first approached the reception desk, attended by a little boy named Brady, who kindly greeted me and asked me what was wrong with my animal. After explaining how I wasn't sure but that I noticed my stuffed animal was limping, he invited me to wait on one of the three chairs in the waiting room as another two students assessed my animal. These veterinary surgeons, doctors, nurses, and receptionists were completely committed to their playful roles in this space, sharing knowledge, joy, and curiosities with one another.

As I entered this building each day, I carried a secret story of my classroom. As I lived out a story of play, wonder, and exploration in my classroom, I kept this story secret as it did not align with the school story of structure, routines, and testing. I felt a cover story was necessary to better align with the stories around me in this new environment. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggested that when our own stories resist the sacred story of school, they do so secretly and, in place, we prepare a cover story to tell outside of our classroom that better aligns with the curriculum image that the sacred story expects.

> When teachers move out of their classrooms onto the out-of-classroom place on the landscape, they often live and tell cover stories, stories in which they portray themselves as experts, certain characters whose teacher stories fit within the acceptable range of the story being lived by the school. (p. 25)

I think about the pressure I felt to uphold my cover story of curriculum. As a result, I would pause our wonder and discovery through play to sit in a circle for our *letter of the day* routine. I struggled with these lessons as they were not designed or delivered to benefit my teaching or my students. This was my cover story; my story that showed to others I was a competent and capable Kindergarten teacher, who valued phonemic awareness and direct instruction of these skills just as I had been taught. This was a component of our day that neither my students nor I looked forward to. It was a "check-off item" on both of our lists to demonstrate we were taking steps toward letter recognition and phonemic awareness, despite the incredible conversation, reflection, and discovery we were engaged in during play. Our letter-of-the-day sharing circle had a much more serious tone to it and writing practice began with teaching through song the proper way to hold a pencil to practice letter-tracing booklets.

Hold the pencil just like this

Push the pointer finger squish, squish, squish

Lay the pencil on the thumb bed

Write all the amazing things in my head.

One of the main problems with songs such as this is they give a false impression of catering to children and how they learn. To some, this may have appeared to be an engaging lesson as it held the students' attention and they all seemed to be following along. As I reflect back, this was my cover story that I would tell to myself and to others. What is not reflected in this story is that each student needed to stay seated in their "parking space," and that I spent time policing behaviour that demonstrated attention was elsewhere. Further, it sent the message that there is one correct way to hold a pencil, and I, the teacher, know it and must teach it to them. Montessori (1912) examined the desire for control in schools, from what children learn, to how they learn, to using the desk, or in my case, the parking space, as a relentless pursuit to dictate how children should learn and what content makes them adequate. In contrast to "the glory of discovery" (p. 22), sitting at a desk demands immobility and forced attention, in which case children become slaves to the mechanics and process of becoming a student. In retrospect, titling my

own movement as "policing of a parking space," reflected my false sense of understanding what my students needed.

I could not help but feel our class needed these constraints because of how constrained I felt, as their teacher, with pressure to deliver the curriculum and follow suit with the cover story of our school. Any type of play and exploration seemed to be viewed as a reward after the "real work" was done and, even then, students were limited in what and how they could play with the materials. My classroom seemed both loud with frustrated, constrained children who were desperate to fulfil their own natural curiosities, and quiet, with children waiting to be told how to behave, what to do, and what to learn. Was I becoming the teacher that I vowed not to be? Had my own story been altered to meet the stories of others around me? Was I changing my students' perception of what school entailed, and what they were capable of?

My experience this year has taught me that Kindergarten is a year where play is the most needed and is the most controversial. Kindergarten is often the initial school experience for children, and depending on where a student's birthday falls in the school year, they may be four, five, or six years old. Paley (2004) explained how we somehow seem to be misplacing a year with our expectations of these early learners. When I think about the sacred story of school, I cannot help but feel that our five-year-old learners are now expected to know letters, sounds, and numbers upon entry into school despite this being the goal for the end of their Kindergarten year. I felt these expectations as their teacher. I think about four young boys in my class who scored very low on letter and number recognition testing. This knowledge did not reflect Connor's passion for building, Eric's extensive knowledge of dinosaur species, Luke's spatial sense in making and completing puzzles, or Adam's experiences working with his family on his acreage.

There was not only tension for me with the academic knowledge and skills that were valued by the sacred story, but also with the behaviours that were applauded. Noddings (2015) referred to these behaviours in the classroom as "soft skills," the ability to listen, cooperate, and communicate effectively in the culture of the classroom. Such skills reflect more the Grade 1 curricular expectations, developed gradually and experientially through one year of socialization, critical thinking, problem solving, oral expression, and creative construction in a play-based Kindergarten classroom. I struggle with the tensions that arise when emergent learners are asked to demonstrate their understanding through paper-and-pencil activities and seatwork. How can such controlled teaching and learning possibly evoke anything similar to the rich dialogue arising between two students as they brainstorm how to create a marble run as tall as they are, or the precautions that little Mya is taking to serve her guests at her restaurant, using a towel to carefully hand out their orders, asking them to be careful as their meals cool down? Or Cohen, working hard to compromise with Mya on the menu, while simultaneously cleaning and organizing the kitchen supplies to ensure cleanliness measures are satisfactory for their guests? Children, like wildflowers, are adaptable. To bloom, they need the right conditions. They need to form strong roots to build background knowledge to deepen understanding, yet shallow enough to have confidence to drift between wonderings and ideas.

After one month of attempting to teach my Kindergarten students a phonics-focused, "play after real work," organized center-style of learning, I was ready to try a new approach. My focus shifted to fostering classroom language where my students knew that play *is* the real work. I positioned myself alongside the

children as a fellow learner and participant, instead of the teacher, a misconstrued all-knowing being. A level of genius, ownership, and agency began to emerge as I expanded the waves of opportunity that facilitated their learning. My class became extremely interested in living things. With the addition of their animal hospital, they began to develop deep questions, wonderings, and curiosities. Increasingly becoming comfortable with play as a space to dwell with ideas, I loved engaging in group discussions with the students, often with no premeditated plan on where I would take them into topics, but instead open to where they would take me. Our knowledge on animal care was becoming extensive. We knew what animals needed to feel comfortable, healthy, and well. We were experimenting with different types of bandaging to comfort swollen joints and broken bones as they recovered in our hospital. We were now considering the knowledge our playful roles as doctors, surgeons, and medical personnel would need to have, including skeletal systems within the animals we were treating. Through examining different examples of animal x-rays, we began to consider how bones are designed purposefully for a function. It was in that moment that two Kindergarten girls explained to me, "We have ribs to protect our heart. Our spine is long because it holds our back together all the way up to our neck and our head. Hey, imagine how long a spine would be on a giraffe!"

A new wave of curiosity, agency, and discovery began to fill our classroom. Boys who hated every ounce of our former writing practice began to jump up and grab notepads from our business center to document what was about to happen. Students who were already convinced they weren't "good" students, who hated sitting still, practicing letter printing, and waiting to be told instruction, became scientists. They made laptops out of construction paper which inspired our "office space," where they would spend hours writing on blank cheques, playing with numbers on calculators, and recording data on clipboards. Smith-Gilman (2018) suggested the need for children to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in creative ways and valuing the process of children's thinking instead of relying on products. The learning and knowledge being shared amongst these children became something organic and meaningful. Their increasing confidence and commitment to these learning spaces suggested to me that they, in fact, knew they were *good* students because they felt valued, were contributing, and engaged.

Along with a strong need for connection to those around them, there are many layers required to ensure children have deep, meaningful learning. Children are sensory beings, and as such they use cognitive, social, emotional, and physical aspects of themselves to interpret the world around them and make sense of new connections (Carlsson-Paige et al., 2015). When children play, they use what they know to experiment, explore, and construct new concepts that lay a solid, foundational ground for language, literacy, math, science, and the arts (Carlsson-Paige et al. 2015). This type of learning is a natural phenomenon that is student-led, hands-on, and experiential. Honeyford and Boyd (2015) reminded us that play provides an opportunity for children to use their contextual experience to explore complex concepts and think in high-level ways.

Creating a Studio

The atmosphere within our classroom began to shift as I began to trust the organic learning that took place amongst the children and how their interests led them to dig deeper in their learning. Our classroom became transformed into one of a studio—a place where children could create, experiment, model, and engage with various materials. Such an environment gave me the opportunity to "[scaffold] children's fluency with multiple symbolic languages, create a context for looking deeply at what interest[ed] children, and … to understand better children's process for learning" (Gandini, 2005, p. 49). The studio became an opportunity for connection between the students and me as we learned side by side, shared perspectives, and experimented with new ideas. Our classroom transformed to one where multiple spaces supported different interests and learning.

Gandini (2005) stated that, "the studio is a place for learning all kinds of techniques, and a place for research […] it is not an isolated place where artistic things happen. It is a laboratory of thinking" (p. 49). Play, in an environment such as this, guides children to the pursuit of the impossible, where they rethink, reshape, and relive every aspect of their lives and creatively find solutions to all their storied problems.

Once I began to reinvent and reimagine these learning spaces as well as the student and teacher roles within them, real and meaningful learning took place. My intention for using these spaces became playful invitations that invited students to experience their learning by living the process of it. Through conversations with my students about what interested them, together we set up spaces, such as an animal hospital, measurement lab, bakery, kitchen, artist studio, and business center. Gray (2013) affirmed the importance of these opportunities being lived experiences, where even in a very scientific domain like biology, individuals "do" biology and play with different ideas to reaffirm existing facts while simultaneously creating new theories.

In his autobiography, Albert Einstein (1949), a leader in genius curiosity, innovation, and creativity, explained how he always loved playing with concepts of math and science but hated studying it in school. For schooling to be truly effective, it is important that students and teachers are comfortable in the dwelling space of an idea—a dwelling space that requires creating theories, revising those theories, and possibly ridding them entirely to create new ones. Paley (2004) explained how children do not require a finalized product to prove learning or to feel successful: "They are always in Act One, on the first rungs of the ladder, preferring to linger there awhile. The children want to discover what the next question might be, before receiving too many answers from the grownups" (p. 75). Play invites learning because it affords children the opportunity to use a genius-level intellect in how they perceive, question, and execute functions to interpret both reality and fantasy circumstances.

Seeds for the Future

I continue to cut my son's hair and am drawn back to the present moment as he opens up to me about a scary dream that he had the night before. I wonder why he did not mention this dream to me earlier in the day. I wonder if it is our playful roles that are providing him space to do so. He explains to me how

he was scared because people were chasing him, but then when he put on his Spider-Man costume, he was able to defeat them and save the day. Through becoming Spider-Man, he gains a sense of confidence and ability that he did not previously feel as Ashton. Play created a space for Ashton to tell me an experience and it positioned me to listen.

As I finish his haircut, I sit back to admire the beautifully curious little boy who sits before me. I know our shared playful experiences help him to build key foundational understandings of the world around him and to create new theories about how his world works. My Ashton is a wildflower, drifting between spaces, ideas, and theories faster than Spider-Man, becoming strong, resilient, and creative because of it.

Wildflowers, often viewed as unruly and wild, are wonderful examples of the beauty of persistence and natural process. At times they thrive in clusters, at other times alone. Yet they stand tall, sharing beautiful colours of yellow, blue, pink, and purple, with complete confidence and brilliance. Perhaps in schools we require a similarly natural process, one of play, growth, and exploration. Children, like wildflowers, grow best in the most natural of conditions.

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Pedagogical Experiences: Emergent Conversations In/With Place/s

Corinna Peterken and Miriam Potts

Abstract

In this paper, we find and share emergent and relational learning practices through intra-actions with people, places, and materials. We are pedagogical and artistic practitioners who learn from experiencing the world with others and explore relational "intra-actions" (Barad, 2003) that facilitate knowledge-making practices. Contrary to mainstream Anthropocentric understandings, we do not see humans as the only agents in learning. Rather, we learn *with* other beings—places, materials, humans, and more-than-humans—as we attend to and move with each other.

Becoming-With[1] Humans and More-Than-Humans, Places and Materials as Pedagogical Practice

In this paper, we theorize learning practices with/in our pedagogical experiences with places. We outline an artistic and holistic approach to knowledge-making that focuses on being-with humans and more-than-humans, places, and materials. Working across borders and temporalities, we come to know specific places through walking and responsive creative practices including artmaking and storying.

We share a connected and holistic way of learning, an alternative to dominant developmental and outcomes-based educational practices. Interconnected encounters shape how we come to know through embodied relations in and with places. Inspired by new materialist theories, we acknowledge the agencies of materials, beings, and places, and learn through their intra-actions with us. We teach and learn together. Storied images emerge from these encounters where we "move with, not passively observe" surroundings (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2016, p. 42). We consider three examples of such pedagogical intra-actions below. In each of these examples, we were called to attend where "to attend to something means to pause" (p. 39). When humans and more-than-humans, places, and materials pause and interact it becomes possible to notice, and for artworks to emerge, extending understandings.

We believe learning occurs in relation with others. This is informed by the theoretical work of Haraway (2007; 2016) and Barad (2003; 2007; 2012). We are inspired by educators who incorporate relational ontologies in their research practices, such as the a/r/tographers (Irwin 2006; Springgay et al., 2008a; Springgay et al., 2008b; Triggs et al., 2014) and early childhood educators (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2016; Blaise et al., 2017). In this paper, we investigate our changing relations with others, including three places.
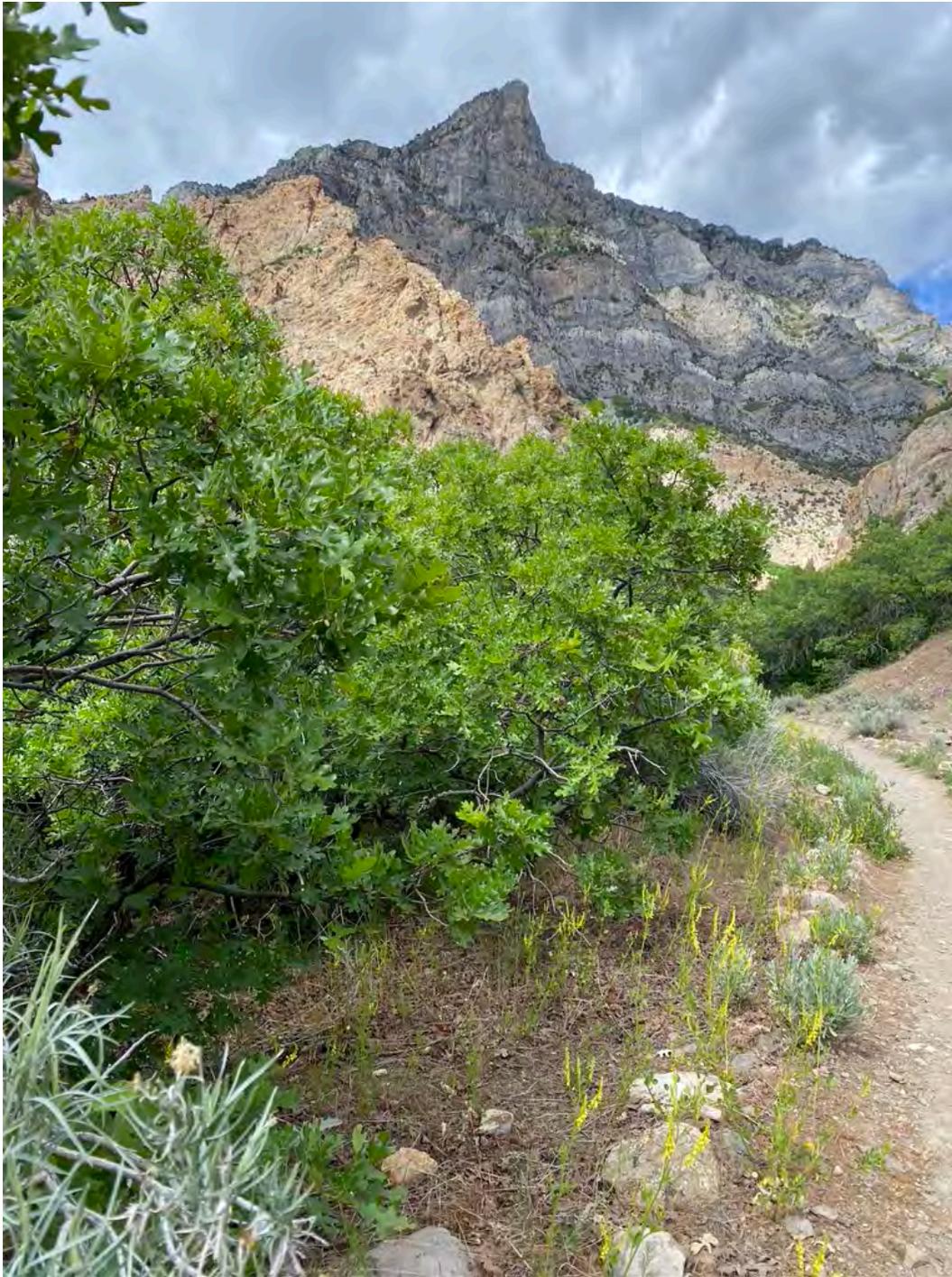
Fig. 1: Squaw Peak, Rock Canyon, Utah. Photo: C. Peterken.

Walking-With Rock Canyon

Rock Canyon has various trails, and here Squaw Peak is centered, looming overhead, structural layers of rock presenting changes over time. Gray clouds on this walk outline jagged rocks and wildflowers call attention and line paths. Yellow beacons draw feet further. Making an image, a piece of artwork with a

camera, brings this to light and returns us to this place and moment. What might we learn while attending to our surroundings as we move[2] through them? This practice sustains us, and our relations with other beings, including each other.

Regular walking practices with local places provide opportunities for learning. We learn to attend to our bodies as they experience places, forming and reforming relations between places and beings across times and responding imaginatively. Close attending enables stories and/or artworks to emerge.

> *Rock Canyon is part of my life in Provo. Regularly I walk with Rock Canyon. The rocky outcrops and surrounding mountains awe and overwhelm. The beach with some cliffs, but open and flat generally, had been my home for 10 years prior. This is such a different place: the flat expanse of the Australian landscape contrasts with the looming mountains of Utah County. The plants are also different from Mornington Peninsula bayside bush of Tea Tree, Banksia, Salt Bush, grasses, and succulents. The many years with the beach, the walking, wandering, and wondering about Indigenous peoples that lived there before are now shifted to Rock Canyon. Stories of the local area indicate First Nations peoples (Rock Canyon Provo, Utah, 2018). Death is in this place, as are conflict and lack of understanding. "Squaw Peak" (Fig. 1) holds the memory of an Indigenous woman falling/jumping to her death rather than be captured by white men with guns. The beauty of the mountains and changing flora and fauna each season do not erase this discomfort in the rocks, paths, and trails. Squaw Peak peeks out at me through trees and buildings as I walk my neighborhood. The contours of Squaw Peak's surface emerge and call to be noticed. They hold the truth of this place. The rock-woman-sky falling story brings wondering; these rocks might have held on and let go. Connections are with and in between the rocks, sky, animals, seasons, running water, plants, and Indigenous peoples who made/make this their home.*
>
> *During the "stay home" time of the COVID-19 measures, Rock Canyon meted out solace as a place of exercise. Newly blooming wildflowers beckoned my camera and eye and listening to the birds gave lightness; the birds, flowers, rocks, and this place teach. The dis/comfort of thinking-with Rock Canyon requires "staying with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016).*

Our research adopts the worldview that humans are not separate from the world but are already part of it. This position enables us to acknowledge the agency of other beings with whom we interact. As we move through the world, relations with others change constantly (Triggs et al., 2014). Walking in relation with other beings—and striving to understand what their perspectives might be—leads to imaginative ways of knowing. As we imagine Squaw Peak's role in the rock-woman-sky story, we learn alternative ways of understanding the world that are less human-centered. Being-with each place and responding creatively is a generative pedagogical practice that emerged from our ongoing work as artist/researchers. Through attentive walking and responsive making, we come to understand what it is we are doing, since, for us, theory emerges through these active processes.

Walking and Conversations In/With Place as Pedagogical Practice

Transformative relations with/between beings and selves emerge through walking, storying, and making. This paper is part of our ongoing research (Collins et al., 2012; Burke et al., 2017; Potts, 2017; Peterken, 2018). Stories[3] are emplaced and transformed into various artworks through being-with and attending to others in/with place/s.

Our lives are entangled[4] with more-than-human others. Acknowledging others is one strategy that shifts attention away from being human centered. A non-human-centric position is essential to a relational ontology with more-than-human beings. Becoming attuned to our intra-actions with others, we learn how we become-with them. We are inspired by those using a/r/tography to attend to these others with whom we share worlds. In presenting the relationality of a/r/tography, Irwin (2008, p. 71) affirms: "Being cannot *be* anything but being-with-one-another" (referring to Nancy, 2000, p. 3, emphasis in original). This attunement is echoed and expanded by Haraway: "There is no becoming, there is only becoming-with" (Haraway & Wolfe, 2016, p. 221). "Being-with" and "becoming-with" mean similar, yet distinct things. In both phrases, "with" is central to the relational ontology. Here, the focus is on relations themselves, rather than just humans, as "the partners do not precede the meeting" (Haraway, 2007, p. 4). A focus on phenomena over things is one similarity between Haraway's concept of becoming-with and Barad's theory of agental realism where "relata do not preexist relations; rather relata-within-phenomena emerge through specific intra-actions" (Barad, 2012, p. 49). Both understandings of the world are emergent where becomings are formed by intra-actions.

Haraway's worldview of becoming-with explores how species become together. She argues (2007; 2016) that humans and animals become together, a process of worlding where both parties rely on each other as they co-construct shared worlds, thinking and storying together through multispecies practices. It is from this shared perspective that we come to our research with other beings, places, and materials. Attending to changing relations with more-than-human others is a focus of our walking practice. Making photographs is one way of documenting this process. We invite you to experiment with a relational focus and photographic contemplation when out walking.

Pedagogical Encounters

Fig. 2: Making in dialogue with Rock Canyon. Photo: M. Potts.

For us, walking is not an end in itself, but, rather, part of a range of creative knowledge-making practices that include encounters with other beings on our walk, documenting, and contemplating our interactions. This continues through encounters with art materials in responding to the walk. Attending is an important dimension of walking. Attending can also take place in dialogue with others. For example, in Fig. 2, paper and charcoal facilitate a dialogue between person and rock, focusing attention on rock's texture. Attending to the others with whom we share the world is part of the worldview that underlies this method of knowledge-making. This is our artistic worldview.

Triggs et al. (2014) found, "everyday living is also a creative practice" (p. 23). Similarly, creative walking is a pedagogical practice in our living and work as artist/academics. By closely attending to intra-actions with other beings in our environment, we are inspired to make artworks that, in turn, teach us about our changing relations with places, beings, and materials. In this practice, our focus is on acts of making rather than forming completed artworks; making and art that draw us back to the relations with others that inspired the works. We invite you to form relations with places, beings, and materials where you live by adopting an attentive walking practice that includes making with materials to draw focus to these relations.

Writing becomes a further intra-action, another layer of creative practice. Writing emerges from and in relation with our walking and making. Writing to think, and writing to change our thinking in the drafting and editing processes, is part of our methodology (Richardson & St Pierre, 2008). We learn, with writing, to decenter the human by changing our language. Through enacting this process, we begin to think of others first (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2016; Kimmerer, 2013). In turn, this helps us see how agency emerges between places, beings, and materials. Writing in this way is a nonlinear process. Words emerge and are changed as we circle back to make sense and to become-with. Stories that are more than words as images-vignettes-places-bodies-theory intra-act on these pages with making.

We become open to connect practice and theory in relation with each other and more-than-human others. We engage in entangled intra-relations with materials (Barad, 2007), places, evolving selves, and post-colonial storying in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. Our shared walking began in Morwell National Park in 2011. We also walked along Port Phillip Bay at Frankston and Pearcedale Conservation Park, both in Victoria, Australia, as well as Rock Canyon, Park City, Bridal Veil Falls, and the Great Salt Lake in Utah. Each walking experience told a story, contributing to our connections with places and with art made in relation to the walks, ourselves, and other beings. This process required walking in/with places with minds open to listening to humans and more-than-humans, listening to learn, requiring us to enter into dialogue with other beings with whom we share these experiences (Blaise et al., 2017) and responding creatively to them.

Fig. 3: Teasels, gloves, and embroidery threads. Photos: C. Peterken.

Teasel Teasing With Park City Rail Trail

Making ties together the threads of our walks and research. These gloves hold the memories of place and walking experiences in embroidery. They also respond to the world, attending to incidental Teasels beside the path in Utah that might not otherwise be acknowledged.

> *A path in Park City opened for walking and Teasels emerged beside the path; or rather, Teasels teased. They called out before I recognized them. Teasels startled me. How were they here, in Utah? The encounter with this plant triggered memories of being a little child in England where Teasels grew. Regular countryside walking near where we lived and collections of grasses, flowers, sticks, and objects from nature were part of my childhood. Names of plants, animals, birds, and fish in streams as we walked were spoken by my father as a way to come to know the place and its delights and fears. This is how the plant here beside the path was with me; the plant knew me, we were together, becoming-with. Teasels had been absent for many years, but their look and prickly feel enticed childlike touch as these Teasels offered their rough spikes and comb-like texture. Roughness and prickling bringing about focused attention. The photographs of the Teasel-walking collect and present this encounter for more learning. The Teasels teach as later, the gloves and their embroidery are with this encounter. Teasels and their images pull at my memories, again teasing me, in the stitching of their lines and cones. The threads become-with Teasels, gloves, memories, me, and Park City walking. The artwork that appeared with the gloves, the walking, and the Teasels, open to learning more through intra-actions each time they are worn.*

Learning in nature, places, memories, making and sharing stories is not new and we advocate for learning that comes in relation and embraces greater attention to and being-with more-than-humans. Encountering Teasels and attending to intra-actions with them brings about more than a pause (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2016). This pause and subsequent pondering with Teasels activated creative practice. The gloves waited for their embroidery. Threads followed the photographic outlines, the spiky cones. Being-with evoked a making response to this walk and brought about learning with Teasels; knowing Teasels, and Park City Rail Trail.

More-Than-Human Agencies

Our attentive walking practice focuses on relations between humans and others. On our Rock Canyon walk, we attended to relationships between us and Weather. Some people are becoming disconnected from Weather (Ingold, 2010, p. S131; Handley, 2018, 22.51). Yet, kinesthetic awareness is an important dimension of knowledge-making. We need to feel what Weather is doing. Going outside with dogs and mountains and Weather is kinesthetically engaging, helping us attune ourselves to what can be learned with them. Focusing attention on relations between us can lead to artistic responses to these experiences.

During the walk with Rock Canyon, we were open to encounters with other beings, including people and dogs walking down the trail as we walked up. While humans were happy to be out in the warm sun, dogs seemed to enjoy the experience more deeply. How does Dog experience this place? With joy!

> *becoming one with Winnie the dog enjoying the snow*
> *so joyful*
> *playing*
> *learning with others how to appreciate the weather*
> *enjoying snow*
> *fascinating and exciting when it snows*

In this encounter Winnie the dog responds to Rock Canyon by making footprints with warming snow (Fig. 4).[5] More-than-humans (e.g., dogs) can respond to places, too. Here dogs and humans co-construct slush by making footprints together.

Fig. 4: Dog making footprints with snow and sun. Photo: C. Peterken.

Dogs explored the materiality of the snow, inviting us to enjoy with them, together with the pitch of Rock Canyon. If we were to begin from the taken-for-granted Anthropocentric perspective, we would tell you, through our writing, what *we* did, what *we* found (out), and how it was measured. This is not that. Instead, learning emerged from and with the walk and the intra-action between weather, snow, dogs, and people. When out walking, we encourage you to attend to the agencies of other beings as they interact with you. For example, how does the temperature affect your relationship to your surroundings as you walk?

Learning With Rock Canyon, Snow, Dogs, and People

On Presidents' Day, Miriam and Corinna went to Rock Canyon with David. We set out with intentions to attend, to notice ways in which interactions unfolded, with an openness to see what might emerge from the intra-actions between beings in this place at this time, curious how today's group of discrete elements might affect one another.

Fig 5: Footprints Rock Canyon, Utah. Photo: M. Potts.

The emergence of story is a creative response to our encounter with Rock Canyon. Fig. 5 shows where story began. Rock Canyon's mud held human footprints in relation to animal prints. At this point on the trail where sunshine melted snow, story emerged in dialogue with David's memories.

> *As the path turned a corner into the sunshine, snow began to squeak beneath our feet. Turning to the ground, David examined footprints in the mud where sun had melted the snow (Fig. 5), explaining the difference between cat and dog prints. We imagined the size of the animals that made the prints: large dogs and cats. We imagined Cougar living in Rock Canyon. Stories emerged from relations between sun, mud, animals, sounds, sights, and people. We enjoyed being-with each other, learning with snow and dogs and people.*

The emergence of knowledge from interactions between places and beings, and then the creation of responding images, is an example of the way creativity (e.g., stories, visual artworks, and poetry) becomes part of the knowledge-making process. This knowledge is made up of this encounter, this material, this place and these people and the artistic response in their connected storying:

> *Melting snow and mud.*
> *Temperature.*
> *How temperature felt …*
> *Part of embodied experience.*

As artists, our creative practices include attentive walking, documenting (including writing and photography), and creative responses. We attend to footprints, we take and crop photographs, we create stories with this place. This is not just a documentation of the footprints, but more than that, a record of our *attending* to them. Editing photographs, so that they might show clearly, could lead to artistic creations. Primarily, we share *thinking* practices that connect us to more-than-humans.

As we walked around Rock Canyon, our footprints left marks alongside those of others in snow and mud. Working with Weather, Rock Canyon has been accumulating and erasing footprints of many species for centuries. Rock Canyon also experiences seasonal fluctuations in temperature, along with plants and animals like us. We recognize Rock Canyon as a cocreator of our shared world. Learning to consider Rock Canyon as a being is a significant de-centering practice. We encourage you to see liveliness emerge in local places through noticing the agencies of more-than-human others via their interactions with you while walking.

Walking, Making, and Thinking With the Great Salt Lake

Fig. 6: Footprints with salt, Great Salt Lake, Utah. Photo: M. Potts.

Salt and sand without coast? An inland beach.
Our Australian eyes are baffled by the Great Salt Lake.
Who could possibly flourish in this saline place?[6]

Relating to places is an ongoing creative practice. Our research is not outcomes-driven. Rather, it is experiential, emergent, and exploratory, focusing on making *processes*. Again, as we walk, footprints call us to attend, and an image calls us to return for making and thinking. Have you ever experienced patterns forming and reforming on damp sand? Can you imagine making artworks that respond to this delicate sensation? Moving from the present sensation back into memory and forward into future possibility, Miriam wonders what could be made possible in the future? She begins to imagine an artwork responding to the glittery crystals of the Great Salt Lake (Fig. 7). This artwork will become something different from how she imagines it today as artworks emerge in dialogue with materials. During the making process, she will learn from materials as they work *with* her in response to the sensations of visiting the Great Salt Lake.
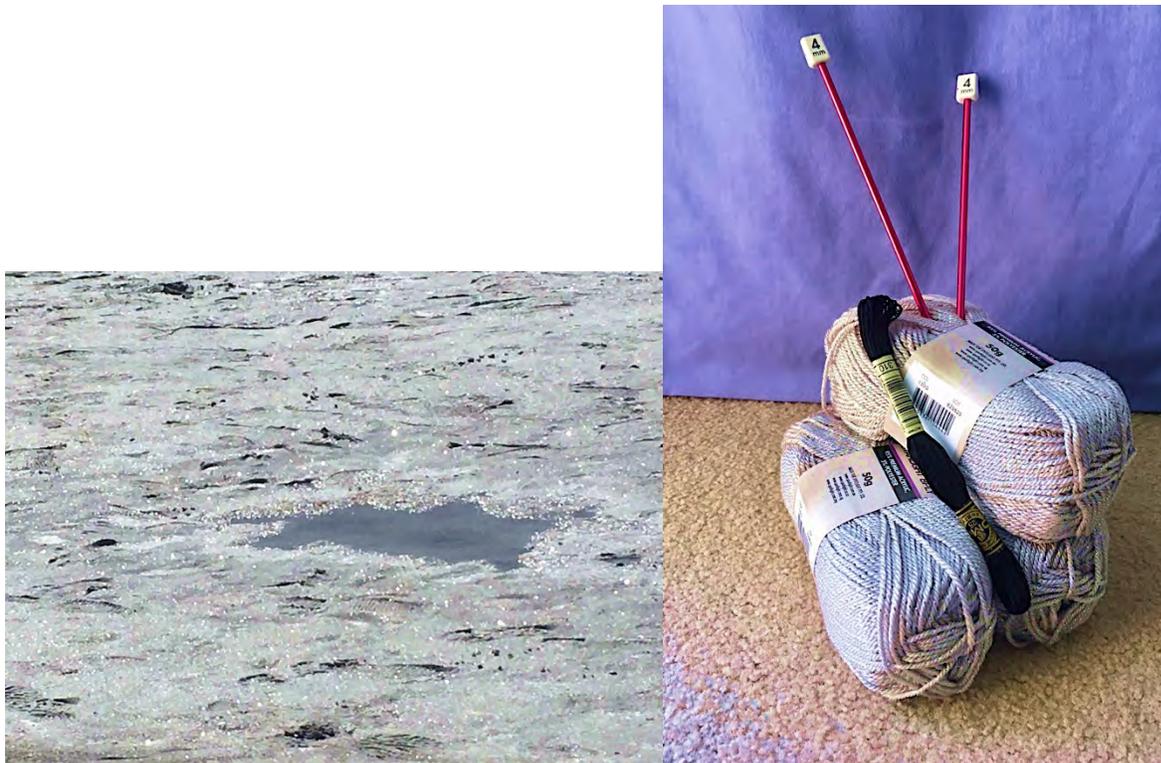
Fig. 7: Glittery yarn begs to respond to experiencing shimmery Great Salt Lake. Photos: M. Potts.

Experiencing the Great Salt Lake occurs on both material and semiotic levels. Materially, we are fascinated by the shimmer of the salt crystals (Fig. 7). Here sparkle emerges from the play of light on salt crystals in relation to human and camera eyes. Culturally, we respond to Smithson's (1970) *Spiral Jetty*, a famous piece of Land Art installed within the Lake (Fig. 8; see also DIA, 1995).

Not being a boat
the irony of the Spiral Jetty *(DIA, 1995) eludes us.*
Rather, the structure invites us to walk along it, spiraling into its center.
Once there, we pause.
Then we feel free to climb across and over the land-formed barriers to exit.

Fig. 8. Robert Smithson, Spiral Jetty (1970), rock, earth, salt water, c. 460 m x 4.6 m. Photo: C. Peterken, 2020.

We arrive at Spiral Jetty.
The art textbook from our Australian art education emerges.
We see and feel it with us.
We know this artwork. The textbook speaks from the past (Hughes, 1980)
'I presented this to you. It was a gift. I knew you would make art and come here, with this artwork. I prepared you. I taught you. You learned.'
Spiral Jetty *beckons…*
'Come, come down and walk with me. Feel; experience my rocks and surrounding sand and salt. I reveal myself.'

Walking and meditating with Spiral Jetty becomes image-making.
Photographs of the Great Salt Lake belie our connection and encounter.
This place impacts and changes.
It is pedagogical.
Encountering and making art with Spiral Jetty *teaches.*

On one level, our experience with Great Salt Lake reflects Smithson's artistic intention to "get people experiencing art in the natural world" (Mann, 2020). On another, knowledge emerges from intra-actions between beings, places, and materials. Where can you walk with beings, places, and materials, make images, artworks, and/or poetry to respond and attend?

