

The background of the cover is a vibrant yellow-green color with a pattern of radiating lines emanating from the top center, creating a sunburst effect. In the upper center, there is a dark blue semi-circular arch. Inside this arch is a white silhouette of a tree. Below the arch, the title "LEARNing Landscapes" is written in a blue, cursive-style font, following the curve of the arch. A faint, light-colored map of the United States is visible in the background, partially obscured by the sunburst and the arch.

LEARNing Landscapes

*Creativity: Insights, Directions,
and Possibilities*

Autumn 2012 Vol. 6 No. 1

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Published in Canada in the fourth quarter of 2012
Imprimé au Canada au 4^{ème} trimestre 2012

ISSN 1913-5688

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Statement of Purpose



LEARNing Landscapes™ is an open access, peer-reviewed, online education journal supported by LEARN (Leading English Education and Resource Network). Published in the autumn and spring 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, by welcoming 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.

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Editorial



There is a growing interest in the role that creativity can play in education to keep up with the fast-moving, 21st Century knowledge society. The definition of creativity has been somewhat elusive as understandings have evolved and changed over the last millennium. It was once thought that creativity was solely a partner of intelligence, and an innate quality found only in highly intelligent people who, during their lifetime, drastically changed the thinking within a particular domain. Largely by studying the lives of such renowned thinkers in many disciplines (see Gardner and Csikszentmihalyi below), it has become apparent that what has been called “Big C” creativity, or eminent creativity, involves knowledge, motivation, perseverance, nurturing/scaffolding, and frequently a good deal of time (Craft, Jeffrey, & Leibling, 2001). Thinking has changed, however. There is an understanding now that “Small c” creativity is a feature possessed by all people and can be developed and taught (Vialte & Verenikina, 2000, p. 112). Individuals have different kinds of propensities that lend themselves to novel ways of using their talents (not only in the arts) to find new and effective solutions in everyday problem solving. These can be nurtured, are context dependent, and culturally shaped. This democratic understanding of creativity is what permeates this issue of LEARNing Landscapes. We are proud to say that it is our eleventh and largest issue to date, and represents the work of university researchers, graduate students, and practitioners from nine different countries. This rich array of work is organized alphabetically in the issue, but for the purposes of the editorial overview, the submissions have been clustered according to themes that emerged while I was immersed in the excellent work of these authors. As in the past, our issue begins with invited commentaries on creativity from luminaries in the field.

Commentary

We are extremely honoured and privileged to have commentaries from some very eminent people. **Howard Gardner**, known worldwide for his theory of multiple intelligences, is the John H. and Elisabeth A. Hobbs Professor of Cognition and

Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. His interest in creativity has its roots in his own music education. He turned his attention away from music for a number of years while he explored the notion of multiple intelligences. In the 1990s, he shifted his focus back to creativity and studied the lives of “seven creators of the modern era.” He recounts in our interview how he was most surprised about their personalities—ambitious, wanting to make a mark, and willing to take risks and fail along the way. He realized during this research, contrary to what had been thought, that creativity was not a one-shot thing in a particular moment, but more the product of a way of being. He discusses his current focus on “good work,” on the moral and ethical implications of creativity, and suggests that the task of educators in fostering creativity is to stimulate young minds to pursue inquiry in ways that lead them to trying to do, and ultimately doing, the “right thing.”

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi is the C.S. and D.J. Davidson Professor of Psychology at the School of Behavioral and Organizational Sciences, and the Peter F. Drucker Professor in the Graduate School of Management, at Claremont Graduate University. He is renowned for his long-time work on creativity and the theory of “flow” within the creative process. Initially, he was surprised when the highly creative people he studied repeatedly talked about how childhood “boredom,” or a restriction due to isolation or illness, stimulated their creativity. He suggests that creativity is fostered by solitude, scaffolding, and passion. He cautions that technology has a tendency to steal important childhood moments, which otherwise would give rise to creative activity, because it is so constantly accessible and distracting.

Jessica Hoffman Davis is the founding director of the Arts in Education Program at Harvard’s Graduate School of Education, and continues to research and write passionately about art and children’s development. In her commentary she discusses the widely varying definitions of creativity that range from small everyday acts, to more global contributions. She recounts how, as a student, she pushed back against the demands of academic conformity which resulted in reprimand, rather than encouragement. Then, as a teacher herself, she lamented when she saw this conformity in youngsters who tended to copy each other’s work. She poignantly highlights how her son taught her an important lesson about creativity at age six when he produced a drawing to explain an event at school rather than telling her about it. Excited by both his approach and product, she framed the picture and hung it up proudly to showcase his creativity. The important insight occurred when her son, some years later, confessed that he had “copied” his friend’s drawing from memory. As a result of this experience, she began to question the very fixed notions of creativity that many educators hold, ones that do not permit replication, even though, she argues, that

replication develops aesthetic judgment, vocabulary acquisition, and new possibilities of thought.

Jane Piirto is the Trustees' Distinguished Professor at Ashland University. Well known for her research in talent development (Piirto Pyramid of Talent Development), she is also a poet and novelist. She lives a full life fueled by thinking, talking, writing, teaching, and presenting about creativity. In this commentary she provides a lively overview of what a week of "living creativity" looks and feels like by describing her daily activities. These are predicated on five key attitudes for the creative process—openness to experience, risk-taking, tolerance for ambiguity, groups trust, and self-discipline—and seven necessary dimensions which include inspiration, insight, imagery, imagination, intuition, incubation, and improvisation.

Before becoming an inspirational Art teacher at St. George's Elementary School in Montreal, **Zenia Dusaniwsky** taught in a range of remote and International School settings around the world. These experiences ignited her passion for teaching art and developing creativity in young children. She believes that creativity is present in everyone and needs to be fostered by providing spaces within structured parameters for play and experimentation, for celebrating mistakes, and for learning to collaborate. She shows, with interesting student examples, how she promotes creativity as a form of critical literacy.

Promise of Creativity

A theme cutting across several of the submissions for this issue of LEARNing Landscapes is the "promise of creativity." **Connery** and **John-Steiner** suggest that the power of imagination is best understood by using a cultural-historical lens based on the work of Lev Vygotsky. Their approach, known as CHACE (cultural-historical approach to creative education), is the *mindful, intentional nurturing of a system of activities resulting in novel interpretations, enhanced understandings, imaginative problem solving, critical innovations, and artistic creations achieved with the support of a community of learners and teachers*. They describe, with lovely examples, how creative learning environments can be established to scaffold student learning and development, to encourage play, imagination, and innovation, to promote self-worth and resilience, to cultivate competence and cognitive pluralism, and to encourage an apprenticeship approach to content development through meaningful and real-life social justice projects. **Treffinger**, **Selby**, and **Schoonover** argue that it is not how creative one is, but more importantly, how one is creative. They juxtapose stories of two students, Michael, who gravitates toward novelty, and Lucy, who embraces structure, to

illustrate two very different ways in which each demonstrate personal creativity and problem-solving styles. They suggest that educators must seek and embrace the differences in students' approaches to tasks in order to foster four categories of personal creativity: generating ideas, digging deeper into ideas, fostering an openness and courage to explore ideas, and listening to one's inner voice, and three dimensions of problem-solving: orientation to change, manner of processing, and ways of deciding. **Sprague** and **Parsons** suggest in a review of the literature that current thinking about creativity is culturally rooted and biased in the Western world toward individualism, genius, eminence, and fine art. This limits extensively how creativity is defined and viewed. They argue that an expanded and inclusive, or ecological notion, of creativity is needed to create spaces in which the promise of creativity can be realized in each and every student.

Power of Self-Study/Practitioner Inquiry

Self-study has been used extensively to help practitioner inquirers (Cochran-Smyth & Lytle, 2009) to study questions about which they are passionate, and get a deeper understanding of their teaching and learning practices. It requires extensive reflection (Brookfield, 1995) and frequently involves the engagement of "critical friends" who offer both feedback and support in the process. **Dobson** shares how two incidences in her educational practice inspired her to look more deeply, using the lenses of Arendt, Bergson, and Damasio (her "critical friends"), to understand how the "essential identity" of a teacher is what creates the necessary caring, respectful, and playful space in which creativity can be nourished and flourish. **Seiki** discusses how by creating "sound stories" of her American Japanese family's imprisonment experiences during the Second World War she was able to uncover counter stories of agency and resistance. These stories gave her a "powerful reliving" of what had transpired and a way to counter the pain she experienced as a result of these racist events. She discovered that this innovative form of representation not only invoked deep empathy from others, but also provided important suggestions for classroom practices. **Russell** and **Owen** describe how practitioner inquiry can include students as researchers. In their research at Deacon High School in Northeast England, teachers worked with students to develop research skills that would examine creative practices across five departments in the school. Using interviews and photographs, and arts-informed representational forms, the students were encouraged to identify new ways of looking at their school context and practices. The inclusion of student voices in the research process enhanced and widened the lenses for looking at creative activity and exploring ways for change. **Ingersoll** delves into stories of her own schooling to show the disruptive, discouraging, and silencing nature of correction and enforced conformity. She

juxtaposes these stories with her experience as a graduate student where writing without censure was encouraged and allowed her stifled creativity and voice to emerge and grow. **Zepeda** reflects on stories of her experiences as a novice Kindergarten teacher to show how she grappled with classroom management and moved from a “punitive” to “instructive” form of discipline. Her candid accounts of her evolution as she moved to accepting, understanding, and involving students in learning, rather than reacting negatively to problems, have helped her to develop creative pathways for fostering meaningful learning, especially for students with particular challenges.

Fostering Creativity in Classrooms

Cline and **Pope Edwards** et al. describe, with delightful examples, a day in Filastrocca Preschool in Pistoia, Italy. They show how a library teacher in this Reggio Emilia-based school supports literacy development through imagination, creative activities, and social interaction, all of which foster a special empathy among these preschoolers. The Reggio Approach is based on the work of Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky, among others. It encourages collaboration among children, teachers, and parents, the co-construction of knowledge, the interdependence of individual and social learning, and how the role of culture is an important part of this interdependence (Rankin, 2004). **Jindal-Snape**, in her work at the University of Dundee, explains how theories of self-esteem, resilience, and emotional intelligence help to explain the psycho-social processes that children use when going through transitions. She illustrates, with examples, how various creative activities can help to make the thoughts and feelings of students more transparent than words, and with these new insights can help educators make student transitions much more positive. **Martínez-Álvarez**, **Ghiso**, and **Martínez**, in response to the educational policies in the United States that support standardized testing and decontextualized curricula, studied first-graders’ second language learning that was culturally and contextually grounded. Their findings show that second language learners thrive when immersed in relevant and creative activities that honour their cultural and linguistic identities. **View**, **Hanley**, **Stribling**, and **DeMulder** used oral history interviews of the schooling experiences of five people of colour to create videotaped, found poems around issues of race that had emerged in the interviews. Subsequently, 60 in-service teachers viewed the videotapes, and created and shared their own poems in response to what they had seen. This endeavour provided increased empathy for others’ experiences, encouraged creative agency among these teachers, and underscored the powerful dimensions of creative activity.

Creative Lenses in Higher Education

Using interviews, reflective sketchbooks, and observational notes as data, **Watson** explored undergraduate student perceptions of working in a creative learning environment at the University of East Anglia. Her study showed that the students benefited from working collaboratively, pursuing their own avenues of inquiry, and demonstrating their knowledge using different modalities. She suggests that performance-driven universities need to change the status quo and to experiment with creative pedagogies if they wish to keep pace with the 21st Century knowledge society. **Pinard** describes the resistance she encountered as a junior faculty member in a state university in the United States when she attempted to convince colleagues to revamp a Principles of Education course by using students' existing philosophical understandings and identities as a point of departure. She shares, using student examples, her experience of struggling to move away from standard curricula and assignments, and how she was able to inspire some to become more creative thinkers, learners, and teachers, while others were less able to take risks in the same way. She suggests that perhaps those who were unable to take risks were inhibited by personal philosophical orientations, and/or by the anticipated demands of the educational job market. This is a tension that resonates with other higher education contexts. At the University of Queensland in Australia, **O'Brien** echoes the work of Craft (2003) and Sawyer (2011) by positing that creativity is not fixed, but rather can be taught. She describes how pre-service teachers learn to use Storythread, a pedagogical program that grounds learners in real-life issues and events, and applies curriculum content using story, drama, inquiry, games, play, deep reflection, and engagement with the environment. The feedback from the students has been very positive and poignant. Much like Pinard discusses in her article, O'Brien underscores that this mindset may be counterintuitive, and therefore resisted by many who choose education as a profession. **Norris** criticizes the binary notions about work and play, and shows with interesting examples how he integrates play into his higher education teaching at Brock University to inspire both creativity and artistry. He acknowledges, though, how this type of teaching/living is often more difficult than it looks. **Lipszyc** describes how in a higher education writing course at SUNY Plattsburgh she used previous student models of writing to try to stimulate creativity among her students and to help them develop strategies to become autonomous writers. She suggests, as does Hoffman Davis mentioned earlier, that by mimicking or applying writing models used in the work of previous students, these writers gained self-confidence, aesthetic judgment, and the vocabulary and practices of the writing genres, and were scaffolded into new areas of possibility. **Badenhorst, Moloney, Rosales, and Dyer** at Memorial University describe the negative experiences that graduate students have with thesis writing because of the literacy demands that are expected of them, and because of an

implicit “othering” they experience in the process. Through an extended workshop with a total of 22 students over two semesters, they presented research genres, rules and conventions and at the same time encouraged creativity, choice and the inclusion of the “self” in research writing. The outcomes were positive, productive, and liberating, suggesting that the “cohortness” of the group, along with an adept balance of structure and flexibility, help to build confidence and to scaffold possibility in thesis writing. **Clarke** et al. examine how they worked with five undergraduate social work students to bridge the gap between mainstream and Indigenous social work by interrogating the dominant Eurocentric thinking that exists in academia. They illustrate this journey visually by representing their work in a “social work tree,” a metaphorical representation for the past, present, and future of social work, and elaborate in some detail in their discussion showing concretely how the use of metaphor enhances understanding.