Attentive walking and creative responding are ongoing research practices for us as artists. Discovering how many creatures rely on the Great Salt Lake for sustenance encourages Miriam to learn more about them. Learning about these creatures inspires her to represent them with wool and thread. In the future, she will return here to walk with them in this place.

Learning With/In Places and Materials

Art making and textile work are part of our ongoing individual research processes as artists/academics. Our walking and sharing places builds on our common creative practices, deepening our relations. Fitzpatrick and Bell (2016) identify three important aspects of making: representational, material, and the

practice itself (p. 11). They affirm, "Things or matter have their own power that call a response from us" (p. 12), and in this paper we have explored walking encounters and creative responses, focusing on the practice itself.

Our artistic ways of learning emerged as we experienced these three places—Park City Rail trail, Rock Canyon, and the Great Salt Lake—with other beings and responded creatively. We found that experiencing local places on foot enabled us to attend to and learn with more-than-human others who share these places with us. Intra-actions with beings, places, and materials enabled learning to emerge. Dog demonstrated that more-than-humans can co-construct the world, too. Mud showed relations between humans and more-than humans. Teasels triggered childhood memories that caused creative responses with thread. The glimmer of salt and sun inspires Miriam to respond, continuing her ongoing creative practice with glittering wool. In all these ways, we become aware of our interconnections with beings, places, and materials through experiences of walking with them and creating in response to them.

For us, walking is more than exercise. When we attend to human and more-than-human others with whom we share the walk—animals, plants, and places—knowledge emerges, stories, poetry, and artworks are created, papers written, and relationships built. We encourage you to try our attentive walking practices, looking out for what might emerge from interactions between beings while walking-with places. Pedagogical walking practices such as those described here can lead to other ways of knowing. In our attentive walking practice relational learning emerges from intra-actions between people, places, and materials.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1. See discussion below on being-with (Irwin, 2008, referring to Nancy, 2000) and becoming-with (Haraway in Haraway & Wolfe, 2016).
2. For us this was walking, but this attentiveness could be taken up in any mode of transportation.
3. Storying is a way of making sense of the world: "A story can allow multiple meanings to travel alongside one another; it can hold open possibilities and interpretations and can refuse the kind of closure that prevents others from speaking or becoming" (van Dooren & Rose, 2016, p. 85).
4. "Entanglement" is a reference to Barad (2007), who acknowledges the ways in which humans are *already* in relation with others.
5. In a relational ontology, "humans are not the only important actors" (Haraway, 2016, p. 55).
6. Actually, the Great Salt Lake is "so alive it smells" and 260 bird species visit, many feeding on Brine Shrimp (Butler, 2018). What does the Great Salt Lake mean to these migratory birds? For American White Pelicans, it is a place to breed and for Eared Grebes, it is a place to feast on Brine Shrimp (Barrett, 2019).

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Faith in the Unexpected: The Event of Obligation in Teaching

Anne M. Phelan and Melanie D. Janzen

Abstract

In the face of standardization and rationalization, the language of the expected, the predictable and the planned has enveloped teaching and teacher education worldwide. However, in a recent study about the emotional toll of teaching in two Canadian provinces, teachers' stories overflowed with allusions to the unexpected, the unplanned, and the unforeseeable. We explore those stories, and in the company of John Caputo's writing about teaching and ethics, we speculate what they suggest about a life lived in teaching. We posit that obligation is the insistent ghost that haunts teaching in the midst of the machinery of schooling.

Faith in the Unexpected: The Event of Obligation in Teaching

> *Some unknown spirit, something, je ne sais quoi, comes over us and asks something of us, asks for our faith…. (Caputo, 2012b, p. 28)*

> *I have a job and I'm paid to do it and I could just stick to it, but I'm with those kids and I know…I can't just walk away from it. (Ian, High School Teacher)*

As teacher educators, we find ourselves preoccupied with preparing new teachers for the classroom—curriculum planning, teaching strategies, teacher-student relationships, and classroom management—so that they can anticipate, understand, and meet their responsibilities as teachers. So, when after a short practicum, a teacher candidate confides that, "Teaching was not what I expected," we may feel admonished and wonder what we might have done differently. But, how do we prepare teacher candidates for what they cannot foresee, when by definition no one can anticipate the unexpected? Moreover, it may seem unreasonable to trust or rely on or have confidence in the unforeseen. Surprises can undo even the experienced teacher, and for the teacher candidate to look bewildered or hesitant is often tantamount to appearing incompetent. And yet, the capacity to be open to surprise, to be hospitable to hesitation, and to embrace bewilderment may be precisely what teaching demands of teachers. Could it be that having spent so much time in pre- and in-service teacher education dealing with the *expected*, we have barely considered what it might mean to nurture faith in the *unexpected*?

Consider Ian, a teacher in a large urban high school. There is little doubt that Ian has lost faith in the objective conditions of schooling, as he notes the lack of human and material resources to meet the needs of non-English-speaking, refugee, and immigrant students. Teaching is not what he expected. Ian marched alongside his students and their parents protesting imminent school closure and ever-dwindling resources for English-language learning—a deed certainly beyond the commitments of his contract. As he witnesses his colleagues leaving, he wonders about the possibilities of a life beyond the school, the

district, and the profession. But still he remains. When asked why, Ian answers, "I have a job and I'm paid to do it and I could just stick to it, but I'm with those kids and I know…I can't just walk away from it." What is "it," that exceeds doing the "job" one is "paid to do," to as a teacher? What is it that prevents Ian from continuing with the job as contractually defined? How does his work with "those kids"—the children of the working poor in his school neighbourhood—interrupt the logic of Ian's teaching contract and provoke an unanticipated promise?

Our conversations with teachers like Ian suggest to us that he is clinging to a "perhaps"—a desire that sometime, in the future, somehow, something might be otherwise. Ian has faith in the unexpected. As he says, he can't just walk away from it. It is this spectral "perhaps" that intrigues us in teachers' stories about teaching, and we have found in John Caputo's writing (1993; 2012a/b) conceptual resources that help us to identify, explore, and appreciate teachers' experience of the unexpected. In turn, the teachers' stories enliven Caputo's more abstract musings. Caputo (2012b) writes that the ghost that haunts teaching is an "insistent spirit" that "insists" in the midst of what exists—the machinery of schooling—where it provokes teachers' attention. At the same time, the ghost "is all but overwhelmed, nearly invisible, nearly nothing at all…" (p. 24). What, on the one hand, could be so strong as to compel teachers and yet, so weak, as to be almost invisible? What could be so unexpected—often coming out of nowhere and anonymous—and yet feel so close to home, so personal? What could provoke disequilibrium and yet, enable balance? What could make such little sense and yet, for some, invoke a feeling of purpose and possibility? Caputo (2012b) responds that it is the call of obligation—as the event—that compels teachers:

> Whoever enters the spectral space of the school is answering a call, responding to some spirit calling us together here in common cause. What calls? What does it call for? Who is being called upon? To what future does it call us forth? (p. 30)

In this article, we explore each of the foregoing questions posed by Caputo (2012a/b), and we do so in the company of teachers who shared their stories of the unexpected with us. These stories were generated in the context of conversations about the emotional toll of teaching and its implication in teachers' decisions to stay in teaching or to leave (see Janzen & Phelan, 2015; 2019). We asked teachers to speak about times when they felt anxious, conflicted, ashamed, surprised, fearful, and overwhelmed; times when they felt ready to leave teaching, felt they should stay, or felt ambivalent about both options. What teachers offered us were descriptions of encounters with others—students, parents, and colleagues—that required them to reach beyond the banalities of everyday life, beyond their contractual duties, to acknowledge and bear the uncertainties and ambivalences of existence among other human beings, and to take a leap of faith.

In the face of the "standardization, rationalization, and mathematicization" (Taubman, 2014, p. 128)—the language of the expected, the predictable, and the planned for that has enveloped teaching worldwide—teachers' stories overflowed with allusions to the unexpected, the unplanned, and the unforeseeable. We wish to speculate about the stories they told us and what they might mean for a life lived in teaching. As such, we issue no grand claims about teaching and offer no advice to teachers or teacher educators. Rather, we try to articulate and explore what is often difficult to put into language

about teaching. Our understandings of teachers' stories are at once tentative and fragile, but we hope they may resonate with other teachers and teacher candidates, as they have with us.

What Calls?

This call, which is not a command or a direct order, has a certain force, but it is perforce a spectral force, a weak and unforced force, with no army to endorse it. (Caputo, 2012b, p. 28)

[Y]ou live under a fear of irresponsibility. (Cecille, High School Teacher)

Cecille is an art teacher—an artist and a teacher—who "used to love" teaching. In our conversation with her, she explains her reasons for taking an extended leave of absence from teaching: "I lost faith. I lost faith in everyone…in everything. I didn't feel able to do my work properly anymore." Expressing her deep dissatisfaction with the "treatment of teachers by government and union," Cecille states that, "everybody is in overload mode." With 19 classes per week, five to 10 designated special needs students per class, 325 students to manage, and a precarious .8 teaching position, Cecille declares that students, teachers, and the disciplines deserve better. While acknowledging that the full inclusion of students with special needs is an important educational policy, Cecille insists that she is unable to meet the needs of so many "traumatized" students with "extreme…severe mental and emotional needs."

Dissatisfied with the status quo of schooling and "haunted by what insists in the midst of what exists" (Caputo, 2012b, p. 32)—the appeals of those students with special educational needs and the inability to offer some form of repair—can make a teacher frantic, restless, and uneasy with the present. While Cecille can point to visible working conditions, it is "what is going on invisibly in what visibly happens" (p. 26) that disturbs her. "[W]hat is that if not a ghost?" Caputo asks (p. 26). The ghost is obligation.

"[Y]ou want all your students to succeed," Cecille declares, but she continues. Teaching became a form of "Chinese water torture" for her, a process in which water is slowly dripped onto a person's forehead, allegedly making the restrained victim insane. She worries about appearing "mad" or unduly agitated to colleagues and school leaders. But would composure be an appropriate response to the feelings of failing traumatized students? Are teachers socialized to read agitation "as a personal [rather than institutional or systemic] failure…as a fatal flaw in the otherwise reasonable surface of our existence" (Ruti, 2014, p. 15)? Do teachers learn not to be spooked by ghosts, thereby retaining the appearance of professional competence and conduct?

Professional codes of conduct constitute a "strong" form of ethics. Such codes are of the order of a closed system or program mandating "principles that force people to be good… clarif[ying] concepts, secur[ing] judgements, provid[ing] firm guardrails along the slippery slopes of factical life" (Caputo, 1993, p. 4). Declarative statements in teaching codes of conduct such as: "The teacher teaches in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice as to…" (The Alberta Teachers' Association, 2018) leave little open to chance. Professional codes seduce with their predictability, potentiality, and actuality. In conveying certainty and possibility, however, they erase the real possibility that things might not turn out as hoped. As such, strong ethics are an affront to faith in the unexpected. They induce a fear of being irresponsible, as Cecille attests, where responsibility exists only within the

terms of the law or code, protecting one from the wrath of parents, school leaders, or colleagues. Being responsible in this sense promises a risk-free existence—a faith in the expected, the solid, and the planned.

As a "weak" form of ethics, obligation does not tarry with the law of "duty" but exists "without owing, without ought, without why" (Caputo, 2012b, p. 25). A teacher ought to teach in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all persons, but in the face of overwhelming work conditions, Cecille cannot. She knows that she cannot because obligation "insinuates itself into and unsettles what seems settled" (p. 29) in the official teaching standards. Cecille feels her obligation intensely; she is haunted by it. Obligation may be a weak form of ethics, but it is insistent. As a "spirit"—an ethos or a call—that haunts schooling, obligation implicates teachers but is not as easily felt perhaps by policymakers who do not have to come face-to-face with particular students and bear witness to their daily challenges. Obligation summons faithfulness to the exceptional and the unexpected (Caputo, 2012a/b; Ruti, 2014); faithfulness to situations that cannot be anticipated in advance nor can responses to them be forethought. Teaching is tortuous for teachers who because of work conditions disallow them from answering the call of obligation. A sense of disappointment in the system and a sense of inadequacy in one's self generates disillusionment in the promise of education. Faith in the event, in its insistence, and in its real possibility is paramount. As a weak form of ethics, obligation signifies an "'undoing of ethics and the possibility of a deconstruction of ethics" represented in professional codes and teaching standards (Scott, 1995, p. 250).

What calls? Obligation calls!

What Does It Call For?

[S]chools…how to keep them in creative disequilibrium without tipping over, how to spook their complacency with the promise/risk of the future…. (Caputo, 2012b, p. 29)

Well, one of the male teachers that had been sitting in this little [school] restaurant was absolutely lit on fire by [two youths kissing]. He stood up and he's saying under his breath, "Those Goddamn faggots!" and…he started yelling at the kids and telling them to get the hell out of there…." (Sara, Middle School Teacher)

Sara's narrative turns on an experience she had as a first-year teacher when she witnesses what she characterizes as a senior colleague's "very homophobic" response to students kissing in the school cafeteria. What "stupefies" her, however, is her own silence and inaction as well as that of other colleagues who witness the scene: "I didn't do anything. I didn't tell. I didn't make a complaint. I didn't talk to my union…. Nobody else in the entire room did anything and everybody saw the way that he reacted. Nobody did anything." Sara goes on to describe her fear about "breaking the rules" and not wanting "to get another teacher in trouble." She explains that, at the time, she was worried that "everybody would think that [she] was overreacting." Her recourse to a strong form of ethics—her code of professional ethics—left her wanting. Sara describes her feelings of shame at having "let it happen" and "not say[ing] anything" as intense and entangled with feelings of self-disgust and disappointment in the teacher she was becoming. Feeling disloyal to her potential, the incident prompts Sara to devote her professional life to working with and advocating for LGBTQ youth.

Spooked by obligation, the incident in the school cafeteria precipitates a turn in Sara's life. The event has "a vocational force, provoking [her], evoking [her] response, transforming [her] life" (Caputo, 2012b, p. 31). Ethical teaching becomes about something more than a professional code for Sara; she studies the research literature on social justice and becomes "an expert," in her own words. As we see from Sara's experience, "the event [of obligation] is what allows invention, inventiveness, and reinventability, effecting a well-tempered dis/order" (p. 32). The event of obligation resists a closed order or system wherein everything is run by rules; as such, obligation allows for surprises and, at times, even demands unruliness. Sara copes with a degree of upheaval by translating the event into a calling—"a purpose beyond our normal way of going about our lives" (Ruti, 2014, p. 125).

Pinar (2020) characterizes the concept of calling as spiritual and sees teaching as one of several professions that share this "sacred subtext" (p. 202). Acknowledging that the call comes from the world, Pinar recognizes that the world also exists inside us—in the voice of conscience. The call reminds one of a greater possibility for the self and draws one back from the everyday preoccupation in the world. While "the actual performance of the call does not…lie within the self's own power of choice, the failure to hear the call does, at some level, involve a decision for which the self is responsible" (Sikka, as cited in Pinar, 2020, p. 202).

Sara seems to appreciate this responsibility. She experiences the moment in the school cafeteria as "an unexpected flash of insight" (Ruti, 2014, p. 124) that massively alters the trajectory of her teaching life. The event overtakes her without warning, but she is open to it and willing to reexamine its contents—the details of her inaction and the values that contoured subsequent actions. Sara converts private desire (conscience?) into public service (Pinar, 2020).

What does it call for? It calls for a response.

Who Is Being Called Upon?
Obligation is the event of someone, of something personal in the midst of [this] inarticulate rumble of events. (Caputo, 1993, p. 246)

Stephen was hospitalized for…a suicide attempt. And his parents said, "we're done with you, we've had enough of the drama," so they didn't even go to the hospital to pick him up…. So I, [with] the police, went and picked him up… (Doug, High School Teacher)

Doug came to know Stephen in the midst of namelessness that characterizes crowded high schools, pervaded by "shallow forms of sociality" (Ruti, 2014, p. 89) where relationships among teachers and students are often held together by routine, convenience, and duty, rather than any real connection. One teacher commented on the challenges resulting from "the numbers…hundreds of students" combined with a "timetable set up in such a way that the [class] periods are 40 minutes…. Everything felt completely unmanageable." Crowded spaces, Ruti (2014) cautions, "force us to live on the surface because the surface is the only thing that the crowd understands" (p. 89).

How then does obligation overcome the anesthetizing features of sociality in schools?

To say obligation happens—it happens—is not to say that obligation is impersonal. In fact, "it is that from which the personal arises and to which the personal returns" (Caputo, 1993, p. 238). Put simply, "a person is a place where obligations happen, where 'someone' says 'I' to 'me,' where 'you' call upon 'me,' where 'they' call upon 'me' or 'us'" (p. 238). A person "is a place where the eyes of the other come over me, overtake me, pulling me up short. From obligations a whole network of interpersonal relations springs up; in persons a whole network of obligations takes root" (p. 238).

As Doug comes to know Stephen, Stephen comes to know Doug, like a glimmer of light, perhaps, in the midst of a cold darkness that stretched from school to home and back again. On that day, in relation to Stephen, Doug is "irreplaceable" in Levinasian terms. Doug explains:

> So I, [with] the police went and picked him up, and uh, took him to a friend's house because his parents said, "Don't, don't bring him home…." [And Stephen explained to me:] "Well, I have no place to live, and I have no food to eat." So… I took him downtown to the shelter, to the Salvation Army, and said, "Well, here's a bed for the night until we figure something out, right?"

Here, educational activity—encounters between teachers, students, and the world—appears in all the rawness of obligation, amplifying the person-to-person encounter beyond prescribed institutional roles and teacher professional codes of ethics. The encounter between teacher and student is an encounter between persons—arguably the essence of human living—"the form that this encounter takes is the meaning of life" (Huebner, 1975, p. 227). Huebner continues:

> The encounter is not *used* to produce change, to enhance prestige, to identify new knowledge, or to be symbolic of something else. The encounter *is*. In it is the essence of life. In it life is revealed and lived. The student is not viewed as an object, an *it*; but as a fellow human being, another subject, a *thou*, who is to be lived with in the fullness of the present moment or the eternal present. (p. 227; italics in the original)

As such, students' encounters with each other, the world around them, and the teacher, constitute the fullness of the educational activity; the encounter is all there is. "The educational activity is life—and life's meanings are witnessed and lived in the classroom" (Huebner, 1975, p. 228), and, we would add, outside it. Our concern is not with "the significance of the educational act for other ends, or the realization of other values, but the value of the educational act per se" (p. 227). We are not suggesting that a deep and long-lasting personal relationship needs to form between teachers and students, like Doug and Stephen. What obligation asks of a teacher is to "be totally and non-selectively present to the student—to each student—as he [sic] addresses me. The time interval may be brief but the encounter total" (Noddings, 1984, p. 180). While we have little understanding of the value for Stephen—though we suspect it was significant—the impact of this encounter on Doug compelled him to ask, as he put it, "What's happening here?" But there is little time to wonder about the failure of the social system, the sheer difficulty of growing up, the challenges of parenting, or of simply staying alive. Rather, Doug is compelled to "lend a hand when the damage threatens to run beyond control, to help restore the possibility of joy, the rhythm of ordinary things" for this vulnerable student (Caputo, 1993, p. 243).

When person-to-person encounters occur, those involved may find operating outside of prescribed institutional roles; ironically, the "who" of the teacher or of the student may become unrecognizable as such. There are times when we have "to suspend the relatively organized structure of our identity [as teachers] by letting ourselves fall into a less organized state of being" (Ruti, 2014, p. 123). These are times when we feel so powerfully called to respond that we may feel as if we have no choice but to obey. There is no room for deliberation. Ruti (2014) characterizes such moments as involving a "'swerve of passion: a sudden upsurge of passion that overpowers, and sometimes even erases, our usual sources of passion" (p. 124). These moments invoke a desire that undoes a conscious desire (Caputo, 1993). Just about to leave school for the day, looking forward to a family birthday celebration or just some time at the local gym, a teacher receives a phone call from the police telling him about the student's imminent release from hospital and the parents' refusal to have their son back in their home. The moment is as "terrifying as it is exhilarating" (Ruti, 2014, p. 124), as Doug immediately drives to the hospital to pick up Stephen.

Who is being called upon? You!

To What Future Does It Call Us Forth?
Teaching occupies the cracks and crevices in the present where the present is broken open by some coming spirit. The students are the future, the future we do not see, either because we never see them again, or because they are the future generations which outlive us, so that whatever gifts we have given are given to a future in which we will never be present, an absolutely spectral future in which we will be but shades. (Caputo, 2012b, p. 30)

I'm not waiting…I'm just saying okay I'll just start taking that leap of faith and just saying let's just see what happens, like go ahead and start acting as if…. (Justin, High School Teacher)

As a newcomer to an Indigenous community, Justin is surprised by teaching colleagues who make no effort to participate in the community; by the absence of resources with which to implement a drama program; and by the complete lack of extracurricular activities for youth. Justin witnesses history in the "cracks and crevices" of the present; it is a history of cultural genocide and obligation and it haunts him. During our interview with him, he pauses to address his Indigenous students directly:

> How do I, how do I achieve that? I can't. I can't fix so much that you're—that you need fixed…. There's only so much that I can do and from a 13-year old's or five-year old's perspective, is that enough?

As if in response to his questions, he recalls an encounter with one of the community Elders who asks that Justin simply respect the students and have high expectations for them. But what, Justin worries, if I make promises that I cannot keep. The risk is palpable. Then something else happens.

In the aftermath of the accidental death of an Indigenous student on the school playground, Justin attends several ceremonies hosted by the community. He describes a moment during one of the ceremonies when, "[o]ne older student in the class…touched my shoulder…just like a sense of like comfort. And that was really powerful and made a big difference in the support that I felt." Contact and accompaniment are important when language does not have the power to say what has to be said because words appear

"vacuous and absurd" (Lingis, 1994, p. 108), or because institutional hierarchy forbids it. It was as if the student was saying that it's okay, teacher, "see what comes" (Caputo, 2012b, p. 32). The student's simple but powerful gesture conveys the possibility of making new promises and the possibility of asking forgiveness, should things not work out as hoped. Justin described that particular healing ceremony as one of

> the key points where at least my perception of how I fit within the community changed. And how I felt supported and it's like the school system is lacking a system, but the community has, like, a system of care.

Faith in the unexpected is challenging and may depend on the often imperceptible but powerful presence of others—the ones who come bearing the gift of hospitality; the ones we didn't expect.

Believing in what might be possible in the midst of the impossible is an act of faith, as Justin understands. Despite the historical precarity of the school community and the insecurity of his own teaching position, Justin makes what he characterizes as "a serious commitment" to the student council to raise $22,000 to collaboratively create and launch a school drama program. Could he/they accomplish the task? Could he/they raise the necessary funds? Would students attend? What would the community, the Elders, his colleagues, or the school district think about his pledge?

The impossibility of answering the question about the future to which the event of obligation guides us— its unanswerability—is the answer to the question. As an event, obligation belongs to a future that none of us can see coming, "over which neither teacher nor student has disposal, what neither one knows or foresees or commands" (Caputo, 2012b, p. 29). Obligation calls each of us to do our best "in an impossible situation," that is, "to see what is possible," to "see what comes" (p. 30).

To what future does it call us forth? The unknown!

Faith in the Unexpected as a Call to Character

"[W]e are not satisfied with what exists and…we are haunted by what insists" (Caputo, 2012, p. 32)

The teachers encountered in the foregoing pages bear witness to Caputo's (2012b) declaration that, "whoever enters the spectral space of the school is answering a call, responding to some spirit calling us together here in common cause" (p. 30). Haunted by obligation, in that place called school where the self meets the world (Ruti, 2014)—the good and the bad of it—teachers actively attempt to answer the call of obligation and to be faithful to the unexpected event that obligation always is.

The call of obligation—as event—creates uneasiness; it cuts teachers off from "the comforts of a deep and reassuring ground" (Caputo, 1993, p. 239) offered by contractual duties or professional standards. Teachers want to do more than survive in classrooms; they seek meaningfulness and desire authenticity in their work and relationships. In the midst of teachers' ongoing efforts to create meaningfulness in day-to-day life in the classroom, events have a way of taking them off course, without warning, creating upheaval and shattering the shell of teachers' usual preoccupations. Unease signals to teachers that they need to achieve a better correspondence between their ideals and the actualities of classroom life, even

when those ideals deviate from the cultural practices of schooling or the profession, where everything is governed by a strong form of ethics (i.e., run by rules) so that nothing is unruly, and there are no surprises. With Caputo (2012a/b), we wonder if it is even possible to imagine a school in which we have prevented the event and banished all the invisible spirits that haunt the halls of schools. Without obligation as event, the school is absorbed into the quid pro quo sanity of the contractual world wherein teachers have been driven to act as if there is no event, as if there were no promises to be made and to be kept.

Faith in the unexpected—a teacher's capacity to respond to the alarm bells of obligation, to hope for the best, to make the best of events—is what ultimately provokes and sustains each teacher's singularity as an ethical subject, their irreplaceability and inimitability in particular moments, summoning the teacher beyond complacency and toward response. It is during such moments, paradoxically, that it becomes necessary to suspend a search for meaning. There may be no rhyme nor reason for what occurs, no *logos* or *telos*. There may only be the question, "What has to be done?" In such moments, one is compelled to follow the pulse of one's passion (Ruti, 2014), rather than rely on routine responses; even virtues can harden into habits, which is why empathy and interpersonal identification can be so misleading and deceptive. Each teacher in the foregoing stories had to be inventive; caught, as it were, between degrees of freedom and unfreedom, each had to live between contractually defined duties and the promissory relation of obligation (Janzen & Phelan, 2019). Each teacher—even Cecille who chooses to leave— decides to reside in a place of refusal, as if stating, "I'd rather not do business-as-usual." This is why there is something counter-institutional, counter-professional about a teacher's character; "why it is impossible to talk about character without talking about inherent rebelliousness of passion" (Ruti, 2014, p. 13).

Obligation as an event demands "an unconditional faithfulness" (Ruti, 2014, p. 128). It asks teachers to hold their ground and not to betray it via laziness, indifference, or fear when others tell them that its "calling requires too much devotion or dedication or is itself an illusion that may take us in harmful directions" (p. 128). To succumb to obligation is not the same as self-sacrifice, however. We are not suggesting that teachers relinquish professional autonomy and embrace dangerous saviour fantasies. Neither do we wish to patronize teachers by asserting their courage in the face of "exhaustingly difficult" work, where "rewards…remain sometimes intangible, often rare, and always uncertain" (Block, 2014, p. 54). Ours is not an ideology of self-abnegation that demands that teaching is all about the students, obscuring teachers' own interests and motivations even from themselves (Grumet, 2014). Our interest here is in what Ruti (2014) characterizes as self-surrender or openness.

Who we become as educators and what we hope to convey to our teacher candidates depends in large part on how we encounter and interact with the world—our students, their parents, our colleagues— around us. Our impact on one another can be substantial because as human beings we are "precariously open" (Ruti, 2014, p. 80) in all our complexity (conscious and unconscious desires, for example). Our students will always be a little inscrutable to us, given that, "what goes on between people—the unconscious portion of relationality—is always a little ambiguous" (p. 81). However, given that, to some degree, we "share a common sociocultural environment" (p. 81), we can begin to understand one another at least in part. Moreover, we have no idea where the webs of relationality, into which we insert ourselves, will take us. It takes courage to cope with ambiguity; it requires conscious retrospective

deliberation, spinning and re-spinning intricate tapestries of meaning that lend weightiness to professional life. Lived in this way, teaching is a pursuit in which one experiences oneself as forever incomplete, never fully actualized or realized.

Obligation is a call of character; it has "a vocational force," provoking us, evoking our response, and potentially transforming us (Caputo, 2012, p. 31). The challenge for teacher education lies, in part, in nurturing faith in the unexpected and helping teacher candidates appreciate that, though often a "quite inscrutable directive" (Ruti, 2014, p. 20), obligation compels teachers to keep rewriting their story line as teachers. So, while the call of obligation offers teachers a future, however spectral, it can also destabilize their sense of professional identity. Yet, there is no alibi for teachers; they must answer in and with their lives, daily.

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Students Engaged in Reflection and Practical Problem Solving: Exploring Colour Theory

Tiiu Poldma, Lora Di Fabio, and Zakia Hammouni

Abstract

This paper explores how students connect meaningfully with theory through the aesthetic experiences of problem solving together in the context of a workshop. It can be challenging for students studying design in university programs to understand how theory is relevant, when applied in practical design studio activities. In the colour workshop presented, students participate in brainstorming exercises to create proposals. Theory is made meaningful through learning activities, including a creative brainstorming session animated by both teachers and industry guests. The experience described was enthusiastically received, with the academia-industry collaboration providing a valuable platform for knowledge exchange both among students and teachers.

Background

Reflection and practical problem solving are foundations for learning in the visual arts disciplines. In visual arts programs such as design and architecture, learning consists of a particular combination of courses that cover both theory and practical design studio courses. We present a colour workshop exercise within a theory class, wherein students learn theory as abstracted concepts and then apply the theories learned into hands-on design studio problem solving during a workshop on colour. Too often, while students want to learn, in numerous university design programs, theory is not always easy to grasp for many students. Theory is taught to impart possibilities and contexts for informed decisions in design thinking and doing for students who study in disciplines such as architecture, design, and interior design. These disciplines require an understanding of theory that often introduces ideas that are completely foreign to students. They must be able to then understand how that theory is applied in decision making about the design of various types of physical built environments, both exterior and interior. A theory-based application into practice is vital for students to understand as lived experience in one form or another as they are learning. This is a particular form of "thinking" and "doing" wherein theory is understood in the real-time experiences through classroom exercises that are informed by problem- or project-based learning (Vaikla Poldma, 2003). Once theory is understood, students apply concepts into situated problems. When problem solving, they are engaging in thinking differently about a subject and are often imagining "something that does not-yet-exist" (Nelson & Stolterman, 2012, p. 35). This type of learning is supported by a problem-based approach in which theoretical concepts are applied into projects or problems. This then sets the stage for understanding through experience-based activities in the classroom. Creating a learning environment that empowers students with decision-making skills based on grounding the theory, is part of the "thinking and doing" that occurs. In the course discussed

in this paper, we are teachers who engage students with theories and ideas about colour, its contexts, and applications, and then explored by students brainstorming about colour use in the environment. Subsequent choices that the students make are informed by historic, theoretical, and contextual aspects of the problem at hand.

This workshop was in the context of a second-year theory course on light and colour in a Bachelor-level interior design program at Université de Montréal in Montreal, Canada. The activity described here took place in February 2020. The two teachers (Zakia and Tiiu) worked together with an expert in colour (Lora) to create the Chromazone workshop on colour. Subsequently, students were selected to participate in the Color Marketing Group's two-week workshop in Montreal on the same theme with Tiiu and Zakia.

In the class, during the first few weeks before the workshop, students learned basic theories such as the physics of light and colour, vision, physical properties of colour (theories), principles and theories, and diverse contexts such as cultural, psychological, and historic uses of colour. They learned about the more dynamic ways that colour and light interact and are used in the design of diverse products and environments, in terms of ambiance and atmosphere when designing interiors and as theories are applied. The goals of the workshop were to put theories about colour, learned by students in earlier sessions, into practice. Students expressed their ideas, as well as their reactions to the project, to the authors both during and after exercises. Lora, Zakia, and Tiiu explore what happened in terms of students and their experiences, and what perspectives are provided about the workshop that bring together theory, contexts, and brainstorming results in exciting ways.

What Is the Color Marketing Group and the Color Forecasting Workshop Activity in the Classroom?

The Color Marketing Group (CMG) is a nonprofit international colour forecasting organization based near Washington, D.C., that conducts workshops with various colour professionals and schools around the world. CMG is a forecaster of trends, and colours are selected yearly worldwide, based on local workshops such as the exercise that we conducted in the classroom.

Tiiu and Zakia, the teachers in the class, were approached by the Color Marketing Group and Chromazone workshop organizer, Lora, to facilitate such a workshop in the class of 50 students. Together, we developed the workshop ideas based on the previous workshops that Lora had conducted. Zakia and Tiiu decided to conduct the workshop in class consisting of two parts:

1) A "show-and-tell" presentation of the Color Marketing Group and how colours are forecast every year globally, with homework preparation that same week (week 1); and 2) A one-day workshop with brainstorming and a goal of solving a specific colour problem in teams of two students (week 2). This was followed by the production of the final concept boards for the submission the following week. We asked the students to solve a particular design problem and to innovate with new ideas, using the colour theory learned in the classroom, and to add their personal and contextual knowledge in framing their responses.

They were then to visually represent the ideas that they conceived in the form of "concept boards" with their colour choices, integrated within the template provided by CMG.

The actual workshop activity unfolded over a two-week period. During the first week in the "show and tell" phase, the Color Marketing Group (CMG) representatives Lora and Natalie presented the Colour Forecast approach and what was expected in terms of the colour choices and how these would be made. The project description was reviewed with students and the preparatory work was explained in advance, so they could form into their groups and do some simple preparatory research to prepare for the following week, when the workshop brainstorming session would occur. Second, at this first presentation session, the guidelines and PowerPoint templates (in English and French) were provided for the students to follow. This provided a springboard for idea development prior to the brainstorming session, guidelines about images to be chosen, so that each group would have a uniform format to follow.

The learning exercise included understanding the goals of the CMG, understanding theories about colours, how we psychologically and contextually choose colours in our environment and what emotions are triggered with certain choices of colours and images to create a feeling, an ambiance, or a response to a particular need.

After the first week of the activity, and as part of their research homework, we also asked students to bring in inspirational images and photos based on the information that they were given by CMG and the teachers. They were also offered multiple free online sites to explore and to help them to select the colours and images that they might use. However, they did not know the problem until they arrived for the brainstorming session in the second class one week later. At home, students were also encouraged to explore ideas by thinking about trends and forecasts of colours as well as emergent issues in society. They were encouraged to research potential ideas, find images that reflected their ideas about colour, and consider what they envisioned for the forecasting of colours in 2022.

During the second week workshop activity in the classroom, students were given the assignment and were grouped into small teams of two people. They were introduced to the activity with an inspirational video to trigger their thinking at the outset, about future trends and what the CMG has already accomplished in workshops in past years. From there, they worked in their groups freely, and created concepts based on a variety of visual brainstorming techniques, creating collages and other visual compositions with colour chips and visual images.

From that second brainstorming session, students produced final solutions in the PowerPoint template, complete with images and stories that were handed in the following week.

Theories Behind the Activities: The Pedagogical Approach

As students advance in school, it is valuable to learn theory and then understand its value in practice, and, in design schools, practice a hands-on aesthetic experience. However, in most design baccalaureate programs, theories are often taught separately from the designing. One of the goals of theory at the baccalaureate level is to impart knowledge about a particular subject. Then in the design studio, theory

and practice come together to engage students in the "thinking" and "doing" of learning concepts that are conceived for practical solutions to practical or theoretical problems.

Theory can be dense for students to understand. In particular, the students in design classes generally do not come from physics backgrounds usually needed in understanding vision and colour. Subsequently, in the situation of the colour and light course described, the colour and light theories taught in the course are difficult to absorb and students can be relatively unmotivated to use them. Meaningful learning happens when the ideas can be explored and developed to their fullest potential in the situation of a hands-on problem in the theory class.

Students often learn theories that are the basis for initial knowledge. Then they apply theories into problem-solving exercises as a form of "thinking and doing"—pedagogical approaches to engaging students to creation and innovation. This idea of "thinking and doing" is predicated on a constructivist approach situated in collaborative learning. That is, theory is understood and constructed together in discussion in the classroom. Then the theory is put into practice in the exploration of concepts applied into problem solving. The problem design and understanding provide a place to then reflect back into theory (Vaikla-Poldma, 2003), as a reflective approach to learning. These ideas are informed by a constructivist view, in that students learn theory and then construct the ideas through problem solving in particular situations that they experience in classroom learning and that are based on the eventual professional experiences that they will have. (Pena & Parshall, 2012, p. 58). They then reflect on choices and the impact these will have on their professional practices as they acquire these new skills (Schön, 1983).

Learning as Experiential

The premise in the classroom is that theoretical ideas are learned and then understood through the lived experiences in both discussion and exercises. As John Dewey notes, it is in the aesthetic lived experience itself that one understands the concepts. According to Dewey, to have an idea and get an idea of reality is to experiment with this idea, to confront it with a real-life situation and then verify (or disprove) the idea (Dewey, 1934, in Ross, 1992; Dewey, 2005). Furthermore, Dewey suggests that it is through aesthetic experience that understanding of the subject or object emerges, be this a work of art or a design ideas/concept. With this perspective in mind, the students tested several possibilities and aesthetic solutions through combinations of colours, lights, and finishes to decide on their design solution to the colour exercise. This aesthetic solution then led to an understanding for each student individually, and as expressed by the student in the form of a visual representation. Their aesthetically motivated ideas generated solutions and concepts also provided understanding for them personally. In the case of this workshop, the aesthetic choice concerned light and colour choices that students made, and that evoked a particular aesthetic experience (Dewey 1934/1992); and this is what students create: they produced concepts to evoke reactions and that integrated image, colour, and text to elicit understanding of what the colour they chose might elicit as aesthetic responses for those for whom the colours will be chosen.

Reflective Learning as Understanding Reflecting in Practice

In the Baccalaureate Program (in interior design where these activities occur), theory is provided for its potential application in the resolution of spatial design problems within professional practice. In the world of architecture and design, students learn reflective practice skills in decision making. Students then make choices to put ideas into the reality of the built interior environment or building that is conceived. When a designer is in the field, their practice demands these types of "thinking and doing" skills. Schon suggests that reflective thinking is a process that is used by students to make decisions about their choices and the design solutions that are proposed. This process is complex, considering the different decisions that go into making a choice (Schön, 1992). In the case of this workshop, the complexity of the situation that demanded reflection, included making decisions about which colours to choose in creating a colour forecast, and arguing for, or building a story, around these choices. In our workshop, the choices made then became the solution to a colour proposition.

The Problem-Based Approach

The exercise was part of a larger course content that is predicated on a "problem-based" approach (Cinnéide & Tynan, 2004). In this approach, it is the problem that situates the student inquiry and subsequent choices that they make, guided by a teacher in a conversational and collaborative approach that seeks to support students' learning through discovery and inquiry, wherein reflection on the issues creates the conditions for ideas to emerge and a solution or two proposed. In the workshop, there was an added dimension of students negotiating their choices with one another, as well as answering the problem that was presented to them, and to do so in an innovative way.

Understanding the problem and reflecting on the potential ideas for a solution are thus manifested in the workshop, between the different participants, the tutor facilitators, and the student. All participants brainstorm together, and students focus their discussions about the choice of colours and the themes that they want to develop. As Schön points out, the language used by the designer/student to describe and appreciate the consequences of their choices are made by choices of representative images accompanying their choice of colours and the explanation that accompanies this choice. These choices are based on a multitude of ideas, influenced by, and not limited to, nature, culture, historic nuance, or ambiance as subjective descriptors to help situate the concept that is developed (Schön, 1992).

Why a Colour Workshop? Reflections on the Workshop Process and Solutions

One of the issues with learning about light and colour, is that the ways we use these theories in the practice of designing is somewhat difficult to show, and even more difficult for students to understand and assimilate the theoretical concepts for use in design studio solution creation. We create ambiances using both colour and light. Colour, however, only becomes apparent when invisible light waves react and reflect of materials and surfaces and our eyes then receive this visual information, which our brains interpret as an object such as a red apple, or an interior that is warm and cozy. For these ideas to take

root with students, exercises about light, colour, and their properties are a first means to understand theories and learn how to put them into practice.

During the colour workshop, students were deliberately placed into small groups of two to learn collaboratively together. This stimulates both reflective thinking and the development of ideas using collaborative strategies. Once in the classroom in the second week, the workshop brainstorming session happened. The students sat together in their preassigned groups. They had been introduced to an inspirational video on this topic, to get inspired and prepare to make their own choice of colours and to put together a story corresponding to those colours. They then had the rest of the time of the class to develop their two concepts for forecasting.

In terms of the classroom environment, Zakia and Tiiu created a collaborative environment for a brainstorming session that happened over a three-hour period, with breaks. The seating was rearranged in an informal manner, encouraging creative work, and snacks were provided, creating an atmosphere of comfort for all to relax and enjoy the exercise, working collaboratively with one another, in between groups and with the professors. Colour samples and catalogs were provided with Internet links to search for inspirational images for unrestricted use.

As the teachers, we became facilitators, answering questions and generally guiding students as needed. We also participated in the exercise and created two concepts as well. We organized ourselves within the class and proceeded to work alongside the students, creating two concepts for the forecasting as required by the project parameters.

Students were animated and engaged in exploring both their ideas and diverse contexts. As we see in Figure 1, the contexts presented are supported by both a sense of cultural contexts and an aesthetic linking of philosophical ideas.

Figure 1 shows one example of one student's project result:
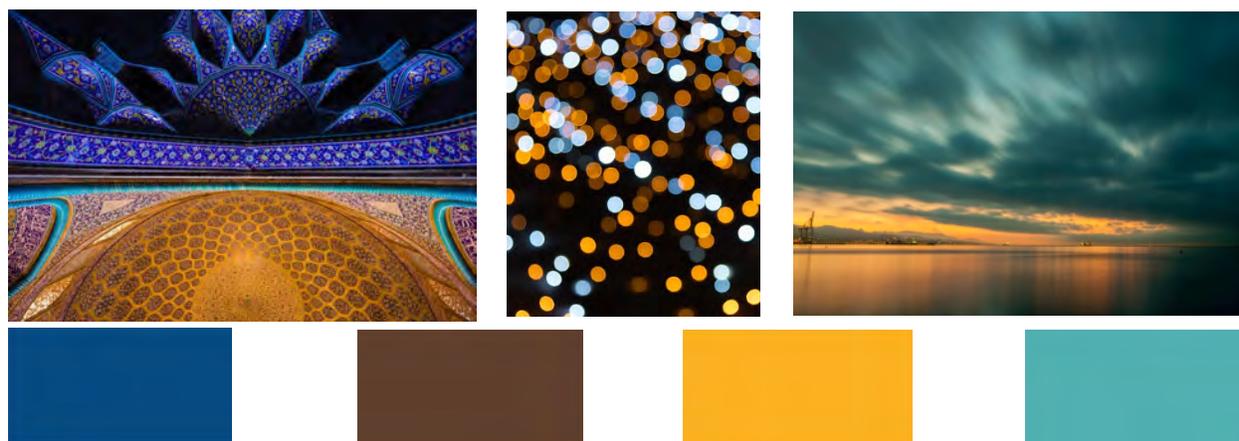
Fig. 1: Kafia's concept: "Path to the unknown"; Kafia Kaafarani, 2020. (Image credits: https://unsplash.com/photos/7rCuJjbwBR0; https://unsplash.com/photos/yaiy4mCbzw0; https://unsplash.com/photos/7cjDM0QBssc

Here in Figure 2, we see a second example of another student exploring in the context of rediscovery and personal development, in light of a changing and uncertain world:

Fig. 2: Béatrice's concept: "Rediscovery"; Béatrice Martin-Blanchet, 2020. (Image credit: Nix, T. https://unsplash.com/photos/q-motCAvPBM)

During the workshop, each group narrowed down their initial ideas into two proposals (one by each student), pondering new implications that are considered and that make their choices unique. They then finalized their solution by proceeding with flexibility towards this solution with which they have started the initial dialogue (image, story, choice of colours).

Discussion, Reflections, and Post-Workshop Activities

The exercise was enthusiastically received by most students. The environment was very friendly, and the students were animated during the activity. Both professors were impressed with the overall results, given the short timeframe of the activity. Every group provided both interesting perspectives and innovative choices of colours based on their research and the design contexts that they established through the themes that they chose. Students were able to understand the value of the colour theory and the meanings attached to colour choices when these are made. This was a natural outgrowth of the exercise, as they were obligated to attach stories to the colour choices made. In Figure 1, for example, the story is told as follows:

> As humans, we ask ourselves questions about life, death and the unknown, which is in the culture of humanity. Indeed, we seek to find answers to the great questions of life. There is a human struggle to find information and answers to be able to progress as a society.
>
> "Path to the Unknown" represents what seems dark, mysterious, and unknown to humans. It symbolizes the cosmos as well as infinity and beyond. (Loose translation)

The story attached to the concept in Figure 2 is framed differently:

> Recently, the nature of travel seems to have changed. More and more, travellers are moving away from the all-inclusive holiday package and moving towards a more adventurous form of travel. This search for authenticity, natural spaces, and meaningful life experiences are at the heart of our travels today. This phenomenon is probably explained by the evolution of the minimalist current. More than a stream of aesthetics, the latter prompted people to reevaluate their priorities and favour experiences over possessions. The phenomenon is also linked to a renewed interest in natural spaces and responsible tourism due to the worrying environmental situation of our Earth. In response to the current containment situation, "Rediscovery" represents the desire for freedom and exploration that is felt around the globe. (Loose translation)

The colour choices are reflected back to the context, which again are reflected back on a theme or other context, such as historic or cultural.

Students were also quite engaged. During informal discussions after the workshop had ended, they expressed their enthusiasm about the workshop exercise. A few positive comments were also made about the surprise they felt when their teachers participated in the exercise as well.

Workshop Follow-Up and Chromazone 2022+

Following the workshop, we (as the teachers) evaluated the projects as an academic exercise. Then, following the end of the course, a separate jury was created to select a few of the best projects for consideration in the Color Marketing Group's workshop Chromazone 2022+. Similar workshops were held worldwide in 2020. Students who were selected were invited to participate in one of 11 North America-focused workshop exercises, which was conducted online, due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, just after the in-class workshop had taken place in February 2020.

This worldwide workshop was the second phase of the process and was conducted around the world, with one workshop hosted in Montreal in the Summer of 2020. Of the 28 groups that had submitted work, four teams were selected as finalists and two teams participated in the Montreal workshop conducted by the Color Marketing Group, Chromazone 2022+.

The students also enjoyed the experience immensely and felt that the workshop was an enriching experience (personal subsequent communications with the two professors. We were also invited to participate in the workshop).

Lessons Learned From Both Students and Collaborators

This workshop was a positive, dynamic experience for the students, both in the classroom and for the students who also participated in the Chromazone 2022+ Montreal workshop. The theories learned in this course on light colour ambience, historical psychological and cultural contexts of colour use, and how to consider the different aspects and psychological effects of a colour, were foundational to the application later on in the workshop problem-solving process. This workshop also allowed the students to put into practice their skills and knowledge acquired through active participation in the real-world situation of the colour workshop. Such activities enhance students' abilities to understand how their

concept development for a particular problem was enhanced by theory and by their application of their ideas into practice.

This was a dynamic and positive collaboration with industry as well. As Lora notes:

> As a student once myself, I clearly remember the guest speakers from industry who came to speak to the students. For years I've made a point of returning the favour and have lectured on colour as it is applied in a work/manufacturing setting. What strikes me every time is the curiosity and interesting questions one gets from students. The Q&A session with the students in this workshop was no exception. The workshop offered valuable results, which is not surprising given the interest and thoughtfulness it received from both faculty and students alike.

Students benefitted from industry presentations and participation in their theory course to encourage thinking. The presentations also helped to situate for the students how the exercise is of value, in terms of how this emulates the potential for the choices that they will ultimately make in the real world. Students could understand, through the lived experiences and exercises they completed, the relevance of theory to practice directly through the workshop experience. Quite often, colour is not deemed a valuable component of the design project, and this exercise elevated thinking about colour and its impact in new and innovative ways. This thinking was then manifested in the solutions that the students proposed. Industry collaborators were impressed with the students' work and results.

On a final note, Lora mentions that,

> The quality of the work was at a high level. Moreover, the work entered for final judging was chosen to be part of the final 2022+ North America Color Forecast. No small feat, given the amount of entries submitted from across North America.

Conclusion

Through the activities of this workshop, students learned how to put theory into practice, and to collaborate in teams to develop solutions for a problem, paralleling the actual design studio experience in the field. There was engagement between students, collaborators, and teachers, creating an enriching experience, and a meaningful way for students to adapt theory into practices through the exercise that reflected activities in the real world. This collaboration provides a valuable platform for knowledge exchange, comparison, and collaboration between academic institution and industrial institution.

Through the aesthetic experiences they encountered, students were empowered to discover new and different light-colour mood solutions, and new ways to promote their ideas. Our conviction is that future workshops can be facilitated using this approach. Overall, the activities of this workshop contributed to changing perceptions about the light-colour aspects of the environment for students. Thinking and doing thus become a way to express and discover aesthetic experiences, that allows for problem solving that is relevant for professional activities and meaningful to students. Future possibilities include incorporating this type of workshop into theory courses, where there is a need to help students understand theory and its relevance to their learning.

Acknowledgments

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Collage as a Pedagogical Practice to Support Teacher Candidate Reflection

Gail Prasad and The Lions BEd Group

Abstract

This article reports on collage as a pedagogical practice to support teacher candidate reflection. We outline a multi-step collage-based reflection workshop that was part of a required course on "Inquiries Into Learning." The summative collage project was designed to help teacher candidates reflect on their vision of learning (hope) and their fears and doubts as beginning teachers. The process and product of their final integrated collage led students to interrogate how their hopes and fears mingle together in practice. Six teacher candidates share their series of collages and GIFs, along with their reflective personal statements. We conclude by highlighting lessons learned through collaging from the perspective of students.

> "While we cannot learn or be taught to think, we do have to learn how to think well, especially how to acquire the general habits of reflecting." (Dewey, 1933, p. 35)

Reflective practice (Dewey, 1933) is a fundamental pillar of many university-based teacher training programs. In Canada, the Ontario College of Teachers includes "reflection" under its "Professional Practice" standard necessary for all teachers. Academic journals, books, and conferences have been devoted to the topic of how to foster teacher candidates' critical reflection about their developing teaching practice. Even so, in my work as a university-based teacher educator, it has not been uncommon to observe what I have come to call "reflection-fatigue" on the part of preservice teacher candidates. Across their multiple university-based courses, as well as their school and community based practica, teacher candidates are called upon to reflect *on* action and to reflect *in* action (Schön, 1983). Nonetheless, requiring teacher candidates to engage in reflection about their experiences in the classroom during student teaching, does not guarantee that they will realize the benefits of reflecting on their practice (Zeichner & Lui, 2010).

In haste to check off all the boxes necessary to become a certified teacher, I often worry that reflecting on practice for teacher candidates becomes reduced to going through the motions of posting the required 300 words to an online discussion forum or to an e-portfolio, sometimes along with an artifact from their teaching. As one teacher candidate recently put it, "If there's one thing this [teacher education] program is big on, it's reflection. In all honesty, I am tired of writing reflections and I don't see much value in being graded on how I think/feel/challenge an experience that I have had." Both the intense pace of teacher education programs and the tyranny of grades are at odds with cultivating a culture of unhurried, honest, and heartfelt reflection. As I see students struggle to keep up with the demands of course work and practice teaching, I wonder how by doing less, we might actually support our teacher candidates in coming to know more—more of who they are, who their students are and who they can become together.

Over the past two decades as a classroom teacher, teacher educator, and classroom-based researcher, I have returned time and again to the question: how do we sustain teacher candidate reflection about themselves as teachers, their learners, and the systems of power they work within as agents of transformation? How can I help teacher candidates be(come) mindful of the ways their intersectional identities shape their teaching and learning? How, through my pedagogical design, can I create space both for listening and for dialogue with self and with others? Ultimately, the purpose of reflection is to lead to transformative action.

In an effort to show, rather than tell, in this article, I begin briefly with a discussion of how I have come to incorporate collage as a pedagogical practice to support teacher candidate reflection. Next, I outline the design of a multi-step summative collage-based reflection as a summative project for a required first-year teacher education course on "Inquiries Into Learning." Six preservice candidates then share their collages and accompanying personal statements with their own voices. Finally, drawing from both teacher candidates' reflections about both the process and products of their collaging, I conclude by articulating affordances and challenges of using arts-informed reflection within the context of teacher education programs.

Coming to Collage: From Research Method to Pedagogical Practice

Arts-based research (ABR) in education (Butler-Kisber, 2010, 2018; Cahnmann-Taylor & Seigesmund, 2017; Cole & Knowles, 2008) and arts-integration in teaching and learning (Wiebe et al., 2007) have both gained increasing attention in the 21st century, particularly as a way of amplifying voices and perspectives of minoritized communities (Robinson, 2013). During my doctoral research about children's social representations of plurilingualism (Prasad, 2015), collage as a research method supported my young coresearchers to make visible their complex and plural understandings of the linguistic diversity that permeated their lives. As part of my preparation to engage children in collage as a research method, I spent two years taking group classes with Donnelly Smallwood, a professional teaching-artist with a focus in collage, as well as individualized directed studio exploration under her guidance at a local art school. Although, at the outset, I was apprehensive to see myself as "artist," I came to relish the time I spent in exchanges with my fellow classmates, in dialogue with Smallwood and in studio. I eventually came to see that

> when I relax into the creative process of gathering, layering, (re)combining and juxtaposing images, I am able to make new connections and allow ideas to surface that are substantively different than when I try to make sense cognitively of multiple pieces of information in the classroom or … in my office. Rather than my head guiding my hand about what it should write, when I collage, the directionality of my thinking moves up first from my sensing of the materials in my hands as a I rearrange images, cut away parts or cover up pieces, up through my eyes as I begin to see new ideas, patterns and possibilities take shape, and then connect them in my mind and heart to what the composition reveals. (Prasad, 2015, p. 7)

The creative process involved in collaging is a centering one. Collaging invites us to enter into a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975) that connects our inner compass to the outer world. Whereas academic training and research privileges critical reasoning and cognitive ways of knowing, I have found that

creativity can temper criticality to produce clarity of mind and to open up alternative ways of knowing, doing and be(com)ing. As Bresler (2018) puts it, aesthetic-based research pedagogies function as internal compasses that enable us "to tune in to what [we] study and in to [ourselves] through attentive observations and opening a dialogue between what is encountered and oneself" (p. 654). Attentive observation and inner dialogue are difficult to teach as discrete skills because they are embodied and are cultivated with care over time. They require a consciousness awareness, and at times a reckoning with self that can be uncomfortable.

I have increasingly incorporated collage as reflection into my teaching, particularly with preservice teacher candidates because the process and its products necessarily require students to slow down so that they can see and listen. Searching existing images for resonance and dissonance helps focus one's attention and the sensory processes of cutting, layering, and gluing necessarily slows us down. Following each iteration of a collage-based reflection that I have facilitated as part of my teacher education courses over the past decade, I have had students report anecdotally that the experience was one of the most meaningful and memorable parts of their journeys towards becoming teachers. Many adults, particularly those who do not identify themselves as "creative-types," can find many art forms daunting (drawing, painting, sculpting, dancing, theatre) because they do not feel they have the necessary skills or talent to engage in the creative process with confidence. Collage, however, is an accessible form because it relies on basic skills—cutting and pasting—that are generally mastered in childhood (Butler-Kisber, 2010, 2018). The collage, personal statements, and students' perspectives on their experience collaging that are presented in the remainder of this article build a case for the powerful possibility for collage as a reflective practice and pedagogy in teacher education.

Course Description and Assignment

In January 2020, I was assigned to teach, "Inquiries Into Learning," for first-year teacher candidates. This course is a requirement for all teacher candidates as part of a two-year Bachelor of Education program at a major university in Ontario, Canada. The course considers how diverse theoretical lenses shape our understandings of ourselves and others as teachers and as learners, conditions for teaching and learning, and the imperatives of institutions and communities. Each week, students engaged in whole class and small group discussions with their colleagues about the different intersectional lenses through which we might see ourselves and our students, including, but not limited to, race, class, gender, language, and ability. Throughout the term, students were expected to submit critical written reflections in response to readings and in-class discussions. The summative project for the course was designed to invite students to temper the critical work we had done throughout the semester with creative reflection, by participating in a three-week collage workshop to produce a series of collages in response to the following three Big Questions:

1) A Hope Collage: What vision of learning do you want to reflect and project for your future learners?
2) A Fear Collage: What fears, doubts and/or questions are you wrestling with regarding teaching and learning with learners in your future classroom?

3) An Integrated Collage: How do you negotiate your hope-filled vision of teaching and learning with your inner thoughts and dialogue with your fears, doubts, and questions about yourself and your future students?

During our in-class workshop, I encouraged students to bring in found print materials, as well as scissors and glue. I also provided a range of magazines and other print materials that students could use as source material. I had prepared materials by cutting magazine pages with images out from a range of magazines such *as National Geographic, Architectural Digest*, *Fine Gardens,* and *Birds & Blooms*. I selected magazine images that did not include well-known personalities and public figures, and I removed pages from magazines so students would not get distracted with reading the magazines. I also discouraged students from using words in their collages, because I wanted them to focus on connecting to images, rather than reading text as their primary mode of entering into meaning making through collage. (Many students still chose, however, to incorporate words and phrases.) I colour photocopied magazine pages so that every group of students would have a stack of images to choose from in addition to any of their own materials. As a result, there was a repetition of some images throughout students' final collages.

In this workshop, I walked students through the process of selecting images that resonated (or not) with them in response to the big question posed for each collage. I also modelled techniques for cutting, layering, and gluing images down on the circle templates provided for each collage. In order to flatten the seams between images in each collage, we scanned the finished hope collages in colour (Figure 1) and the finished doubt collages in black and white (Figure 2).

Fig. 1: Hope collage, full colour

Fig. 2: Doubt collage, black and white

I then introduced three different techniques for integrating the hope and doubt collages into one final collage: tearing, cutting, and weaving (Figure 3).

TEAR   CUT   WEAVE

Fig. 3: Three techniques to integrate hope and fear collages

The final integrated collage was designed to help teacher candidates see—literally and figuratively—how hope and fear are not necessarily in conflict with one another, but rather, that we live continually within the tension between them. In addition to the collage protocols, students were asked to use the images in their collages as metaphors and the following narrative protocol as a scaffold for composing a final reflective personal statement (Figure 4).

[Collage Title]
By [name]

Learning can be **as** ...
Learning is **like**...
As a beginning teacher, I sometimes feel **like**...
I often question...
[Collage Title] reflects how I feel ... / how I think about...
Through the process of collage, I have come to see ...

Fig. 4: Personal statement reflection protocol

Before turning to teacher candidates' collages and statements, it should be noted that, although I had scheduled for this multi-step collage workshop to take place over three weeks of face-to-face classes, we had to pivot to remote learning following the first in-class session (three hours) due to COVID-19. While less than ideal, I produced several short videos and outlined the collage process on our course site in our learning management system. Students were also given the option of combining their collages into GIFs, if they were unable to scan and print their hope and doubt collages. In several cases, students created alternating GIFs with their hope and fear collages as a form of virtual integration.

I created a sample GIF using my own Hope and Fear collages (Figure 5) using the following free GIF maker: https://imgflip.com/gif-maker.

Fig. 5: Ever unfinished GIF (https://imgflip.com/gif/3smhci)

I invited the following six students to contribute their collages and personal statements to illustrate collage as a hands-on pedagogical practice for reflection, even in the midst of pandemic times, when teaching and learning as we have known them, have been completely disrupted. We have included the hope (left) and fear (right) collages in colour and black and white respectively. The integrated collage is centred. The first three students each used different strategies for integrating their hope and fear collages. The last three students created alternating GIFs with their hope and fear collages. Accompanied by students' personal statements, the collages illustrate the range of ways that students engaged in reflecting on their hopes and fears, while also coming to see how they animate one another.

Collage as Critical and Creative Reflection: Six Examples

Lifelong Learner by Pat Baybayan

Fig. 6: Lifelong Learner collage series by Pat Baybayan

Learning can be as fun as a game. Just like a game, learning should keep everyone engaged and on their feet. Students or players should be able to work together, but also be able to make meaning out of their individual experiences. Even though games and learning may feel competitive at times, at the end of the day, it should be enjoyable, fair, and accessible to everyone.

Learning is like riding a bicycle up a steep hill. Unless you keep cycling, you'll fall back down the hill. Students and teachers alike should aspire to be lifelong learners. After all, a big part of life is to learn, not solely in the classroom but also through obstacles, successes, relationships, experiences, and so forth.

As a beginning teacher, I sometimes feel like I stand in a grey area between students and teachers. On one hand, I'm open to learning from teachers who have lived through the obstacles of the teaching profession and have wisdom to offer. On the other hand, I stand for the changes that need to be made that are in the greater interest of the students. I often struggle with these power dynamics as a teacher candidate.

I often question whether I'm cut out to be a teacher. I have a passion for teaching and engaging with students, but I often find myself trying to take on more than I can handle, and I worry that it may become a problem in the future.

Lifelong Learner reflects how I feel about the teaching profession in general. I believe the greatest gift of being a teacher is being able to learn from every student that we come across, as well as to share our own knowledge.

Through the process of collage, I have come to see that hopes and fears are inevitable in the teaching profession, and that we must do our best regardless of our fears.

A Work in Progress by Kaisha Cunningham

Fig. 7: A Work in Progress collage series by Kaisha Cunningham

Learning can be as... rewarding as climbing a rockwall. It takes a lot of work to gear up and climb, while strategizing each and every move. But at the top of the wall, you feel a great sense of accomplishment and pride. As a teacher candidate, my job is to continue climbing upward, gaining new skills and perspectives until I reach the end of the climb/program.

Learning is like... traveling to a destination you've never been before. You don't truly know what is around the corner, or exactly what it will look or feel like, but the journey is a reward in and of itself. As a teacher candidate, I am doing a lot of traveling to new destinations, and a lot of learning in the process. I have an idea of what to expect, but I am continually surprised inside the classroom at how complex the job is. For some things, I am pleasantly surprised; but for others, I am apprehensive at how I will handle aspects of the job.

As a beginning teacher, I sometimes feel like... I am hitting every pothole on the road. I know that a lot of teaching is based on experience in the field, but I still sometimes feel like I make mistakes that I should have known better. It's difficult not to get down on myself when I am unable to put everything I learned immediately into practice. It will take time for me to be able to incorporate everything I want to into my teaching style.

I often question... If I can do it. Sometimes I feel like I can walk on water, but other times I wonder if I will be as effective a teacher as I hope to be. Because I have ADHD, my organization and sustained mental effort leaves something to be desired. Add to this my impulsivity and childishness, and I wonder how I will ever be the mature adult inside the classroom that is responsible for guiding future generations. I've got a strong case of Impostor Syndrome.

At times, it can feel like... I am hitting my head against the wall. When things go right, I feel like I can do anything, but when things are not working out the way I intended, I feel frustrated and ineffective.

A Work in Progress reflects... my insecurities about becoming a teacher interwoven with my positive outlook for the future.

Through the process of collage, I have come to see... that as much as I have high expectations for myself, I am still a work in progress, and as such, I should give myself a break every now and again!

Prism of Possibility by Katherine Carranza

Fig. 8: Prism of Possibility collage series by Katherine Carranza

Learning can be as elementary as going up a ladder, one step at a time. From the moment we open our eyes into this world, we begin learning every day. As an educator, we must understand the individual learning process of our students and how we may scaffold their understanding to ultimately reach success.

Learning is like climbing a mountain. To each, it feels as though their goals are unreachable. I will be diligent in my efforts to always encourage and support my students on their quest for learning. We don't realize until we have reached our destination that the journey was the most amazing part.

As a beginning teacher, I sometimes feel like I am overwhelmed by the responsibility this career holds, but that feeling is quickly replaced with passion. Just as in any other job, teaching comes with its own downsides and stress.

I often question how I can use my own experiences, knowledge, and skills to provide the absolute best possible education for my students. It takes a lot of deep reflection to identify the qualities of both good and bad teachers that I have had, and even more effort in understanding how different each learner really

is—what worked for me may or may not work for them, and I have to learn how to be consciously versatile.

***Prism of Possibility* reflects** that with everything in life, you have to take the good with the bad. It won't always be sunshine and flowers as in the hope collage, nor will it always be challenges depicted in the fear collage. Once we shine our light of insight, it all comes together to form a bigger picture with a bigger meaning of being versatile.

Flipping Through Hope & Doubt by Krista Deda

Fig. 9: Flipping Through Hope & Doubt collage series by Krista Deda

Learning can be a rollercoaster of the most rewarding feelings by working collaboratively with peers, students, and community. Most importantly in our current society, the enforcement of equity in our classroom is crucial. Quotation marks in my hope collage represent the importance of embracing student voice, opinion, interests, cultures, and ethnicities, combining a positive, successful, and inclusive environment for students, allowing them to embrace and motivate their learning.

Learning is like a flower blossoming, a pathway and journey. Some flowers blossom quickly, some take their time, some blossom and close again; they are all on different journeys of growth. Likewise, with students, who are all in different pathways of learning in education. All students have different methods of learning, such as visual, kinesthetic, auditory, and intrapersonal. Learning is a journey that is different for all. Educators need to acknowledge this, and be willing to learn from their peers, their students, and themselves.

As a beginning teacher, I sometimes feel like I have so much to learn. Although what I have realized and now believe, is that being an educator is a lifelong journey of learning. Like the journey of travel, since there is constant discovery, seeing and cruising. Educators are in constant learning of applying great

modifications and accommodations, enforcing inclusion, and belonging in the classroom through their lesson design and plan.

At times, it can feel like climbing a ladder. As I climb the ladder of my future as an educator, I hold great responsibility of being the best role model for students. I want to continue climbing in order to support, guide, and encourage student learning and success.

I often question how much I will know my students, and how much I will implement my knowledge about them in my program, my lesson design and plan? I connect this to the game of chess, as you may know the roles of each chess piece. Although you may underestimate its powers or not comprehend the impact of their roles and actions.

"Flipping through hope and doubt" reflects my excitement towards my future as an educator. Although I have my feelings and opinions of both hope and doubt, as I flip through my images and photos formed together, I realize they contain the colourful world of my opinions, perspective, and beliefs as an educator.

Through the process of collage, I have come to see that my hopes and doubts intertwine. Going into this activity, I knew I had my opinions as an educator, although I wanted to embrace my fears and doubts. I wanted both my collages to be colourful, since my beliefs as an educator are a reality of colour! For the purpose of creating my GIF, I made my hope in colour and doubt in black and white in order to differentiate the two. Although my doubt collage is just as colourful as my hope, I wanted to express my willingness and dedication to overcome future obstacles. I want to make sure I embrace students' differences and unite them for a learning experience for myself, students, and their peers.

Common Unities: Moments, Maps & Memories by Sabriyya Bacchus

Fig. 10: Common Unities: Moments, Maps & Memories collage series by Sabriyya Bacchus

Learning can be fluid; done in any location, by any one, from any walk of life. This is why I included different light sources and locations throughout both collages, to represent the transferability of learning, but also to remind myself that enlightenment is not limited to any place (and neither is learning). I'm mindful as a youth worker and teacher candidate that my students (much like my own youth) come from all walks of life, and with them they bring their lived experiences, past and present.

Learning is linear for some and a rollercoaster for others. It is an ongoing process, and without a doubt, the sky is the limit. Learning also takes place in many different forms—in nature, in our communities, through books, and through the stories we tell one another. As an aspiring teacher, it can be nerve-wracking to think that I will be responsible for the learning experiences of so many students, some of whom have not had prior experiences with learning that have been positive. I am reminded of my roots, of going to inner-city schools with friends whose parents (unlike my own) didn't prioritize school sometimes because just surviving in Toronto was all they had the energy for. I am also reminded that I continue to learn every day, from my own life, but more importantly from the lives of those around me.

As a beginning teacher, I sometimes feel like I don't belong here. My experience at York has been adverse. I started the year off less than a month after my uncle died unexpectedly. Since I worked full time all summer, and of course needed my pay to put towards my tuition, there was never really a moment to stop and process my loss. This loss came after a turbulent summer as well, and I spent first semester working seven days a week to make sure my winter tuition would be paid. In contrast, I feel a disconnect from many of my peers who seem to only have school as a priority, and more immersed in the academic experience than I have the capacity to be. I'm grateful to my mentor teacher who inspires me to finish this program despite often wondering why I started it...

At times, it can feel like I'm on a never-ending staircase or navigating using only a map (I'm definitely directionally challenged and would not have survived before GPS). I have learned not to focus too much on one thing to avoid becoming overwhelmed by others. Rather than look back one day and wish I had valued this experience more, I try to be present in the parts of it I am enjoying and chalk up the parts that I'm not to life just being that way sometimes.

I often question where in this field I will actually end up; my roots are as a child and youth worker and that's definitely where my heart is. I've worked in recreation since I was 16 and it remains one of the most transformative experiences of my life. I also aspire to work internationally, whether in community development, youth work, or education. In the last year, I have also taken on some of the responsibilities associated with managing my best friend's career as an artist; and building his brand is the ultimate learning experience. Over time, I have learned that teaching is not limited to just the classroom, or the typical students and teacher experience. So, whether I end up planning tours and music festivals for the rest of my life or with an LTO position right out of teacher's college, I'm open to where my path takes me.

"Common Unities" reflects how my doubts and hopes exist synonymously; there were aspects of both images in each collage. My initial (hope) collage was entitled, "Spaces and Places," and more

representative of the different realms that learning takes place in. My second (doubt) collage was entitled, "The Climb," and meant to represent the different routes individuals take on their learning journeys. Ultimately, I believe in the universality of the learning experience, and that as a teacher, I hope to promote diverse learning experiences.

Through the process of collage, I have come to see that reflection is not limited to words and often more effective when done in a visual format. I was sceptical about this assignment to begin with, but am ultimately proud of my final product as I think it is representative of my learning journey this year.

From the Outside Looking In By Yann Myslowski

Fig. 11: From the Outside Looking In collage series by Yann Myslowski

Learning can be as easy as listening, reading, and writing, but can also be as hard as climbing a fence, hiking a mountain, or walking a tightrope. From the outside looking in, learning can be like a perfect balance of uncertainty and inspiration. As a future educator, I'm uncertain about what subjects and grade levels I will end up teaching, but I'm equally inspired by the sheer amount of learning both my students and I will be doing together along the way.

Learning is like climbing a seemingly never-ending ladder toward the infinitely open skies of self-actualization and greatness. Learning is like steadily growing in strength, by climbing one rung of the ladder at a time, until you are strong enough to crack through the shells of doubt, thus hatching inspiration for you and everyone you've climbed with. As a future teacher, I want my students to find comfort in knowing that we are all in this journey of learning together.

As a beginning teacher, I sometimes feel like a freshly born chick, hatched from a shell of comfort and certainty, and hesitant to take my first steps up the hill of learning. I sometimes feel like I won't know what I'm doing in my first years of teaching, but I am comforted by knowing I've experienced feelings of doubt before, and I have always overcome my perceived adversities by listening to the wisdom of those who have gone through the journey before.

I often question whether I'll be able to provide my future students with the ideal balance of challenge, inspiration, and authenticity during our shared learning episodes in the classroom. I also question how I will know whether I've truly helped my students succeed at making the most of their strengths, other than via standardized assessment methods.

"From the Outside Looking In" reflects how I feel about currently being nothing more than a first-year teacher candidate overflooded with ambitious and morally applaudable ideologies of universal inclusiveness for my future students. I feel uncertainty as to whether I'll be able to transform my good-hearted ideologies into actual and effective teaching practices.

Through the process of collage, I have come to see how learning is about creating your own meanings from all the physical and abstract symbols we are surrounded by in our daily environments. Prior to constructing my collages, I had no plan in mind and had no idea what I would create. Once completed, my collages gave me new meanings of hope and doubt.