Creative Spaces for Professional Learning

In the fast-moving world of learning and technology, there is a growing demand for innovative professional development that will meet needs, and build capacity and sustainability in educational contexts. **Johansson-Fua, Ruru, Sanga, Walker, and Ralph** describe an interesting professional learning mentoring initiative among leaders from Fiji, Tonga, New Zealand, and Canada. They based the work on their beliefs that all mentoring is fundamentally relational, and that metaphors help to explain and create mental images by connecting the familiar and the strange and result in clarifying meaning, evoking emotions, and guiding action. They describe a series of three workshops held in the South Pacific and attended by a total of 94 educational leaders from a variety of disciplines and professions. Their study showed that the participants were able to use cultural metaphors to adapt generic mentoring principles meaningfully to fit specific contexts, and that the collaborative, cross-disciplinary nature of the groups enhanced the overall process. **Córdova, Hudson, and Kumpulainen** share how the Cultural Landscapes Collaboratory (CoLab), made up of educational researchers interested in innovation for 21st Century learning, used their theory of innovation and action called *ResponsiveDesign* as a basis for a summer leadership institute. The institute comprised a National Writing Project, a school district, and museum leaders in St. Louis Missouri in the United States who worked on the use of *ResponsiveDesign* (a model for exploring, envisioning, prototyping, and enacting teaching practices) to explore creatively the development of partnerships among formal and informal learning contexts. They describe with rich visuals a number of the activities in which they were involved, the enthusiasm of the participants, and the interesting ideas that emerged as a result. Their work attests to the potential

synergy that exists when leaders from formal and informal contexts collaborate. **Davis, Aruldoss, McNair, and Bizas**, researchers at the University of Edinburgh, building on the work of Csikszentmihalyi (1990), Sawyer (2012), and others, describe the CREANOVA project. This was an investigation involving 507 participants from technical and creative industries in four countries on how relational issues diminish or enhance creativity in learning/working contexts, and how creative learning environments can be promoted. Their quantitative and qualitative results highlighted the collaborative nature of creativity. Their findings indicated that creativity is motivated internally and externally, by a number of different factors, and often is generated from a wish to help others rather than for individual gains. Furthermore, environment, learning, freedom (within flexible frameworks), and interaction were significant factors contributing to creativity and innovation. They conclude with an interesting discussion on how their findings have implications for teaching and learning in schools.

Reprinted Article

Last, but certainly not least, **Adler**, from the Faculty of Management at McGill University, suggests persuasively that we need to focus on creativity and beauty at the macro level of society, rather than on mundane aspects at the micro level. She argues convincingly, with a range of examples, that our aspirations should be grounded in careful observations, rather than assumptions, that will inspire and result in creative, courageous, and innovative possibilities. These will contribute to a peaceful and prosperous world for the future.

LBK

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Lynn Butler-Kisber (B. Ed., M. Ed., McGill University; Ed. D., Harvard University), a former elementary school teacher, is Professor in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education in the Faculty of Education at McGill where she is Director of the Centre for Educational Leadership and the McGill Graduate Certificate in Educational Leadership Programs I & II. She has served as Director of Undergraduate Education Programs, Director of Graduate Studies and Research in Educational Studies, Associate Dean in Education, and Associate Dean and Dean of Students, and on numerous committees inside the University and in the educational milieu. In 2007 she was appointed to the Board of Directors of St. George's Schools. She teaches courses on language arts, qualitative research, and teacher education. She has a particular interest in feminist/equity and social justice issues, and the role of arts-based analysis and representation in qualitative research. Her current research and development activities include the McGill/Champlain College Mentoring Project, the Quebec/Vermont International Professional Learning Community Project, and other work with teachers and school leaders in Dominican Republic, France, and Bhutan. The focus of this work includes leadership, literacy, student engagement, professional development, and qualitative methodologies and she has published and presented extensively in these areas. Most recent is her book entitled, *Qualitative Inquiry: Thematic, Narrative and Arts-Informed Perspectives*, published by Sage.

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Commentary

Reflections on Some Dangers to Childhood Creativity

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Claremont Graduate University

ABSTRACT

In this commentary, renowned author and psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi reflects on the state of creativity in today's children. From his many years of studying creativity, Dr. Csikszentmihalyi has observed that the most creative people share a common experience in childhood: that of being left alone, often in a barren environment, and of being bored. Paradoxically, solitude and boredom become the springboard from which a creative passion is born. Finally, the author questions whether the presence of technology in children's lives today is an opportunity for learning or a source of effortless experiences that are not conducive to nurturing creativity.

Despite the fact that I am writing these notes right after Thanksgiving, which means that Christmas carols already drift in the air and lovely light-bulb decorations swing between the neighborhood's trees, in writing about creativity I feel overcome by a distinctly Grinchish feeling. It's such a lovely topic, so why is it so difficult to be upbeat about it?

Creativity has been a steady interest of mine for the past 58 years, ever since we started the first research on young artists with J.W. Getzels. Or even earlier, when I had no idea as yet that you could research such topics. But while at the beginning I was driven by a curiosity to understand how such a wonderful thing as creativity was possible, now I am more worried about understanding what we should do so as not to lose it.

Clearly creativity, at least creativity with a capital “C,” waxes and wanes across cultures and through time. For all we know, potentially creative children are born at the same rate in every culture and generation. But the opportunity to transform the potential into actuality does vary a great deal. Athens was a hotbed of new ideas and wonderful products two and a half millennia ago; Florence in the Fifteenth Century; Paris in the Nineteenth. Is the United States poised to be the next cauldron of creative ideas, the kind of ideas that give hope for a meaningful, worthwhile future to the rest of the world? Or will G.B. Shaw’s quip to the effect that “America is the first great civilization to start declining before flourishing” come true? There are troubling signs that point towards the second alternative. Everyone knows that in terms of test scores, the US sadly underperforms most advanced countries in terms of reading, mathematics, and science. Even though such scores are no indication of creativity, they are the substance from which creativity can arise. So it is worrisome to see that despite the enormous material advantages enjoyed by the US, its children are less able to read and do mathematics than the children of Finland, Poland, or Luxembourg, not to mention China, Korea, or Singapore.

This concern took added weight as I was listening to the individuals whose interviews formed the basis of my book, *Creativity*. These were men and women in their sixties and older who had left their mark on the culture, contributing to the advancement of the arts and the sciences. A dozen were Nobel laureates, two of them twice over.

One of the things a few of these unimpeachably creative folks mentioned spontaneously was that creativity in children was becoming endangered. When I asked why, an unexpected answer kept cropping up: “Well, the problem” they would say, “is that children are no longer bored.” At first this answer appeared to me strange and counterintuitive. But after a while, I began to see that it contained more than a grain of truth.

It turns out that many of these outstanding persons started the work that has changed the world we live in because they had to learn to find enjoyment in a barren environment. Vera Rubin, an astronomer who revolutionized our understanding of how galaxies move, remembers that when she was seven years old her family moved from the center of Chicago to the edge of the city, into an apartment building across from a vast cemetery. Without friends, in a strange new place, she felt lonely and lost. Because of the location, the nights were dark, and for the first time in her life she could experience, laying in her bed, the full impact of the starry skies. She spent more and more time just watching the slow wheeling of stars and planets over her

head. Fortunately her father, who was an engineer, understood Vera's budding passion, and he helped make a small telescope out of an old cardboard tube and a few lenses. After she was able to see clearly the rings of Saturn and the moons of Jupiter, she said, "I could not understand why every adult would not be an astronomer." In a nutshell, Vera Rubin's experience was replicated in the majority of the creative individuals' life stories.

The commonalities included a temporary change of lifestyle or restriction of movement due to illness or isolation. In this condition the child felt lonely and bored. Then an unexpected event—often quite ordinary—opened some opportunities to the child. If the child seized the chance, and if she was fortunate to have the support of caring adults, the child began a journey out of a boring reality into the freedom of a new world. Of course, once the journey started, the child needed a great deal of good luck and support before her interest could make a difference—before the play became creativity.

Heinz Meyer-Leibnitz, a German physicist whose influential career was crowned by Nobel prizes being given to two of his students (for different discoveries started in his lab), had a touch of tuberculosis when he was still in grade school. His parents sent him to stay with a farmer's family in the Bavarian Alps. At first he laid in bed all of the time, while his hosts went on with the chores of their peasant life out in the fields and the meadows. Later he began to take short walks around the house, in the shadow of the pine forests. The inscrutable peaks of the Alps towering above the village led him to wonder about the nature of stone, and then matter in general. Slowly he was no longer alone and listless; he started reading about physics . . . half a century later he became the Director of the first European nuclear research laboratory in Grenoble, France.

Oscar Peterson, the great jazz pianist, grew up in a poor district in Montreal, Canada. His father was a railway porter who left Mondays on the transcontinental run to Vancouver, and returned home for a few days a week later. His mother left to work every morning, and Oscar was left home alone with nothing to do. But listening to old LP records, he became fascinated by the sound of piano, and kept badgering his parents to get an instrument like that for him. Finally his father gave in, and bought an old decrepit piano for his son—but with one condition: that Oscar would learn to play one new song every time he took a trip away on the railroad. The condition was accepted, and from then on as soon as his father came back from Vancouver, the first thing he did upon his return was to sit down in the parlor, and ask Oscar: "well, son, let me hear that song you were supposed to learn for today." And if the performance

was poor, he let his son know it in no uncertain terms; if the song was well played, he slapped his knees in satisfaction.

Or Ellen Lanyon, a painter who has become over the years a friend and mentor to dozens of beginning women artists. She grew up with a single mother who had to work each day. Just before starting school, Ellen came down with scarlet fever and had to stay in bed while her mother was away at her job. After the first day alone, she asked her mother if she could buy a pad of paper and some water colors for her to have something to do during the long boring day. Her mother obliged, and by the end of the day Ellen had filled the pad with paintings—of the window, the sofa, the cat in various poses. . . Out of paper, she asked the mother for another pad. Although the mother agreed, she forgot to buy more paper the next day. Growing increasingly bored, Ellen began to paint on her bed sheets, and then the walls of her room. When her mother returned from work, instead of bawling Ellen out as she had feared, she promised the girl to make sure to get more paper for her next day, which she then did. By then, however, Ellen had learned a life-changing lesson: nobody needs to be bored, and everyone has the means to escape that uncomfortable condition.

But why is it that not every child gets to learn this lesson? One possible reason, one that the creative people I interviewed mentioned more than any other, is that we have made it too easy for them to escape from boredom and loneliness. All they need to do is turn on a TV set, or a video game, and a stream of glittering information will capture their attention; no need to figure anything out, to use the resources of the mind, to engage reality—voilà—you are (virtually) connected with the stream of life, you are back where the action is, in the middle of things.

Of course, this diagnosis might be no more than the grumbling of an older generation looking disapprovingly at a world it no longer understands. I remember that when I was a child and started reading incessantly; my father (who was a fairly well educated man for his time and held a distinguished professional position) would become frustrated and angry: “What is wrong with you?” he would ask; “why aren’t you doing something useful? How can you waste all your time reading books?” Certainly, the written word can also become a medium of cheap escape. But it has the advantage of requiring more effort on the part of the reader, an effort that leads to habits of concentration and the development of skills involved in translating abstract linguistic signs into images, events, and ideas that can be used to create alternative worlds.

In our research we have learned that children and adolescents report being more happy and motivated when they watch TV than when they read. On the other

hand, in one study where we tried to predict which high school students would end up in good colleges, we found that two questions were the most significant predictors of whether the teenager would end up in college, and if they did, on the quality of the college they were admitted to. The two questions were: “do you have a TV set in your bedroom?” and, “are there more than 50 books in your home?” If the answer was “yes” to the first, and “no” to the second question, the chances that the teen would end up in college were slim, and the chances of ending up in an academically demanding college next to nil. And this controlling for parental income and education.