Lessons Learned Through Collage: Students' Perspectives

These six students' collages and statements illustrate how collaging offers teacher candidates an invitation to engage in alternative ways of knowing and seeing and provides a structure to scaffold reflection. With the support of the creative, visual process of collaging, students then approach writing a personal statement with figurative language that reveals their embodied experiences.

I had originally planned for students to share their collages with one another in a gallery walk during our final class. Because we had to wrap up the semester online, I asked students to complete a brief "exit-ticket" by responding to the question: How did you engage with the experience of reflecting through collage as a teacher candidate? How did collage support or constrain your reflection? Students' answers were quite revealing.

Pat expressed that his collage

> revealed thoughts and feelings about teaching that I haven't necessarily addressed or dealt with throughout the academic year. I think that the busy lifestyle of teacher's college doesn't always give us the opportunity to reflect on our overall experience or our anxieties about the future.

For Katherine, the practice of collaging

> reminded me that there is more to reflection than a post on Moodle [LMS], and that these exercises are incredibly valuable to see a picture of our inner self. My collage encouraged me to be more openly perceptive of my work, to explore my creativity, and to acknowledge the very

real fear and anxieties that I have for my future in this profession. I found that I have been so preoccupied with the stress of life that I subconsciously stopped looking for meaning in the little things of life, and this assignment opened my eyes to the symbolism we can find.

Both students point to the pace of their teacher education program being at odds with inner reflection. They welcomed the time and space to engage in creative reflection.

For other students, however, the initial response to the invitation to engage in reflection through collage was not so enthusiastic. For example, Sabriyya and Yann noted that they were skeptical at first because they didn't see themselves as "artistically inclined." Kaisha went further to explain that for her,

> At first, I thought the assignment was silly and infantilizing, but after I started working on it, I began to see the benefit. There have been ways that I have been feeling that have been difficult for me to put into words, but this activity has afforded me the opportunity to engage with those feelings in a concise and constructive way. Collage supported my reflection in particular by giving me the ability to put my innermost reflections into metaphoric pictures.

While all three students engaged at first with some reluctance, by entering into the scaffolded experience, they came away with new insights about themselves and the power of opening up to alternative ways of knowing.

Yann went on to elaborate how, ultimately, the entire experience of collaging and then crafting his personal statement, allowed him to come to a deeper awareness of self:

> I have always been a self-proclaimed math and science advocat[e], claiming there is far more value in knowing the objective truths of reality than there is in learning about mine or other people's subjective interpretation of reality. However, engaging in every stage of this collage-making experience, from the initial planning process of deciding what types of visual media I would bring to class, to the actual collage construction process, to reflecting on the meanings evoked from my final collage products, has reminded me that learning is more about the process of struggling through challenges, than it is about being provided with new knowledge. It was via the entire process of creating my collages, rather than simply seeing the result, that I was able to develop new meanings about myself with respect to my hopes and doubts of becoming a teacher.
>
> After going through this rare… experience of creating self-defining collages, the process of making my collages and writing accompanying personal statements has provided me with fresh insight into ways of thinking about my reasons and goals for becoming a teacher. I entered the process with initial beliefs about myself and my potential for being a teacher, but I only knew how to conceive and describe these beliefs in ways I was familiar and comfortable with. As I engaged in the collage-creation process, I developed alternative ways of thinking about the learning process in general, and how learning can and should occur in a variety of different forms in order to create a variety of meanings.

Yann's description of the experience of collaging as "rare" reveals that depending on their disciplinary backgrounds, teacher candidates may not have equally had exposure to the use of alternative modes of representation and expression to scaffold their reflection and meaning making. In such cases, the need for aesthetic-based pedagogies in teacher education is all the more critical.

Krista also explained that for her,

> through this process of forming my personal thoughts, through searching and cutting symbols, and forming them together, I surprisingly have a more clear view, understanding, and hope as a future educator pursuing to be and reflect on everything I have learned throughout this course…the process of creating a collage and writing an accompanying statement makes space for students to further understand themselves."

Similarly, Sabriyya notes that

> the collaging process helped to support my reflection as it allowed for imagery and metaphor to play a part in the reflective process, and also allowed for my personal statement to incorporate more creative writing than can be typically used in reflection pieces at the university level.

While there is no magic in collaging as reflection, the examples of practice and students' perspectives in this article provide an empirical base to support further exploration of aesthetic-based pedagogies in preservice teacher education. Indeed, making space to listen to our inner selves can support teacher candidates in bringing their whole selves into their teaching and learning and inviting their students to do the same.

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The Lions BEd Group is made up of six teacher candidates at York University who were enrolled in the course "Inquiries into Learning" with Professor Prasad during the 2019-2020 academic year. They each contributed their final collages and reflections to this article. **Pat Baybayan**, **Kaisha Cunningham**, **Katherine Carranza**, **Krista Deda, Sabriyya Bacchus**, and **Yann Myslowski** are pursuing teacher certification in the junior and intermediate division with various subject specialities. Each of the members of the Lions BEd Group are eagerly looking forward to joining and advancing the field of teaching and learning through their reflexive practice.

Preparing Future Mathematics Teacher Educators to Develop Mathematics Teacher Educator and Researcher Stances

Annie Savard

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to support mathematics teacher educators (MTEs) to prepare their graduate students in becoming MTEs by creating a learning environment to develop epistemological stances. I present the components of my graduate seminar taught in a Practice-based Teacher Education program. The seminar aims to support graduate students to develop their stances and to address the "practice-theory" tension that exists between university courses and the work of teaching. I provide an overview of the class activities and present assignments that support graduate students in becoming MTEs.

Background

Over the last 20 years, there has been more focus in the literature on becoming and being mathematics teacher educators, MTEs (Adler et al., 2005). Some individuals have recounted their own experience in becoming and being MTEs (see, for example, Tzur, 2001, and Chauvot, 2009). Meanwhile, others, like Chapman (2009), have pointed out that MTEs should reflect on facilitating the development of mathematical and instructional knowledge of prospective teachers.

This paper focuses on training MTEs from the point of view of an experienced MTE. What does it mean to *train* them? As part of their graduate studies, many MTEs have had the opportunity to teach mathematics or mathematics education at the undergraduate level, especially to prospective teachers (Chauvot, 2009). Too often, teaching at university level means lecturing a large number of undergraduate students. In this case, teaching might refer to presenting the content to be learnt by prospective teachers, so that they can teach what they know. It is about providing some kind of knowledge—not about developing a professional stance. There is no official or institutional support for supporting the development of teacher educators (Cochran-Smith, 2003). In fact, MTEs learn how to teach undergraduate students *by teaching them*. They also teach experienced teachers through workshops or professional seminars. They are supposed to know how to teach because they know the content. As indicated by Ball and Forzani (2009), teaching is not innate, but it can be learned purposefully. This paper presents the conceptualization of a graduate seminar that aims to support novice or prospective MTEs to develop their practices. By conceptualizing the components of the graduate seminar on the development of MTEs, this study contributes to the emerging literature on supporting MTEs' learning.

Teaching Is Creating a Learning Environment

Drawing on the French Didactics (Artigue, 1988; Brousseau, 1998), teaching is about designing an environment in which students can interact deeply with the content and participate in that interaction.

The teacher must know the learners and the knowledge to be learned so as to create an optimum learning environment and learning conditions. The learner should interact with the knowledge through tasks, materials, peers, and discussions (i.e., the green arrow between Learner and Knowledge in Figure 1)
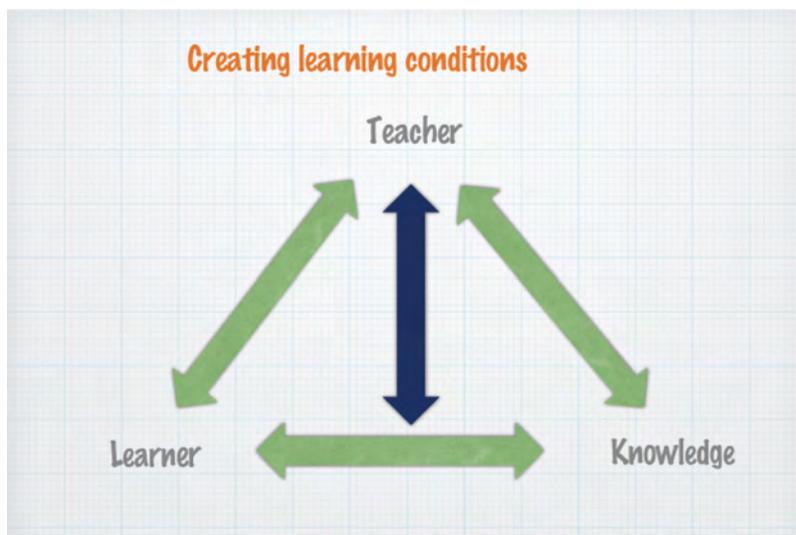
Fig. 1: Teaching is creating learning conditions between learners and the knowledge

It is not enough to have students just interact with their learning environment (Piaget, 1974); mindful thinking on these interactions is also needed to create a deeper learning experience. In Figure 1, the dark arrow shows where the teacher should focus the most: on the interactions between the students and the knowledge. This might involve adding a constraint to a task, eliciting student thinking, providing another kind of material or manipulatives, and asking why this works. Questioning students might lead to discussions of important concepts. Discussions are done either with a partner, within small groups, or as a whole class (Chapin et al., 2003).

In all cases, some effective teaching practices are needed to bring students further when communicating about mathematics. For instance, the teacher needs to listen and respond to students' ideas and contributions, since this discussion involves a co-construction process between the teacher and the students. It is more than a teaching monologue or a questioning "ping-pong exchange" between teacher and students (e.g., teacher questions, student answers, teacher asks another question, another student answers). Rather, it is about teaching toward an instructional goal:

> In the back-and-forth routine dialogue among students and teacher that occurs in these routine kinds of interaction, the work of the teacher is to deliberately maintain focus and coherence as key mathematical concepts get "explained" in a way that is co-constructed rather than produced by the teacher alone. (Lampert et al., 2010, p. 131)

Thus, eliciting student thinking goes way beyond finding the answer: it is about students' understanding of the task, concept, or knowledge, and about justifying their thinking. It reveals where students stand at that point in their development. The challenge is to help them without telling too much, so that the knowledge is co-constructed by all participants and not just by the teacher (Brousseau, 1998).

I use this model, initially developed for teaching school students, to teach as an MTE and to teach to novice MTEs. In fact, I contend that being a mathematics teacher educator not only entails teaching undergraduate or graduate students, but also analyzing our practice in relation to our students' learning. It is about reflecting consciously on how we can introduce concepts to students in a way to support them in developing a conceptual understanding and have them think critically about those concepts.

Developing Teaching Practices by Developing Teaching Stances

Inspired by the work of Ball and Forzani (2009) and Lampert (2010) on Ambitious Teaching, which focuses on the specialized work of teaching, I decided to develop a graduate seminar to help MTEs develop their own teaching methods using "Pedagogies of Practice" (Lampert et al., 2010; Kazemi & Wæge, 2015). I am a firm believer in "learning by doing," so that learning to teach must primarily be done by teaching in a safe environment. One way to put pedagogical practices first was to have undergraduate students rehearse a lesson before enacting it. The rehearsal is coached by the MTE, and I coach the MTE, so that the novice MTE can gain some insight and reflect about the practices they are trying to develop in the lesson. This is a great opportunity to foster MTEs' interactions with the knowledge. The rehearsal is followed by a written reflection on certain practices, providing the novice MTE with more feedback before the enactment. Other novice MTEs benefit from the rehearsals by participating as learners and observing like a novice MTE. At this point, they might play different roles, such as undergraduate students or teachers, which might be related to their different epistemological stances: former pupil or college or university students (Brown et al., 1999). As highlighted by DeBlois and Squalli (2002), there is another stance that novice teachers have: the teacher's stance. While novice teachers' experiences in elementary school mainly reflect a traditional teaching approach (former elementary school student stance), the university student stance focuses on getting good grades. Because the student-centered approaches usually promoted in university courses differ on how mathematics teachers learned mathematics, a tension might highlight this duality. The teacher stance focuses on teaching in relation to learning, using student-centered approaches and developed within university courses.

The construction of the teacher stance is challenging, because if novice teachers learn mathematics in a traditional manner, they will tend to reproduce how they learned without taking into consideration the advancement of Mathematics Education, such as conceptual understanding. Modifying their beliefs seems to be very difficult (Meirink et al., 2009). I studied this transition process and shed light on how novice teachers used teaching practices, while teaching mathematics to students during rehearsals, and guided them to understand some mathematical concepts (Savard, 2014a). It is through practice that they can truly understand the mathematical concepts to be learned, because they have to teach toward an instructional goal, both during the rehearsal and the enactment. They have to take into account every opportunity to foster students' thinking to make them understand the mathematical concepts.

For instance, the mistakes made by students were learning opportunities. Moreover, students invented processes to perform an operation or to solve problems. They had to reflect on their practice to have students reach the instructional goals. Thus, part of training MTEs is having them look differently at the mathematics they will teach. In my undergraduate course in Mathematics Education, I observed and studied this process, and found it was also necessary to develop the MTE stance (Savard, 2014b). In fact, becoming an MTE might also lead them to look differently at the mathematics they will teach. The MTE stance is guided by how to teach mathematics to students, which focuses on how students learn mathematics. In other words, designing learning conditions, such as presented earlier in Figure 1.

In addition, the MTE stance also implies problematizing and interpreting phenomena coming from the practice. In a sense, the researcher stance (Savard, 2017) is also strongly elicited along with the MTE stance. The MTE stance and the researcher stance should work together to support novice teachers to develop the teacher stance. This is quite a lofty goal, because it goes beyond teaching mathematics or mathematics education—it is about having an individual become a professional. This is a huge responsibility, because those novice teachers will one day teach mathematics to thousands of students.

Thus, training MTEs supports them in developing both their MTE and researcher stance. This is the foundation of the graduate seminar I designed. In this paper, I will use each component of Figure 1 to highlight how the seminar is conceptualized to help graduate students become novice MTEs.

The Graduate Seminar in Practice-Based Teacher Education

I initially designed this graduate seminar for Mathematics and Science Education graduate students only. After one year, the course was open to graduate students from all disciplines. Each year, I collect oral and written feedback from students about their expectations toward the seminar at the beginning and end of the class. The students mentioned that they learned a lot from each other, and that having classmates from different disciplines in the seminar helped them to reflect about their own discipline. Having many readings on Mathematics and Science Education helped them develop their researcher stance, because they had to make sense of them in relation to their own discipline. At the end of the course, the students completed a survey on the relevance of each reading and assignment, which has allowed me to adjust and improve the seminar over the years. In this paper, I focus mainly on my MTEs, for whom this seminar is mandatory.

Learners

My learners come from different backgrounds and different countries. English is often a second or a third language for them. They were schooled in different systems, so they have different visions of teaching and learning. They might be master's degree students or doctoral candidates. For many of them, this is their first class in Education, since they have degrees in Mathematics or Science. However, I also have students coming from Education without a degree in Mathematics or Science. Some of them are already familiar with the teaching practices presented in the seminar, because they did their undergraduate degree in our university. There are also teachers or school board consultants who are studying part-time,

as well as other students who don't see themselves as teachers because of their limited teaching experience. Those who are teachers have difficulty picturing themselves as graduate students; others only think of themselves as graduate students. Their focus is also quite different, because they are interested in teaching and learning Mathematics at different levels: elementary school, middle school, high school, college, or university. Some of them want to do a Master's degree project in Mathematics Education, not write a thesis. Students who are starting their Masters' degree in Mathematics Education usually don't have a lot of experience with Education research, thus their researcher stance is at the beginning stages.

Numerous students don't have any teaching experience, which is why it is so important to support them to develop their teaching practices to teach novice or experienced teachers. Many of the students enrolled in the course are not ready to become MTEs, and need to focus more on developing their teacher stance. Slowly, they start to develop the MTE stance during the coaching teacher's rehearsal.

Interactions Between the MTEs' Instructor and the Learners

It is crucial to create a safe learning environment. Often, graduate students feel intimidated by the experiences of others, and think they may not belong or be able to contribute to the community. Furthermore, they are not sure what to expect from the instructor: another effect of the didactical contract (Brousseau, 1998). My role is to build a positive and professional relationship by giving them space and time to grow. For example, I make it known that I view mistakes as a great learning opportunity. Thus, when a graduate student makes a mistake, I use it to make connections with the teaching and learning process. I provide as much support as possible to my students, which makes it easier for them to contribute to class discussions.

At the halfway point of the semester, I also present my work on my own different epistemological stances. Usually, this is an important moment for the learners in this class, because they can position themselves to be more than a graduate student or a teacher—they see themselves becoming a MTE. After that, they explicitly name their epistemological stances in discussions, presentations, and in their writing. Below is a student's response from the last assignment, the E-portfolio:

> Before this class, my teaching was crude, I mainly followed what I have experienced as a student and imitated my teachers to plan my lessons and classroom activities. At that time, I seldom thought about how to improve it. The most important thing I have learned in this class is my stance transformation, my stance changes from student to teacher and then to coach which shoulders three positions simultaneously. Although I am not a successful teacher at present, the change of my stance has a strong impact on my learning style and future teaching style. (Allie, first-year master's degree student)

Knowledge

The knowledge presented has two different layers, because MTEs should teach novice teachers how to teach students in school. Thus, the first layer is about knowing how to support a teacher to learn how to teach mathematics to students and how to support them. The second layer is about knowing how to support novice teachers to learn how to teach mathematics to students. For each layer, knowing how

to use high-quality practices to support learners (students or teachers) is needed. To this end, the seminar aims to provide an overview of research on high-quality practices in teacher education, with a focus on practice-based teacher education. Practice-based teacher education addresses the "practice-theory" divide that often exists between university-based teacher education courses and the work of teaching by providing opportunities for graduate students to learn through engaging in teaching practices. Practice-based teacher education is organized around a core set of cross-disciplinary principles and practices (Table 1). The main goal of this course is to help students become teacher educators who, in turn, are able to support preservice and in-service teachers in implementing these principles and practices. At the same time, students will learn how to implement these principles and practices in their own teaching through apprenticeship opportunities. The learning outcomes are for students to:

- develop and improve their own pedagogy for teaching preservice and in-service teachers;
- develop their abilities to coach teachers on their teaching practices;
- reflect on the cultural, social, and political nature of knowledge in society;
- develop their critical stance toward pedagogies used for supporting students to learn;
- reflect on their own stances as teacher, educator, coach, researcher; and
- connect their teacher educator roles with their own research project (if applicable).

Table 1:
Principles and Practices of High-Quality Teaching Used as Framework in the Seminar

Cross-Disciplinary Principles and Practices of High Quality Teaching

Principles of High-Quality Teaching[1]	Cross-Disciplinary Practices of High-Quality Teaching

• Children are sensemakers.
• Ambitious instruction requires clear instructional goals.
• Teachers must know their students as individuals and as learners.
• Teachers must design instruction and a learning environment that supports *all* children to do rigorous academic work in school and to have equitable access to learning.
• Teachers must be responsive to the requirements of the school environment. At the same time, teachers should consider why schools function as they do and how schools might improve.
	• Teaching toward an instructional goal
	• Eliciting and responding to student thinking
	   ○ Pressing on student thinking
	   ○ Revoicing student thinking
	• Orienting students to each other's ideas and to the instructional goal
	• Positioning students competently
	• Establishing and maintaining expectations for student participation
	• Representing student thinking and key ideas
	• Using a public record of student thinking

Interactions Between an MTE and Knowledge

As an experienced MTE, I know that presenting theory is not enough for in-depth learning of the content. When learning mathematics, students must be actively engaged, and this includes university-level novice MTEs. Mathematical concepts always seem to be addressed explicitly. For instance, designing and reaching mathematical instructional goals requires a sound knowledge of mathematical concepts. The purpose of teaching is to make these mathematics concepts accessible to learners in a way that supports their learning process. Discussions of teaching practices were always done in relationship with learning mathematics. Mathematics then becomes the focal point for students. While I do not consider myself a

mathematician, I do have enough mathematical knowledge to support my undergraduate and graduate students. As an experienced mathematics teacher in elementary school, I have had many novice teachers in my classroom as a collaborative teacher. I am familiar with both theory (the university side) and practice (the field side). As an experienced researcher in mathematics education, I deepened my knowledge by doing research and using the literature to improve my teaching practices. For instance, my work on problem solving has allowed me to teach my undergraduate students how to teach additive and multiplicative structures (Savard & Polototskaia, 2017). As a graduate student supervisor, I know how to coach them to develop a mathematics teacher stance and/or researcher stance.

The mathematics teacher stance should focus on supporting students to learn mathematics in a conceptual manner, so that they understand what they are doing and can justify their reasoning. Another focus is to encourage students to think critically and creatively toward mathematics, and perceive mathematics as an important knowledge to use in their daily life (i.e., to enjoy intellectual challenges, as tools to make financial decisions, and to understand the world we live in). Mathematics is a fundamental tool for every citizen. One cannot fully participate in society (ten Dam & Volman, 2004) without having a certain amount of mathematical knowledge. Thus, teaching mathematics is a way to build a better society by supporting individuals to become responsible citizens.

The researcher stance should be developed in relation to the epistemology of teaching, learning, and mathematics. Not only is the researcher stance built on the practice of doing research—such as using a framework to analyze a teaching/learning phenomenon and using literature or evidence to support a claim—but also on using and analyzing the learning conditions to design a learning environment. Figure 2 shows how this environment changes, based on the knowledge to be taught.
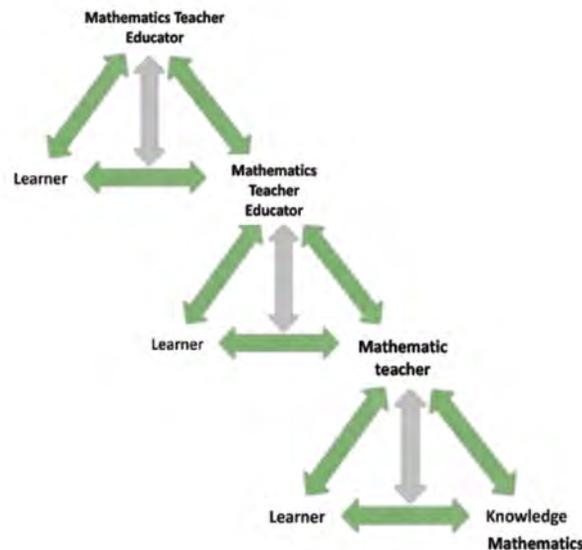
Fig. 2: Interactions between the MTE and the knowledge to be taught

Learners' Interactions With Knowledge

The first classroom activity asks the students to write their own definitions of learning and teaching, which is followed by a whole-class discussion of their definitions. They are asked to keep this definition, since they will have to include it in their e-portfolio assignment. Other activities include designing and presenting a conceptual map on some readings, oral presentations, and rehearsals. Table 2 presents each assignment and the learning intentions to develop the MTE and the researcher stances behind them.

Table 2:
Supporting the Development of the MTE and the Researcher Stances

Assignments	Learning Intentions
Assignment A – Observing Tool: In teams of two, graduate students develop an observing tool to use while observing teachers teach. They must validate the tool by using it while observing an experienced teacher. They also present it in class during a gallery walk. This assignment has four parts. In the first part, you will develop an observing tool to use when observing teachers while teaching a lesson. In the second part, you will use the tool twice: once while observing a teacher educator teaching a lesson to undergraduate students, and next while observing an experienced teacher teaching a 45-minute class (any level). In the third part, you will revise your observing tool based on your validation process. In the fourth part, you will present your revised tool in class during a gallery walk. Please provide a list of the references that you used at the end of your paper, and evidence that you attended both the classes. This assignment must be done in teams of two. You will submit a written report containing both versions of your tool (initial and revised), a reflection on your tool using the template provided, and the references.	Novice MTE will develop their MTE stance by: • selecting and justifying the choice of the practices chosen. Novice MTE will develop their researcher stance by: • selecting and justifying the choice of the format of the observing tool; • reflecting, validating, and revising the observing tool; • using literature to support their work.
Assignment B – Cycle of Enactment and Investigation: In teams of two, they prepare a lesson, and enact it with either undergraduate students or teachers. They then reflect on their teaching practices. The rehearsal and the enactment are video recorded. In teams of two, you will create a lesson, enact it in front of undergraduate students or teachers, and reflect on your enactment. This assignment has five parts. In the first part, you will design a short lesson that will focus on orchestrating a short whole-class discussion for novice or experienced teachers. In the second part, you will	Novice MTE will develop their MTE stance by: • teaching novice teachers or teachers a lesson on mathematics; • designing a lesson for their learners; • design instructional goals; • rehearsing and enacting that lesson to reach their instructional goals; • reflecting about their own practices; • using feedback to improve their own practices;

rehearse, in class, your part of the lesson you designed. In the third part, you will write a short analysis of your rehearsal. This reflection will not be graded; you will, however, receive formative feedback on your reflection. In the fourth part, you will enact your lesson with novices or experienced teachers. In the fifth part, you will write an analysis of your enactment, not about your performance. A template with guiding questions will be provided. Please, provide a list of the references that you cited and quoted at the end of your paper.	• reflecting about their learners' learning process. Novice MTE will develop their researcher stance by: • reflecting about other practices while observing other rehearsals; • thinking critically about the mathematical content presented in other rehearsals; • analyzing; • using the teaching practices as a framework to analyze their and other practices live and on videos; • using literature to support their work.
Assignment C – Coaching Teachers: In teams of two, they coach another team of two classmates on improving one teaching principle and one practice. They watch the enactment video of that team of two classmates. They select moments to watch with them and prepare questions to ask them, so they can reflect on the principle and practice they wanted to improve. This assignment will be done with the same classmate with whom you have done the Cycle of Enactment and Investigation assignment. You will coach a team of 2 classmates on improving one teaching practice. To do so, you will watch the enactment video of another team of 2 classmates. You will select moments to watch with them, **and prepare questions to ask** them so they can reflect on the practice they wanted to improve. This assignment has 3 parts. In the first part, you will plan your coaching session. In the second, you will facilitate a coaching discussion by watching with the members of the other team, moments from their enactment. In the third, you will reflect on your coaching practice and submit a report on your reflection. The report must contain at least 4 references read in class.	Novice MTE will develop their MTE stance by: • observing and analyzing a video of a classmate teaching novice teachers or teachers; • providing constructive feedback to the classmate; • coaching to support the classmate to reach an instructional goal. Novice MTE will develop their researcher stance by: • observing and analyzing a video of a classmate teaching novice teachers or teachers; • reflecting about other practices while coaching; • using the teaching practices as a framework to analyze a classmate practices on videos; • using literature to support their work.
Assignment D – Presentation of the Synthesis of Your Journey in Teaching and Coaching: In teams of four (the same group of four classmates who did the Coaching assignment together), they present to the class a synthesis of their learning journey through the Cycle of Enactment, Observing Tool ,and Coaching assignments.	Novice MTE will develop their MTE stance by: • reflecting about their learning journey; • reflecting about their teaching practices;

In teams of 4 (the same 2 groups of 2 classmates who did the Coaching assignment together), you will present to the whole class a short synthesis of your learning journey throughout the Cycle of Enactment, Observing Tool, and the Coaching assignments. The presentation should be no longer than 40 minutes long. Each member of the group will have 8 to 10 minutes to present their synthesis. The presentation should highlight the learning process journey as a teacher and a teacher educator. You must link your journey with the readings of this class. The format of the presentation is your choice. Be creative. You may use any technology you want, including PowerPoint, Prezi, Movie Maker, or other. You are also invited to interact with the classmates during your presentation.	• reflecting about the feedback received and given; • interacting with their audience about their learning journey. Novice MTE will develop their researcher stance by: • selecting important points to present; • justifying their learning journey using evidence; • using literature to support their work.
Assignment E – E-Portfolio: The e-portfolio should include: reflexive reports (12 pts.), and a statement of their teaching philosophy for teaching mathematics (6 pts.). The e-portfolio should also include all the documents from their assignments (A to D) as well as a table of contents, an introduction, and a conclusion. You will make an e-portfolio that will demonstrate how your learning and epistemological stances have changed over the semester. Your e-portfolio should include: 1) the reflexive report; 2) a statement of your teaching philosophy; and 3) all the written reports of your assignments. Your e-portfolio should also include a table of contents, an introduction, and a conclusion. This e-portfolio is a support to make sense of your learning in this course, and therefore, should reflect on how the assignments shaped your learning trajectory. **1. Reflexive Report (12 pts)** You will reflect on your own practices as a teacher or teacher-educator by answering three questions. This part of the assignment is expected to be a reflective report of your own journey. You are expected to make links between your learning, your teaching practices, and readings presented in this course. Please provide specific references to your content. You may use the readings from class and other articles, books, etc.	Novice MTE will develop their MTE stance by: • reflecting to the change of their professional identity; • revising their philosophy of teaching; • looking back to their learning journey on teaching and learning, to find out where they are now with their own teaching practices; Novice MTE will develop their researcher stance by: • organizing their thoughts about their learning journey; • analyzing their epistemological stances; • conceptualize their learning journey about teaching practices; • using literature to support their work.

Questions to be answered **1. How did this course change your professional (teacher, coach, researcher, …) identity?** **2. In your future teaching, which principle(s) do you want to focus on most, and why?** **3. In your future teaching, which practice(s) do you want to focus on most, and why?** **2. Statement of Teaching Philosophy** At the beginning of the course, you wrote your teaching philosophy. Please place a copy of this document in your e-portfolio. You will state a revised teaching philosophy, addressing in particular teaching/coaching teachers. Please refer to authors that helped you to define your statement. **3. Build your E-Portfolio** Your e-portfolio is supposed to show your learning journey throughout this course and end in the direction you want to take as a teacher and a MTE.	

The seminar offers many opportunities for teamwork, especially with regard to the assignments. All the assignments are linked and follow a progression for supporting the students in developing their MTE and researcher stances. For each of them, MTEs are invited to use the in-class readings and other relevant literature. Thus, to study their own teaching practices, they will have to rehearse and enact them in the Cycle of Enactment and Investigation assignments. They are video recorded in both instances. To become more familiar with the teaching practices, they will have to observe—using an observing tool they developed—an experienced MTE teaching an undergraduate course in Mathematics Education. Next, they will coach a classmate using their observing tool while watching the video of their enactment. They will orally present a snapshot of their learning journey during those three assignments. Finally, they will do an e-portfolio to synthesize their learning process and make explicit their MTE and researcher stances. All assignments are described in detail—some have a template to guide their thinking reflection, and an assessment rubric is given for all of them.

All the assignments are designed so that they can build on their learning experiences. They thus need certain contents from previous assignments to complete other assignments. The following table summarizes the contents they need from previous assignments to complete each assignment, and the final products to submit for each assignment.

Table 3:
Relationships Among the Assignments

	Assignment A	Assignment B	Assignment C	Assignment D	Assignment E
	Observing Tool	**Cycle of Enactment & Investigation**	**Coaching Teachers**	**Presentation of the Synthesis**	**E-Portfolio**
What you will need from previous assignments to complete the assignment	Enactment Video (B)		Enactment Video (B) Observing Tool (A)	Enactment Video (B) Observing Tool (A) Coaching Video (C)	Presentation (D) Written reports of: Cycle of Enactment (A); Observing Tool (B); and Coaching video (C)
Final products	Observing Tool Poster (gallery walk) Written Report	Enactment Video Written Report	Coaching Video Written Report	In-class Presentation	E-Portfolio

Teachers Interactions on Learners' Interactions With Knowledge

In order to support novice MTEs to learn the content, I designed the activities made in class and the assignments. In class, I used principles and practices as a framework to foster novice MTEs' thinking. I elicited their thinking and asked them to justify their claims, and make connections between what they know—the principles and practices—and the readings. I wanted them to articulate their thinking in relation to their teaching practices and research project. For instance, I had them make a conceptual network between some readings in order to conceptualize key points. Before, during, and after each activity, I asked open-ended questions and facilitated a discussion around them. When I wrote important points on the board or used a public record of their thinking, I took pictures of the board and added them to the PowerPoint presentation. This was a way for them to reflect on the co-constructed knowledge.

The interactions that I made through the assignments are quite explicit. I provided feedback before, sometimes during, and after the assignments. The way I provided feedback before the assignments was by having a fairly detailed description of the assignment, which included providing the rubric that presents all the evaluation criteria and their weight. I also provided a template to guide their reflection. Over the years, students using a template have displayed more structured thinking, and did not miss important components of the assignment, such as evidence and references. I provided constructive feedback during and after the rehearsals to help support the students' learning. Moreover, I used the

rubrics and provided comments in every assignment, which I viewed as a way to engage in dialogue with novice MTEs.

Concluding Remarks

I provided an overview of the seminar and the rationale behind my choices. I am still reflecting on it and about my practices. Over the years, I have learned that MTEs grow professionally and personally when they are asked to articulate their thinking using both MTE and researcher stances. Once they leave the graduate student stance, they are able to position themselves differently:

> In my experience, the most impactful aspect of this assignment was the reflection template. You provided specific questions that we had to answer when reflecting. That really changed the way I looked at my practices, more analytically and less judging. (Allan, PhD student)

Therefore, programs that support MTEs should have practical components that foster the development of the MTE stance. More research is needed to connect theory and practice while developing an educator stance. To this end, it might be helpful to study the tensions that might arise between the MTE stance, the graduate student stance, and the teacher stance.

Note

1. These principles and practices were borrowed—and, in some cases, adapted—from the Learning Teaching in, from, and for Practice Project: http://www.teachingworks.org.

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Remaking Science Teaching:
Border Crossing Between Home and School

Sumer Seiki, Daniela Domínguez, and Jolynn Asato

Abstract

In this case study, we explore ways to prepare preservice teachers to translate theory into practice and make science curriculum accessible through familial curriculum. Using her "Family Science Lesson Planning" assignment sequence, Sumer taught preservice teachers the theory of transformative curriculum making (Seiki, 2016), and guided them to recognize, articulate, and translate their own familial curriculum into science lessons. As a result, the three participant preservice teachers' own histories and familial knowledge were repositioned and valued alongside science. Our findings show how to use science curriculum and instruction to border cross between home and school, thereby making science more accessible.

Background

Responding to education researchers' call to make science relatable through curriculum and pedagogy for diverse students (Lee & Fradd, 1998; Bang et al., 2012), we explore issues of unequal distribution and access to the tools needed to thrive in science for both diverse students and their teachers (Education Trust-West, 2015). California's segregated schools have limited science curriculum, resources, and professional development for their teachers, directly affecting students (Education Trust-West, 2015). The National Science Teaching Association suggests curriculum affects students' achievement, confidence, and perceptions of science (Miller et al., 2015). This lack of access, resources, and professional development can have grave consequences for students.

Science curriculum is often abstract and requires students to learn scientific terms and memorize principles that have had little relevance in their lives (Oakes et al., 2013), and students often struggle to connect home and school, since these worlds linguistically, epistemologically, and ontologically do not align (Clegg & Kolodner, 2014; Tsurusaki et al., 2013). This focus on facts and memorization reflects a teaching disposition that favors assimilation of diverse students to "mainstream ways of communicating and knowing" (Santau & Ritter, 2013, p. 261), the effects of which are harmful in that they devalue students' cultural knowledge. Since curriculum is shaped through larger historical, sociopolitical, and economic forces (Freire, 1970, 1973), the clear shortcomings in memorization-based and assimilationist science curricula (Aikenhead & Elliot, 2010) are not surprising. In turn, it is imperative to provide science support to teachers entering into this context.

Building on this earlier work, researchers are now exploring ways for preservice teachers to learn how to teach science in culturally responsive and accessible ways (McLaughlin & Calabrese Barton, 2013).

Part of the difficulty beginning teachers have when using home and community cultural resources to instruct students in science, is the cultural divide between home and school, which is characterized as a border (Aikenhead & Elliot, 2010). In this article, we explore a way to cross the border between home and science knowledge through transformative curriculum making (Seiki, 2016), which is a tool in science education that helps preservice teachers border cross by using their personal assets to learn and teach science, and create more equitable and inclusive learning spaces within hegemonic institutions (Seiki, 2016, 2017). Our research puzzle centers the question, "In what ways do preservice teachers learn to recognize, articulate, and translate their own familial curriculum to create elementary science lesson plans for diverse urban students through a transformative curriculum-making assignment sequence?"

Border Crossing

Sumer purposefully situated her classroom curriculum within the call to design accessible science curriculum for teachers and their students. She knew science curriculum and pedagogy often excluded women and marginalized communities through "entrenched, usually hidden, boundaries that tend to control the borders of acceptable meanings and meaning-making practices" (Bang et al., 2012, p. 303). Additionally, race and racism shape the epistemological debate between those whose knowledge counts, and those for whom it is discounted (Yosso, 2005, p. 70). Thus, due to the ways bias acts like a gatekeeper of valued knowledge, Sumer was spurred to investigate accessible curriculum.

She was inspired by Aikenhead and Elliott's (2010) First Nations student study in Canada, which found that in order for students to be successful, they needed to learn—unfortunately, without teacher assistance—to cross a cultural border between their own cultural knowledge and the cultural knowledge of academic school science. Since many students were unable to do this, they felt alienated by the foreign language of science, not able to take up an identity as a scientist. To create a more fluid border crossing, Aikenhead (2000) suggests that science teachers must: (a) make border crossings explicit for students, (b) facilitate border crossings, and (c) substantiate the validity of students' personally and culturally constructed ways of knowing (p. 228). To bridge these opposing paradigms within their classrooms, Sumer incorporated Aikenhead and Elliott's three suggestions into her *Family Science Lesson Planning* assignment and incorporated familial curriculum to further strengthen the science-learning access.

Family Curriculum Making in Science: Revaluing Science Instruction in the Home

"Familial curriculum making" is a concept that emerged from narrative inquiry, hence it is grounded in the relational and is conceptualized narratively; it is a dynamic construction of a life along an evolving plotline (Clandinin et al., 2011; Huber et al., 2011). Familial curriculum making is inclusive of personal, familial, community, and cultural knowledge, stories, and emotions, which are cultivated generationally and passed in relationships. Familial curriculum making is distinct from the place of school curriculum making (Clandinin et al., 2011; Huber et al., 2011), and is important to both classroom and school

curriculum teaching (Huber et al., 2011). Incorporating familial curriculum benefits student education outcomes, and offers teachers and teacher educators a social-justice-based pedagogical technique in cross-cultural contexts (Houle, 2015; Lessard, 2015).

Moll and colleagues (1992) suggest that teachers learn to identify students' funds of knowledge—"the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 133)—by observing familial and community activities and analyzing social and labor histories in households, in order to ''reveal the accumulated bodies and embodied knowledge of households'' (p. 133). Moll et al. suggest removing barriers between home and school and inviting teachers to enter into the homes of students to facilitate higher-order content learning. Though this type of teaching is highly effective, researchers and practitioners note it is not easy. Sumer used Moll et al.'s concept, but instead of teachers entering into the homes of students, Sumer proposed something new. By suggesting her preservice teachers invite students into the preservice teachers' homes through teaching their science lesson, Sumer teaches preservice teachers to value family curriculum through sharing from their own funds of knowledge.

Yosso (2005) added to research on familial knowledge by providing insight into passing ancestral knowledge through community cultural wealth. Using Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) concept of social capital, she explained that marginalized community assets can be categorized into aspirational, familial, social, cultural, linguistic, resistant, and navigational capital—each of these capitals shows the depth of knowledge and complexity gained outside of school. We suggest that although Moll et al.'s (1992) ethnography and Yosso's critical race theory research are from different research paradigms, both contribute to the conceptual understanding of familial curriculum.

Transformative Curriculum Making

Incorporating familial curriculum is a central part of this process of transformative curriculum making. Seiki (2016) describes *transformative curriculum making* as constructing curriculum that counters hegemonic learning spaces within science content. Transformative curriculum making creates a spectrum of diverse curriculum, pulling from the students' and teachers' familial curriculum, and diverse teaching epistemologies.

By bringing together transformative curriculum making and familial curriculum, Sumer created an assignment entitled *Family Science Lesson Planning* to prepare preservice teachers to address known science access inequities for themselves and their students. Through this four-assignment sequence, she scaffolded preservice teachers in the transformative curriculum making process of recognizing, articulating, and translating their familial curriculum, a process that confronted the epistemological divide between home and school. Aware of the segregated elementary schools her preservice teachers often enter, her objective was to teach them how to make curriculum that considered the lived experiences of their diverse students as well as to meet the current California science instruction time constraints, an average of 27 minutes per week (Education Trust-West, 2015). By the end of this

sequence, students possessed the skill of making short, culturally relevant science curriculum, ideal for the urban California context.

Sumer's goal with this study was to explore ways to make science relevant for both preservice teachers and their students, creating conditions for preservice teachers to identify and access their own and their students' familial curriculum when teaching science. Accessing a teacher's familial curriculum may help educators better identify and utilize their students' own familial curriculum in learning science, as well as teach students that they have a right to their own histories within the classroom. While research has focused on teachers learning their students' funds of knowledge first, we uniquely propose beginning with teachers first focusing on accessing their own familial curriculum in order to apply it to their students.

Method

This case study is situated in Sumer's *Curriculum and Instruction of Elementary Science Methods Course,* and was approved by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at an urban west coast university. The seven-week course had 14 preservice teachers enrolled, and met once a week for three hours and forty minutes. This was the first graduate course in which preservice teachers learned to teach elementary school science content; none of the students were science majors and had limited science background knowledge.

Case studies use a diverse data set including interview, classroom observations, and classroom artifacts revealing the implicit and hidden pedagogical implications of using and enacting science curriculum (Marco-Bujosa et al., 2017). Like Miller and colleagues' (2015) case study format for their National Association of Science Teachers study, Sumer presented individual classroom case data through narrative vignettes and classroom assignment artifacts collected from classroom field note reflections.

Classroom observations were a significant data source that Sumer captured in field notes. Further information was gathered to confirm the findings, including interviews, classroom lesson plans, and assignment artifacts. Assignment artifacts also served to further confirm the primary data source of field notes and reveal participants' internal thoughts and experiences. Additionally, each of the interview participants reviewed and approved Sumer's narrative vignettes included in this article, which served as a participant check.

The three interview participants in this study took this course together in their second year of an elementary teacher credential program. Participants were selected through criterion sampling, which selects participants, "that meet some predetermined criterion of importance" (Patton, 2002, p. 238). Eligibility criteria included individuals who completed the course, participated in the assignment sequence, and were at least age 18 and older. To ensure data confidentiality, pseudonyms were used. Participants were students of color or multiracial: Kara was a mixed-race Pacific Islander student, Elaine was an Asian American student, and Diego was a mixed-race Latinx student.

Prior to starting the individual semi-structured interviews, Sumer presented the interview questions to the participants and obtained permission to audio-record the interview. During the interview, participants shared their experience with the four-assignment sequence. Participants' interview transcripts and class assignment artifacts were then analyzed. Inquiring in this way allowed Sumer to explore her preservice teachers' transformative curriculum-making process with the four-sequence course assignment. Danny and Jolynn reviewed the research methods, data analysis, and theoretical frame and provided insights which, in turn, informed the conclusions articulated in this article.

Family Science Lesson-Planning Sequence

To prepare students to complete the course sequence, Sumer selected and had students complete readings on: inequitable science access (Education Trust West, 2015), Western science and indigenous epistemological divide (Bang et al., 2012), and the benefits of incorporating familial knowledge in science instruction (Moll et al., 1992; Rosiek & Clandinin, 2015; Yosso, 2005), as described in the literature review. After finishing the readings, students discussed the rationale for *Family Science Lesson Planning*.

To assess student learning, Sumer examined students' ability to complete each of the four assignments within the sequence. The course assignment sequence required preservice teachers to: (a) recognize science familial curriculum in their own lives, (b) draw and share a memory alongside a science concept, (c) translate that memory into a 10-minute science lesson plan for culturally diverse elementary students, and (d) teach the planned lesson in relatable, culturally relevant, and scientifically accurate ways. She analyzed each classroom observation alongside interview transcripts.

Case Study Data analysis

We used a narrative inquiry lens to understand and unravel the complexities of human experiences within our case study data (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Each classroom narrative vignette existed within a three-dimensional space: temporal, social, and place-based. Investigating these dimensions allowed us to examine the interplay between these dimensions and the preservice teachers' familial curriculum. It was a process of exploring intersecting networks of life threads, interwoven in a particular space and time. Narrative inquiry informed our analysis process, helping us move inward, outward, backward, and forward within a three-dimensional narrative space captured in the vignettes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

We analyzed the four-assignment sequence in a narrative style. We presented the larger conceptual themes that were identified through field notes, interviews, and artifacts (data). Each piece of data is interwoven with analysis and shows the evolution of students' learning through the assignment sequence.

Findings

Our findings are organized into themed sections. We report on the preservice teachers' engagement with making the border explicit (Aikenhead & Elliot, 2010), and progress to recount their attempts to border cross. The results illuminate a spectrum of learning as the preservice teachers navigated the tensions of border crossing between home and science curriculum.

Making the Border Explicit

The concept of making science borders visible became apparent from the data collected through Assignments 1 and 2. In these assignments, which we present in sequential order below, Sumer prepared preservice teachers to border cross by first having them see their homes as a site of science learning. She facilitated making this visible by having preservice teachers discuss the science practices that existed within their home life. This was a difficult but important process; students struggled to reduce the borders between home and school.

We looked at possibilities for science in Sumer's classroom observation of Assignment 1, captured in her vignette below. Interview quotes also reveal the preservice teachers' learning process. The focus of this section is to understand the ways Sumer's preservice teachers recognized their familial curriculum, thus making the border explicit.

> Sumer projected onto a screen the question, "In what ways did you learn science at home?" and instructed them to discuss this in pairs or table groups. At first, students hesitated to begin talking. Some looked confused. Sumer waited for students to process and begin their conversations before circulating. When Sumer visited groups to help facilitate, they asked her questions like, "Is this ok to talk about, is this science?"

This vignette illustrated the preservice teachers' learning process, in which they wrestled with accessing familial curriculum making in science; they struggled to see home as a place of science learning and teaching. In engaging with this activity, preservice teachers learned how hard it is to recognize and connect home and science: they personally experienced the distance that science hegemony maintains.

In order to understand the specific difficulty preservice teachers had in recalling family science memories, Sumer conducted individual interviews. Elaine and Kara both provided insights about their difficulties and process of making connections. Elaine said:

> At first, I thought, I can't think of anything. I can't remember specifically any science from a book, or a science project from a book, or anything. I thought about it for a while, and I just thought about what I did in my childhood. I spent a lot of time with my parents, and … a lot of my childhood was helping … cook and garden …then I tried to think about what science came from that. I remember as a kid, I remember us frying chicken, frying fish, frying eggrolls. I remember being taught that every time before dinner, my mom and dad would have us help prep. And then I remember specifically my mom saying to do this right, to cook the food right, you need to put this amount of egg rolls into the oil because it's not going to cook right.

In her quote above, Elaine recognized how hard it was to connect home and science. She struggled to find what "science" her family taught her. In fact, she revealed that her frame of reference was anchored in a traditional science textbook. She used her recollection of science textbook concepts to evaluate which of her home experiences would fit science instruction in the home. Her valuation of school science content knowledge in textbooks is indicative of the larger struggle of valuing Western knowledge over familial knowledge (Bang et al., 2012). The activity enabled her to make the border between home and school visible. Kara explained:

> I remember really feeling like in science you can't make mistakes. There's all these rules and it's like right and wrong. So it's hard to fit your own family knowledge into that because it seems like science is this distant thing set in stone and you kind of fit into your life rather than fit your life into it. I think it was also kind of hard for me because everything I was taught [in science] didn't have familial knowledge in it so that was really separate for me. It was two very separate things.

As Kara said, it was "separate," indicative of the epistemological divide that separates school and home science curriculum (Aikenhead & Elliot, 2010). Identifying science content learned from their families, the students started to unearth the value of their family science. As students engaged with Assignment 1, they did not see their homes as potential sites of science learning. As they talked and thought about the question, all of the preservice teachers made the border between home and school visible.

Unmasking the Border Between Home and School

After Assignment 1, the preservice teachers immediately began Assignment 2, in which they moved from uncovering their family science and began to articulate the science concepts they learned from their families. This articulation served to unmask the border in that students could see how family science was informed by science concepts, and in fact they were enacting science concepts at home. As they engaged in this activity, it demystified science concepts and validated home knowledge as the practice of science.

They practiced articulating their knowledge by individually recalling and selecting a memory of home science learning and describing the corresponding science concept. This activity served to diminish the distance between home and school knowledge. Using pastels or markers, each preservice teacher drew a picture of the science memory they learned from their friends, family, or community. Diego's drawing is a sample of the types of memories student depicted (Figure 1). Diego's drawing is followed by Sumer's classroom field notes of Assignment 2, which provides examples of the preservice teachers' articulations.
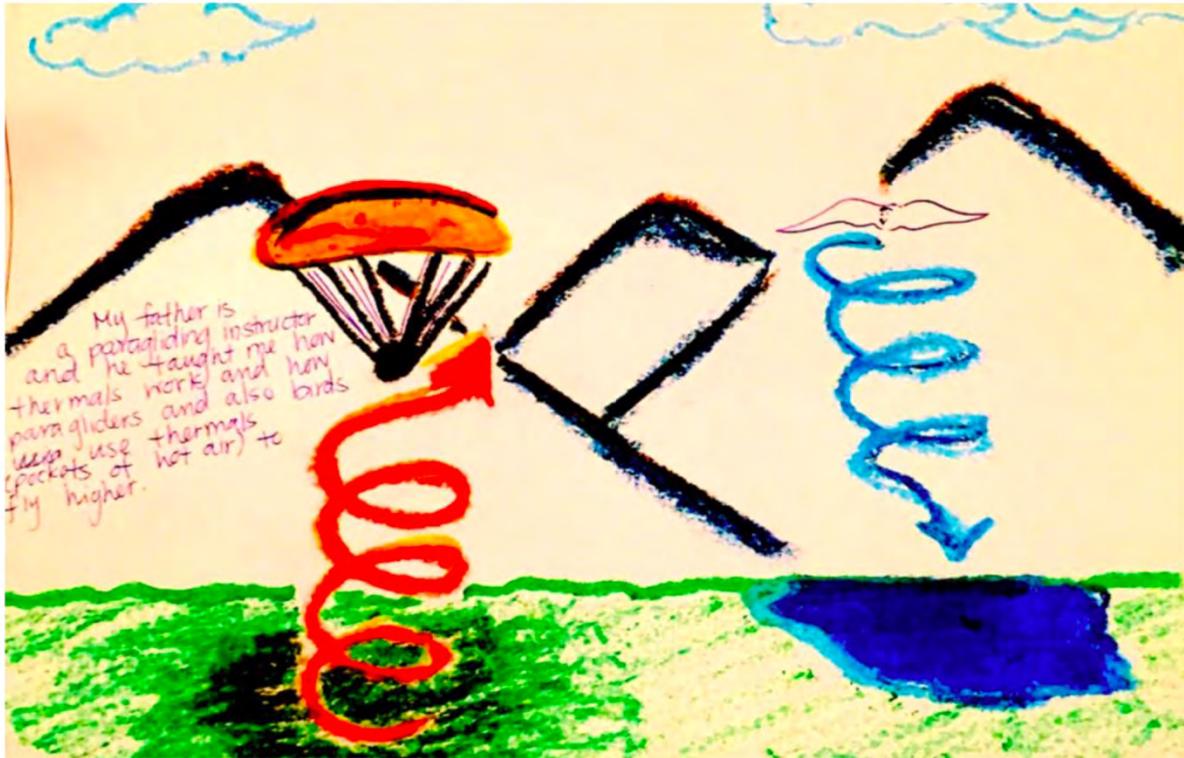
Fig. 1: Diego's accessing & articulating familial curriculum

Once their drawings were complete, the whole class stood in a circle. Students held their picture and told their science familial curriculum-making stories, and articulated the connections between home and science.

> Jenny shared that in school she learned about chicks and eggs. Jenny's teacher showed them the fluffy chicks, and she thought they were cute. She took an egg from her refrigerator and placed it under her pillow to hatch it. Her mom, who had grown up on a farm, saw Jenny's hidden egg and explained that it wasn't possible to grow an egg from the refrigerator because grocery store eggs were not fertilized.

> Elaine shared, "My mom taught me the secret to making golden brown egg rolls. The secret she said is to not put too many egg rolls in the pan." A student turned to her and asked, "how is that science?" Elaine replied, "Well, if you put too many [egg rolls] in the pan, the oil temperature gets lower and the egg rolls don't brown—they just get soggy. It's about heat transference. Having too many egg rolls in the pan causes the temperature of the oil to go down."

Students connected in different ways. Jenny and Elaine were able to relate science to everyday life and home chores; they became conscious of every home being a site of science and knowledge production. These stories are complemented by Diego and Will, and captured in Sumer's field texts below:

> Diego, he held up his drawing [Figure 1] and explained, "My Dad taught me to fly high by tracking birds." Thermals, he explained, are pockets of hot air along the beach. My Dad is a parasailing instructor and he explained that pockets of hot air rise in heat convection. I learned how to look for birds on the beach, then scan below them [the bird flocks] to look for dark

patches on the sand and identify where the thermal pockets of hot air were; that's where to parasail. He'd [Dad] say, "follow the birds and they will help you to soar."

Diego's story exemplifies the richness that one familial memory can contain, within it, multilayered lessons beyond science facts. For example, Diego's father skillfully communicated his knowledge of birds, physics, and his aspirational hopes for his son to "soar high." When Diego shared his lesson with our class, he too was teaching the class to "soar high." In communal sharing, familial and ancestral wisdom came forth.

> Will shared that he grew up on a tropical island in the South Pacific. His family lived there for generations. As an island youngster, at age 5, he went to the beach with his father. Standing on the shores, his Dad taught him about the tides, how they are formed, and what caused them to rise and recess. His Dad, concerned for the well-being of his young son, wanted him to be safe on the sandy beaches with the ever-changing tides. For Will's Dad, such knowledge was important for survival.

> After the last student shared, we stood in awe at the rich science lessons that came from home. Students realized, after sharing and listening to others' stories, how prevalent and rich home science lessons can be. It was powerful to experience the ways family entered Sumer's classroom through stories; moms, dads, aunts, grandmas, grandpas, cousins, and friends all came into the class through the sharing of familial science curriculum. Each student brought a part of home with them into Sumer's classroom.

With assistance, all students were able to meet the objective of articulating science concepts from home practices, but what made this transformative was that it actively uncovered elements of aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005) in their science stories. At first, students struggled to translate the everyday home learning into the scientific abstract terms. Then, science was elevated in their stories beyond head knowledge by the hopes and love of their families, which is aspirational capital; it was a revealing of the heart. To share and be seen by their classmates in this way was a powerful experience, and was the place of learning. They took steps towards crossing the border of acceptable science and meaning making, when they made those home connections.

Collective Meaning Making as a Key Component of Border Crossing

An effective tool to facilitate science and familial connections was collaboration. Peer dialogue and whole-class sharing aided in the recalling and articulating. As preservice teachers spent time in discussion, thinking together, and sharing their memories, they supported and prompted each other to make familial science connections. The pictures they drew and stories they shared were a part of the group learning and teaching process. As they thought and recalled together, sharing in a circle they opened themselves to be seen by others, and they were able to see other households as sites of knowledge. Yosso explains that we come from homes with wealth. Kara commented in her interview:

> I really remember . . . the people in it [the class] because I remember what they taught about was really interesting. I really remember thinking that because you learn it [familial curriculum] you also learn about your classmates and I really like that, and important stuff not just what they liked, but where they came from.

Kara shows the value of learning within community and learning science from community. As Judson (2014) explains, teachers "should not do this work alone" (p. 14). It is meant to be collaborative.

This collaboration, however, was not without tension. Some preservice teachers worried about their peers' reactions. Elaine explained, "I'm sharing with the class [about egg rolls] and [I thought] this is something that could be made fun of as a joke, classmates could think oh there's that stereotypical Asian making egg rolls." This tension that Elaine identified could have affected her sharing, but Elaine moved beyond this tension, feeling safe in her group to complete the assignments. Tensions arose in this struggle to embrace home knowledge as valuable and bridging their epistemological worlds. Ultimately, all preservice teachers completed the assignment and, in so doing, were challenged to reconceptualize how they think of science, home, and themselves.

Repositioning Family and Self as Scientist and Teacher

An outcome of communal learning and making the border explicit, Kara repositioned herself as a science teacher. Kara shared that she had the science knowledge "within me" the whole time:

> At first it was really hard because I definitely couldn't automatically make those connections. But once I got to thinking about it, it opened up a whole box of stuff that I had not thought about before. I had it within me, but I hadn't made that connection. Once you make that first connection then there's this, and then there's this, and then there's this…

Kara found within her ancestral and cultural knowledge science concepts. In border crossing between home and science, she was able to lay down her familial curriculum epistemology and ontology and connect it to school science in new ways. As Aikenhead and Elliot (2010) suggested, through this assignment process they built connections and deeper understandings of both home and school.

Will exemplifies the ways epistemology and ontology could be taught through his father's wave lesson. Will was able to understand and explain both worlds and perceptions when he stood teaching in the circle. He showed how his father's indigenous ontological and epistemological perceptions of the world were different from those of Western science, yet, at points, he showed how they aligned. In this moment of sharing, Will provided access to diverse wave concepts through this father's science curriculum. Similarly, Bang et al. (2012) suggested that the science classroom could be a place where we have "multivoiced meanings of core phenomena," a place where we collectively understand the different epistemologies and what they have to offer (p. 308).

Will continued to reflect even after the assignment. As evidence of this, Sumer shares an excerpt from her class reflection:

> Will came up to me a week after the initial lesson [Assignment 1 & 2]. He said he had been thinking about the lessons his father taught him about the waves. He realized his Dad was taught the same lesson by his father, Will's grandfather. The lessons he had learned had been passed generationally.

This interaction with Will demonstrates that he began to recognize what Kara said earlier, a treasury of knowledge that was "within." Will's recognition of his ancestral knowledge is part of a larger debate of valued knowledge and is an issue that arose for some of the preservice teachers of color. Elaine explained, "I didn't realize the importance of it [familial curriculum] until I came to college . . . recently I was thinking that it wasn't until now . . . it's [familial curriculum] not written but there's a lot in it." Kara, Will, and Elaine show the ways that ancestral knowledge is lost, as it is not valued in the same ways within our society nor taught in schools (Yosso, 2005). Yet, in these activities, these preservice teachers began to dismantle the value hierarchy and acknowledged these systems. We collectively replaced and revalued the knowledge we carry within.

Border Crossing Through Teaching

The concept of border crossing emerged from the findings as preservice teachers worked on using the memories of learning science at home to teach science concepts. The data presented in this section encompasses assignments focused on the last two steps in the four-assignment sequence, Assignments 3 and 4. The data from Assignment 3 included preservice teachers' 10-minute familial curriculum hands-on science lesson plan, and Assignment 4 included observations of preservice teachers teaching their lesson in different small groups. These assignments were more difficult for preservice teachers because now they have to incorporate the Western science concepts. As a result, some people struggled.

Kara is an example of someone who made the bridge in Assignments 3 and 4. She was able to make a lesson from her familial curriculum, and it was also an example of border crossing, serving as a transformative experience for both herself and her classmates. In this vignette, Sumer shares a class observation of Kara:

> Kara was nervous, in fact at the start of the term she said, "I'm not good at science." She was concerned because she felt uncomfortable with being a science teacher. "It's not safe to make mistakes when you're the science teacher," she explained. Now it was time for Kara to be a science teacher of a lesson rooted from her own familial curriculum.
>
> Kara placed her lesson plan on her left side of the large table. From her backpack she removed a rectangular plastic Tupperware. Placing it in the middle of the table, it contained small clumps of boiled taro. She was set to teach her lesson to her small group of Diego and Katherine. Nervous, she touched her typed lesson plan to reassure herself. She scripted out all of her dialogue to ensure that if anxiety crept in, she could reference her plan.
>
> "Today," she began, "we are going to review some of the states of matter, focusing on solids, liquids, and gas, through cooking poi. Poi is an ancient food and common in the Hawaiian Islands, where I'm from." Sumer watched as she taught her small group. They began to collectively mash the taro. The chunks became small clumps as she poured water into the container. Mashing. Mashing. They continued. Kara looked at them and pulled the container closer to her and observed their poi-making skills. She critiqued them, something I've rarely heard her do, "This is too runny and there are clumps." The two students began to mash more. Then she proceeded with her lesson. At the end of her lesson, Kara excitedly said, "Sumer, this was the first time I didn't pick up my paper to teach. I just knew it."

Reflecting on the classroom vignette above, Kara showed that teaching science from her familial curriculum alleviated some of the stress of teaching science content knowledge, since part of their lesson related to home knowledge. Like her classmates, she was confident in this sharing. Their home identity bumped up against science anxiety. Murphy and colleagues (2012) explained that curriculum making allows individuals to construct themselves differently, cultivating multiple personal identities. Bringing forth familial curriculum from home shed light on these different identities. Kara described these feelings:

> It was a lot easier to teach than a lot of other lessons I've taught because I had the knowledge, I didn't have to keep going back and reassuring myself to make sure I wasn't making mistakes. So that part was easier, I already knew [it] inside me.

Kara became the expert teacher, the knower of her family curriculum. She pulled from her familial curriculum as an island native whose family has farmed taro for generations. Kara found a way to bring her ancient traditional and family practices into the science curriculum. She was bringing into the classroom her family's generational knowledge of taro farming, cooking, making poi, and teaching science. She expressed her familial curriculum as she border crossed between the worlds of her familial knowledge of taro and poi, to those of science, reducing her anxiety:

> This is science, it was in front of me the whole time, I just never made that connection. [Taro's] a solid, you steam it and it releases gas, and you put liquid in it to make it poi. Once I connected that terminology, it was easy. I knew I had more of it [lesson-content] in me, I didn't have to go out and look for it, researching and looking stuff up.

In her teaching, Kara considered both her familial curriculum making alongside science content. She wrestled with layering familial poi cooking practices, her "first food" alongside using relevant science terminology and concepts. Because Kara was teaching about her familial curriculum, she cared deeply about the accuracy of both.

Preservice teachers like Kara felt more confident about their home knowledge as they taught through their short lessons. It was natural and easy for many of them because the content centered familial knowledge and cultural wealth. Additionally, Diego was able to do both with ease. He explained, "I know it very well, it's been engrained in my memory." Engaged in this transformative curriculum making, we worked to reposition voice, power, and valued epistemological knowledge. In these lessons, preservice teachers worked to embody their emerging identity as "science teacher" and "keeper" of familial knowledge. Thus, this offers a beginning in the longer journey for new teachers.

Different tensions arose in these assignments, some due to the oppressive science practices, some due to difficulty trans-languaging from familial science to Western science. In these assignment activities, preservice teachers faced the hegemony of science in struggling to write lesson plans. For example, Will had difficulty making tides and waves in a water bottle, yet it was still transformative for him. Science emphasizes the gap between home and science because it is abstracted. Will worked to take the lessons he learned on the shores and move them into a wave demonstration in a plastic water bottle. While the abstraction lost some of the knowledge Will was seeking to convey, he persisted.

Others had contested relationships with family, some of whom triggered racial microaggressions. Diego provided an important insight: "If they don't have a good relationship with their parent(s), it could actually be triggering." Ultimately, Elaine and Anna chose not to use the family memories and choose a different story to teach. Yet, Kara's family, Will's father, Diego's father, and Elaine's mother were still all knowers of familial curriculum and science concepts in our teacher education classroom. Although at times the tensions of family dynamics emerged, we moved forward together and focused on the purpose of transformative curriculum making. We taught science through real and sometimes tenuous relationships, not abstraction.

Discussion

For culturally diverse preservice teachers in the class, we found these patterns for accessing, articulating, and translating community cultural wealth into short science lessons extremely valuable. Findings point to science being made accessible and relatable through family stories.

Through her deeper understanding of preservice teachers and their families, Sumer cultivated meaningful relationships with them and fostered critical examinations on those whose knowledge counts. Preservice teachers learned to build relational border crossings into science content. It was not just about them making these connections visible; it was also about listening and realizing the prevalence of familial science in the home, and, in so doing, building an expectation through the four assignments that each home was a site of scientific knowledge production. This led to the understanding that science is indeed within the home. Preservice teachers became practiced in making the border visible and crossing that border, which, in turn, positions them to value the home science learning of their future students.

Our research represents a starting point—this transformative curriculum is an opportunity for preservice teachers to learn from self and/or familial curriculum. It gives preservice teachers a structure to begin to inquire. Since preservice teachers are positioned as learners of their own past, they can influence their present teaching and future curriculum making.

Repositioning family knowledge and teaching practices within the preservice teacher classroom was part of the course goal, and findings showed it is a starting point to connect families and push back against assimilation in a science content. In fact, through the four-assignment sequence, preservice teachers' transformative curriculum making allowed us to hear and learn from culturally diverse and ancient voices. Those previously excluded and silenced were able to be present through their descendants; the wisdom they passed on was embodied in their descendants' stories, teaching, and lessons.

We all stand in the circle identifying, articulating, and locating the stories within ourselves and others, preparing one another to border cross between home and school. In so doing, we make the border more porous and redefine the possibilities of science education not as something distant, but as close as home.

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(Re)discovering *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

Christopher Darius Stonebanks

Abstract

This article chronicles a crisis of alignment regarding Critical Pedagogy due to the top-down power structures of White authority that is pervasive in the theory's North American academic environment. Contesting the often touted "radical" or "revolutionary" nature of Critical Pedagogy in higher education spaces, the author questions his relationship with Paulo Freire's work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, ultimately abandoning the content of writing over the way the theory/philosophy is lived in academia. Through the lived experience of engaging with community in the James Bay Cree territories and Malawi, the question is asked as to who owns Freire's rebellious call to action.

Prologue

> It's hard to start this article. Even though it's not a face-to-face conversation, it's still hard. I won't be able to track the real reaction on your face and the furrows in your brow as you take in what I'm about to say. I don't know if this is easier or harder for you but I am past caring about making it easier; it has to happen so let's begin. We need to talk about race in punk… like now. (Phillips, 2013, para. 1 & 2)

This article will *not* be about punk music, although I could have written about punk music and simply done a "search and replace," inserting Critical Pedagogy in its place. Punk music's use is to show that movements that self-proclaim a set of convictions and values, are often not *lived out*. As one of the very few non-Christian, Middle Eastern immigrants to the west end suburbs of Montreal, Canada, punk music had a great allure to me in the 1980s, as it represented something I could potentially belong to, in the face of feeling so desperately outside of the seemingly homogenous community in which we lived. Punk stood against sameness, against the consumerism of suburbia, and against normative status-quo social practices, or at least that is what I read into the music and proclaimed texts on the back of album covers. However, *living* the punk experience was somewhat different than what the music, or the revolutionary message screamed. Punk music, and the actual focus of this paper, Critical Pedagogy, has a liberation edge that declares a "speak truth to power" philosophy. Punk and Critical Pedagogy share the same "we are dangerous, and the status quo doesn't like what we have to say" declarations. However, Kai (2014) asks an important question about an artistic genre asserting to be the definitive voice for resistance against conventional politics, society, and norms, "If punk is the ultimate anti-establishment scene, why is it still run by all these white men?" (para. 1). The same question needed to be asked about Critical Pedagogy.

> Writing this chapter on the "race problem" in critical pedagogy makes me nervous because I fear what might happen when powerful critical pedagogy figures read it. As an assistant professor soon to be going up for tenure, I understand the importance of having influential allies; being a radical in academia can be very tricky business. (Allen, 2006, p. 3)

In *Reinventing Critical Pedagogy* (Rossatto et al., 2006), Allen's chapter, "The Race Problem in the Critical Pedagogy Community," confronts the elephant in the room regarding racism within Critical Pedagogy: that is the fear and nervousness in calling out a hierarchical structure infused with White privilege (Diangelo, 2018; Eddo-Lodge, 2018; hooks, 1994). What can be said about a radical, grassroots, and revolutionary ideology, when speaking truth to its establishment after the death of its founders—namely its post-Freire leaders and academic "rock stars"—other than there is danger involved?

The first few drafts of this article began in 2013 as a breakup letter to Paulo Freire and his creation of Critical Pedagogy. Reading Stephanie Phillips' blog about the realities of racism she encountered as a Black woman within the punk rock scene was the final push for me to "unfriend" with Freire, to "dump" Paulo, to "ghost" his writing, and ignore his friend circle in all the places we used to hang out. I had to leave him, because although we needed to talk about *racism* in Critical Pedagogy . . . like now, we were not *allowed* to have that conversation. The humanizing and liberatory aspects that made up Freire's work were not being *lived out*, and I began to loathe him for it.

This article is about a crisis of philosophical alignment that first recognized, in retrospect, a Freirean approach to teaching and learning in the James Bay Cree community of Mistissini, then, when encountered with the followers of Critical Pedagogy, drove the author to depart from the theory, only to (re)discover Paulo Freire's philosophical intent, relevance, importance, and application in the rural region of Malawi. At the outset, it needs to be stated that this is not a parallel to the religious "footprints in the sand" poem, where I realized Freire was carrying me when it was most needed. Far from it. This article is more attune to Eddo-Lodge's (2018) miscomprehended "break-up letter" with White people regarding the discussion of race. The purpose of this article is not to analyze the comparative issues regarding problems with punk music to critical pedagogy as it relates to racism (although, that would be useful), or to fully examine the very real problems of ethics of implementation that Critical Pedagogy has in the Global North in regard to reinforcing White privilege (more needs to be done on this). Rather, its central aim is to illustrate that the foundational writing of Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2018), originally published in Portuguese in 1968 and translated into English in 1970, has a tremendous amount to offer classrooms, locally and globally, and needs to escape the hierarchies that have been wound into the White status quo of the Global North (in this article, focusing on Canada and the United States), to return to its emancipatory, liberation, and humanization roots. I hope to do this by illustrating the use of Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in the concrete development of a public campus, owned by a local community and dedicated to lifelong learning in the rural region of Kasungu, Malawi. Malawi being one of the most impoverished countries in the world. In effect, this article is about *living* many of the ideals put forward by Freire.

First Meeting

I first met Freire's work like many students of Education do, in an undergraduate class under the course umbrella of philosophy and/or sociology. In a Sociology of Education class, sometime in the late 1980s, my professor introduced us to the three primary schools of thought that influenced schooling at the time, Critical Theory, Functionalism, and Symbolic Interactionism. Paulo Freire's work came under Critical Theory, and given my perfecto leather jacket, ripped jeans, and Doc Martins, the engaged and observant professor believed that *this* was the theory for me. Marxism, revolution, defying top-down systems, "stick it to the man," everything my pinback buttons screamed, seemed to clearly connect with these ideals. However, I came into Education because I hated schools due to the racism my siblings and I encountered on a daily basis (Stonebanks, 2004). Symbolic Interactionism, and Charles Horton Cooley in particular through the "looking glass self," had a profound impact on the way I understood identity formation vis-à-vis perceptions of dehumanization imposed on racialized others. *Life and the Student: Roadside Notes on Human Nature, Society and Letters* (Cooley, 1927) was both the focus of my Masters' thesis, and the only original edition book I have ever sought and purchased. When we had to do an end-of-year oral presentation on a specific theory that spoke to us, my undergraduate professor asked about my certainty regarding Cooley's work. After all, the assignment connected to a critical incident we completed at the beginning of the course, and I had written about one of the many violent encounters in school during childhood. Given the nature of the critical encounter, the professor suggested that Freire's work may have more meaning and may be better suited to answer fundamental questions. But, I was resolute; it was Cooley for me, not Freire. But, in an effort to show that I had done due diligence, I purchased a copy of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, leafed through it, maybe (maybe) underlined some passages (doubtful), and had it on my desk in class to make sure the illusion was created that I had made an informed decision.