No one, I hope, will take these findings literally and conclude that if they remove the TV from the child’s room and buy 50 books at random from the nearest bookstore their offspring will be offered a scholarship at Harvard. These questions were simply diagnostic of a home environment that was either friendly or hostile to a child’s developing interests and mental discipline. And that environment includes, above everything else, a parental commitment to a lifestyle conducive to learning. Some of the parents of the creative people we studied had developed a network of relatives or friends who were interested in one topic or another, and then prevailed on them to become mentors to their children; uncle Rob introduced one child to bird watching and the attendant avian lore; cousin Rita took the other child, who loved dancing, to every ballet performance in the vicinity. Another creative person, who grew up in poor circumstances in the Northeast, remembers that the entire family would pile into their old car on weekends and drive to some free museum, historical site, or architectural site within driving distance; by the time she was a teenager, she felt connected to her environment by strong strands of meaningful memories.

It is also true that for a few children, the readily available technology offers tremendous opportunities for learning and creating new programs, new games, new apps, even new hardware. But how many are doing this? For the great majority, alas, the new media are a limitless market of consumption, a source of effortless experience. And once a child enters the network of electronic communication, it becomes difficult to step back from it. The cell phone and the Internet allow each child to be connected. Unfortunately, creativity requires periods of solitude. Without prolonged periods of concentration, which requires solitary “work,” only the most superficial creativity is possible.

Not that the creative person must always work alone. To the contrary, collaboration with peers who share the person’s interest is just as important for creativity as solitude is. The problem is that solitude has become more and more difficult to find. In another study, this with talented teenagers, we found that high school students

who had outstanding talent in mathematics, science, visual arts, music, and athletics spent more time alone than typical teenagers. And more importantly, they tended to feel less lonely when they were alone. Those talented teens who disliked being alone avoided solitude, and if they could not hang out with their friends they would be on the phone (this was before they could twitter, as the technology was not yet advanced enough. . .) By the time they were finishing high school, the teens who had trouble staying alone had reverted to being average students; those who could stand solitude continued to develop their talents. Of course, adolescents have always been gregarious, and solitude has been generally considered a fate only marginally better than death. To avoid feeling alone, children in the past had to learn how to make friends, how to relate to other people's world-views, and above all else—how to make the best of solitude itself, when there is no other choice. And those are usually the times when creativity flourishes best.

Obviously, it is not the technology itself that is to blame, but the use we make of it. The evolution of humanity has always involved a step forward in the use of tools, from stone axes to spaceships. In each case, the technology allowed us to do something faster, easier, more efficiently. At the same time, the introduction of new tools has also often resulted in unexpected consequences that were less desirable. This was not much of a problem as long as the technology was local and could do little damage. But when a medium can reach every child, and is so seductive that it captures a great deal of their free attention, then we better watch out.

Unfortunately, past efforts to control the media have been both ineffectual and reactionary. The Popes tried for centuries to prevent books to carry information that they considered dangerous to the readers' souls. The Nazi storm troopers burned books that undermined their ideology, and so did Mao Tse-tung's Red Guards—all to no avail. We clearly need more creative solutions for how to prevent new technologies from sapping the imagination of children.

And this leads us to another issue that we might want to consider: how can we expect children to be creative when we don't teach them how? Our entire educational system is geared to produce convergent thinkers, solvers of problems that are presented to them and for which tried-and-true solutions exist. Unfortunately, a great many of the problems that life will present them are ill defined, and cannot be solved by applying known methods. To use a simple parallel, we aspire to teach our children to be good chess players—but life is more like a poker game. If we wish children to be creative, we need to become more creative ourselves.

These are some of the Grinchean thoughts that the Holiday Season suggests. But there is one more. Fifty years ago, creativity was a minor concern of parents and educators. Each year, however, it appears that more and more concern is expressed about how to make our children more creative. This is a good trend, I think, up to a point. But it can be overdone: pursuing creativity at the expense of solid knowledge will lead nowhere. In fact, “creativity” does not exist in the abstract. You can be a creative physicist, in which case you are unlikely to be also a creative poet, or pastry chef, or plumber. And a creative poet is unlikely to do creative work as a physicist. So the first thing children need is to discover a passion, or at least an interest in a particular aspect of the world. And then they need the help of parents and teachers to develop their interest in creative ways—by understanding the context, the causes, and the consequences of the knowledge they are acquiring. They may not become Mozarts or Einsteins in the process, but their lives are likely to become meaningful and productive.



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Commentary

On Children's Creativity: Defying Expectation

Jessica Hoffmann Davis, Harvard University

ABSTRACT

Our definitions of creativity are varied and broad, ranging from the invention of small works to the achievement of global contributions. As arbitrary as they may be, our understandings generate stereotypical expectations for creative individuals and their behavior. I argue here that these expectations (from artistic work as a priori creative to originality as a criterion) may stand in the way of our appreciating children's artistic development and their acquisition of the necessary tools and confidence to find and break boundaries. I urge teachers to be creative themselves in their interpretation and acceptance of children's creative endeavors.

People have always told me I was “creative.” When I was little, I liked to draw and adults said I was “amazingly artistic” and “so creative.” What I liked about drawing was the worlds I could invent. For example, I would portray my classroom with my own versions of my classmates seated at desks arranged as I would have them, doing tasks that I invented as the director of the scene. At night, if I would wake up from a bad dream, my mother would suggest I try to dream the nightmare again but this time with a better ending. Not to forget a dream was like a movie and I was the director: the person in charge, the creative force behind whatever was afoot.

I used my drawings to design things, tiny-waisted 1950s evening dresses for idealized figures, high heel shoes (I had a great schema for making those) with or without polka dots or bows—whatever my creative inclinations were at the moment.

In adolescence, because I was creative, I wrote poetry instead of joining the science club. And indeed the poems were like my dreams—their content and direction in my control—a set of words bound together by rhythm and rhyme as determined by my creative vision and power.

When I struggled with (but enjoyed) mathematics in my cookie-cutter high school, the teachers said,

Not to worry. She's a creative type who will best succeed in the free arenas of the arts with no need for the rule-based constraints of mathematics and science. Surely a creative type like Jessica will blow up the science lab and flunk a mathematics exam.

These were the sort of stereotypical expectations that surrounded me and suited me well. Why reach for the hard-edged challenge of more prosaic domains when the soft contours of the arts would keep me safe and invite admiration from those who were less, shall we say, creative?

Perhaps unexpectedly, I went on to St. John's College where all students were required to take four years of science and mathematics and seminar and music and language and logic and there were no rain checks for creative students like me who would at any other institution be majoring in writing or theater or the visual arts. In this classical structured enclave, I learned a lesson that seemed to have escaped some of my teachers in high school. Euclid was a wildly creative guy and in reading his work, I was greatly inspired and loved not just to draw his elegant geometric figures, but also to experience the beauty of claims that built on each other and forged new ground. And how about Isaac Newton? When he experienced phenomena he couldn't explain in the available language and systems of the day, he invented a new vocabulary.

In my high school, when instead of writing a report on a country in the world, I invented one of my own, I was reproached. "Yes she's creative, but she has to learn to play by the rules, to color within the lines." Well Newton didn't believe that and neither did Euclid. They rewrote the rules and crossed the lines. They were creating worlds in their domains as surely as I had done in my dreams and drawings. Of course these world movers had to learn the territory and its borders before charging ahead; and so had I reviewed other countries and how they were framed before constructing a country of my own. But that diligence was not what my teachers expected from a creative type like me. There were no alternative modes of entry through the gates of their assignment.

From teaching and learning to world shaking and moving, creativity spans as many arenas of human thought as human beings can invent. And even as our perceptions may open and shut doors, we struggle for clear definition. I spoke recently with a high school student, a seventeen year old who excels at mathematics and science. He told me,

I think of myself as an artist because of how I see things. I never see things for what they are but for what they can be. I see a table and think, 'how would it look on its side or if somebody were hiding behind it?' (Davis, 2011, p. 35)

Is this not the essence of creativity? This imagining of possibilities beyond the given as in my reinvented classrooms and Newton's invention of the calculus.

One thing is certain. The word creativity is used with more frequency than clarity. Nonetheless, our various understandings have critical impact on children's development and the direction of their learning. Which child is creative? Which if any is not? My teachers thought that I was creative because I liked to draw and paint and write poetry. But I went to an elementary school where these activities were daily requirements that we all enjoyed (Davis, 2010). Did we all have a better shot at being creative than children who went to schools that excluded the arts? Are we all born with creative potential that is fostered or left to fade? And if fostered, toward what end?

What does adult creativity look like? The field-wide shifts that psychologists describe (for example, the invention of psychoanalysis or anti-balletic modern dance) in which whole systems of thought are expanded and transformed? Or the persistence and passion that keeps Aunt Martha painting seven hours a day without selling any of her work (Davis & Gardner, 1996)? And what about childhood creativity, as the early gift that writers and researchers have romanticized and celebrated since at least the turn of the century? We are all moved by the open expressivity of young children's drawings and many of us mourn the exchange of free-form emotion for the stiff "uncreative" stick figures that find their way into the work of children in middle childhood (Davis, 2005). Must you be Freud or Martha Graham to be truly creative? Or does the cherished expressivity of the young child or the ignored passion of Aunt Martha count as well? And who will be the judge?

Teaching art in the 1960s to elementary school-aged children, I admired the work of the youngest artists and longed for their creative immediacy. That "Oh here's a crayon and here's a line" kind of quicksilver rapport, so different from the weary

“What shall I draw?” refrain of the older children. The row of six little nine-year-old girls drawing flowers with smiles and perfect rainbows in blue skies—each landscape practically a replica of the others—would break my heart. Here surely, I thought, was the death of creativity.

But some researchers have recognized artistic development in the uniformity of these renderings, the agreed-upon box and triangle for a house, the stick and ball for the tree (Davis, 2005). They suggest that children at this stage are gaining vocabularies of forms, learning from one another the strategies and schemas that make for acceptable representations of what we see. “Come on girls,” I would plead without speaking, “be creative. Try drawing something of your own. Something different from the child sitting next to you.”

Was my restricted view of creativity as originality and difference out of step with the development I was unknowingly observing? Don’t we need to attain a vocabulary of conventional forms before we can break a boundary in the landscape of drawing? Did my unspoken disdain tell those girls that their participation in the sweet acquisition of shared images was a forbidden adventure?

On a day several years later, my son Benjamin, a first grader at the time, was late walking home from school. I was understandably distressed and he was duly apologetic. All of a sudden, a light went on in his head—an “Ah ha” moment creativity mavens might call it. “Wait a minute,” Ben said, “I’ll draw you a picture of what happened.” Charmed (don’t forget I too had been a creative child), I watched as he produced without hesitation a wonderful crayon drawing of a little boy bent over in some kind of discourse with a few snake-like creatures wiggling out of the earth. The rounded lean shape of the boy mirrored the shape of the creatures. “On the way home,” Benjamin explained, “I got into a conversation with a few worms.”

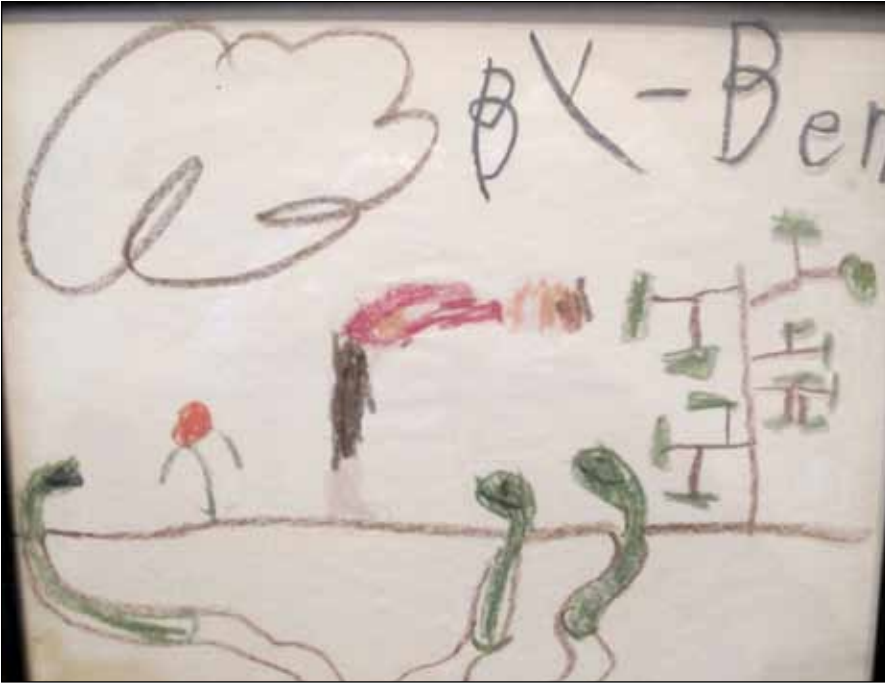


Fig. 1: Benjamin's first grade drawing circa 1978

I was naturally delighted by my son's wildly creative response to my concern. It was creative not only because he chose to tell his story in an image, not in words; but also because the drawing itself was so expressive—the articulated shapes responding to one another as if in genuine conversation.

Never one to limit the display of child art to refrigerator doors, I framed Ben's drawing and hung it with pride on our living room wall. Over time, it became apparent that Benjamin was less than delighted when folks would compliment him on his tour de force. Finally he confessed to me with great embarrassment that it wasn't his drawing at all. He had "stolen" it from a boy named Eric in his class. "Stolen?" I exclaimed. "I saw you draw it with my own eyes." "Yeah, but Eric made this drawing in class and I loved it. So I made it myself for you." He was ashamed.

How much of his attitude came from me? My persistent disappointment at the flowers and rainbows all in a row; my disinterest in the stick figures that children draw at a certain age, apparently relieved that their sticks and circles will serve as a visual short hand for "person." Or perhaps by first grade in Ben's progressive school,

originality was touted as an objective in art. "Make it your own." "Don't copy from your neighbor." "Be creative." Hadn't Ben been creative putting to good use an image that he had admired in class? Wasn't he creative lifting crayon to paper and realizing without hesitation the very marks that had inspired him earlier in the day?

If only Ben knew the number of great artists that collect and "copy" the artwork of children (Fineberg, 1997). Grown-up professional artists with work in art museums using as inspiration and theme the literal copy of a child's drawing, without even mentioning (as Ben did with Eric) the name of the child from whom the image, in Ben's words, was "stolen." Miro, Klee, Picasso, and first grader Benjamin Davis. All creative artists who spoke for themselves through the representations of others. A generative recycling rather than blatant theft.

Creativity can be found in any realm of ideas from our dreams to our drawings to the breaking of boundaries in science or mathematics. As educators we need to think creatively about children's expression. We must be open to alternatives and to performance that defies expectation. Only then may we find even in replication (traditionally the anathema of creativity) the development of the sort of aesthetic judgment and acquisition of vocabulary with which our students can go on to forge new and joyful directions of thought. Definitions and expectations offer clarity but they threaten to confine. How do we encourage children to make their own worlds and to feel comfortable using as media for their creations whatever inspiration they may find?

Benjamin's admiration and re-creation of a drawing were early signs of the professional artist he grew up to be. Were I to turn the clock back several decades, I'd have celebrated the rainbow girls for their interest in their friends' images and in the world of images that they themselves could create. My teachers, were they still around, would no doubt wish that they'd welcomed my reinvented assignment. Whatever our understandings of and aspirations for creativity, we must remember to remind children that they are the directors of the worlds they are creating, that their imagination and the imagination of others are what keep us moving forward. Creativity knows no bounds and neither should their thoughts. Take this from someone who has always been called "creative."

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Commentary

A Portrait of the Creative Process in Children's Learning

Zenia Dusaniwsky, St. George's Elementary School

ABSTRACT

In this filmed interview, Zenia Dusaniwsky describes her first teaching assignment in South America over 20 years ago and how she eventually became the art teacher at St. George's Elementary School in Montreal. She believes that all children can learn, but not necessarily at the same pace or in the same way. She stresses it is important to "highlight mistakes and failures...not as an endpoint but as part of the process." Moreover, she feels that creativity is as critical as literacy in fostering the overall development of students and their ability to take on future life challenges. She concludes by presenting some of her students' creative art projects.

Can you start off by telling us how you decided to become an art teacher?

Essentially the decision fell into my lap, so to speak, as a church bulletin. I graduated in 1990 and at the time there were not a lot of jobs available in Montreal. I came across a posting for a job teaching in South America. I knew very little about South America and I knew even less about teaching art but being young and adventurous I was game to take on the challenge. So I went and my teaching load at that time was to do the elementary / middle school art as well as middle school science, computers, high school gym...so I had a little bit of everything. I had no formal training in art at that time. In fact, I hadn't done any art myself, probably since my elementary school experience and so I essentially flew by the seat of my pants and had real joy, pure enjoyment in terms of engaging the students for the pleasure of creating art. But that's essentially where it stayed for those first couple of years.

Upon returning from South America I went back and actually did a Certificate in teaching Art Education so that I would have a background in terms of techniques and strategies and a little bit more of a formal approach. When I resumed teaching in Montreal I not only had the opportunity to keep the pleasure aspect of creating going, but also I had little bit more to offer the students in terms of the techniques and strategies that they could apply in their creations.

How did you end up in your position at St. George's?

I originally started here as a research assistant and I retained the position of a grade five homeroom teacher and then I proceeded to take over the grade three homeroom teacher position whereby I taught English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Social Studies...and I did incorporate a lot of art into the curriculum. In the Language Arts there was a lot of art integrated with the writers' sketch-journals that were used as the art always served as a springboard for the writing. I also had students create self-portraits—each year they did at least three. I thought it was a wonderful exercise for them to take a moment to reflect upon how they saw themselves at that particular moment in time. Not to mention for nostalgic purposes, there are students that I've met many years later who still have those portraits framed [laughter]. I taught as a homeroom teacher for 12 years and then I left on maternity leave and this position opened up and I joyfully jumped at it. Coming back to art with more maturity as a teacher enabled me to not only keep the pleasure of creating art and then add the techniques, but I also had a sense of how I needed to address the bigger concepts and the bigger picture of "Why art? Why is it that we were doing what we were doing?" It was no longer just a series of cute activities for the pleasure of doing a cute activity. It's growing in depth in terms of my experience of developing as a professional.

What are your basic beliefs about education generally, and art more specifically?

I think that learning is life. I think that every incident that you're exposed to, every person that you meet, every experience that you have is an opportunity to learn. Inasmuch as I have the title and the role of a teacher, I think that the students have a lot to teach me as well. As a result, I believe that all children are capable of learning—I think not necessarily at the same time or in the same way. They should be given the time that they need to learn and offered diverse approaches to learning. All children like to learn, that they are "wonder addicts," and that they are innately curious. I believe that parents are crucial partners in a child's learning...as well as the

culture and community in which the child is raised...ALL these influence their education. I think that literacy is essential, and by literacy I don't mean just reading and writing; visual literacy, media literacy as well as mathematics literacy and science literacy are very important. I think creativity is as important as literacy is. I think that success breeds success and that can become addictive. I feel that it's important for children to learn to be independent. At the same time, it's important to teach them the soft skills of working in a team collaboratively. I think that if learning did not occur, that teaching did not occur...so I often think about that when I'm writing reports and I'm evaluating the students, the ones who have had difficulty I think of what may have been lacking in my teaching. Learning is also something that's intrinsically innate in that the learner has to take ownership of what they're learning in order for there not to be a dissociation. It's important to address the purposefulness of what I am teaching so that the students see the big "Why?" and I think that this can then be transferred to other areas.

I believe that art is fundamental in the development of the child in terms of their motor development but also in their social, cognitive, and emotional development. I believe that children prefer a strong and firm boundary when they're learning and when they're creating, but then also knowing that there's a freedom within those parameters. I really believe that art, to a great extent, is about pushing on those limits...it's about pushing those limits and pushing the potential of the creativity within that defined parameter. It's my job to set up a context in which the students can push and then realize the potential of their creativity. I think creativity is innate to everyone as a human being; you have it because you're human. I think that it can be taught, re-taught—it's almost as if we have to *remember* that we are creative beings and that it can be modelled. I believe that, in terms of art, children's work should be posted in public as much as possible. I believe that children can be inspired. They are easily inspired because things easily awe them. I think, most importantly in art, that there needs to be time: time to play and time for spontaneity. I think it was John Muir that said something to the [effect] that, "play is the exultation of the possible" and as much as possible in the confines of a constrained schedule I think it's important to create time for play and experimentation with a new medium or a new idea. That's the time where children can take risks and they can share their ideas and adapt their ideas.

Can you give some examples of how teaching art to elementary students has surprised you on occasion and/or taught you something important?

I think one of the difficulties sometimes in art is that because there is a constrained time in a classroom setting, that usually the first idea is the last idea. I am constantly trying to find new ways to make it so that there is more time to play. I think that it's important to highlight mistakes and failures, not as a *cul de sac*, not as an endpoint but as part of the process. I think it was Einstein that said something to the effect of, "If a person hasn't made a mistake it's because they haven't tried anything new." We're constantly celebrating mistakes, and in art "you really can't make a mistake," I tell the children, and, in fact, it might be the best thing that happened, these wonderful accidents. I think that it's important to give the decision-making and the control as much as possible to the students so that they can really make those choices and take ownership for their learning. And therein there comes a balance: you have this free-play time and this time for just exuberance and play and experimentation and exploration, and then there is that inner critic that gets silenced during this sacred time but then later it needs to come to the fore and really suss out and make decisions based on the ideas that have been developed to really come to an end of that creative process. I think there's that synergy of opposites that occurs and there's an important need to also leave the time to reflect on the process. My job, in all of that, I feel like I'm an enabler [laughter] and what I do is I am enabling by creating that structure for all of that to happen...and so the children are playing, and they have the pleasure of creating and they're learning techniques, it might be techniques with different media, and they're learning the creative process which I try to make as explicit as possible, and they're learning the strategies and the big concepts—and I get paid for that, and that's quite extraordinary.

I think that one example of "the importance of play" that sticks out in my mind—because it was a recent example—is when I was working with a student with Down syndrome. It was an ultimate pleasure, privilege for me that on occasion I would have an opportunity to work with her one on one. And inasmuch as I would set up the creative situation for her, I then took the opportunity to follow her lead and see what she would do. I mirrored her approach, her use of materials. Her process was nowhere near my process...so if she would make a mark or place a colour in a certain place or do some gesture, it would make no sense to me but I would follow along. I think the beauty of that was seeing when there is no inner critic, that all things are possible. The trick there was teaching her how to find the right moment to stop because the sensory would otherwise take over and there was no end in sight [laughter]. I think for the younger children too, kindergarten and grade one, they are so raw and so full

of delight with just the sensory experience of the materials, that really for them, art is about learning to find the right moment to stop. A lot of the organization of the program is about creating and exploring with different media and also learning when to stop...when to stop making marks, and when to stop mixing the colours so it doesn't always become a brown and a grey [laughter].

One of the things that also strikes me is the idea that the best creative work that I have seen over the course of the years that I've been teaching art comes within a structured parameter. You would think that entirely open-ended would produce more astonishing results but I think there's a certain terror and almost a paralysis with ultimate freedom. It makes me think of a story from my childhood of being enclosed in our backyard. We had a big beautiful backyard and I was the youngest on the street and everybody else was at least four years older and the children would often come and pop their bicycles over the fence and then play with me a while and then leave. I was alone in the backyard and I would watch day after day how it is that they crossed over that fence. I was about three years old and one day I figured out how to do it, and I got over to the other side, but they had all taken off on their bikes and left. And I remember that crystallizing moment of being on the other side of the fence and realizing I could go anywhere, I could do anything: the world was entirely open to me—and that *terrified* me. And I remember calling out to my mother and she opened the gate and I ran back in. I think that's what that structure does for students: it tells them you're allowed to play within this parameter; do whatever, push the limits, you can put a limb over, you can put your head over, you can suspend yourself over...but stay in here. I think that's how the most creative work comes.

I'm also in awe, even at the earliest ages, of how children are able to respond to art. I think one of the things that makes us distinct as human beings is that we can function with symbols and we can communicate through symbols. There's an example in the other room. In grade two I was looking with the students at the work of Mark Rothko and we were talking about how colour speaks. We analyzed his style and the children looked at the fact that it was essentially about fields of colour, and what could you say with colour? And they came up with titles for his pieces and then I put out a time line of his work and I asked them to talk to me about what they saw. Even at six and seven years of age, there was one child who really had me with my mouth hanging open, who was able to essentially read Mark Rothko's life through his work. He talked about Rothko's youth and that his colour choices would have made sense in terms of his youthfulness and exuberance and joy of life having all prospects ahead of him...and how with time the colours became more sombre when perhaps he realized that he was aging and even with the success that he achieved that he wasn't leading

the type of life that he would have wanted to... This child even inferred that perhaps Rothko died or was close to his death with the colour shift.