By 1995, I had graduated with my Masters of Arts in Educational Studies, and through complete chance found myself teaching for Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel (CEGEP) St. Felicien in the James Bay Cree community of Mistissini, in a program titled "Native Early Childhood Education" (NECE). At the time, the location was termed by the CEGEP as "isolated," but the community and its people were not. Working with adult women, the majority of whom were older, mothers, wiser, more patient, and residential school survivors, was one of the most enriching experiences of my life. The position came with (at best) loose physical or academic support, and there was no administration lording over you. In the early days, before Quebec's official curriculum became competency based (Ministère de l'Éducation, 2001), the instructors in each of the nine James Bay Cree villages were given competency-based outcomes, and wide liberties on how to achieve them. No standardized curriculum, no set textbooks, no predetermined teaching resources, no end-of-term standard tests, and in some cases, no classroom. There I was, with a group of adults, barely an adult myself and tasked to have them certified to be daycare teachers within two years. Moreover, experiences of residential schooling and colonialism loomed large in the face of considering what it meant to be a "certified" preschool and daycare teacher in a Cree community.

> Authentic liberation-the process of humanization-is not another deposit to be made in men. Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it. Those truly committed to the cause of liberation can accept neither the mechanistic concept of consciousness as an empty vessel to be filled, nor the use of banking methods-of domination (propaganda, slogans-deposits) in the name of liberation. (Freire, 2018, p. 79)

In Mistissini, I had no reference books to draw from. I certainly did not have my copy of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Nor can I recall any strong memories of Freire either. What was clear, was that with little of the typical resources available to a neophyte CEGEP instructor, that any kind of meaningful teaching and learning experience was not going to come from a manual, guide, or textbook. Somehow, we made the choice, that the standard roles of "teacher" and "student" had to be reimagined. Without referring to Freire (2018) in any way, we concluded that, "(a)t the point of encounter there are neither utter ignoramuses nor perfect sages; there are only people who are attempting, together, to learn more than they now know" (p. 90). As a young man, with a young wife, and an infant daughter, I was very aware that the women I worked with were organized and purposeful in their support and defense of the NECE program and the new human beings who entered into their community. Freire writes that, "(d)ialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for the people" (p. 89). Heavily influenced by Freire, bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1994) spoke on, among many topics, love, classroom as a community and a co-constructed curriculum with students. Love certainly played a role in how we quickly grew to communicate with each other in our class, and soon we were collectively looking at expected competency attainments and considering locally relevant ways to achieve goals. In a class of 13 adult students, all input was key and the coursework became richer and more rewarding for their individual contributions. On moving away from traditional top-down pedagogy, hooks writes, "(t)he exciting aspect of creating a classroom community where there is respect for individual voices is that there is infinitely more feedback because students do feel free to talk-and talk back. And, yes, often this feedback is critical" (p. 42). That relationship of a negotiated classroom space built on ethics of love, respect, and care became a cornerstone of my experience in Mistissini. Sure, when the students graduated, the class valedictorian cried and said that no one ever pushed them harder than I did, but it was a speech filled with pride for the group as a whole, and I responded on stage telling them that no one had pushed me harder than they did. My time as a teacher in Mistissini ended up being a large part of my 2005 PhD dissertation, and then a few years later, reworked, as a book, *James Bay Cree and Higher Education* (2008). In the rewrite, Freire's work became more prominent upon personal reflection and public deliberation.

Commitment

In a post 9/11, US Patriot Act and "war on terror" world, Canada saw some of these White Critical Pedagogy rock stars arrive at our universities, hoping for new a space of academic freedom, which was seen as increasingly under threat in the USA. Many of these rock stars brought genuine mentorship, publication opportunities and, unwittingly or not, a distinct culture surrounding what it *meant to belong* to a group that followed a theory. I had one of these rock stars as part of my dissertation review committee, and he was a wonderful supporter. This rock star took a great interest in my work history in the Cree

community of Mistissini, especially as it related to aspects of demonstrable implementations of Critical Pedagogy. The lack of standardized texts, and other materials, fascinated him. He would question, "How did we come up with teaching and learning strategies that were *so Freirean*?" Was there anything I remembered, in detail, that perhaps influenced classroom approaches? In truth, there was a vivid memory in my Masters' program at Concordia University, where a professor started a lecture by writing *Praxis* on the blackboard in bold, white chalk. "Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it" (Freire, 2018, p. 79). Praxis was introduced in that Masters' class as "putting theory into action." The challenge was put clearly: All these lofty ideas about equality and equity we talk about in departments of education and universities, can they be put into practice in actual classrooms? With absolute certainty, the process of reflection and action on the world was put into practice in Mistissini to develop an interactive, community-based classroom approach. But what about another one of Freire's contributions to education, his anti-banking contributions? A banking approach, the traditional method of teaching is described by Freire as the following:

> (a) the teacher teaches and the students are taught;
> (b) the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
> (c) the teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
> (d) the teacher talks and the students listen-meekly;
> (e) the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
> (f) the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students
> comply;
> (g) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting
> through the action of the teacher;
> (h) the teacher chooses the program content, and the students
> (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
> (i) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or
> her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition
> to the freedom of the students;
> (j) the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the
> pupils are mere objects. (p. 73)

In this method, the reality of the authority, the teacher (oppressor) is forced upon the subject, the student (oppressed). Whether through a hidden memory of Freire, intuition or "teacher survival mode," this is certainly not how I approached the classroom. Dialogue was key to each day, and we moved forward together with a communal approach to better understanding and acting on our tasks and world through reflection. Perhaps this rock star was right, and I began to read and reread *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. At this point in my life I called myself a Critical pedagogue, continuing my teaching approach at the university level, but now grounding what I had already started through a theory.

During this time, many of these rock stars were intent on demonstrating that Critical Pedagogy was being put into practice to the benefit of human beings, especially those in greatest need. The rock star with whom I was working was determined to find examples of enacting innovative Critical Pedagogy spaces, not reporting on it after the fact. This became a key conversation with him, as we discussed potential classroom teachers who had expressed significant interests to Freirean ideals in graduate classes who could be observed and supported in their radical teaching. Unfortunately, this never really came to pass,

as finding those concrete examples in public schooling proved more of a challenge than anticipated. Yes, there were many examples of wonderful teachers doing wonderful things, but a revolution leading to something like racial equity really did not seem to be part of the lesson plan. Meanwhile, many of us neophyte academics found ourselves caught in the nervousness that Allen (2006) describes all too well, focusing on allegiances and their connections to publication opportunities over anything truly grassroots and racially emancipatory. Over time the environment, or the culture of Critical Pedagogy, became inauthentic, in the gentlest of descriptors. Those of us in early stages of our careers who were vying for spaces in an institution that had been referred to as sociopathic (Gatto, 2017), contributed in our own way to propping up a system of White status quo, conformity, and top-down directives. Mocking the hypocrisy of the mid 1980s efforts of US rock stars raising money for starving children in "Africa," Joey Ramone, lead singer of the punk band, The Ramones, said, "If you're not in it, you're out of it." I started to see holes in the lived realities of those that espoused Critical Pedagogy, and I was starting to feel out of it.

Growing Apart

In my experience, to be a part of the punk scene meant, at most, being part of its peripheral edges and acceptance in knowing your place. Racism did (and for all I know, still does) exist in the punk scene. However, punk, as a cultural phenomenon, appears to be owning this reality better than Critical Pedagogy. A Google search on, in quotes, "racism in punk" results in over 2,500 hits, with musicians like Phillips imploring that the race problem needs to be addressed. On the other hand, if we examine another self-asserting vanguard of anti-racism, like critical pedagogy, only one result is listed, that being Rossatto and colleagues' (2006) *Reinventing Critical Pedagogy*. Curiously similar to Phillips' sentiment of the conversation being hard to start, in Allen's chapter he writes of being "nervous" (p. 3) about discussing the race problem in the critical pedagogy community, and he also notes that he is "… going to say it anyway" (p. 4). In the same spirit of Phillips and Allen, I will have that difficult conversation, too.

Freire's work covers such noble pursuits, such as anti-banking models of teaching and learning, emancipatory and liberation pedagogy, revealing dehumanization and collectively pursuing humanization, dialogical pedagogy, critical thinking, critical literacy, and critical consciousness raising. The focus of these pursuits is in the very title of his most influential book: *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. In her dialogue with herself about Freire, hooks (1994) spoke about the sexism in his work and noted, "Freire's own model of critical pedagogy invites a critical interrogation of this flaw in the work" (p. 49). Had I read hooks with the attention it deserved, perhaps I could have also had a playful dialogue with Freire regarding the complete absence of BIPOC leaders within the Critical Pedagogy hierarchy.

There was an envy amongst many in the Critical Pedagogy circles, in particular, that a Muslim heritage and brown skin were a real boon for someone's academic advancement. How lucky we all were to have narratives of oppression and marginalization. Suddenly there was a pay-off for being perceived as an Ay-rab, a Paki, an eye-ranian, or simply a terrorist. Suddenly there was a pay-off for the slashed tires, arson attempts, verbal abuse, physical abuse and an array of other hostility in both youth and adulthood. 9/11, for those that did not recognize the racism to Muslims and peoples of the Middle East that existed

prior to this date, was a godsend to our publication careers. But to get career advancement in academia amongst so many of the Critical Pedagogy elite, you had to toe-the-line. You had to receive the approval to speak from those who explicitly stated that they were ahead of you on the academic ladder. Deference had to be paid, and if so, you were *allowed* a voice. If you step out of line, if you dare to say the emperor or empress is not wearing any clothes, you run the very real risk of being the one publicly stripped. None of this made sense for a theory that was supposed to be about humanization and liberation. The way it was being lived had nothing to do with these ideals. Critical Pedagogy seemed like a White-controlled space that made personal profit from the Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) community. So, I drifted away from Paulo.

Separation

Late 2008, an idea for university students "re-engaging" with the Global South (GS) was forwarded by an administrator. In particular, it was a country in east sub-Sahara that was the destination to assist the administrator's friend on an existing effort in its early stages of development. It was a typical idea forwarded by a university executive, in that it was heavy on promotion of the home institution, light on GS community benefits (beyond time with White students), and completely void of financial support. It was "volun-tourism," "exposure-tourism," and Peace Corps fantasies (Geidel, 2015) revisited, of the first world saving the third world by simply being present. Despite my concerns, I did think GN students benefitted from cross-cultural exchanges, and chance played a role in the decision to go to the region, fuelled by a colleague's own project in the central, rural region of Malawi (neighbouring the original country of destination). As well, I had a growing concern that my academic epitaph would read, "He worked in elementary schools for around 10 years and then taught college in the James Bay Cree area … then he talked about that a lot in his classes." Despite promotion of the other sub-Saharan country, Malawi was picked as a start for initial discussions regarding any potential university community endeavours. Although conversations with diverse communities played a large part in decision making regarding location, the realities of Malawi were patently significant. Malawi is a landlocked country in the sub-Sahara that is referred to globally as "… one of the poorest … in the world" (International Monetary Fund, 2017, p. 4), is ranked 174th out of 187 in terms of poorest and least developed (UNDP, 2014, p. 162), and the United Nations describes it in terms of being impoverished (Gwede, 2015). If anyone has romantic ideas of local contentment in opposition to these poverty definers, local rural Malawians shatter this illusion when they self-identify as "… very poor" (Stonebanks, 2008, p. 389; Emory, 2015, p. 10), with academics equally echoing the people's state of living (Miller et al., 2010; Chowns, 2015; Mchenga et al., 2017; Kretzer et al., 2017). With extreme economic poverty, education (Durston & Nashire, 2001; Roche, 2016) and healthcare (Makwero, 2018; Makaula et al., 2019) sectors (despite best efforts) are overwhelmed and unable to provide basic services to a population of 19 million.

Initial meetings with around 10 villages commenced with village elders and a variety of representatives (youth, professionals, etc.) attending sessions to discuss what their thoughts were about community-university partnerships (Stonebanks, 2014). Much of the early talk focused on optimism, while balanced with the kind of reality of foreign efforts described (Katz, 2013) as new, big, clean, white trucks simply "driving by"

on the highway to somewhere else. Malawi was (and still is) littered with dilapidated and abandoned buildings that represent foreign agencies' efforts of good intentions (Easterly, 2006; Barry-Shaw et al., 2012), all partially standing to remind us of how easy it is to fail in these efforts. Considerations on "needs" was daunting, and the first few years were based on Malawian participants insisting that Canada (as if we represented a nation) bring solutions to evident community problems. Health, Education, and Development were all listed by community as immediate needs of improvement, and the clarity from local participants that "we" had something to teach "them" that would alleviate suffering. Having put aside Freire, I was bringing to the conversation the likes of Fanon (2004), Illitch (1968), and Moyo and Ferguson (2010), who all seemed to be imploring that the best way to approach this was to simply leave. In response, local community took this as pessimism and responded with fulfilling immediate needs with a banking style of restoration. Frustrated with the idea that we were holding back on a secret to success held by the GN, at a certain point I even offered to commit to the personal cost of going to Malawi, around $5000 Canadian, for a span of 10 years, if we stopped coming and they made local decisions on how to best use funds. The offer was rejected. Just like with my relationship with Freire, community and I were at an impasse.

Reconciliation

Giroux (2010) writes that Critical Pedagogy is an "… educational movement, guided by passion and principle, to help students develop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action" (para. 1). Passion, principle, freedom from oppression; these are admirable goals to do good. Often, the burden of being good comes with the responsibility of love. On love, Freire wrote "… love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to others. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is a commitment to their cause – the cause of liberation" (p. 89). Rather than this kind of deep commitment to people, often the GN Critical Pedagogy culture would utilize a variance of "love" that is referred to as "radical love." It is, however, lived out more like a USA daytime talk show using "tough love," reducing love to a top-down mentality that does not veer significantly from the old White man's burden (Kipling, 1899) that is so often critiqued by the Critical Pedagogue. Care, which I believe must be a part of love, requires *engrossment*. Noddings (2003) writes, "(a)t the bottom, all caring involves engrossment. The engrossment need not be intense nor need it be pervasive in the life of the one caring, but it must occur" (p. 17).

Love, care, and engrossment are not techniques that can be imparted on a student or a process. Yet, it was a part of our collective success in Mistissini, and it was certainly what seemed to be missing in my short time trying to exist in GN academic Critical Pedagogy circles that were mired in the same top-down systemic racisms they would often rage against. On reflection of what came about naturally in Mistissini, I found the missing part to a difficult conversation in Malawi that was quickly taking us down a path of university travel-abroad fantasies, or abandonment. Freire (2018) wrote, "If I do not love the world—if I do not love life—if I do not love people—I cannot enter into dialogue" (p. 90). In one hand I held Fanon and, in the other, Freire; both offered excellent guidance. One a warning, and the other, hope. After many

years of commitment to the cause, as a group we were able to agree that the answer to the problems of banking education could not be more banking education.

> In sum: banking theory and practice, as immobilizing and fixating forces, fail to acknowledge men and women as historical beings; problem-posing theory and practice take the people's historicity as their starting point. (Freire, 2018, p. 84)

Examining historicity of both the local community and the way GN universities operated in Malawi, offering no more than short-term benefits, took time beyond the typical three-year research projections and required outputs by academia. Throughout *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (2018) implores that authentic dialogue requires humility, faith, hope, and critical thinking (pp. 91–92). Establishing this trust eventually led to participants forwarding that existing structures related to Health, Education, and Development were lacking because Critical Thinking, Creativity, and Social Entrepreneurship had not been fostered or allowed under the colonial systems that required obedience and subservience. By 2014, five years into the dialogue, Chief Makupo, a college graduate himself, quietly pulled me aside and insisted that "games" needed to stop and that it was time to establish a centre, a physical centre, that was dedicated to the kinds of conversations we were having. A lifelong learning campus dedicated to Health, Education, and Development nurtured through Critical Thinking, Creativity, and Social Entrepreneurship. As a campus, the overarching theories and philosophies that drive our work are based on transformative learning (Mezirow, 1990), anti-banking pedagogy, liberation practices, critical consciousness raising (Freire, 2018), decolonizing viewpoints (Smith, 1999), and an action-oriented ethic of care (Noddings, 2003). Since that initial spark by Chief Makupo, and supported by Chief Chillonga, who dedicated one square mile of her traditional land, the Transformative Praxis Malawi campus now boasts a multipurpose community center, primary school, computer learning lab and an adult-ed classroom, experimental farming space, water borehole, living residence for research visitors, radio station, model toilets, a women's cooperative chicken coop, sports' field, and much more. The physical structures, all powered via solar energy, make up 40,000 m^2. Employment, research, exploration of food security, taking risks on new curricula regarding permaculture—these are all concrete (often literal concrete) results that not many theories can bring into action.

The Learning Lab has copies of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, along with other readings that local members are free to peruse. The book does not exist as something to be worshipped, rather it stands as an important contributor to how the campus came to be and where it can go. Had I remained in the GN culture that had claimed Paulo Freire, I would never have realized that his work lived in places where people suffer from crippling oppression. It took me years to realize that GN ownership of Freire was as much a part of the kinds of systemic racism (Diangelo, 2018; Eddo-Lodge, 2018) that took possession of so much that surrounds us. In Malawi, like the James Bay Cree territories, Freire's work existed without a White filter. I grew to live with Freire by rejecting status-quo ownership and rejecting all of those that spoke on his behalf. One on one, I re-discovered a comrade. Albeit a comrade on paper.

Epilogue

In the 50-year anniversary edition of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Donaldo Macedo (2018) completely acknowledges that Freire was often criticized for not analyzing race relations, instead focusing on class oppression. Although it was something that he began to address before his death in 1997, I have no idea what he would make of the dominant White power structures that control his voice today in the GN. hooks (1994) quotes Freire, indicating his own uncertainty of his Whiteness, stating, "(a)s an apparent white man, because I always say that I am not quite sure of my whiteness …" (p. 57). This uncertainty would have made for a fascinating dialogue, given his own criteria for how that would begin and develop. The Critical Pedagogy rock star, with whom I worked, expressed to me on many occasions that he worried about a predominantly White leadership. And he was right to have this concern, given the faces of its leaders.

In Norton's 2004 book, *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire*, she notes that neo-conservatives "adore" Strauss, and that talk about him "… the way young girls talk about horses and boy bands," and that know trivialities about him, like his favourite movie was *Zulu* (p. 28). GN Critical Pedagogues are like that about Freire and his apparent apostles as well. It is all too much top-down fetishism and worship. Ultimately, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* are words on a piece of paper whose ideas can be connected to the likes of Socrates (i.e., dialogue) and John Dewey (i.e., focus on the student's world). But they are good ideas that are well laid out and provide a powerful basis for action. I will *never* call myself a Critical Pedagogue, but I will insist that *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is an essential reading to anyone who wants to act on oppression and *live* social justice ideals beyond platitudes.

Phillips (2013) concludes her discussion on racism and the existing White power structures in punk music by stating, "(m)y new band will exist, and we will be an all-black punk band" (para. 12). Shortly after she wrote her article, she did just that, creating Big Joanie, a black feminist punk band that still rocks today. Philips and her bandmates prove that no one owns revolutionary ideas, and if the so-called owners are not *living* the ideals they claim, well … bullocks to those who cannot live these principles. Take the ideals back and turn them into action. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is yours to discover, or (re)discover and put into practice. Bullocks to them.

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The Everyday Creativity of Authentic Classroom Assessments

M'Balia Thomas

Abstract

This paper examines the everyday creativity embedded within authentic classroom assessments. While not all authentic assessments are necessarily creative (i.e., novel, innovative, and contextually appropriate), I demonstrate everyday creativity in two authentic classroom assessments I have adopted in my TESOL courses. In revealing the everyday creativity of these tasks, and in light of their desired learning outcomes, I seek to demystify the role everyday creativity can play in student demonstrations of knowledge and skill.

Background

Educational scholarship often describes authentic classroom assessments as realistic, complex, and meaningful alternatives to traditional classroom assessments (Frey et al., 2012; Newmann et al., 1998; Wiggins, 1990). Additionally, authentic classroom assessments are heralded as providing feedback on teaching and student learning that is both "useful and meaningful" (Frey & Schmitt, 2007, p. 402). Rarely mentioned, however, is that these assessments reflect and demand of learners (and of teachers) demonstrations of what the late educationalist, Ronald Carter (2004), describes as *everyday creativity*. Everyday creativity is a quotidian creativity expressed through the thought processes, rhetorical strategies, and rhythmic cadences students and teachers use to instruct, solve problems, and provide responses. Arguably, everyday creativity is a feature of many authentic classroom assessments, contributing to the realness, complexity, and meaningfulness associated with this category of assessment.

In this manuscript, I attempt to bridge the theory of everyday creativity with the practice of developing and implementing authentic classroom assessments. I do so to foreground the creativity inherent in these assessments and the affordances this creativity can impart upon teaching and student learning. I begin by introducing, contrasting, and interweaving the concept of everyday creativity as understood in my home fields of Applied Linguistics and Education. Next, I review the term authentic classroom assessments, and I highlight the everyday creativity potentially inherent within these assessments. By way of example, I present two authentic classroom assessments I use in my teaching—the first in an undergraduate TESOL methods course and the second in a graduate TESOL course. I reveal the creativity within and required by these authentic assessments, and I discuss their affordances to my teaching and to student learning.

Everyday Creativity

While the field of Education embraces creativity as the ability or aptitude to produce contextually novel, innovative, or "appropriate" work (Beghetto, 2005, p. 255; Plucker et al., 2004), the field of Applied Linguistics emphasizes the notion of everyday creativity (Carter, 2004; Pennycook, 2007). This latter concept draws upon the educational notion of creativity while calling attention to the demotic, colloquial, everyday speech practices and rituals of language use in which creativity surfaces. Everyday creativity includes speech acts and language use whose novelty, innovation, and contextual appropriateness allow speech communities to address the diverse ways human beings tackle everyday tasks—including teaching and learning. Everyday creativity can also be observed in the most unexpected places, such as an ad encountered in a university bathroom stall in the United Kingdom (see Figure 1).

UK Bathroom Etiquette

Please sit on the toilet and do not stand on it

Please flush the used toilet paper down the toilet and not the bin

Please throw plastic cups in the bin and not down the toilet

Please flush the toilet after use with your hand and not your foot

Please use your hand to open the door and don't leave toilet roll on the door handle

The sinks are for washing your hands only. No hand towels or toilet paper should be used as a plug

Fig: 1: UK bathroom etiquette

Everyday creativity is "both differently accented and socially constructed in different times and places" (Carter, 2004, p. 24); and therefore, it may be readily overlooked and even misrecognized—i.e., "strategically misconstrue[d]" (Warner, 2009, p. 21, referencing Bourdieu, 1977). In our present episteme, everyday creativity is attached to activity that is deemed "novel"—"new," "original," "made up" (Carter, 2004, pp. 26–27)—and that surfaces from a solitary human act and mind. While creativity can involve solitary action, it may incorporate as well "co-creation," "inventiveness," and "novelty and appropriacy" (Carter, 2004, pp. 27–28). Synonymous with appropriacy is usefulness, an important concept for "[t]hat which is novel but has no use, merit, or significance is simply novel, not creative" (Plucker & Beghetto, 2004, p. 157).

As a Critical Applied Linguist who is also a TESOL Teacher Educator, I am attuned to the everyday creativity present in teaching and learning. Everyday creativity surfaces in the classroom instruction teachers provide, the grading rubrics they design, and the didactic analogies and stories they produce—quite often on the spot and in inspired moments. Everyday creativity is expressed through the adoption of varied instructional modalities—Total Physical Response (TPR), song, dance, and other forms of embodied communication (see Catalano & Leonard, 2016; Shin, 2017). This is creativity expressed not only through novelty or difference, but also through the demonstration of "repeated sameness" (Pennycook, 2007, p. 579). Such sameness includes the echo and repetition of wordplays, idioms, and puns, and the rhythm and systematicity of instructional delivery that work to promote meaning and uptake by students.

Everyday creativity also surfaces in the rhetorical styles adopted in academic speech and written texts that are designed to persuade, foster understanding, and entertain learners (Ardalan, 2015). Fahnestock (1999, 2003), for example, highlights the rhetorical strategies and figures of speech that mark the writing of science textbooks. She identifies the arguments and strategies of persuasion used by the texts' authors to build claims and describe scientific findings. These arguments and strategies include figures of speech such as the contradictory, yet proposition-advancing *antithesis*, the series generating *incrementum*, and the repeating forms of *ploche* and *polyptoton* (Fahnestock, 1999). Similarly, scholars in the fields of mathematics employ analogy pedagogically to make abstract and complex scientific concepts more readily understood (Glynn, 2007), and to enhance learning and retention (Garner, 2005).

Finally, everyday creativity manifests in my work as a Harry Potter Scholar. My research and teaching capitalize upon the generational knowledge preservice and inservice teachers have of the Harry Potter series. I use this already established knowledge to draw analogical comparisons between the linguistic and sociocultural practices of the fictional wizarding world into which the novels' muggle-born-and-raised characters are being socialized (e.g., Harry Potter and Hermione Granger), and similar processes of socialization faced by learners of English as an Additional Language (EALs) in real-world schools (Thomas, 2018a). With two graduate students, I have written about the personal and practical knowledge that wizarding teachers bring to student learning in everyday creative ways (Thomas et al., 2018). Through deeply personal and reflective writings, I have drawn upon the everyday creativity of intertextual and double-voiced speech (Bakhtin, 1984) to address themes of professional (re)socialization (Thomas, 2018b, 2018c, 2019).

Yet, while the everyday creativity of instruction, textbooks, and scholarship may be recognized willingly, its existence within the authentic classroom assessments of these instructional spaces has been overlooked. In the following sections, I build a case for the presence of everyday creativity in authentic classroom assessments. I begin by defining and unpacking this key term.

Authentic Classroom Assessments

While a number of features are associated with authentic classroom assessments, I will highlight three. Firstly, authentic classroom assessments "mirro[r]…real-world tasks or expectations" (Frey et al., 2012, p. 1). Different from traditional assessments (which are often indirect measures of knowledge and skill), authentic assessments draw upon "performances and product requirements that are faithful to real-world demands, opportunities, and constraints" (Wiggins, 2006, n.p.). These assessments provide "useful" (Wiggins, 2006, n.p.), if not direct, feedback about the skills students are able to apply in context and the knowledge shown in the process. In addition, authentic assessments may incorporate real-world actors and possible actions (Newmann et al., 1998). Specific to the field of teacher education, authentic classroom assessments "simulate actual acts of teaching" such as teaching demonstrations and "examples of the work of teaching (videotapes of teaching, plans, and assessments of student learning….)" (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000, pp. 524, 527). These assessments provide students with insight into the work of the field.

Secondly, while real-worldness is a feature ascribed to authentic classroom assessments, Frey and colleagues (2012) posit that authentic tasks also "must mirror the complexity, collaboration, and high level thinking that is necessary in the most intellectual of professional problem-solving and decision-making" (p. 10). These tasks impose "more complex intellectual demands on students" and "elaborated communication" (Newmann et al., 2001, p. 10). For teacher educators, attending to complexity involves creating assessments that provide feedback on students' readiness to address the "integration of multiple kinds of knowledge and skill…used in practice" and to apply that knowledge in ways that take into account "the greater range of students from different backgrounds" and their "experiences and needs" (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000, p. 523).

Thirdly, authentic assessments are meaningful. Their meaningfulness derives from their direct (Wiggins, 1993), contextualized application of knowledge and skills, and the "value [they possess] beyond success in school" (Newmann et al., 1998, p. 19). Wiggins refers to this feature of authentic assessment as "transferability"—that is, "whether you can use your learning, [and] not merely whether you learned stuff" (2006, n.p.). Specific to the field of teacher education, meaningful assessments include "[case studies], exhibitions, portfolios, and problem-based inquiries (or action research)" (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000, p. 523). These assessments provided contextualized "opportunities for developing and examining teachers' thinking and actions in situations that are experience based and problem oriented and that include or simulate actual acts of teaching" (p. 524).

Thus, three characteristics—real-worldness, complexity, and meaningfulness—mark authentic classroom assessments. Next, I discuss the everyday creativity these three features offer to the authentic assessment of student knowledge and skills, and their significance for teacher education.

The Everyday Creativity of Authentic Classroom Assessments

Authentic classroom assessments both reflect and require expressions of everyday creativity. The demonstration of everyday creativity in these assessments surfaces in their expectation of "original application of knowledge and skills, rather than just routine uses of facts and procedures" (Newmann et al., 2001, p. 14). Authentic classroom assessments oblige students to synthesize knowledge and "create…bridges from generalizations about practice to apparently idiosyncratic, contextualized instances of learning" (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000, p. 524). Furthermore, they encourage strategic and creative thinking that is reflective of real-world contexts, audiences, and situations. Ultimately, these creative demonstrations of knowledge can be presented through a variety of modalities and response types, although they are typically solicited through written or spoken rhetorical and argumentative strategies.

Additionally, the everyday creativity of authentic classroom assessments is reflected in the varied cognitive skills students need to complete these assessments. These skills include "conducting research; writing, revising and discussing papers; providing an engaging oral analysis of a recent political event; collaborating with others on a debate, etc." (Wiggins, 1990, p. 1). The everyday creativity of these actions emerges in the language skills students draw upon to dialogue with, double-voice, and intertextually reference authorized (scholarly) knowledge. This knowledge is shaped by, and sometimes in conflict with, expert-others where it is revoiced with a "sideward glance" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 196) to the response anticipated by the instructor and the field of teaching and teacher education in general.

Finally, because authentic classroom assessments draw upon real-world and complex phenomenon, "there may be no right answer, and [a response] may not be easily scored" (Wiggins, 1998, n.p.). Thus, the everyday creativity of these assessments is demonstrated in the contextual appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of a given response. Furthermore, the flexibility required on the part of teachers to score these assessments may spark additional everyday creativity through the creation of innovative grading rubrics that appropriately and usefully offer guidance and feedback to learners.

While authentic classroom assessments may give rise to expressions of everyday creativity, such creativity can be cultivated. According to Beghetto (2005), creativity is fostered in authentic classroom assessments in two stages. The first, or divergent, stage is marked by the free-flowing generation of knowledge and ideas. This stage is represented by the act of brainstorming without concern for evaluation or merit (Beghetto, 2005). This stage elicits and injects a personal and practical kind of knowledge into a situated (or contextualized) problem or task. In the second, or convergent, stage, students must evaluate and select an idea that moves the project forward. In these instances, not only creativity—but also everyday creativity—can be expressed through the novel, appropriate, and useful knowledge and rhetorical strategies individuals take up to move projects through to completion. These include the ways individuals "use their evaluative thinking skills, check the appropriateness and social validity of their efforts, persevere in the face of difficulty, and follow through by completing their project and publishing their work" (p. 257).

In my own teaching and assessment, I have sought to nurture everyday creativity though the authentic classroom assessments I have assigned to my students over the years. In the sections that follow, I describe two authentic classroom assessments I have adopted as end-of-unit summative assessments. The first, "The Supervisory Observation Report," features in an undergraduate TESOL methods course, while the second, "The Conference Poster Presentations," is used in a graduate curriculum and teaching course for inservice teachers and full-time doctoral students. For each assessment, I present a context for the assessment, I unpack the authentic aspects of the assessment, and I provide an overview of the everyday creativity these authentic assessments demand and afford learners in terms of demonstrating higher order thinking and knowledge production.

The Supervisory Observation Report

The Supervisory Observation Report is an authentic classroom assessment that I have used in my undergraduate course, "Instructional Approaches for ESOL Learners in the Middle / Secondary Classroom" (Thomas, n.d.a). Designed for middle and secondary preservice teachers in the content area—Social Studies and Government, English Language Arts, and Foreign Language Education—this required course has incorporated a number of authentic assessments over the years. I have had students write a professional teaching resume, create lesson plans, and then deliver a mini-teaching demonstration. While resumes are useful artifacts for students to create, they serve a purpose apart from the demonstration of student knowledge and experience in that they allow me to get to know my students beyond the surface level of race, gender, and program of study. Through the curriculum vitae of their young adult lives, I glean their lived experiences, talents, languages learned and spoken, range of employments, and places they have lived. In the same way, the lesson plans students create, while decontextualized and lacking in real-world meaningfulness, allow students to demonstrate and apply their knowledge in novel, inventive, and appropriate ways.

To create a contextualized and potentially meaningful authentic classroom assessment, I constructed the Supervisory Observation Report to challenge students to apply their TESOL knowledge to a pedagogical problem. To address the problem, students must draw upon their familiarity with the stages of second language acquisition, academic English proficiency, and language complexity at the word, sentence, and discourse levels. Students read, comprehend, analyze, and select contextually appropriate pedagogical suggestions, drawing from possible pedagogical actions outlined in the course readings. Lastly, students reveal their dispositional stance toward EALs through assessment of the context, challenges, and pedagogical recommendations provided to the teacher. Successful performance on this authentic assessment is marked not only by the contextual appropriateness of the recommended pedagogical strategies, but also by the rhetorical support that provides evidence of the socioemotional, cultural, and linguistic issues at stake in the teaching and learning context.

The teaching and learning context provided for this assessment is taken from a 12-minute fictionalized short story film entitled "Immersion" (Levien, 2009). Set in a multiracial and multilingual classroom setting with real-world actors (Newmann et al., 1998), the film introduces, "Moises," a fifth-grade EAL.

While successful at decoding math word problems, Moises struggles to communicate his mathematics knowledge successfully in English. In addition to observing Moises' linguistic and subsequent socioemotional struggles, the audience witnesses the frustrated attempts of a second actor to address his language needs—Moises' classroom teacher, "Ms. Peterson."

The Assessment

The Supervisory Observation Report places students in the imaginary role of evaluating a teacher's pedagogical response to the limited English proficiency of an Emergent Bilingual and offering pedagogical feedback to improve this response. Students are given the prompt below to the assessment:

> Ms. Peterson has asked you as the curriculum supervisor for the school to observe her classroom teaching and interaction with Moises. She has asked that you provide input on her pedagogical techniques and provide suggestions, recommendations, advice on pedagogical strategies that she should use to support and build Moises' Academic English Proficiency and prepare him for the upcoming standardized test. (Supervisory Observation Report)

The Supervisory Observation Report requires students to glean relevant details about the context of learning (the classroom situation, the learner, and the teacher) in order to suggest contextually appropriate courses of action to the fictional classroom teacher. The assessment is authentic in that it compels students to engage in simulated acts of teaching observation. In fact, students must watch the film several times, jotting down notes and attempting to weigh which elements of curriculum making present on screen might be relevant to determining future pedagogical actions. In this sense, this assessment "sample[s] the actual knowledge, skills, and dispositions desired of teachers as they are used in teaching and learning contexts" (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000, p. 527).

Finally, while this authentic assessment does not provide "direct interaction with students" (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000, p. 524), it does require students to engage with the complexity of teaching and learning in meaningful, contextualized, and useful ways. Students must work toward a goal they explicitly understand, even if they are unsure what the best method is to arrive at that goal—to provide instructional supports for a limited English proficiency student that will increase their participation in class and on a standardized test. The assessment requires complex thinking as students strive to 1) assess Moises' level of English language proficiency, 2) determine the stated and inferred pedagogical constraints to increased language proficiency (from the perspectives of the teacher and the student), and 3) recommend the pedagogical actions to support increased proficiency based on best practices featured in our ESOL course reader. Finally, like the real-world, students must be able to justify their recommended courses of action by providing evidence from the learning context.