The accessibility of the art never ceases to amaze me with the students. They get it; they get it on so many levels. Even the kindergarten class for example: the kindergarten program is structured on “Why art?” That’s the underlying question, the undergirding question for the program...so we look at art as a doorway to the imagination...how you can’t make a mistake in art...art can address the impossible, things that don’t exist...art can address fears that you might have...we look at art as monsters or beasts or mythical creatures. We then went into art as narrative and we looked at how art can tell a story, how images can tell a story, and we looked at the Lascaux cave paintings and they enacted hunting scenes and rituals that may have preceded a hunting scene and then they created their own Lascaux-style paintings. We then looked at art as an opportunity to leave a mark: we want to create something to leave our mark, knowing that we are mortals. In our most recent project we were looking at art as decoration. We were decorating the human body, so the children looked at images of people who decorate themselves throughout the world. We had many images posted including warriors from Papua New Guinea as well as people doing Japanese theatre...and I asked them to group these images and think about why people would decorate themselves. Given that we had done all this work about the hunting, they talked about the fact that the people might disguise themselves to embody the spirit of the animal that they were hunting, or the type of hunter that they would like to be, and then they saw that the warrior aspect was present in the images and they grouped together images that they thought might be warriors wishing to frighten their enemies. Then I asked the students if any of them had parents who decorate themselves or paint their faces, and the students responded, “Yes. You know my mom paints her face.” And I had asked, “Do you think it’s to scare her enemies?” and “Oh yes,” they said [laughter]. Then quickly one of the little girls rectified and said, “No, it’s to make herself beautiful.” But they *get* it; they get it on a very innate level. It is something that’s primal—it’s part of us, it’s part of who we are.

That whole accessibility of art and the discussions about art are something that always leave me really energized. And I know that they come away with a sense of art being part of their lives. I remember one student in grade two: I had brought in multiple objects and asked them to tell me what they all had in common. In the end, one of the students said, “So, you mean to tell me everything is art, all of this is art? My teacup is art and my bathroom sink is art and my bedspread is art?” And they walk away with a sense of “it’s all art” and then the best part is one of the students had said, “So I’m art too, aren’t I? I’m living art.” I think that’s a gift to think of ourselves as living works of art, something we’re constantly and “ongoingly” creating.

In your opinion, what do you think educators should do to develop creative learners for the 21st century?

I think that given that we're preparing students for a life that we're not familiar with, we are not really sure what lies ahead, I think there are some fundamentals that need to be in place. I think that creative problem solving would be one of those things, definitely critical thinking, the ability to communicate well, the ability to collaborate with others... A lot of jobs in the future will rely heavily on team efforts. Given that the amount of information we have access to at present can be difficult to navigate, we need to prepare our students to deal with information management and to become media savvy and to be digital citizens as well—that's their reality.

I also have a soft spot in my heart for thinking that part of education still has to include teaching things like honour, trust, love, kindness, cooperation, peaceful conflict resolution, ethical economics, understanding power, and things of that nature. But I think creativity is extremely important. We need to have students and people who are going to be able to think unconventionally and to question the herd...and to make decisions and to imagine new scenarios and to then generate new ideas and refine these ideas and produce astonishing innovative work and solutions to problems that we're going to have.

Would you like to share some of your students' artwork with us?



Fig. 1: Grade three pumpkin transformation project by Milo Berger and Grace Lipovetz

This is a project that the grade three class recently undertook and it was a transformation project. In fact, what you're seeing here is a pumpkin. I asked the students to look at the round shape and to transform it in some way. They worked collaboratively in groups of two and they created these pumpkin transformations. They built whatever it is that they needed to build—it was an additive sculpture. They weren't allowed to cut away because the pumpkins decompose too quickly otherwise. The whole creative process was really made explicit in this project. We looked at generating a lot of ideas and then choosing the one that was the best. And if they chose to come together with a partner they had to collaborate and as a team decide which ideas would best work together and which ideas they would have to leave behind. At times they would try things in terms of construction that didn't work. They had to resolve the problems. They had to figure out what materials they needed, how they were going to adhere the things that they had prepared to the pumpkins themselves. One of the students summed it up best and said, "We're really good at solving these problems, aren't we?" [laughter]. That was essentially what the project was trying to address: the idea of the creative process and the problem solving that goes along the way. My role: I did some shopping for supplies and I was also the head "hot glue" person but they took full ownership and the results were extraordinary.



Fig. 2: Grade one art project by Lorelai

This one is an example of children in grade one. In grade one the question is, “Where do the ideas come from? Where do artists get their ideas?” We look at art ideas as coming from your imagination. We look at art ideas as a representation of nature—we go outside and we draw the sunflowers that are in the back parking lot. And then we look at art ideas as observation from a different perspective. We all went out and lay under the trees and looked at the trees right up through the sky and then the students painted what it is that they saw. They also look at art as a marriage between the imagination and observation.



Fig. 3: Exploratory piece of students learning to *speak* “Mark Rothko” by Anika (Grade 2)

This is an exploratory piece so it's not a final project—it would be an interim project. I would give the students an opportunity to look at the work of Mark Rothko. For example, we would discuss his style and then we would attempt to *speak* “Mark Rothko” because I often talk to the students of art as a language. So they learn to speak English and they learn to speak French and here they learn to speak “Mark Rothko.” And using Rothko's language they try to create a portrait of something or someone that was important to them. They made choices in terms of colour, they made choice in terms of the materials and the tools that they would use, and they would play with texture. From that, their final piece would be an attempt to create their own language because ideally what I want them to do is not just to imitate someone else—I want them to create and find their own creative voice so that they can talk about the world around them. This is an interim piece; a final piece has yet to come. In it, they're using colour and shape and figurative work or abstract—as they see fit—to best express the world that they see around them.



Zenia Dusaniwsky is currently working as an Art Specialist at St. George's Elementary School in Montreal, but has 22 years of varied teaching experience behind her. She has taught at different grade levels ranging from Pre-K to University and in different subject areas including: Science, Math, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Art. Her experiences have taken her overseas where she taught in established International School settings as well as in shantytowns and remote jungle communities. Zenia has a B.Ed., a Certificate in the Teaching of Arts, as well as an M.Ed. in Educational Psychology and Counseling.

LINK TO:

<http://www.theartstory.org/artist-rothko-mark.htm>



Commentary

Getting at the Heart of the Creative Experience

Howard Gardner, Harvard University

ABSTRACT

In this interview, developmental psychologist, professor, and author Howard Gardner describes his early interest in creativity and explains why he wanted to study creativity from a different perspective than what had been done in the past. He shares why studying creativity through the biographies of creative people provides more insight than using creativity tests that may be as limited as IQ tests. The creative leaders he studied in his book *Creating Minds* proved to have an unusual blend of intelligences—not just those intelligences obviously related to their field. He explains that creativity is about one’s personality, the willingness to take risks, and being a certain kind of person rather than having a particular set of cognitive skills. Finally, he comments on creativity in today’s society.

How did you first become interested in creativity?

As a young person I was very much involved in music. After I went to college I spent a year in England and even though I was supposed to be in studying at the London School of Economics I spent most of my time going to theatre, opera, ballet, museums. I think that was sort of the beginning of my interest in the creative process from a scholarly point of view. When I was a graduate student in psychology I actually wrote a big literature review about creativity for Stanley Milgram who was a famous psychologist, now deceased, known for his study of the “obedience paradigm.” I remember, he went over the paper pretty carefully, and he wrote in notes saying, “People who study creativity are a singularly uncreative lot.”

I don't know why he said that but it always stuck in my mind. I might say it was a stimulus or a motivator. I would add that while I think my interest in creativity came from the arts, I don't think creativity is particularly connected to the arts—I think you can have creativity in any realm from business to politics to technology. Many artists would hope they're creative but they may not be. The study of creativity is a long-term interest...I didn't write about it directly for 20 years after graduate school but it was always something in my mind.

How has your journey to understand creativity unfolded, and what were the milestones along the way?

I had this long-term interest in creativity but I really put it aside for work in more “canonical” developmental psychology and neuropsychology where creativity wasn't much on the agenda and where there were not, in my view, good methods for studying creativity. I'm best known for developing a theory of multiple intelligences in which I argued that intelligence shouldn't be viewed as a singular entity but rather people are capable of developing and displaying different kinds of intelligence. That got a lot of attention thirty years ago. When I began to speak publicly about this or to write in more popular venues, people would say, “Well, what about creativity? Is there one creativity or are there a bunch of creativities?” I hadn't really thought about that much before but I decided that I wanted to see whether there were specific forms of creativity which mapped in a certain way to different kinds of intelligence.

Around the middle of the 1980s I began to think seriously about that issue. First of all, I was never very happy with the so-called creativity tests, which were tests of divergent thinking. In fact, if I wanted to be brutal, I would say that divergent thinking tests are tests of creativity by people who don't really understand what creativity is all about. I think tests of divergent thinking basically show whether somebody is facile and can be entertaining at a cocktail party or maybe brainstorm well at some kind of mixed group at work. I think creativity is a much longer-term endeavour, which requires deep immersion in the subject matter, the development of skills, the capacity to ask questions that haven't been asked before and to spend as much time as necessary to come up with the best answers we can to those questions. Divergent thinking tests fall even shorter from the phenomenon of creativity than IQ tests fall from the phenomenon of intelligence. I was not going to go out and give a bunch of divergent tests to people in different domains to see whether their creativity was different. Instead, I made a decision to do biographies and to take individuals who were clearly creative—whether or not people liked them: they were clearly creative

in specific spheres, and by argument, these people would be creative in different intelligences.

In your book, "Creating Minds" you have indicated that it was a pivotal moment when you shifted from the question, "What is creativity," to "Where is creativity?" Can you talk about this and explain why this was so helpful?

My book, "Creating Minds," came out in 1993 and has just been reissued in 2012 with a new preface, a new bibliography and new cover, which uncharacteristically I helped to design. In that book I studied seven people, each of whom I thought would be creative in a different intelligence. The list was: Einstein whom I saw as a logical, mathematical thinker; T.S. Eliot, the poet as linguistic thinker; Pablo Picasso, the painter, a spatial thinker; Igor Stravinsky, the composer as a musical thinker; Martha Graham, the dancer as a ballet-kinesthetic thinker; as "intrapersonal," Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis; and "interpersonal," Gandhi, leader of people in India [over 60] years ago. My hypothesis was that each of them would be creative, reflecting their particular intelligence.

I selected people all of whom lived about 100 years ago, which meant, that on the one hand, we were far enough away that nobody would argue that any of them was not creative but recent enough so there was lots of data available. If you've studied Mozart, he's certainly creative, and I've written about Mozart, but the amount of data available about him or the amount of data available about Napoleon or Jesus Christ is pretty modest.

Interestingly, it didn't turn out that each of these people was strong in one intelligence and not in the others. In fact, what characterized them was more that they had an unusual blend of intelligences. [For example,] Freud saw himself as a scientist but he wasn't particularly good in logical, mathematical or spatial thinking but he was brilliant at language and in understanding other people and in understanding himself. He was a combination of linguistic and personal intelligences even though he saw himself as a scientist. Each of the people whom I studied, except for one, also had areas in which they were notably weak in—intelligences where they didn't stand out at all. The only exception from my study was Stravinsky, who I think was perfectly fine in his other intelligences. He probably could have been a lawyer; in fact he studied law, was quite gifted in the other arts. He wasn't a particularly nice person—I don't think he'd have any use for me—but I wasn't studying who was nice, I was studying who made creative use of different intelligences.

This book is very different from other studies of creativity; it doesn't give tests to people, it doesn't [look at] people that are alive, although Martha Graham was alive during most of the time that I was working on this book. It relies on archival material. I think of all the books I've written, it was probably the most fun to do because I really immersed myself in the worlds of these people and tried to pretend that I was a friend of theirs and I could ask them questions and see what they were doing and thinking.

Can you discuss the fundamental things that you learned about creativity in your case studies of the "seven creators of the modern era?"

Probably the thing that surprised me the most was while these people were very sharp cognitively, what distinguished them more were their personalities. These were people who were very ambitious, wanted to make a mark—and here's the important part—were willing to take risks and didn't care if they failed. If you want to be creative you have to take risks—that's almost the definition of being creative, but yet if you don't succeed and you quit or kick the dog or jump out the window, you're not going to be creative. So when these people did their risk taking, and it didn't work out, rather than blowing their stack, they said, "What can I learn from this? How can I do better next time?" And then when they had a creative breakthrough—sometimes they knew it and sometimes the world told them—they didn't rest on their laurels, they were looking for other kinds of challenges, other places to take risks. Creativity, contrary to what I and many other people have thought, is not a one-shot thing; it's not even something that occurs at a particular moment. It's more a way of being, and the way of being probably starts very early in life. In fact, except for prodigies—Picasso was a prodigy; Mozart was a prodigy—most people form the personality of a creator before they figure out which area to be creative in. I mentioned that Stravinsky could have been a lawyer, certainly T.S. Eliot and Freud could have been conventional scholars—they were very good academically. But they were already people who weren't happy with the status quo and they wanted to try something new. Even though they might have been despondent if something didn't work, they got out of it and they tried new things. Creativity is really as much about personality, risk taking and being a certain kind of person rather than having a particular set of cognitive skills.

You asked, "What's the importance of asking the question, 'Where's creativity?' as opposed to 'What is creativity?'" This idea is not mine. It came from Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, who is an expert in creativity. He actually took the "linguistic turn of phrase" from a teacher of mine, Nelson Goodman, who was a philosopher and who,

instead of asking the question, “What is art,” wanted to ask the question, “When is art?” Part of being a creative person, whether you’re Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi or Nelson Goodman, is to ask a new question, and when Csikszentmihalyi asked the question, “Where is creativity?”, this was like a breakthrough.

Everybody, including myself, thought creativity was all inside the head of the individual and most of our conversation so far has been about the individual. But in fact creativity is always emergent from three different sectors: one is the individual of whom we’ve been talking about until now, one is the domain in which individuals work, and one is the field which makes judgments.

To be specific, if you’ve got a bunch of painters, and they’re all busy painting away, one question is, “How does their painting relate to what other people are doing?” Is it just copying, is it too far out? Does it represent a step forward or a step backward? But what the painter thinks, what the painter’s mother thinks doesn’t matter—it’s what the field thinks. The field are all the taste makers and opinion makers in the area of the arts: people who decide who gets into art school, who graduates from art school, who gets displayed in galleries, who gets a positive review, who wins various rewards, and so on. You might say, “Well, that’s the area of painting, it’s very subjective. But what about mathematics, it’s very objective: do you need a field there?” And the answer is, “absolutely [yes].” There are many people who are mathematicians, but you have to look at what mathematics they’re doing and how it relates to what mathematics other people are doing. Does it copy what everybody else is doing, or is it going off into a promising direction? But, again, it doesn’t matter what the mathematician thinks or his mother thinks. The question is, “What do informed people think?”

By a more funny coincidence, every few years there’s an award given to the most original mathematician under the age of forty and it’s called the “Fields Medal.” And of course it’s named after somebody who has nothing to do with “field” in the Csikszentmihalyi sense. But what it means is that even in mathematics we have to make judgments, and just as in painting, the judgment of the man in the street doesn’t mean much. The judgment of informed people, whether it’s gallery owners or givers of the Fields Medal, is very important. Csikszentmihalyi having phrased the question this way gave a whole additional push to the study of creativity.

I could add at this point I don’t think social science is or should be a mere imitation of natural or physical science. What social scientists like Csikszentmihalyi and me do is come up with concepts. These are concepts that people may not have

thought of before like “multiple intelligences” or “flow” and we try to call evidence out in favour of those concepts through experiments, observation, and argument. Then, if the concept, whether it’s “multiple intelligences” or “flow” or Erik Erikson’s notion of “identity” or Freud’s notion of the “superego” or Max Weber’s notion of the “iron law of bureaucracy,” if those concepts proved useful to people who are thinking about these questions, then they gain a certain currency. Again, social sciences differ from the natural physical sciences, because sometimes when we write up a new finding it actually affects the way people are. When Erikson wrote about “identity,” all of a sudden people had an identity crisis which they may not have had before. That’s the way in which I think about my work on creativity, and probably one of the reasons I’m not that excited about creativity tests, because I don’t think they get at the heart of the creative enterprise.

You have suggested that “creative capital” is developed in childhood. How can it be fostered and enhanced?

I think [there is] a good contrast between the prodigies whom I mentioned and other people who end up being equally creative. Prodigies—Picasso and Mozart are the prototypic examples—are individuals who have an incredible talent in an area, in this particular case in graphic representation or in music, and within five to ten years they become an expert and everybody says, “Wow, look at how representational Picasso’s paintings are...” [or] “Look how readily orchestras can play what Mozart plays...” But most prodigies don’t end up doing anything that the rest of the world cares about. They aren’t judged as “creative” by the field, as I defined it earlier. And what has to happen basically with a prodigy if he or she is going to be judged as creative, is for that prodigy to acquire a personality which is more challenging, which doesn’t simply try to do better what all these adults are already doing, but trying to go on in a new direction. It’s probably not an accident that both Mozart and Picasso literally rejected their fathers. They were trained by their fathers. But rather than being loyal to their fathers, Mozart went away from his father, and Picasso actually changed his name—he used his mother’s name rather than his father’s name. There’s kind of a rejection of the teacher, so one heads off in a new direction.

If you are a conventional creator—if that’s not a contradiction in terms, as I said earlier—you first develop a kind of robust challenging personality and then you choose which domain you’re going to work in but you don’t choose it randomly. [For example], Einstein [could] probably have been a good mathematician as well as a good physicist, but we know he wasn’t a particularly good violinist and he certainly

wouldn't have been a good politician. The choice of domain is not random—it takes place in areas in which you already have some strength. You might say, "What is it in youth that involves the creation of capital on which you can draw later?" I don't think there's a high heritable component; I don't think people have creativity in their genes. I do think having a healthy constitution, being robust, not having to sleep all that much, probably has a genetic component. But much more important is the milieu in which you live. It's very hard to be creative if you live in a totalitarian environment where there are very strict rules about what you can do and what you can't do. There needs to be a certain tolerance for experimentation. It helps if your own family has got some iconoclasts in it: people who aren't just following the status quo but who are asking new questions. Probably, the conversation around the dinner table is important: is father just dictating what to do, is everybody just sitting there quietly, or are there vigorous discussions back and forth?

One of the fascinating things about the creative people I studied is that none of them was born, as far as I can recall, in a major metropolis. They grew up as kind of a big fish in a relatively small pond, but as soon as they became a middle adolescent—that's the age of eighteen, nineteen, twenty—they immediately moved to a big city, whether it was Vienna or London or Zurich or New York. The reason [for this] was that they'd already outgrown their little pond and they wanted to test themselves against the best and the brightest in the domains in which they were interested. Even though many of them became very difficult people as they got older (and I write about this), at the age of 20 they're all...characters like themselves, arguing, they would make common cause, they were kind of young rebels. That certainly has happened in our time in the United States: people would go to Silicon Valley or to Hollywood or to Wall Street. I would imagine in Canada many of them flocked to Toronto or on the west coast to Vancouver. One interesting question for students of creativity concerns the digital era where we can contact everybody online: "Will geography become less important or will it be as important as ever?" Richard Florida, who studies this issue, says geography continues to be important even though we can be in contact with people online; ultimately we want to be able to rub shoulders and elbows and make love and make war with our peers—we don't just want to do it via Facebook or Twitter but it's too early to know about that.

In your book “Five Minds for the Future,” you have said that what is needed in today’s society is a “generous dollop of creativity in the human sphere” (p. 101). Can you talk further about this and suggest the implications this has for classrooms?

If you live in an environment where there’s creativity all over the streets—and that would be the United States today with Hollywood and Silicon Valley, then the inculcation of creativity in the classroom isn’t as important because the message is very vivid in the rest of the society. Even though that includes forms of creativity which are not ethical, about which I’ll talk in a minute. But if you live in a society which is more top-down, more controlled, more cutting down the tall poppies, the high giraffes, then it is important for there to be creativity generated in the classroom [and] in the home because the message in society isn’t that powerful. I’m going to use Canada as an example. If you live in the middle of Saskatchewan you’re [probably] going to want to end up in Montreal or Toronto or Vancouver, and then even if you’re very good in Canada you want to go to London or Paris or New York because it’s a bigger pond and you want to lock your horns with people who are not in the country—which I think is a wonderful country—but it’s not as much in the headlines as the places I’ve talked about.

Part of my answer to your question is; it depends on what the messages in society are. Another answer is, “What is the teachers’ model?” If the teachers’ model is the correct answer, then you better get to it as quickly as possible and if you don’t get the correct answer “you’re a dummy,” then that’s not going to foster creativity. But if teachers ask questions to which there are many answers or they analyze answers which are thought to be wrong to see how people got to them, then that’s a much better message.

I have a story I would like to tell about the smart-ass kid who came up to me after a lecture about education. He held up his smartphone [and] said: “Why do we need school anymore when the answers to all our questions are in the smartphone?” And I thought for a moment, I said: “Yeah, the answers to all our questions except the important ones.” The important ones are not going to be answered in smartphones and the teachers or parents or religious leaders or club leaders who convey that attitude are much more likely to spawn creative individuals than ones who think it’s open and shut or “you can look it up in Google or Wikipedia,” and that’s end of the discussion.

When I talk about a “generous dollop of creativity in the human sphere,” I’m really talking about ethics and morality. All the rewards for creativity now are for the

latest app, latest technology, the ways in which you can invade privacy even more effectively than before, or diss or bully people more absolutely than before. But human nature seems not to have changed very much, and certainly not very much for the better since the time of the Greek city-states. Of course, we had a lot of dark ages. We had an enlightenment—the Enlightenment was wonderful for people who lived in France, England, Scotland, the United States, maybe Canada, but certainly didn't affect other parts of the world. A new enlightenment can't just be what Locke and Rousseau and Hume and Voltaire thought—it has to reflect the best thinking in our great traditions from all over the world as well as from some smaller societies which managed the issue of sustainability better than many of our larger and more avaricious and more iconoclastic societies.

My own work, as you may know now—it's not in intelligence, it's not in creativity—it's what I call good work: we're beginning to call our efforts the "good project" because we look at good persons, good workers and good citizens. (See www.thegoodproject.org.) We want to have people who don't just have a lot of money and a lot of power, we want to have people who want to do the right thing and go about trying to do the right thing. [However,] that involves a seismic change in how human beings relate to one another online and offline, how we make use of the best of our talent in the young as well as in the old, and how we judge people not just by how much disposable income they have but rather by what kind of contributions they make to society. I like to joke—and this is probably a good line to end on—that I always look to see what Scotland and Canada do because Canada always does the opposite of the United States and Scotland always does the opposite of England, and in many ways Canada and Scotland are much saner. The problems in the United States are more visible and have more power...and so we have to change the big guys by learning from individuals, groups, and communities who may have a better idea of how to have a moral society but who don't receive the same attention as Washington or London do.

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Commentary

A Week in Creativity

Jane Piirto, Ashland University

ABSTRACT

The author recounts a week in October, describing her teaching, writing, thinking, mail, and other activities that relate to her professional and personal work on creativity. This personal creative nonfiction piece also contains poetry and references to her books and lectures. The author chose this form in order to emphasize the autobiographical nature of work in the area of creativity.

The Saturday was a gorgeous Ohio fall day, with orange and yellow trees, colorful mums planted in precise plots, people wandering along paved paths. The park was Inniswoods, a Columbus metropark, and I was here to meet six graduate students in education, studying for their endorsements to be gifted intervention specialists, taking their master's degrees in Talent Development Education. They were five women and a man and we were on our Meditation Day for the course called "Creativity Studies." Today we would meditate on nature, on the dark side, and on art and beauty.

I read several poems having to do with autumn and nature, by such poets as Gary Snyder, Mary Oliver, and Rainer Marie Rilke, as the students formed a circle. "This is your day," I told them. "No kids, no duties, nothing to do but to meditate and think about your own creativity. The rules are simple. Walk alone and think. Meet back here by this bench in an hour and fifteen minutes. If you meet someone from the class, just acknowledge with a nod and move on." I am of the philosophy that one can't teach people to be creative unless one has explored her own creative self. The park was busy with photographers and their subjects—families and couples. People walked on

the boardwalk and on the packed dirt paths. When we met up after the hour, everyone shared one observation. Mike said the park was fake and loud. The others were more positive.

Our next venue for the day was a nearby cemetery. “We are here to put a concrete experience on the dark side as an inspiration for creativity. If you have recently experienced tragedy in your life, you do not have to participate in this meditation, but just enjoy the day.” I read some poems having to do with the dark side, one by Theodore Roethke, a poet who committed suicide; one by Allan Tate, “Ode to the Confederate Dead,” as the students turned and looked at the American flags flying next to many of the graves, indicating service in the military. This cemetery has graves from soldiers as far back as the Revolutionary War. I concluded with one of my own poems, “Srebrenica,” about the massacre in 1995. Again, the students dispersed with their Thoughtlogs (a daily assignment to make a note about their creative thoughts to encourage the core attitude of Self-Discipline, an attribute which creative producers must have), with an admonition to think about the dark side as an inspiration for creativity.

Again we gathered after the meditation to share thoughts. Karla read a poem about the contrast between the traffic passing (this cemetery is on a busy corner), heedless of the inevitable fate that befalls us all. She is an English teacher with small children, being “at home” while she works on her Ph.D. She has always wanted to write fiction and poetry but has experienced self-censorship about her abilities. The poem is stunning, but I don’t tell her that as being over-praised is as killing to creativity as is criticism. She is going to do her final individual creativity project as a creative writer. She first wanted to make a backsplash for her kitchen counter out of tile, but I have, over the years, discouraged home projects in the HGTV mode, so she has reluctantly taken the risk (a core attitude) to work on her dream of writing creatively. Mike passed on sharing. He had sat on the grass writing furiously in his Thoughtlog. It turned out that he had lost his father in a pedestrian-car accident last year.