The Everyday Creativity in this Authentic Assessment

The Supervisory Observation Report requires the creative identification and application of "multiple sources of evidence…collected over time and in diverse contexts" (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000, p. 527). This evidence is provided over time and space through the fictionalized short film. The

assessment requires students to attend closely to the people, things, and processes (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) present within the fictionalized classroom space. In their assessments, my students exhibit varying degrees of success in pointing out aspects of the situated context that are pedagogically relevant. For example, in his Supervisory Observation Report, "Cal"—a pseudonym, as are all student names presented in this paper—describes the pedagogical context of one of the opening classroom scenes as follows:

> The student, Moises, is struggling to process new content in a language he does not understand. He is clearly bright and knows to look around for visual cues, but he runs into roadblocks with vocabulary such as Tier 2 words like "block." He is trying to process the auditory input of the language in addition to reading word problems. The events taking place in the learning environment include a lot of verbal instruction and very little emphasis on written and visual cues to accompany spoken word. Ms. Peterson doesn't appear to know how to most effectively ask questions to ELL's and repeats statements that are clearly not clicking, such as the scene where Moises answers the word problem. The urgency is not only set by his slowed rate of proficiency but the impending standardized testing to take place. (Cal, Supervisory Observation Report)

The report also challenges students to anticipate aspects of the teaching and learning environment—its structural, sociopolitical, environmental, temporal, interactional, and spatial contexts—that bear on their pedagogical recommendations. For example, although the film does not provide a calendar date, the mention of school-wide testing in this U.S.-based school suggests students are entering the spring standardized assessment period. Likewise, given a conversation held between the classroom teacher and a colleague, students discover that in this sociopolitical setting, teachers cannot translate content for students and students cannot use bilingual dictionaries. Despite these limitations, there are affordances. The classroom is designed for collaboration—students are seated side by side in pairs and Moises is shown speaking with various classmates, even if he struggles to fit in socially. The multiple and varied contextual details the film provides allows students to craft individual, novel, and appropriate pedagogical recommendations. It is with respect to such contextual elements that "Jo" offers the following pedagogical suggestion in their report:

> It is clear that many students did not produce the same/correct answer for the math problem, so it would be beneficial to allow students to work together and orally discuss what steps they took to solve the math problem. This would allow Moises the opportunity to share his feedback without so much spotlight specifically on him, and giv[e] support and a safe space to discuss with his classmates. (Jo, Supervisory Observation Report)

The report further challenges students to think creatively about the utility of the people, objects, and processes present in the learning context. However, noticing and drawing conclusions about the curriculum-making elements present in the classroom are not intuitive processes for many preservice teachers. Over time, I have come to recognize that student success in this area is contingent on me as instructor explicitly guiding students in the ways of reading (seeing) a classroom as an experienced educator. This explicit instructional practice increases the possibilities that students will make connections between the TESOL pedagogy discussed in class and in our readings and the people, objects, and processes present in a classroom setting that make particular pedagogical actions possible (such as utilizing classmates as learning partners or even language brokers, or scanning the classroom for wall-based materials to use). It is possible to see such a connection arise for "Fran" who notes in their observation report: "I observed that there were posters and other visual aids in the classroom that Moises

used during the class; however, it was not evident that Ms. Peterson suggested these visuals be used to help with classwork" (Fran, Supervisory Observation Report).

Moreover, the report calls upon students to take up the speech acts and discursive practices that are part of the written argumentations and oral deliberations of teaching, such as advocate, list, persuade, synthesize, and plan. These discourse strategies are part of students' everyday rhetorical repertoire and they can be drawn upon to communicate the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions students possess as preservice teachers.

The Conference Poster

The Conference Poster is an authentic assessment I use in my course, "Language, Discourse, & Ideology" (Thomas, n.d.b). This theory-driven graduate course explores the original writings and applied theories of Bourdieu, Foucault, and Bakhtin. Rather than submit lengthy term papers as summative assessments, students demonstrate their understanding and application of theory to practice through the creation of a series of Conference Posters. By the semester's end, students will have created three distinct posters reflecting their application of theoretical knowledge based on the work of the three theorists studied.

Fig. 2: Social media advocacy by parents of children with disabilities

The Conference Poster allows students to address the real-world challenges of communicating a theoretical argument succinctly, analytically, and visually for their academic peers. It also prepares students for the oral and public aspects of defending novel ideas through their comprehensive exams and dissertations. Finally, this authentic classroom assessment supports my department's goals of fostering professionalization among our part-time EdD and full-time doctoral students.

The Assessment

The Conference Poster tasks students to find text or talk ("data") that can serve as a basis for a Bourdieuian, Foucauldian, or Bakhtinian argument and that can demystify ideologies present within the data. Each poster presents a context for the data and includes a statement of the problem. This problem is then theoretically unpacked, linguistically analyzed (or a proposed approached to analyzing the data is offered), and the material/symbolic effects or the oppositional practices reflected in the data are highlighted and discussed. Through this assessment, students reveal their understanding of theoretical concepts and their implications in real-world settings.

I designed the course so that students would have three weeks to select their data, discuss their data with classmates (and with me), outline a plan of execution, and create the poster. Pre-COVID, these final conference posters were displayed on the classroom wall and the first 30-45 minutes of class were spent perusing the array of posters while enjoying hot apple cider and snacks. A Q&A session followed the public display of posters. During the Fall 2020 pandemic, the course was taught via Zoom, so conference posters were uploaded electronically to *VoiceThread*, a collaborative media space where participants can add public comments to video and text. Students were required to record a five-minute audio presentation to accompany their poster. The online presentations were set up like a virtual art gallery and students had a week to view and comment on their classmates' poster presentations. The comments and feedback where encouraging, generous, and instructive. Moreover, they resulted in dialogic engagement between students and their ideas, occasionally by students following up to feedback offered by their classmates.

The Everyday Creativity in this Authentic Assessment

As an "exhibition of performance" (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000, p. 529), the Conference Poster provides students an opportunity to present and defend their academic work in "novel and useful" ways (Plucker et al., 2004, p. 90). The assessment requires students to create "a product…that has meaning or value beyond success in school" (Wiggins, 2006, p. 51). Moreover, since the posters are displayed for public exhibition, the assessment allows for student performance that is "assessed in a context more like that encountered in real life" (Dez et al., 1992, pp. 38–39). Thus, meaningfulness and transferability of knowledge are important features of this authentic assessment.

Additionally, the course requirement to create three poster presentations is an exercise in repetition— that is, sameness as difference, or rather, repetition as "recreative" (Pennycook, 2007, p. 584). For example, the creation of a conference poster challenges students to express their knowledge in same but different ways across multiple modalities—written word, visual representation, and spoken word.

In addition, students are required to take up this assessment several times. One can observe the ways students take the same poster structure and rekey (Goffman, 1974) it in novel, individual, and expressive ways across three different theorists. The assessments repeat, parallel, and build upon previous posters, but also deviate from one another in significant ways. Finally, it is possible to see the evolution of student argumentation and presentation skills over multiple iterations.

Spoken Word as a Form of Resistance
Jamila Lyiscott's 3 Ways to Speak English

KU SCHOOL OF EDUCATION — The University of Kansas

Data

Sometimes I fight back two tongues
While I use the other one in the classroom
And when I mistakenly mix them up
I feel crazy like ... I'm cooking in the bathroom
I know that I had to borrow your language because mines was stolen
But you can't expect me to speak your history wholly while mines is broken
These words are spoken
By someone who is simply fed up with the Eurocentric ideals of this season
And the reason I speak a composite version of your language
Is because mines was raped away along with my history
I speak broken English so the profusing gashes can remind us
That our current state is not a mystery
I'm so tired of the negative images that are driving my people mad
So unless you've seen it rob a bank stop calling my hair bad
I'm so sick of this nonsensical racial disparity
So don't call it good unless your hair is known for donating to charity
As much as has been raped away from our people
How can you expect me to treat their imprint on your language
As anything less than equal
Let there be no confusion
Let there be no hesitation
This is not a promotion of ignorance
This is a linguistic celebration
That's why I put "tri-lingual" on my last job application

WE'RE A VERY TOLERANT SOCIETY, BUT IF YOU DON'T BEHAVE LIKE US ... YOU CAN GO BACK TO WHERE YOU BLOODY CAME FROM

WORDS HAVE POWER
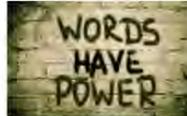
spoken word

Statement of Problem

This is an excerpt from a TED Talk called 3 Ways to Speak English by Jamila Lyiscott. Jamila is a social justice education scholar and views herself as a critical social researcher through the use of hip-hop, spoken word, and digital literacy.
I chose the data because she does a fantastic job of bringing to light the problems that come with labeling a language as the standard. As an English teacher, I struggle every day with the ideology embedded within Standard English and what that means for me as a multilingual and what that means for my students who are trying to learn the language and succeed academically while bringing in different varieties and backgrounds and at the same time being pushed to learn the standard (whatever that means).

Unpacking the Problem

Language Ideologies: Like Bourdieu, Jamila explains through her spoken word that the current language ideology is not neutral, it is Eurocentric, and it creates otherness (distinction). Gal and Irvine also show that language ideologies create separation (difference).

Monolingualism: Jamila says, "This is a linguistic celebration" to engage the listener in reflecting how standard of a language is a socially constructed idea.

Cultural capital: For Bourdieu, part of cultural capital is how one speaks— Jamila demonstrates that her way of speaking English is devalued when compared to the standard.

Symbolic power: unconscious modes of cultural/social domination through what a language is considered to be and how one should speak in different situations.

Misrecognition: Jamila's ways of speaking English are not recognized by society as an intentional practice to maintain a gap between those in power who speak the standards and those who don't.

Oppositional Practices

Jamila uses spoken word to bring to light what is usually considered as articulate and she opposes that by providing examples of her own language practices– the way she speaks to her parents, her friends, and her professors– as forms of being articulate.

She also uses spoken word to oppose traditional views of what 'bilingual' or 'multilingual' mean by including the term 'trilingual' (something that is usually thought of in terms of language) on her job application even though she's referring to 3 ways of speaking English.

"And the reason I speak a composite version of your language
Is because mines was raped away along with my history
I speak broken English so the profusing gashes can remind us
That our current state is not a mystery." Here Jamila professes the underlying issues of how she is expected to speak and the reality of how her language has been exploited along with her history.

Going Forward

Going forward I'd like to explore the role of spoken word in curriculum. Are students getting access to these forms of resistance in their classes? Is this form of expression only deemed valuable in specific classes/places?

I'd also like to explore the opportunities others have in using spoken word as a form of oppression. How did Jamila's TED talk come about? Was it due to her position as a professor and scholar? How can others use tactics in order to express their stories, ideas, and concerns in a way that will be listened to?

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Fig. 3: Spoken word as a form of resistance

Furthermore, students are creating new ideas as they revoice old theoretical ideas and adapt them to new contexts and situations. In fact, Pennycook (2007) might suggest that students are (re)creating their own (different) understandings of old (same) ideas in applying them to novel sociopolitical and sociohistorical contexts. It is often possible to see the intertextual remnants of these old ideas in the key words that feature prominently in the headlines of students' conference posters—"form of resistance," "habitus," and "capital". Revoicing occurs in dialogue with classmates with whom they share their ideas. In some cases, students work together to create their posters. This collaborative process allows students to engage in their own creative, innovative, and individualistic expression of knowledge and skill in ways that are co-constructive but also reflective of idiosyncratic style and creativity.

Lastly, everyday creativity is exhibited in the assessment's grading rubric. Because students are dealing with theoretical concepts that do not have ready-made interpretations, it is important that students take some risks in their interpretation and application of theory to everyday data. To support risk taking and innovative expression, I designed a weighted rubric where the lowest grade students could receive for a completed poster was an 82% ("B–"). The weighted rubric is an appropriate course of action for our graduate program where "B–" is the minimum passing grade for a course. More importantly, by removing the option of failure (short of not submitting a complete assignment), students were assured that they would not receive a failing grade for their attempts.

Why Everyday Creativity Matters in Authentic Classroom Assessments

Throughout this work, I have attempted to build a case for the presence of everyday creativity in authentic classroom assessments—perhaps not as a feature of all authentic classroom assessments, but as a fundamental potential of this category of assessment. Arguably, everyday creative potential lies in every authentic classroom assessment; it merely waits to be acknowledged, teased out, and presented to students as legitimate forms through which knowledge and skill can be expressed.

To authorize and legitimize the everyday creativity of authentic classroom assessments is to promote deeper student learning. Authentic classroom assessments foreground the real-world, complex, and contextual nature of applying knowledge and skills. In addition, these assessments demonstrate that creativity can include repetition, sameness, as well as difference (Pennycook, 2007); and they illustrate that innovation, novelty, and individuality of expression are natural products of higher-order thinking and more engaged dispositional stances (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). Everyday creativity should be encouraged in the development and execution of assessments designed for preservice and inservice teachers. Allowing for such creativity can cultivate the intellectual and pedagogical risk taking our students need in their careers; and by providing these opportunities in our classrooms, authentic classroom assessments can serve as a shelter under which students can take risks and learn from mistakes.

Finally, to authorize and legitimize the everyday creativity of authentic classroom assessments is to unleash the everyday creativity that teachers possess. Creating, planning for, and implementing these authentic classroom assessments requires an educator to gain clarity about what needs to be taught, foregrounded, and announced to students in advance. The steps to make sure one has provided students with the information and support needed to successfully complete an assessment is a difficult and ongoing process of coming to know. It requires constant evaluation and reevaluation of how one teaches and prepares students to carry out tasks. This approach to assessment encourages everyday creativity, and it is the hallmark of the kind of teaching that can lead to deeper learning.

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Pedagogical Practices of a Special Educator:
Engaging Parents Who Have Children With Intensive Needs

Jillian Vancoughnett

Abstract

As a special education teacher working with intensive needs children and their families, I have come to understand the importance of using "parent knowledge" alongside my professional knowledge to inform my pedagogy, enabling me to authentically and meaningfully program for students. In this article, I use my storied experiences with Shirley and her mom, Nancy, to make visible how my engagement with Nancy shaped my beliefs and practices as a teacher. This article describes a "pedagogy of walking alongside," a pedagogical approach in which parent engagement is integral in all work I do with young intensive needs students.

Narrative Beginnings

I recall the days when I was a student in small-town Saskatchewan. I walked to and from school on my own because we lived just one block away. For the most part, I really loved going to school. In our home, teachers were held with high regard. At the dinner table, I was often asked how my teacher was doing. My parents owned and operated the only pharmacy in our small town, so they were active members in the community. When my parents mentioned that one of my teachers came to the store, I remember being shocked to discover that teachers were able to leave the school. On Saturdays, I delighted in the job of using the price tag gun at the store for a couple of hours. On occasion, I noticed a teacher from the school walk into the store. I immediately got butterflies in my stomach as I began playing detective through the various store aisles. Growing up, there was a very distinct line drawn between home and school. Parents raised their children at home, while teachers taught children at school. Homework was mandatory and it came above all else in my home. If there was ever a conflict at school, I begged the teacher not to not call my mom. I knew that my mom would be incredibly disappointed if she got such a call.

I do recall participating in parent teacher interviews, Christmas concerts, and family variety nights. However, these were school-led events at which teachers seemed untouchable. There was no parent council in my elementary school days. Schools made the decisions as to what was best for the school community and they led the school events on their own. One Christmas, the entire staff did a mock Christmas song on stage for the audience at the annual Christmas concert. The crowd went wild watching the spectacular event on stage. However, after the concert, the teachers were nowhere to be found. I remember begging my parents to stay longer so that I could see my teacher. I got a firm reminder that my teacher needed to get home to her family and that she had spent long enough at school that day.

I was a sensitive little girl. I grew up in a home where our mother constantly invited new people to our home for holidays. If my mother knew someone new to town was alone for Christmas, she invited them to sit at the head of our table. Perhaps because of this sensitivity that was cultivated, I was always drawn to children in my classes who had intensive needs. They were never part of our class for the entire day. They were often never seen at school events. If they did attend a school function, they were to be seen and not heard. They did not participate with our whole class, that is for sure. I recall one of my classmates being hard of hearing. She spent her entire day with an educational assistant. As a result, she had no friends to play with. I remember feeling conflicted at recess. I wanted to try and play with her but I was scared of the educational assistant. As a young child, it was easier to walk away altogether.

When I became a teacher in 2008, my first teaching assignment was as a special education teacher in a small town in Saskatchewan. Imagining what it meant to be a professional, I dressed to impress, bought a new work backpack, and put on a new pair of dress shoes. There was just one problem: my degree had prepared me to be a classroom teacher, but not an interventionist. I knew that the children referred for special education assistance were struggling to meet basic curricular expectations. It was my job to figure out how to help provide additional support to them so they could meet these demands. While I had years of experience working as a camp counsellor for adults who had a variety of developmental and physical disabilities, I had no experience working with children who had special needs. Further, in my first year as a special education teacher, there was no one mentoring me—there were no professional development opportunities in special education in our school division, and there was no additional training on how to program for intensive need students.

Not knowing where to begin with my new students, I decided to start by getting to know them. I invited small groups of grade-alike intensive need students for daily blocked schedules in my office. We visited, played cooperative games, and worked on classroom assignments that their teacher sent with them. I collaborated with the classroom teachers to see which curricular goals needed to be met at each reporting period. I clung on for dear life to those teachers. The sad part was that the teachers were looking to me to find solutions and make recommendations on how to help their students learn. I felt like a fish out of water, but my students and I enjoyed spending time together throughout the school days. Those students helped me survive my first year of teaching. At the end of the school year, I knew that something was missing in my teaching. I questioned my career choice, because I did not feel a sense of accomplishment at the end of the year. I knew my students felt safe and cared for at school, but I also knew that I could not take them to the next level because I just did not know them as well as I needed to know them.

Awakening to Parents' Narratives

As I entered my third year of teaching, my feelings of a lack of accomplishment turned into something else, something that was burning inside that I could not make go away. I needed to do something to enhance my pedagogy. But what? Flipping through the University course catalogue, entertaining possibilities, I landed on one of my favorite undergraduate classes, a class on parent engagement. I remember specific, real-life stories that resonated with me deeply, that rattled, inspired, and moved me. Memories of field experiences that

brought me to tears of joy, flooded my mind. I stopped flipping through the course catalogue immediately. I recognized that my narrative was unfolding, and I needed to pay more attention to the burning and nagging feeling inside me. I decided that I wanted to further my education, to help me address my burning questions and tensions. I enrolled in a Master's program in Special Education and I also became a mom for the first time—two life-changing and personal growth events. I thought my questions would be answered with the achievement of these milestones in my personal life.

My first few months back at work were not easy. While I had to leave my little baby for the first time, it did feel good to be back in a routine and I was happy to be back with my students. When I began creating personalized inclusion plans for my students, I suddenly became very interested in the parents of my students. I was drawn to their stories, their lived experiences, their hopes and dreams for their child, and to forming a relationship with them. As a new mother, I was innately engaged in their narratives, narratives that came to feel settling and comforting to me as the teacher of their child. Even with two milestones achieved, it was not until my return to teaching that I realized what, in fact, the burning inside me was. While I gained a great deal of knowledge and insight from my master's degree in special education, and I was awakening to "parent knowledge" (Pushor, 2015a) through my lived experience as a new mom, I realized that the missing pedagogical piece that I was seeking as a professional was the knowledge expressed in parents' stories of their children. Now, once more at the university, I am interested in building on existing research into "parent knowledge" (Pushor, 2015a) through inquiring into the unique and particular parent knowledge that parents with intensive special needs children have to share with educators.

Awakening to the narratives of parents of intensive special needs students in the last few years of my career, and to how educative they are, I was drawn to using narrative inquiry as a methodological approach. Clandinin and Caine (2013) acknowledged that, "participants are always in the midst of their lives and their lives are shaped by attending to the past, present, and unfolding social, cultural, institutional, linguistic, and familial narratives" (p. 170). I enter this inquiry in the midst of my career, and in the midst of parenting my (now) three children. I recognize that I enter in the midst of parents' and children's lives and that I enter into the midst of their families. What can I learn when I stop and listen? What "family stories" (Huber et al., 2010, p. 80) might they tell? How might those family stories rub up against, or sit alongside, school stories? Hegemonic notions of family? About who is knower and knowing? How might they expand and enhance our understanding of what it means to use parent knowledge alongside teacher knowledge in curricular and programming decisions for intensive special needs children?

Connelly and Clandinin (2006) define narrative inquiry as "the study of experience as story" (p. 477). How might parents' narratives make visible the particular and unique parent knowledge they hold as they nurture and support their children with intensive special needs in the complex contexts of home and school? How might that parent knowledge inform the pedagogical practices of teachers who "walk alongside" (Pushor, 2015b) them? In my narrative inquiry, the parents' stories are both the phenomenon under study—the *what* into which I am inquiring—and the method—the storied way in which I am conducting that inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

The Birth of My Narrative Inquiry

I was in my eighth year of teaching elementary children with intensive needs when a huge challenge landed on my desk. I was asked to do an intake on a three-year old child who was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and a global developmental delay. Her name was Shirley.[1] Welcoming this little three-year-old student into the school community scared me. She was nonverbal, autistic, small, and brand new to the school system. I was more comfortable with older intensive need students who had language. I was terrified about my lack of professional knowledge and experience and I felt a lot of self-doubt. I knew that I would be asked to program for Shirley.

The principal handed me a plan for Shirley that indicated she was to come to school with her mom, so they could see the space and meet the educational team. As a student in Pre-Kindergarten, Shirley was entitled to be at school every afternoon from 12:45 to 3:00 p.m. I felt nervous to have Shirley at the school for so long, not knowing her or how to educate her. We had very few resources to use with her at the school. Further, her report from the medical community discussed how she was a flight risk, unresponsive to her own name, put most things in her mouth, screamed and pinched when she was frustrated, and how attached she was to her mom and dad. I knew that our current plan was setting Shirley, her family, the school team, and me up for failure. I knew I needed to approach my administrator to talk this plan through.

I begged my principal to start Shirley in school for only an hour a day. "Do we have to rip the band-aid off so quickly?" I frantically asked my administrator. I requested permission to suspend my other afternoon classes for the first month of Shirley's entrance. How was I going to place an educational associate with Shirley, if I did not even know where to begin? I felt the process needed to begin with me and the real expert, Shirley's mom, Nancy. I needed time to get to know Shirley. I wanted to know what her triggers were, what provided her with comfort, and what caused anxiety for her. I knew these key things would be best learned at home, so I also asked permission to go to Shirley's house for one hour a day for the first week of her scheduled time at school. It felt foreign to me, asking to spend time with Nancy leading up to Shirley's arrival in school, but it also felt like the right thing to do. Thankfully my administrator approved all of my requests.

A Pedagogy of Walking Alongside

The new plan provided me the opportunity to meet with Nancy and Shirley in their home every day from 1 to 2 p.m. We visited, played, and got to know each other. Shirley lived in a townhouse with her mom, dad, and older brother. When I arrived, I immediately noticed latches on the top of every door. Nancy told me that Shirley would leave otherwise. The living room was full of cause-and-effect toddler toys such as push and pop-up toys, there were dents in the wall, a large baby gate blocked off the living room from the kitchen, and the television was playing a cartoon. Nancy brought Shirley some goldfish crackers and almond milk, because she knew it would keep her settled and quiet for a few minutes, so we could visit.

As Nancy and I talked and got to know one another, Shirley began to get used to me as a person entering into her world. On one occasion, Shirley attempted to share one of her goldfish crackers with me.

I home visited the family daily for a period of two weeks. As Smith (2013) noted, through our time together, Nancy and I built a trusting relationship and she believed me when "I walk[ed] into [their] home and compliment[ed] …her hard work in raising an amazing child" (p. 77). With this trust in place, we switched to having Shirley and Nancy come to school for one hour a day. Together we explored the playground, classrooms, and sensory room. Nancy showed me how much Shirley loved to swing on the playground, find water in the water fountains, and run circles around the gym. Nancy also taught me how to handle transitions between activities and how to calm Shirley. When Shirley screamed or fell to the ground in frustration, Nancy distracted her with another toy or object. Nancy always remained calm and giggled or sighed softly as she waited patiently for Shirley to regulate.

After two weeks of Shirley and Nancy coming to the school together, I asked Nancy to leave Shirley alone with me for the one hour. Shirley would scream frequently to communicate with me. While Shirley screamed for 15 minutes on the hallway floor, protesting, against my request for her to make a visual choice between two preferred activities, I remembered Nancy's voice in my head saying, "Don't let her win all the time, she is stubborn." I waited patiently with Shirley on the ground, until our moment of triumph when a choice was made.

After two months of our slow and staggered entry into school, I began training an educational assistant to work with Shirley. Once again, I called Nancy to come in and help with the transition plan. Being a parent is a "birth to forever" undertaking (Pushor, 2013). Parents are on an intimate journey with their children.

> As teachers who work in schools, we have the privilege of supporting parents in this life-long task of educating their child from birth to forever. It is important to recognize that our provision of formal schooling is just one piece of their child's education. (p. 8)

I wanted her "parent knowledge" to inform my professional knowledge as we worked on transitioning another person to our team. I also trusted that Nancy would know if the educational assistant I chose would be a good fit for Shirley. I knew what Nancy's parent knowledge did for me when I entered the scene; I wanted to offer that same support and authenticity to the staff member I was training. "By making visible what parent knowledge is, and how it is held and used by parents, I am consciously attempting to change the story of the school" (Pushor, 2015a, p. 19). I needed Nancy, the new staff member needed Nancy, Shirley needed Nancy. Nancy knew her child better than anyone else. I yearned for the earlier days of walking alongside each other as we welcomed Shirley and Nancy to the school for the first time.

Parent Engagement

Journeying with Nancy awakened me to "parent engagement" (Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005). I realized I "involved" my students' parents in the first few years of my teaching career, but I did not engage them. Working with Nancy awakened me to the difference. In the past, I sent home necessary documentation for parent signatures and I greeted parents at school functions. Pushor and Ruitenberg (2005) explained, "Parents who are 'involved' serve the school's agenda by doing the things educators ask or expect them to do" (p. 12). In contrast,

> Engagement implies enabling parents to take their place alongside educators in the schooling of their children, fitting together their knowledge of children, of teaching and learning, with teachers' knowledge. With parent engagement, possibilities are created for the structure of schooling to be flattened, power and authority to be shared by educators and parents, and the agenda being served to be mutually determined and mutually beneficial. (p. 13)

In engaging with Nancy, I utilized her parent knowledge to inform my teacher knowledge. I engaged Nancy as we co-constructed Shirley's day as a team. As confirmed by the Relational Schools Foundation (RSF) (2018), "If parents are a vital partner in supporting young people's educational achievement, they must also surely be a key player in a school's improvement narrative" (p. 5). Parent engagement with school, then, "is a stepping stone to what will actually make a difference and help us narrow the gap and support many more of our young people" (Goodall, 2018, p. 5).

When we engage parents, we turn to their parent knowledge in order to gain their understanding, intuitions, and intimate discoveries of their child. No one knows their child better than the parents. Parents know what calms their child when upset, what their favorite songs are, what scares them, what energizes them, what their different cries mean, and how to read their body language. These key understandings reflect parents' relational, intimate, bodied, embodied, intuitive, and shifting knowledge of their child (Pushor, 2015a, pp. 15–19), knowledge which can make a world of difference for a teacher when shared by parents.

> Parents have been instrumental in their children's learning since birth. Parents may well not hold qualifications related to teaching (although of course many do) but they are also not inexperienced in supporting children's learning; they have been doing it for years by the time a child arrives in school. In undertaking what can only be called a teaching role in relation to their children, parents have clearly been in positions of power when their children were young; there is no clear reason why they should relinquish (rather than share) that power when their children arrive at school. (Goodall, 2018, p. 607)

Coming to understand the difference between parent involvement and parent engagement, the value of parent knowledge, and how important relationships are between a teacher and a parent, I knew I was in a position of great change in my professional practice. What I had been yearning for since the beginning of my teaching career was knowledge and input from the parents, and meaningful connections with families and students. Reaching out to parents was not a sign of weakness or laziness, as I first thought as a beginning teacher. Working with Nancy and Shirley, building relationships as adults with a vested interest in a child, it was evident that the overall success for Shirley was going to be greater. I know

I gained as well because my professional capacity was increased. Nancy, too, spoke to me about how she gained. She no longer felt so isolated and, with my affirmation of the significance of her parent knowledge, she no longer felt so inferior in relation to parents whose children did not have special needs.

Home Visits

I remember the first day that I met Shirley in her home. Shirley opened the door with her mom, Nancy. She was kissing her mom's hand, twirling her blonde curls in her tiny fingers, and smelling her mom's thick brown hair. The behaviours that Shirley demonstrated surprised me because I thought that children who have autism do not like to be touched or cuddled. I had anticipated screaming, yelling, tantrums, and fighting. Instead, Shirley danced in her living room, chewed on her toys, threw them away when she was done with them, and used her mom's lap like a jungle gym. It was so obvious that Shirley was loved just as much as my own child. I learned about Shirley's dad and big brother, and how special they are to her. Shirley's dad took her for daily car rides to help her fall asleep every night. Her older brother never touched the remote when Shirley was around, knowing how captivated and happy she was to hear the Sesame Street theme song. I discovered that Shirley's grandma and grandpa were the only people who ever cared for Shirley, other than her own parents. I learned so many particularities about this little girl and how she was loved beyond measure.

Learning from my experience with Nancy and Shirley, home visits and building authentic relationships between home and school became a priority in my professional practice. Galindo and Sheldon (2011) conducted a study researching the positive gains in a Kindergarten child's mathematics and reading skills when authentic parent relationships were combined with positive school interactions. The research showed a tremendous gain in students whose parents and teachers worked collaboratively in meaningful ways. These findings invited me to reconsider my relationship with Nancy who has an intensive need student. Even though we were not working on mathematics or reading skills for her child, we had other important individual goals we were working on together. For Shirley, we would be looking at the promotion of holistic development as it pertains to the Play and Exploration Early Learning Program Guide (2008) set out by the Government of Saskatchewan. Activities that would fit into social-emotional development, physical, spiritual, and intellectual domains would be the focus for Shirley. Meyer and colleagues (2011) captured the importance of home visits, "The information gained in a home visit can be utilized as a means by which teachers can plan curriculum best suited to the individual needs of children in their classrooms" (p. 192). Knowing the home Shirley came from, the tender and loving strategies that Nancy employed to encourage her to eat, and the special toys that Shirley loved, as examples, helped me to envision and create meaningful programming for her at school. Seeing me away from the school also created a more trusting, meaningful, and authentic relationship for all members of the family as well.

Parent Knowledge

I knew that I wanted school to be more than respite care for her family. Shirley deserved school to be an authentic and enriching experience. I wanted to try and determine Shirley's capabilities, so that I could

meet her at her level. I remembered Nancy showing me how to soothe Shirley in the rocking chair, use music to energize her, and provide her with freedom to play with toys and explore them. Through my relationship and time spent with Nancy, I knew that I had gained enough insights from Nancy's parent knowledge that I could authentically program for Shirley. I purchased a rocking chair at school for Shirley, we put everything we could think of into song for her, and we provided sensory experiences for her to engage in safely. I remembered Nancy telling me that Shirley loved bath time at home. Knowing that, I decided to turn one school water fountain into a water table for Shirley. Shirley delighted in the old water fountain for minutes upon minutes. She would squeal and grind her teeth with delight.

It was in setting up my classroom in a way that would promote rich learning for Shirley that I fully understood how "relational parent knowledge" (Pushor, 2015a, p. 15) is something that significantly informed my pedagogy. Parents know their children differently than anyone else. When we first learn to be teachers, we are not doing it in a relational capacity *with* children. We are learning from the outside. We read, view, observe, and reflect from within university classrooms. Parents, in contrast, learn from and with their child minute by minute, cry by cry, and through various facial expressions, movements, and touch. I came to understand how Nancy's parent knowledge was informing my professional knowledge. It was so apparent that we were a unified team working toward the same goal. I trusted and valued her. I realized that I learned how to teach Shirley, through Nancy. Without Nancy, I would still be in the hallway feeling helpless as Shirley screamed for 15 minutes in protest of making a visual choice.

The school team met with Nancy in December to have a support team meeting and discuss Shirley's progress. It had been three months since Shirley started school. I was eager to hear how Nancy felt the first little while had gone. Nancy expressed that she was no longer keeping Shirley home all the time. She was more comfortable taking her on short outings in public because of the progress she was making at school. I immediately responded to her, reinforcing that we would not have reached this significant achievement without her parent knowledge guiding our way.

> Dignean spoke about such curriculum making in terms of the attentiveness it provides teachers through which to view each particular child:
>
> So, it's having that parent knowledge enter in and give you that little insight into each individual, that enables you to know the child more deeply, "Wow I understand you now. I understand that little piece of you that's just quirky, or that's interesting and unique."
>
> …It is realizing that when we share our knowledge as parents and teachers, we can attend to children much more richly. (Parent Engagement Collaborative II, 2015, pp. 217–218)

Shirley adapted to school so beautifully, because of the knowledge Nancy shared with us. Shirley's school days were filled with specific games, experiences, and activities that were based on her individual needs and interests that arose from the knowledge that Nancy was able to share with us.

Parent Knowledge of Special Need Children

I invited Nancy for coffee while Shirley was at school. Something inside me kept going back to Nancy for more. I asked her how she felt about being part of the school community. Nancy expressed to me that she is not like the other parents at school, so she stays away. Her child has different needs, so she feels like her ideas, concerns, and suggestions do not bear any weight or validity. Her child is different and not mainstream and so, as a parent, she feels different and not mainstream either. Woodgate and colleagues (2008) conducted a study looking at the experiences of parents who have a child with autism. They concluded that the parents felt isolated in most aspects of their lives, even within the school. "Parents basically felt that they were now having to 'go at it alone' in all aspects of daily living, but especially with respect to dealing with the challenges of parenting and caring for a child who has special needs" (p. 1078). I appreciated how Nancy felt, but, given how much I learned from her, I knew she had so much to offer the broader school community.

I recall the day I became a mom. It was a hot summer day when our daughter was born. I remember wondering how I would ever know what to do. How would I know what my baby needed? Through time, intuition, and relationship, I developed the parent knowledge I needed to care for her well. Parents learn to know their child on an intimate level. They know the meanings behind different cries, the physical signs of fatigue setting in, and the different emotional expressions. Nancy had the same parent knowledge about Shirley that I held about my daughter. However, she also held a unique and specific knowledge about Shirley that only a parent of a special need child could develop. Shirley had a heightened awareness of medical knowledge, sensory challenges, and personal care needs. Nancy could predict whether or not a specific activity at school would work or not, based on her unique parent knowledge of her child. Nancy's lived experiences with her child who has intensive needs gave her an incredible bank of knowledge, beyond the parent knowledge typically held by a parent, that would continue to guide my programming for Shirley at school.

A Narrative Past, A Narrative Future

I drift back in time, back to my early years as a student in school, a time when everyone walked alone. Teachers walked alone, parents walked alone, and students walked alone. Teachers walked with children at school. Parents walked with children at home. Children with special needs walked apart from children in mainstream classes. Over the 12 years of my career, I have been on a journey that has led me to a "pedagogy of walking alongside" (Pushor, 2015b). Through my stories of Nancy and Shirley, I have shared how teachers, parents, and children can now walk with each other, sometimes hand in hand. I have exemplified how parent knowledge can inform teacher knowledge, and how authentic and meaningful home visits can be at the centre of programming. So much is made possible when parent knowledge is invited and welcomed. How much children benefit when the lived experiences of teachers and parents are shared, and their knowledge is discussed openly and freely. My lived experiences with Nancy and Shirley have led me to my doctoral research inquiry into the educative possibility of the knowledge held and used by parents of intensive needs children. Freire (1994) stated, "One of the tasks

of the progressive educator… is to unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be" (p. 3). As my research unfolds, my hope is that this research will bring the lived experiences and stories of parents to school landscapes to be used alongside teacher knowledge as central pedagogical practice. In the future, my hope is that no one ever has to walk alone.