We drove a few miles downtown on I-71 for the next venue, the Columbus Museum of Art. We gathered there in the foyer for lunch where we have a creativity salon—we talk of music and art and books and politics—and not of our home lives, our children, or our jobs... Then I read them some ekphrasis poems—Browning’s “My Last Duchess,” and Keats’ “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” among them. They separated and wandered through the rooms of the museum, with the charge to write a poem about a work of art that moves them, that stabs their hearts. We then met up and went back through the museum and they were the docents for those works of art, reading their

poems to great appreciation by their classmates. Mike did not find a work of art worth writing about, but he wrote about the old and new architecture of the museum. Samantha, a third-grade teacher, chose a work from the primitive Columbus wood carver, Elijah Pierce, exhibit being featured. Carol, a national board certified middle school teacher, also chose an Elijah Pierce piece.

We had a final bout with the Thoughtlogs and a final sharing. They were appreciative of the day, even though they arrived with resentment of having to give up a Saturday. Marianne, an accomplished horsewoman, had taken the course after she gave up a corporate job in Hollywood and New York, to keep her children in their school district locally. She is so experienced no school system will hire her for the classroom, as she is too expensive, so she is acquiring a new endorsement to make herself more marketable. She gave up a day at the All American Quarter Horse Congress, which was in town, to meet the assignment. I drove the 80 miles home, exhausted, to greet my 96-year-old mother, who came to live with me as she can't live alone anymore.

On Monday, I began a four-week segment of an undergraduate honors seminar, which I shared with two other professors, one in mathematics, one in philosophy. The students would be reading my book, *Understanding Creativity*, and I would be teaching them my creative process system. *Understanding Creativity* was published in 2004, and my publisher says it is "a classic." In this book, I used my graphic theoretical framework, the Piirto Pyramid, to discuss the paths of creative writers, visual artists, scientists, mathematicians, inventors, classical and popular musicians, composers, conductors, actors, dancers, and athletes. In 2002 I realized part of my goal to write a separate book about each of these domains, in my book, *"My Teeming Brain": Understanding Creative Writers*, where I studied the lives and creative processes of about 200 U.S. creative writers who qualified, through a rigorous publication record, to be listed in the *Directory of American Poets & Writers*. I have begun work on a similar book about 10 female North American visual artists, including Emily Carr and Frida Kahlo, but I have not gotten very far, what with full-time teaching and many requests for writing, and trying to evaluate data I have collected on the personalities of talented adolescents.

In *Understanding Creativity* I also laid out my take on the creative process, which features five core attitudes—(1) Openness to Experience; (2) Risk-taking; (3) Tolerance for Ambiguity; (4) Group Trust; and (5) Self-Discipline. I have named Seven I's necessary in the creative process: (1) Inspiration; (2) Insight; (3) Imagery; (4) Imagination; (5) Intuition; (6) Incubation; and (7) Improvisation. Several general practices

include the use of ritual; the search for silence; the presence of exercise, especially walking; the practice of meditation; the practice of solitude; and a conscious decision to live a life that is centered on creativity. In 2011 I published a book called *Creativity for 21st Century Skills: How to Embed Creativity Into the Classroom*, which contains many practical suggestions to use in class. It seems to be doing well; at least my royalties weren't zero.

I crossed campus and entered the room in the science building where the honors seminar was to meet. There were six students, four females and two males in a rigidly arranged classroom with tables in rows. I asked them to move the tables to make a circle so we could see each other. The discussion of Chapter 1, which they had read as an assignment, began. They were quiet, but also overwhelmed and surprised by the sheer number and import of creativity writers and thinkers who are mentioned in this introductory chapter. We ended the class with an overview of the Five Core Attitudes. The core attitude of Openness to Experience is illustrated by a mindfulness exercise. I led them in closing their eyes, breathing deeply, and tasting a dried blueberry, chewing it slowly. I challenged them to eat a whole meal with this kind of mindfulness and openness to taste. I went home—it was so good to be teaching only a few blocks away—and made my mother some supper.

I had to get up early Tuesday morning and drive to Columbus, where the Ohio Association for Gifted Children annual conference was being held. The executive director asked me to do a session. I titled it, the title of a keynote speech I gave to the Chicago School of Professional Psychology early in 2012, "Unlocking the Creative Process: A New Educational Psychology of Creativity," modifying my PowerPoint presentation from the Chicago speech to psychologists, tailoring it for the teachers and administrators who would make up the audience. Over 100 people attended. I led them through the Seven I's, Five Core Attitudes, General Practices, and the Piirto Pyramid's "thorn" of intent and motivation, in this 50-minute presentation. I began it by telling them how I came to this thought and system—how being both an artist and a scholar has led me to rethink the common divergent production-based creativity exercises that are the curriculum for teachers studying creativity. I repeated some of what I said last month at a similar presentation in Muenster, Germany, at the European Council for High Ability Conference, when over 50 people attended, for the last session of the last day of the congress, in a room far away from the headquarters, in a science classroom on that huge campus. I am still grateful that so many people sought out that session. I received e-mails later from colleagues in Sweden, Russia, and Slovenia.

My daughter took the day off and drove from Columbus, where she lives and works, to be with my mother, as I had to be away for 14 hours, for my creativity class with grad students would meet that night. In class, the students shared focus question essays; we had been discussing whether creativity has to have a product, and we continued that discussion. A couple of students created an image of some idea in the assigned readings from *Understanding Creativity and Creativity for 21st Century Skills*, and they shared original art and poems. The evening ended with reaction essays to Meditation Day. All five women were thankful and had a good experience; Mike's reaction was negative—to all three venues—he felt cramped and coerced, he said. Troubled, I drove home the 80 miles. My daughter was grateful for the day with her grandmother, and I was grateful that my mother was safe in her hands.

My e-mail contained an acceptance for some poems I presented at a poetic inquiry conference in Bournemouth, UK, last year. I belong to an arts-based research group and we have biannual conferences. These were poems written at work, and contained poems like this one:

PARENTS' MEETING SPEAKER

Here, in the vocational school gymnasium,
 We are gathered, I to speak, you to listen.
 Or here, in the conference room at the big hotel,
 We are gathered, I to speak, you to listen.
 Or here, at the university auditorium,
 We are gathered, I to speak, you to listen.
 I give my generic powerpoint
 based on my book which is based on my opinion
 and long experience

"How to Parent the Gifted and Creative."

My 13 points:

- Provide a Private Place for Creative Work to Be Done
- Provide Materials: Musical Instruments, Sketchbooks, Fabric, Paper, Clay, Technology, Sports Equipment
- Encourage and Display the Child's Work, but Avoid Overly Evaluating It
- Do Your Own Creative Work and Let the Child See You Doing It
- Set a Creative Tone
- Value The Creative Work of Others

- Avoid Reinforcing Sex-Role Stereotypes
 - Provide Private Lessons and Special Classes
 - Use Hardship to Teach the Child Expression Through Metaphor
 - Discipline and Practice Are Important
 - Allow the Child to be “Odd”: Avoid Emphasizing Socialization at the Expense of Creative Expression
 - Use Humor
 - Get Creativity Training
- You wait patiently afterwards to speak to me
about your wonderful children.
Don't you know your very presence here tells me
that they will be all right?

I am glad these idiosyncratic poems have found a home. For the past two summers I participated in the Upper Peninsula Writers' Book Tour in my home state of Michigan, and a couple of my U.P. based poems have been accepted for anthologies of our writing. So, the literary work goes on, simultaneously with the scholarly and teaching work.

My mail on Wednesday contained a surprise cheque from an old publisher for permissions to use something or other from my work on creativity and giftedness. I was surprised, as I thought that book was dead. There was a contract in the mail, also, from a press that wants me to edit a book on teaching to intuition. I have gathered contributors from the arts-based life I've led, from the domains of mathematics, physics, general science, social studies, language arts, dance, theater, visual arts, general elementary classrooms, writing, and the like. Marcy, one of my students in the creativity class, will contribute a chapter. She has noticed that her regular calculus students solve problems much more creatively than her Advanced Placement calculus students, and is keeping a log of these solutions, to compare, and to make the point that creativity is often squelched by the prescriptive curriculum of Advanced Placement syllabi. The book will be one of a kind, and we are all enthusiastic. Its working title is *Organic Creativity*, and it will be out in Fall 2013.

Wednesday afternoon I met the honors seminar for the second time. I gave them a new box of colored pencils and small notebooks for Thoughtlogs. While I went over the second chapter, I passed out mandalas and ask them to color as we talked, as doodling and coloring will ensure they retain the material. They read their focus question essays aloud and we talked about the “I” of Inspiration from Nature. We closed by sharing a time when nature inspired us. Tales of starlit nights, solitary walks, and

swimming bareback on horses ended the class. My sharing was about my solitary walks in the woods with my dog running loose and free. They were more lively than the first day; I felt hope.

On Thursday I drove to meet another cohort, a class on counseling and social emotional needs of the gifted and talented, and one of the students led a dialogue on perfectionism. They were reading my tome of a textbook, *Talented Children and Adults: Their Development and Education*. They will take the creativity class next semester and they are such students that will be challenged as they take it.

I am writing this on Friday. Today I finished reading the new biography of Leonard Cohen, in which I have taken many notes on his creative process and the themes in his life, which are similar to those of other creative writers—another part of my week of creativity. Perfectionism is strong in him. I'm sure I will use examples from this biography in my future writings and speeches. This has been a typical week, containing many other instances of living a creativity-focused life, but LEARNing Landscapes has asked me for only 2,000 words and I'm over the count.

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Graduate Research Writing: A Pedagogy of Possibility

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ABSTRACT

Graduates often find conceptualizing and writing long research projects an arduous alienating process. This paper¹ describes a research writing intervention conducted at Memorial University in Newfoundland with two groups of graduate students (Engineering and Arts). One small part of the workshop was devoted to creative “sentence activities.” Our argument is that these creative activities contributed to re-connecting students to themselves as researchers/writers and to others in the group. The activities engaged students in language literally, metaphorically, and performatively.

Introduction and Context

Graduate students rarely express their experience of writing research dissertations in enthusiastic terms. For the most part, they convey their experience in terms of anxiety, distress, suffering, agony, and even torture. The plethora of advice books on how to complete a Master’s or PhD thesis that have saturated the market are testament to the desperation among many students to find some compass, some north star, to latch on to and guide them through this journey (Kamler & Thomson, 2008). Once finally at road’s end, many students express a loss of confidence after completing their Master’s or PhD dissertation when intuitively one would expect the opposite. After many years of focussing on a research topic and hour upon hour devoted to writing, one would expect students’ self-assurance

to grow with their increasing content knowledge and expertise. Why is the research dissertation process defined by struggle? Does it necessarily have to be? What can be done to change this? At Memorial University, a group of faculty from different disciplines (Education, Engineering and Applied Science, Arts) were drawn together by these questions. We wanted to explore the possibility of introducing graduate students to new ways of thinking about their research.

Why Is Graduate Research Writing Defined by Struggle?

One key reason why students find writing difficult is because, as Bartholomae (1985) wrote of undergraduate student writing: "Every time a student sits down to write for us, he[*/she*] has to invent the university for the occasion" (p. 4). What Bartholomae suggests is that students write within a context that is fluid, evolving, and constantly changing. Negotiating fluctuating writing discourses is difficult for students, mostly because the requirements are hidden. To be successful, a student needs to understand the institutional and disciplinary values and expectations. Learning the secret life of research and research writing happens at a largely tacit level. Language conventions, required genres, and even thinking styles are often governed by disciplinary norms. Many of these conventions are subtle even to experienced scholars, yet students are expected to know them without explicit instruction (Parry, 1998). Universities consist of discourse communities that have ways of structuring writing (genres), ways of doing research, ways of asking questions, and ways of using language (Cain & Pople, 2011). To participate in a discourse community and to be taken seriously one must be able read, speak, and write the discourse (Northedge, 2003; Wrigglesworth & McKeever, 2010). Far from being explicit or even stable, these hidden requirements must seem like "a set of secret handshakes and esoteric codes" (Sommers, 2008, p. 153), particularly to newcomers. By the time a student reaches the graduate level, he/*she* will have divined the writing requirements for an undergraduate degree in some way. When they begin their graduate program, they soon realize that the rules have changed yet again.

A second reason why graduate writing is defined by struggle is that few programs offer institutionalized graduate research writing courses. Graduate research is cognitively complex: students are required to undertake research, embark on large projects, develop conceptual frameworks and, especially for PhDs, contribute to the knowledge of a discipline or field. Writing in academia, requires not only subject-matter knowledge or knowledge of genres, but also how to write "convincingly to expert readers" in the field (Tardy, 2005, p. 325). Students will often receive training in content areas, and research methodology through prescribed courses. They may get

mentoring through supervision in operationalizing their research and collecting data. But rarely do they get training on how to pull these disparate areas together. Added to this, the nature of research itself is chaotic, messy, and multi-faceted. Students are required to draw threads from the chaos and translate these into a coherent linear written text without much formal guidance beyond supervision. For this reason, there are increasing calls in the literature for systematic graduate research training in a variety of forms (Aitchison, 2009; Clughen & Hardy, 2011; Ens, Boyd, Matczuk, & Nickerson, 2011; Ferguson, 2009; Haas, 2011; Maher et al., 2008).