Note

1.   All names are pseudonyms.

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What's Among and Between Us:
Mining the Arts for Pedagogies of Deep Relation

Jessica Whitelaw

Abstract

In this paper, I share results of collaborative inquiry with youth and teachers into how the arts can create more relational learning spaces in the classroom. I offer a framework for relational teaching and learning through the arts guided by the questions: Who am I? Who are you? And who are we? Through these dimensions, I explore how arts-based practice can support new ways of being in the classroom, where teaching creates conditions for students to be "among and between": in relation to the material, the teacher, and importantly, to themselves, to each other, and to the world around them.

> *Maybe the purpose of being here, wherever we are, is to increase the durability and occasions of love among and between peoples.* — June Jordan (n.d.)

A month into a yearlong study in an arts-based English classroom, 9th grade student Raquel told me what she thought was different about learning through and with the arts. "Well teenagers these days, mostly, they like something art-related, like drawing, or theatre, or dance or music. And you can all relate." Throughout that year, the word "relate" kept recurring across student interviews. Students talked about *relating* to the arts, to English class, to their teacher, to each other, and to themselves. Because we don't live in the world alone, learning is always to some degree relational. But students were telling me that this relating was somehow *different* from more typical classrooms they had experienced. In this arts-based context, they were learning to relate *differently*—to themselves, to one another, and to the world around them.

Pedagogical questions about how to develop students' understandings of the inextricability of others' experiences as connected to our own (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), are pressing ones. How we engage in profound relational work across different cultural, epistemological, and political frameworks and lifeworlds remains one of the biggest educational and societal challenges we face. How can teachers possibly take on this challenge within the complexities of classroom spaces that are increasingly diverse and where the potential for relational learning has long been suppressed by systems rooted in coloniality, white supremacy, and capitalism that uphold individualism and the status quo?

In this article I investigate how arts-based practice can support new ways of learning and being in the classroom, where teaching creates the conditions for students to be "among and between": in active relation to the material, the teacher, and importantly, to themselves, to each other, and to the world around them. I'll offer a pedagogical framework for relational teaching and learning through the arts,[1] guided by the questions: Who am I? Who are you? and Who are we? I'll use these questions to explore pedagogical design around a complex set of interrelations.

Background

Classrooms have the potential to be deeply relational learning spaces. However, unless planned and carefully structured as such, they tend to take on a life that is not. Practices steeped in the industrial model of learning that have been engrained in American schooling for over a century are tied up in ways of knowing, doing, and being that, at best, constrain relational learning and, at worst, prevent it through top-down relational structures. These structures rooted in coloniality rely on a power differential between student and teacher in ways that reproduce inequity in the classroom through individualism and expectations for compliance. Today, the current and deep influence of market logic on schools, with its emphasis on efficiency, quantification, and individualistic measures of success, brings a sense of urgency to the topic. Research on teaching is called upon to explore and reclaim approaches to teaching outside of the corporate logic that shapes pedagogies of authority, obedience, competition, and adjustment to the existing social order (Giroux, 2019; Hill & Kumar, 2009).[2]

Set against this backdrop, the arts and aesthetic experience are rich but too-often untapped pedagogical resources for learning in relation. The arts can focus our individual and collective attention, stimulate public discourse, and shape the cultural imagination. The arts can ask students, as viewers and makers, to think about how the world is currently organized and how it could be organized differently. However, advocacy arguments for the arts have insufficiently accounted for the role that pedagogy plays in what the arts actually do and can do in classrooms. In this paper, I focus on pedagogy as a site of inquiry because although the arts have the potential to support more relational learning spaces and new ways of being, this potential is never a guarantee. As Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) argues, "the arts don't *do* anything" (p. 211): they can foster individualism and competition just as easily as relational understandings and an emphasis on the collective. For teachers who believe in the relational potential for the arts in learning, the question becomes, "How can I mediate and cultivate this potential in my classroom?" What pedagogical invitations can I create and how might these invitations encourage more humane, socially just *means* of learning toward more humane and socially just *ends*?

Art and the In-Between

Conventional knowledge often positions the arts as irrelevant, individual encounters with a piece of artwork. From another view, the arts can be understood as occupying relational space, a space that imbues them with collective potential and transformative possibilities. Scholars across a range of intellectual traditions have theorized relational possibilities for the arts. Phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty (1967) asserted a holistic view of the individual in a lived world where the subjective body and lived body are intertwined. He argued that arts, the imagination, and aesthetic experience allow for a permeability of boundaries that we construct between ourselves and others, and that this permeability of boundaries allows for our perceptions to be affected and changed.

Art theorist Bourriaud (1998) posits that the arts and aesthetic experience create *social interstices*, "space[s] in human relations which fit more or less harmoniously and openly into the overall system but suggest other trading possibilities than those in effect within the system" (p. 16). In these social interstices, Bourriaud argues, there is possibility for an "arena of exchange," one with "epistemological breathing room" (i.e., flexibility in ways of knowing), and one that might "tighten the spaces of social relations."

From a related angle in media studies, Ellsworth (2004) conceptualizes what can happen in Winnicott's (1989) notion of "transitional space" where the arts provide a pedagogical holding environment for being in open relation. This space, also referred to as "zone 3," is a fluid space that assumes the body is in constant motion and in relation to what is not itself, and therefore open to change. Linking the notion of transitional space back to Merleau-Ponty (1967), Young (in Ellsworth, 1994) argues that zone 3 is dynamic and ripe for relational sense-making because "what exists between (art) subject and object is in some sense a zone and in some sense a permeable boundary with constant traffic both ways and with objects often multiply presented" (p. 80). Although the potential for transitional space and change is everywhere, mining this potential in pedagogical spaces requires intentionality to both set up and facilitate this traffic. Ellsworth calls upon teachers to be curators of pedagogy who "innovate, design, and stage the materials of expression and conditions of learning so that something new may arise" (p. 28).

Taken together, these ideas challenge notions of the arts as peripheral, nonessential, and nonacademic vis-à-vis their transformative potential in these spaces of relation. They support a re-centering of the arts and aesthetic experience in the social spaces of classrooms at the intersections of relationships and in the interest of knowledge generation and change. In the next sections, I'll share and explore images of how teachers strategically mined the arts for pedagogies of deep relation and consider implications for teaching and learning.

Methodology

Data in this paper are from a yearlong collaborative practitioner inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) in two English classrooms at an urban public arts-based high school. The research was co-constructed among teachers and students as participants within a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) where teachers, students, and I shared an interest in what it means to learn through and with the arts. Situated within a constructivist epistemology and a mode of reasoning grounded in Heidegger's (1962) notion of "being in the world" (p. 53), the research was taken up within a conception of reality as semiotically mediated rather than objective. The findings are thus what Gadamer (1960) might call a "fusion of horizons" (p. 306), although one meant not to flatten but to show texture and play across relations.

Within this epistemology, I approached my inquiry through an interpretive, hermeneutic paradigm motivated by questions of how and why, that is, how arts-based pedagogy was taken up and why it mattered. While much of school-based arts research in recent years has been called upon to justify itself within a logic of transfer and correlation, this inquiry draws from what has been learned about social

context and knowledge construction in recent years in social science and literacy studies, to better understand the role of the arts from critical, sociocultural perspectives on learning and inquiry (Gadsden, 2008).

Students came from a vast array of backgrounds and neighborhoods across a large northeastern city, and most travelled via public transportation to attend an art-based school. Students identified as Dominican, Brazilian, Bahaman, Asian, Black, Arab, African, Puerto Rican, Native, African American, and White. They identified as Christians, Muslims, atheists, and agnostics. They came from predominantly working-class families and many students were from first-generation immigrant families. The school was arts-based and college preparatory, so the emphasis was on integration of the arts into all subjects rather than on strict disciplinary arts study. Important to the ethos of the school, admissions decisions were made emphasizing interest and commitment over arts talent or expertise in a specific arts discipline.

Coming to this study as a former English teacher who had relied upon the arts in my own classroom to teach better, I positioned myself as a practitioner inquirer (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Both teachers, Molly and Lorraine, shared an interest in exploring the possibilities of arts-based English teaching with me and with their students. Both brought a critical lens to their teaching, had worked with the local chapter of the National Writing Project, and had won awards and accolades for their teaching. Both were innovators, inquirers, and designers of their curriculum in a school district with mandated standards-based teaching, as well as school and district oversight around achievement. Both teachers juggled working within and against these mandates to teach in ways that were art-based and responsive to their students' lives, cultures, and knowledge. While members of the school community shared a commitment to the arts, comprehensive arts-based teaching and learning was not common in the district, and teachers and students expressed how this work was easily dismissed and often misunderstood by those outside of the school. Variously positioned as teacher/critical inquirer/daughter of Filipino immigrants (Lorraine); teacher/critical inquirer/White (Molly); and teacher/researcher/critical inquirer/White (Jessica), we shared a commitment to transformative teaching (hooks, 1994) and to the role of the arts in this project.

To study arts-based literacy pedagogy, I drew from ethnography with its origins in anthropology and sociology to understand holistically and over time, the ethnographic question, "What is going on here?" As Erickson (1984) argues, this approach involves a deliberate, reflective, and context-based inquiry process that is developed in situ and over time. The data set included observations, fieldnotes, interviews with teachers and students, student work, and classroom artifacts from across the two classrooms. Through recursive analysis of the data, I sought to make sense of arts-based literacy teaching and learning in this context as "bricoleur" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), piecing together language and patterns to characterize the implicit logic in how teachers were designing for transformative pedagogy with the arts. Data were analyzed first through open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and then through subsequent layers of conceptual coding. Through this iterative process, the deep, relational design of arts-based teaching and learning was identified as a central overarching theme. Through additional recursive analysis, I identified *who am I? who are you? who are we?* as a framework and heuristic for a deeper tacit logic within this relational design.

Framing Arts-Based Teaching & Learning as Relational Work

The framework offers insight into three different dimensions of being in relation: the question, *who am I?* looks inward and asks who I am in relation to myself; the question, *who are you?* asks how I understand others in relation to how I understand myself; and the question, *who are we?* asks how we are in collective relation to one another and among a broader community. Differing from the notion of best practices, these questions comprise a pedagogical framework that can be taken up by teachers in myriad ways that are open to invention and context specific. Molly and Lorraine explored each dimension over time and differently, and space here does not allow for a full rendering of this range and variation in practice. Readers are encouraged to imagine the following examples as windows into a range of possible arts-based practices that invite students into a dialectic across relationships among themselves, one another, and the world around them.

Who Am I? Looking Inward Through the Arts and Autobiography

> *Art is about specificity not standardization - Because art seeks diversity of outcome, meaning is personalized: the arts develop personal vision which helps an individual to recognize what is distinct about themselves.* —*Eisner (2002, p. 44)*

Autobiographical work centered prominently in the teaching across both classes, building upon the unique cultural resources of every student and considering seriously students' own lives as academic subjects to explore. It also set up a fluid orientation to the self as a work of art (Foucault, 1990), making space for students to engage in identity work through art, and to do this in the social space of the classroom. As Molly described:

> I hope to create a safe space, safe in the sense that kids can really be themselves and really be validated for who they are, and allow for that plurality of voices, and experiences, and personalities and styles… I find that really exciting and… really important to validate, to acknowledge in the classroom. That this is a place where it is okay to be exactly who you are, and if you don't know who that is, it's also a place to explore and figure it out…that is probably the most important thing.

Importantly, in this context, a range of art forms provided multiple ways of entering into an intimate dialogue with students' unique and individual selves. Students created playlists/music autobiographies, and *This I Believe* podcasts. They drew body biographies, wrote autobiographical poems, and created multimodal memoirs. In 9th grade, to prepare for writing their name vignettes, students listened to music about names and read short stories and poetry about names. A design that used a range of art forms to explore identity, created open and dynamic invitations for students to enter into autobiographical inquiry.

Aniya was a 9th grade student and voice major who identified as African American. She described herself as loyal and honest and told me that she worked hard to put all of her thoughts into her reading, writing, and art. When I asked Aniya what arts-based learning was like for her, she told me that it was very different from her previous experiences with school. With learning through the arts, she said, "It's interesting and you can actually get into it. We can actually *relate* to it. We relate to each other's

stories and it's fun." Getting into it and relating across stories involved ongoing autobiographical work. In her *My Name* narrative vignette, Aniya grapples with how identity is always shaped in relation—both constructed by the individual and imposed upon by others. As a Black girl, Aniya stakes claim to her name given to her by her African-American mother and to a strength and legacy associated with her name. She also pushes back against how names are linked to micro-aggressions and racialized harm that students of color experience in school and beyond (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012).

> My name is Aniya. To me it means independent, successful, hardworking, and outstanding trooper…. The name I have been given sounds to me as a source of motivation, dedication, concentration, and last, but never least, determination. … Motivation meaning I "must" strive to do my best and "want" to do my best. Dedication meaning I "will" stay true to myself and others and "never" letting an opportunity pass me by. Concentration meaning to be focused. Determination meaning to never give up and persevere through barriers that might knock me down. These four terms justify me as Aniya Alana Johnson, NOT just another name an African-American woman gave me as I was born into this place we call life. As I think about what my name means I also wonder how it will affect me as I become older and stand on my own two feet without my parents… My mind is still unsure about how to answer the thousands of questions I have.
>
> What if my name was not Aniya? Would people look at me differently? Will my name determine whether I get a successful job or not? Do people have negative opinions regarding my name? My answer is: should it matter?! My personality is what makes my name stand out as an individual. So, when I look in the mirror staring back at myself – in my heart, mind, and soul – I will know that Aniya Alana Johnson is a leader I am proud to be and not a follower which I will never become.

The relational aspects of Aniya's vignette can be understood as what Chicana/Latina scholars have called opportunities for feminist affirmation and intervention (Knight et al., 2006). She uses the vignette as affirmation to assert self-determination and as intervention to resist imposition, writing herself as a powerful agent of her own story, shaping the narrative of her life as a work of art. As one of many art forms that could be easily shared, the vignette centered students' lives as a source of meaningful inquiry and learning. When Aniya shared her vignette with the class, this experience empowered not just personal affirmation and intervention, but public affirmation and intervention.

Later in the year when I asked Aniya if there was a piece of writing that she was most proud of, she told me it was this vignette about her name because "it meant a lot to me." "I think it's more about how the person is and what they have to offer and you know, a name shouldn't define who a person is, so that's what I think. That's why it was my best writing." Aniya's work speaks to how the art form of the vignette made space to explore, relate to, and build a commitment to oneself. It serves as one example of the arts being engaged as an act of creation and a mode of inquiry. Aniya could both construct her own version of herself, while at the same time explore understandings of identity as an ongoing process of becoming, rather than something fixed, pre-determined, and to be discovered. Tenth grader Lys captured this affordance of fluidity well when she asserted, *I am striving to become the person I wish to one day meet*.

Even when students were looking inward autobiographically and asking, *Who am I?*, they were never doing this in isolation, because a central feature across both classrooms was ongoing dialogue and

sharing of student work in the interest of deep relations. So, while the dimensions (who am I/who are you/who are we) do represent important distinctions in ways of designing for relational pedagogy, drawing overly sharp boundaries across these dimensions would not accurately capture the fluidity and authenticity of the relations that were being cultivated. With this in mind, in the next section I'll shift to explore how arts-based pedagogy fostered outward-looking dialogue that was deeply intertwined with the identity work highlighted here.

Who Are You? Looking Outward Through the Arts and Dialogue

> *Well usually at my old school it was like… I'm not gonna talk to him because I don't speak his language – but here everybody tries to talk. They try to learn their language. — Justin, 9th grade*

Scholar and activist bell hooks (1995) asserts that even though we now have sophisticated cultural criticism with notions of cultural hybridity, border crossing, and the singular/plural, most still see identity as fixed and hold on to the idea that people have essential traits and characteristics that are unchanging and static (p. 10). She argues that self-work necessarily precedes and accompanies the work of relating to others; when we begin to know ourselves as mutable and open to change, we become more able to see others this way, softening our perceptions. Since this inward/outward looking process is always entangled, the inclusion of multiple voices and perspectives in classrooms can offer ways to map similarities and differences across experience. Such mapping can help students to develop deeper intrapersonal and interpersonal understandings, a process that is aligned with cultivating compassion (hooks, 1995; Hanh, 2005). For critical and transformative teaching, this cultivation necessarily involves attention to power that shapes whose voices are typically heard, and what perspectives are centered.

Pedagogically, multiple perspectives and dialogue can be enhanced by strategically inviting the diversity of students' lives and experiences into the classroom to be in conversation with a range of art forms and texts that center nondominant voices. In literacy classrooms, this can involve juxtaposing print text (such as a story or novel) with many short, related arts pieces. Taken together, many voices across art and experience can combine to create a unique and dynamic kind of "traffic," as described in the theoretical framework. And while this can open up spaces for dialogue "between me and not me," it requires that teachers do a lot of intentional planning around how to design and mediate this particular kind of traffic.

Ninth grade student Lys told me, "Here we do discussions instead of worksheets. It's kind of a different way to learn." When I asked her how this was different, she told me it was because the discussions helped to change her perspective: "It happens like every day—you just listen to people and what their actual opinion is about it and if it contrasts with, like, my own. It gives you a new perspective." While discussion isn't unusual in English classrooms, and adolescent development happens relationally whether we plan for it or not, the extent to which the arts opened up spaces for dialogue, and the extent to which students noticed this work changing their perspectives, stood out in the data. What also stood out were teachers' strategic efforts to mine these relational affordances. One morning in March, Molly placed large chart paper on the walls in the classroom and asked students to name what "bothered and offended them" in

discussions, what "made them think," and what their "favorite kinds of discussions" were, as represented by the following chart:

Bothered/Offended	Makes Me Think/Favorite Kinds of Discussions
- Discriminating against people - Racist comments - Wanting to talk and you can't get in - Putting facts on a topic you don't know	- Someone brings something new - It's about something I never thought of - Talking about our lives - Talking about other peoples' views - Breaking stereotypes - Making a difference in the world - One person at a time - Everyone's opinion is heard - Circle set-up - We respond to each other; it helps people build on each other's ideas - It goes beyond the obvious

Fig. 1: Students comment on relational learning

Over halfway into the school year, these comments reflect some of the ways that students were experiencing and understanding relational learning in the arts-based classroom. They reflect a way of being in relation that centers race, discrimination, knowledge, power, and voice in the classroom. The comments also place value in students' lived experience, in equitable discourse, and in actively changing the world through what they think. The comments are instructive to pedagogies of relational learning through the arts because they place importance on the knowledge that each student brings as potentially transformative and, at the same time, on questions of power and voice. Importantly, the teacher didn't set these norms ahead of time; students were developing these understandings through the particularities of their lived experience with the arts in this context.

In a unit on immigration, students read novels, legal documents, and political cartoons; they watched film clips, examined visual art, and wrote a formal research paper. The juxtaposition of the different texts sought to disrupt the vitriolic and racist ways that the topic of immigration was being covered in the mainstream media and to invite more nuanced and humane conversations around belonging. This was particularly relevant because students in the school came from neighborhoods all over the city and brought a diverse range of backgrounds and cultural identities, including first-generation immigrant identities. To invite students into an encompassing conversation about belonging, Molly asked, "What happens when who you are is miscommunicated, misunderstood, misrepresented? Anyone ever had this happen?"

Teacher: What happens when who you are is misunderstood, miscommunicated, misunderstood, misrepresented. Anyone ever had this happen?
Stephanie: When people, like my aunt and uncle, misunderstand what I sign. (Stephanie identified as deaf)
Ariana: When I was younger, half of my face was paralyzed, people took me for being weird, not really on their level.
Sasha: Someone on the bus said to me: this is a real good neighborhood. There are no Puerto Ricans. (Sasha identified as Puerto Rican)
Ariana: [Even] at home in my house and something could happen. You can't worry… I think it's a race thing (she tells a story about a neighbor with a cat named Onyx, her mom yelling at the neighbor in Spanish about the cat and the neighbors being racist) they think Mexicans are dirty and don't know how to act (Ariana identified as Mexican American)
Anik: in 7th grade… it was like why are you not beating people up? When you get mad, you're not like cursing? Well, maybe I'm just educated!
Tanesha: People at my school thought I was Jamaican or African and it got in my nerves. Just people I wore bright colors I guess. (Tanesha identified as African American)
Vanessa: It's like an internal conflict: we question our identity like is this okay? (Vanessa identified as Bahamian)
Haley: People assume things because of where you live, how you talk things, that you do. When I go to the mall people seem to always think that I'm gonna shoplift because I'm a teenager. (Haley identified as White)
Tanesha: When I get know a person I ask them after a while, they start asking me all kinds of bad stuff.
Natasha: I think it's just a [this city] thing but sometimes people call me a hippie. I despise that word. They think that if I wear a tie-die shirt I do LSD! (Natasha identified as White)
Anik: When people first meet me, they tell me they think I'm mean. That affects me after a while. (Anik identified as African American)
Shona: People get angry about things from each culture and anger turns into hate. (Shona identified as Arab)
Tanesha: I hate things because I don't know how to do it. Like in music class we are introduced to music maybe we don't like if you don't know something, you say you hate it, my teacher said, you'll like it soon. If you don't know something or someone, you say you hate

Fig. 2: What happens when who you are is miscommunicated, misunderstood, misrepresented?

By this point in the year, students had become accustomed to sharing and making meaning from lived experience in conversation with a range of art forms. In this excerpt, students name experiences with belonging that encompass race, class, language, culture, disability, and age. Shona theorizes that anger can lead to discrimination and hate, while Tanesha links hate to not knowing and argues that the arts, specifically music, can be a way to know something that you didn't know and thereby combat hate; it's about "knowing something or someone" because "if you don't know, you can say you hate." Relational pedagogies of being made space for this kind of knowledge generation to happen student to student, from their own lived experience, and in conversation with the arts and stories they encountered.

The above conversation about belonging provided a backdrop for exploring a travelling art exhibition called *SB1070: An Artist's Point of View* (2012), a multi-artist response to Arizona's immigration law, SB1070 which, at the time, was the strictest anti-immigration measure passed in the United States.

Fig. 3: SB1070: An artist's point of view

The show took inspiration from artists Vasquez and Payan's (2002) poster and manifesto, *Keep on Crossin'*: "For long before there were borders, there were crossers. We are the proud sons and daughters of these crossers, and we hold that crossing is a basic human right." Molly introduced the term "cosmic immigration," a metaphor that invited students to think about immigration as a broad topic that encompasses physical, social, technological, and political borders. The idea that if crossing comes to a standstill, life comes to a standstill was a concept that resonated with students as learners, inquirers, and artists. Here students argue that migration and crossing is about openings and relations across difference:

> **Ariana** (who identified as Mexican American): If we stop [crossing] altogether we'll run out of space to explore, we'll run out of ideas, there'll be nowhere else to go.

> **Vanessa** (who identified as Bahamian): It would stop social development. How would we develop as a community if we aren't open to new things? Different ways of speaking, living, etc. It opens new doors.

> **Shona** (who identified as Arab American): I agree. It opens up new ideas, like new fashion, food. You learn a lot about different cultures. If we didn't let anyone in, we'd just be Americans.

Ariana, Vanessa, and Shona articulate understandings of a connection between the movement of people and the movement of ideas across spaces of relation. They argue that crossing invites an outward-facing exchange and openness to new ideas; space to explore; and opportunities to learn across difference. In this brief excerpt of conversation, they link the relational benefits of crossing to intellectual, personal, cultural, and social development.

When I asked what stood out to students from the year, Natasha named this unit on immigration. When I asked why, she said it was because of the relational understandings that were made possible through this way of teaching.

> Yeah, the immigration unit. I really liked that because that's not something that you'd typically discuss in an English class … we didn't talk about who migrated where or who emigrated from this country to that… more so we talked about the immigrant experience …in relation to us. …. I think that discussing that in English class gave people a new way of thinking -- perhaps a better way of thinking and I think that the goal is to open minds and to pretty much eliminate single stories.

Natasha's comment reflects her understanding of pedagogy that cultivates transformative ways of being in relation. She suggests that arts-based inquiry shifted the emphasis away from othering immigrants or exploring immigration at a distance, and toward being in closer relation to themselves, thereby offering a "better" way of thinking. She links the notion of better to the concept of eliminating single stories from Adichie's (2009) TED talk that students had watched earlier in the year. In making this link, she suggests that the relational focus in their learning was linked to openness and less essentializing of cultural experience.

Because so many students found deep relational work atypical, as the work was happening, it invited critical understandings of their own education and what makes for good teaching and learning. Ariana suggested that pedagogies of relation that invite looking outward through the arts and dialogue to ask,

"Who are you?" don't just enhance the learning in that one classroom, but have a reach into other areas of the curriculum and daily life.

> If you're in one class learning perspective is important, you're kind of going to use that in other parts of your life – so whether it be critiquing someone's art, it sort of just goes on to having empathy and having a perspective for somebody else's like feelings and the situations going on in their life and being able to understand them, it just sort of counts for everything. Perspective is just something you need – you need to have it in order to connect with other people and to learn better and just to be able to explore your surroundings – that and curiosity.

While the arts are often framed as nice to have but not needed, Ariana makes the case that the arts with a relational focus can help you learn better, but also offer something you "need to have." Ariana makes the case that the perspectives gained from arts pedagogy can provide a critical foundation for human connection and a pathway to fundamental ways of being in relation that are rooted in curiosity, learning, and empathy. These relational bonds, connections, and tightened spaces of relation made collective commitments possible, as I'll explore in the next section.

Who Are We? Building Collective Commitments and Making Appeals for Change

Rather than putting activism solely in the hands of organizers outside of school, the classroom can become its own site of activism when students have opportunities to be agents of change for each other. When engaged critically and authentically, arts-based pedagogies can unveil the ways that power is exercised, and in doing so, make calls to activism. In these ways, the arts can offer ongoing opportunities for students to speak up and out to one another in the classroom across a range of forms of art and representation. Arts-based opportunities to explore *who are we?* are one way to build energy around collective concerns, helping students to see the power they have to affect audiences to think and to change (Royster, 2000).

After students in 10th grade read the play, *The Laramie Project* (Kauffman, 2000), they were invited to research and write their own plays in a similar style, bringing together and juxtaposing multiple voices to tell a story about an issue in their city that they cared about. Students self-organized into groups around collective concerns, interviewed family and friends, co-wrote their polyvocal scripts, and performed them for the class. In creating their scripts, students were tasked with bringing multiple voices together, highlighting shared concerns, and accounting for resonances and dissonances across voices of participants. The form of a script allowed for creative juxtaposition and arrangement to make their appeal to an audience on their chosen issue.

One group (Sofia, Sheri, Travis, and Max) chose the topic of district budget cuts for their project. The school district at that time was in the midst of a years-long and poorly managed financial crisis and deep cuts to education were pending. This group's polyvocal script was composed of excerpts from interviews with teachers, parents, and students. Using patterns, juxtaposition, and overlapping voices, they transformed their research into a script that they performed for the class. Their work highlights four aspects of funding that they were especially worried about: transportation, arts, sports, and

extracurriculars. They called their piece "Start at the Top," making their appeal to those who held fiscal control of these important aspects of their everyday lives.

Start at the Top

Overlapping Voices: *Go to the top. Businessmen, philanthropists, the top of the school district and the mayor himself.*
Parent: Parents and teachers must work together – the education of our children is the future. I am sure there are other areas to be cut. Although I am not a proponent of excess taxation I wouldn't mind paying a little more if it helps our kids
Parent: *The only ppl who can fix it are at the top.*
Student: *But they won't hear us unless there are enough people that the bottom who shout loud enough to hear us.*
Parent: Start with our state reps who need to get to the Governor.
Student: I'm entirely sure who should fix this but maybe the head of the school district.
Student: We as kids have to voice our thoughts and voice them to everyone. Someone needs to help the School District in the sticky situation it is in. I think we need to go straight to the top with our ideas and let them know this is not the way to go!
Scene 1

Transportation Cuts

Student: This would be a major kick in stomach for schools' attendance percentages since some kids won't be able to get to and from school every day.
Parent: Cutting transportation would make truancy would go up. Children would not get to school because most do not live in walking distance and most parents could not afford to pay for transportation
Student: This is a terrible idea. Many students travel ridiculous amounts to get to school. Not every student can afford to pay $20 for septa busses not including transfers or train rides. I also think this would cause many students to drop out seeing as they have no way to get school
Parent: School transportation should be cut. It is much easier to keep kids at the schools in their neighborhoods. The school they live near is just as adequate as the one they are being bused to.
Student: It would be extremely hurtful for kids to pay for their own transportation and attendance would go down. Take this school for example. Some kids take 2 busses and trains, and it costs a lot of $. Some kids could end up paying $10 and another $10 to get back and it would be ridiculous.
Overlapping Voices: *Everyone is on the same page. No one is going to come to school. No way will every student be able to afford that on a daily basis.*
Student: Cutting transportation is like cutting school out for kids altogether. It gives us as kids an excuse not to go to school. Kids rely on public transportation. To get to school because they can't walk, they can't drive, or their parents don't have the time in the morning to take them. Cutting out transportation would make a higher dropout rate, especially in high school.
Student: I don't understand how this could happen – for instance at my school, I take 3 busses to get home. Some students even take trains because of how far away they live. I don't think anyone wants to start paying to get on the bus to get home from school.
Parent: I think if push comes to shove, we should try to cut transportation to keep more important things in school and I am sure there are other ways.
Scene 2

Sports, Music, Extra-Curricular Cuts

Teacher: I don't think is a good idea to cut art, music – some kids get a LOT out of it. As for extra-curriculars, an even worse idea. There has to be a way to find money. Extra-curriculars are one of the best things schools have, and some kids get more out of that their regular classes. If you cut sports there will be a lot of kids with nothing to do at their schools. Think about all the kids that play sports. It's a lot.
Student: As much as I hate to say it as an artist myself, I think the $$ going to art and music could go to better causes. Even though most students are only exposed to art in schools. That's how terrible I believe the budget crisis is. On the other hand, extra-curriculars are what set students apart applying for college. The one with more is going to have the advantage. There needs to be a way to keep that going.
Teacher: Art is *very* important. It has been proven that kids do better in math and reading when they are involved in music and arts. If these are cut, students will not have anything to look forward to so we shouldn't cut them.
Parent: As for sports, a lot of students rely on them for scholarships plus being involved in sports gives them an extra push to work harder in academics.
Student: We all came to school for art and music and love it. I can't imagine not coming to school and getting music. It's an awful thought.
Student: I love music so much and never want that to be cut. I am not really into sports, but singing is my thing. I'm grateful to come to a school that lets me do that every day.
Student: I love music *and* sports and I don't want to see either cut. Kids need sports and music AND art. Dropping these things may be like dropping students. That may be the only thing they come to school for.
Student: Someone important needs to see what damage may be caused and try to fix it.
Overlapping Voices: *Face it, us kids rely on everything that the district offers, and we can't afford to lose a thing. Agree.*

Fig. 4: Start at the top

Centering multiple voices was a figurative way for students to "shout loud enough" about school funding, to raise their voices as "people at the bottom" to "the people at the top." Students relied heavily on public transportation to get to and from school, some taking two to four buses and sometimes trains, traveling up to two hours each way to get to and from school from different neighborhoods across the city. They liked school and they often talked and joked about the efforts that they made on a daily basis to get there. Public transportation for these young people, made their lives work every single day. *Everyone is on the same page* they assert, taking up a collective voice. Pending transportation cuts, they argue, there is "No way every student will be able to afford that." The consequence, they implore, is a fundamental one: "No one is going to come to school."

Earlier in this paper, we saw how Ariana reframed the arts as important "need" for cultivating empathy and connection. In this script, the students also redefine what is a need, centering what they collectively cared most about in school: music, sports, and extracurriculars. "Kids don't just *want* sports and music"— they *need* it, students suggest (emphasis added). Losing these aspects of school life, they argue, would be like "dropping students." "It may be the only thing they come to school for." The students reframe

music, arts, and extracurriculars not as extras, but, like bussing, as basic needs to literally be present at school. Aware that decisions come down to money, their script ends with a challenge to the concept of what the district can afford, reframing what is at stake and for whom: *we* (the students) can't *afford* to lose a thing! With this, they assert what is of value to *them* as experience, access, and opportunity when they know well the fragility of arts experience in school, and the ways that the arts are routinely cut and cast as nonessential.

The arts-based invitation to explore *who are we?* meant developing a shared concern, collectively researching that concern, and representing their research to an audience. The form of a polyvocal script provided a unique space to put forward a collective voice, argument, and appeal, while at the same time accounting for many voices. Pushing back against the ways that literacy classrooms tend to privilege univocal and authoritative texts by focusing on singular meaning and comprehension, a polyvocal script was one arts-based mode of teaching and learning that made space for relations, multiple voices, and contestation. Polyvocality can be likened to what Royster (2000) calls a kaleidoscopic view, where multiple meanings can push learning contexts to be more reciprocal, complex, interactive, and rooted in mutual exchange. The script was a way to curate these voices and bring them together into a transitional space among and between participants both in the classroom and beyond.

Implications

The design of relational learning spaces through the arts looked like what Anzaldúa (1987) calls sites of cultural contact, where diverse people come into contact and where the spaces among and between individuals shrink with intimacy (p. i). What I have aimed to show is that relational pedagogy wasn't guaranteed simply through arts inclusion, nor was it something that teachers could simply claim or assert into being through classroom norms and expectations. The three dimensions offer a way to think about how relational pedagogy was and can be facilitated through architecture and planning. More specifically, the dimensions offer insight into how pedagogical design can frame and take into account different angles on being in deep relation—opening up spaces to be in relation to oneself, to one another, and to the world around us. Through the examples, I have invited audiences to consider how an ongoing placement of the arts at the center of classroom life can support the design of these deep relational spaces.

The framework explored here resonates with what Irwin and de Cosson (2004) characterize as a way of living" in the classroom, in other words: not just *a way of knowing*, but an embodied practice that involves a *way of being* and *way of doing*. This practice knits together the personal and political by centering dialogue within and across the relations of self, each other, and world. As such, it shifts the focus of research on art in schools away from arts activities or projects and toward transformative practice and relational, arts-based ways of being. It invites audiences to consider a design of arts-based pedagogy that provides students with ongoing opportunities to negotiate *I, you*, and *we* across the everyday work of schooling and over time.

When we ask students to stop and think about what's important, to consider and debate meaning, and to determine what is necessary for change, we have a moral obligation to ask ourselves about the ways of knowing and being that our pedagogical choices cultivate in schools. Pedagogies of relation must extend beyond a bidirectional teacher-student relationship, in order to decenter where knowledge comes from and who controls it in the classroom. Arts-based pedagogy can be designed in a way that centers the generation of knowledge among and between relations, thus decentering power in the classroom.

In this way, asking questions, who am I, who are you? and who are we? are important to inquiry-based teaching and learning in any context committed to social justice, because these questions are questions that push teaching and learning toward more ethical arrangements. They can humanize learning spaces by centering students as individuals and as members of community who negotiate identity, each other, and shared concerns as part of an ongoing practice. Strategic uses of the arts can support the cultivation of these practices, can generate knowledge in the spaces among and between us, and can draw attention to the means and ends of teaching, making space for new arrangements that are simultaneously more intimate and humane.

Notes

1. I refer to the arts broadly as they were taken up in this context and drawing from recent theoretical shifts that consider the arts within an epistemology that relies upon the aesthetic, the imagination, and the embodiment of meaning (Abbs, 2003).

2. Although these consequences are not entirely new historically (Tremmel, 2006), they are heightened by the ways in which privatization is rapidly proliferating in the educational landscape.

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