Third, a common assumption is that writing is a transparent activity (Parker, 2002). One does research and then writes it up. An “academic literacies” perspective takes the approach that writing is complex and involves many embedded literacies that are situated in specific contexts (Lea & Street, 2006). Consequently, writing a research thesis is not merely reporting on research but about making ontological and epistemological claims (Lillis & Scott, 2007). We perform our academic identity through our research writing (Hyland, 2002). It is the way we participate in the discourse, how we are positioned by the discourse, and how we negotiate that positioning. Structures of argument, citation practices, and making evaluations on previous research have underlying epistemological roots (Parry, 1998). What forms of data are acceptable and how data is valued changes from discipline to discipline and sometimes within disciplines (Badenhorst, 2008). Disciplines and discourse communities are themselves fluid structures and are continually changing (Parker, 2002). While writing is about language and skill, it is, indeed, much more.

The “Othering” of Graduate Students

We argue that all of the above contributes to many graduate students experiencing a process of “Othering” when they engage in research writing. Krumer-Nevo and Sidi (2012) describe Othering as the way moral codes of inferiority and difference are subtly established over time. It is the “critical discursive tool of discrimination and exclusion against individuals” (p. 300). Otherness happens through rules of behaviour, conventions, and performance in a discourse. Often the process is seen as neutral and transparent, and becomes accepted as natural. In their study they found four mechanisms of Othering at work:

- 1) *Objectification* is subjugation of individual complexities by ignoring personal perspectives. The individual person is hidden behind the general features of the group or cohort.
- 2) *Decontextualization* is the detachment from an immediate context of place and

time. Behaviours become generalized rather than specific responses to particular circumstances.

- 3) *Dehistoricization* is the focus on the present. Divorced from personal individual histories, the present becomes distorted.
- 4) *Deauthorization* where texts created are supposedly autonomous, objective, and authorless. Writing is not an author's interpretation but the views of an omniscient narrator with an external reality.

These mechanisms of Otherness produce "alienation and social distance" (p. 300).

When writing in academic contexts, students are faced with these four mechanisms of Othering. Personal histories are often subjugated by prevailing discourses on academic writing that promote third-person, distant, passive, objective, and neutral positions. Conservative, rule-bound conventions characteristic of academic writing (Fulford, 2009; Northedge, 2003) often decontextualize and depersonalize content. Academic writing is often seen by students as impersonal and dry where they must separate their personalities from their research or writing. The self must be subordinate to the rigid conventions and authorial anonymity (Hyland, 2002). The process of researching and writing as strictly mediated by the discourse community is restrictive and "militates against creativity and individuality" (Cain & Pople, 2011, p. 49).

Krumer-Nevo and Sidi (2012) further suggest that methods to write against Othering would include using 1) narratives to enable contextualization, historicization, and subjectivity; 2) dialogue which brings together the personal and subjective of the other, and acts against objectification and dehistoricization because the subject is present; and 3) reflexivity which acts against the (apparent) authoritative stance of the researcher. Critical reflexivity questions the stance of the researcher as an all-knowing claimer of truth. When the author demonstrates his/her processes of interpretation and conclusion-making, it emphasizes the text and writing as personal and partial. Reflexivity positions the researcher/writer in the text and reveals the researcher's "epistemological, ontological, methodological premises" (p. 305).

Krumer-Nevo and Sidi (2012) pose their argument in the context of researchers writing on and of their "subjects," but we found their work applicable on two levels. First, how students themselves are Othered through academic writing practices and, second, how students perpetuate that Othering when they write about their "subjects."

Introducing Creativity

Our research team's collective history involved many hours of grappling with how to nurture graduate students as writers within disciplinary constraints and processes of Othering in contexts where graduate research training is seen as only necessary in the format of once-off, add-on workshops. How could we incorporate the complexity, the fluidity, the contradictions, the hidden rules of research writing as well as the explicit knowledge of genres, argument, research conceptualization and so many other crucial bits of information and process?

We drew on an existing workshop, which had successfully been applied in the South African context (Badenhorst, 2007), and adapted it to suit the disciplinary contexts at Memorial (Rosales, Moloney, Badenhorst, Dyer, & Murray, 2012). We applied for and received funding to pilot the program. The result was an intensive, co-curricular, multi-day workshop. The pilot was conducted with a relatively small cohort of students from Memorial University's Graduate Program in Humanities and the Faculty of Arts (A&H) in Fall 2011 (9 participants) and a second offering occurred in Winter 2012 with graduate students from the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science (E) (13 participants). The 9 and 13 refer to the numbers of students who completed all components of the workshop. The total number of students attending was 17 in each offering, 34 in total. Many who attended were international students. Research areas varied considerably and included sports, poetry, the esoteric, music anthropology, and philosophy from the humanities group and electrical, computer, process, civil, ocean, and naval architecture, and mechanical in the engineering group. Each offering of the workshop involved seven mornings of class time, which lasted 3.5 hours each. The workshop was divided into two parts to simulate two stages of the writing process: *composition* (Part 1, four consecutive mornings) and *revision* (Part 2, three consecutive mornings). Daily homework was assigned to reinforce key learning points and for students to adapt learning to their own research contexts. Between the two Parts, participants had about a month to work on the first draft of their chosen research writing project.

Each of the seven workshop mornings was divided into three sections. In the first section, the homework from the day before was discussed in groups using specific feedback strategies. In the second section, activities and facilitated dialogue gave participants information and models on academic discourses relevant to graduate research (what counts as evidence in the discipline, how arguments work, research writing genres, etc.). They were also guided through theories of writing and creativity (process writing, what writing does, why writing is difficult, why creativity is important, identity and writing, how criticism affects writing self-efficacy, how academic

writing is situated in a discourse of criticism, etc.). The last part of the morning was devoted to “play” activities intended to allow and encourage participants to move out of their usual ways of writing. Students were supplied with a copy of Badenhorst (2007) which contained materials, notes, and examples. They were also given additional references, and models of research and writing specific to their disciplines.

Creativity was a key theme throughout the workshop. Our purpose was to present writing and research genres, rules, and conventions but then to introduce the notions of possibility, choice, and the Self in writing and research. We sought to encourage flexible minds (Zerubavel, 1995) that would allow students to embrace the chaos of research rather than to only limit and control it. We carefully chose classroom settings that were as un-classroom-like as possible and conducive to creative thinking. Tables and chairs were arranged in groups to reflect a more “studio” style of learning. On each table we placed piles of blank coloured paper and a mug of coloured felt-tip markers. We removed all blue and black markers and asked students to write only on coloured paper with coloured markers, preferably their favourite colours. We also asked students to use their paper in “landscape” mode and not the regular “portrait” style. As we explained to participants, the purpose for using coloured paper and pens was to shift them out of habitual ways of doing things and to move them into changing their way of seeing their research. Throughout the workshop we asked students to sketch their research, to draw concept maps, to free write, to “play” with their research ideas.

We talked about Billy Collins’ poem, *Introduction to poetry*, (<http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/001.html>) where he says “I ask them to take a poem/and hold it up to the light/like a colour slide.” He ends: “But all they want to do/ is tie a poem to a chair with a rope/ and torture a confession out it.” We urged students to hold their research up to the light, turning it this way and that to see how the light shone through it, to drop a mouse in it and to see which way it crawled out and not torture a confession out of it. We asked them to write/draw using activities that were metaphorical and often illogical. Again the purpose was to allow students to “see” their research with new eyes, to unpack hidden assumptions, and to work through inconsistencies and contradictions.

Initially some students were sceptical of the activities but over the duration of the workshop they increasingly found value in them. By the end, they happily engaged in a range of creative activities. In part, the success of this component of the workshop was due to a set of activities, “*the sentence activities*,” conducted in the last hour of each day in the first week. It is these activities that we would like to

explain and highlight in this paper. The sentence activities were just *one* set of activities among many others but they played a crucial role in the workshop.

The Sentence Activities

For the last hour of each of the four days in Part 1 of the workshop, we introduced students to four sentences: *The statement, the question, the exclamation, and the command*. The inspiration for these activities was taken from Paul Matthews, *Sing me the creation* (1994), a sourcebook for writing poetry. Matthews argued that all language circulates around and between these sentence structures. We used the sentences to focus students' attention *literally* on how to construct sentences and paragraphs, *metaphorically* on what using these sentences can mean, and also *performatively* (Austin, 1975) on what these sentences do. Participants were asked to do the activities quickly and not to think too much or to censor themselves. Specifically, we talked about self-criticism and how negative inner talk often serves as an editor in writing, correcting before we have even thought through what we want to say.

The statement.

We began with the *statement* as it is the sentence that students are generally most comfortable using. The statement is the comfort zone of academia because it states, it names, it describes, it defines, and it gives information. Academic writing is most often about naming and defining. The statement is the voice of reason where a writer views the world and comes to conclusions about it. Statements are powerful because it allows a writer to name differences and to state truths (this is a chair, that is not). The statement, Matthews (1994) argues, aims to be correct and wise: "Statement is the power that human beings have to name differences, to distinguish between I and you, dark and light, cat and cabbage" (p. 20).

After explaining the sentence, we asked students to do a number of activities. The activities were drawn from Matthews (1994) and Badenhorst (2007). Only a sample of activities are included here. We scaffolded the activities by moving from the concrete to the abstract. We used M.C. Escher's lithograph "*Relativity*" (<http://www.mcescher.com/>) to frame to concrete activities. "*Relativity*" was selected because it was a combination of the rational/logical with the chaotic/illogical to help students relate to the chaotic yet rational research process. The activities moved from "*Relativity*" to the classroom, to more abstract issues, to their research, and finally to themselves. For example:

- Write three statements about the Escher lithograph
- Write three wise statements and three unwise statements about “Relativity”
- Write three truthful statements and three untruthful statements about “Relativity”
- Look around the classroom and write a statement that only you can see
- Write a statement explaining how this room is different from other rooms
- Write a statement of certainty and one of uncertainty
- Write a statement on the “big picture” of your research
- Write three “I am...” statements.

Students were given between 10-20 of these activities, depending on the size of the group and how fast they worked through them. Participants were quite comfortable writing statements and this provided an easy way into these activities that would continue to push them out of their comfort zones as the days went on. Despite this, students sometimes found it difficult to do some of the activities. For example, in writing untruthful statements they would ask: “Am I supposed to do it like this? Is this right? How do I know?” We did not provide answers or guidance and reminded them that they were “play” activities and to “let go.” Once the activities were finished, all groups around a table were asked to read their responses aloud to each other and to select responses to share with the larger group as a whole. We did not give criteria for the selection but left it open to the group. We did pose the possibility that they might want to share the funniest, the most innovative as opposed to the “best.” We also suggested that if they wanted to share more than one response for each activity that was fine too. Initially there were many questions around what was “right,” what they were supposed to do, and what everyone else was doing. By the end of the week, groups were quite happy to contribute in ways that suited them. After the group discussions, the groups then shared their chosen responses to the larger class. The facilitators used this to direct discussion around language, words, academic conventions, and possibilities. For example, what happens when you name something, when you claim a truth? How do you do this in research? In writing? What counts as truth in your discipline? For the final activity, each person read his or her response to the whole group. This served to acknowledge the personal in the researcher/writer and the groups bonded considerably over these activities.

The question.

The second sentence was the question. The question moves a writer into uncertainty (Matthews, 1994). The stability of the statement gives way to the ambiguity of the question. Questions cast doubt on truth and are about being receptive and opening up to a response. They are about possibilities, dialogue, receptivity as well as

interrogation and cross-examination: “Question implies a quest – to find an answer, someone to answer us. Without a question we are forever shut out from the inner life of another” (Matthews, 1994, p. 66). The activities included:

- Write three questions about the Escher lithograph
- Write three profound questions and three silly questions about “Relativity”
- Write three unusual questions about “Relativity”
- Write an interrogative question about the room, write an uncertain question about the room
- Write a question that tests the truth of the room
- Write an answer on a sheet of paper, fold the paper to hide what you’ve written, pass it to a partner who writes a question without looking at the answer
- Write a question and answer about your research
- Since questions are about quests, what is your quest in life, research or otherwise. Do a free-write.

The first day’s activities broke the ice and by the second day, students were much more comfortable doing these activities. We asked students to change tables and sit with people they did not know or had not worked with before. The atmosphere in the classroom was one of focused concentration interspersed with laughter, side-comments and joking. Students were asked to provide three sentences rather than just one because it allowed them to move beyond their initial surface thoughts. Often the first sentence response was similar in the groups but numbers 2 and 3 were different. This reinforced the unique nature of individuals, their particular writing style, and their distinctive voice. Many students were surprised at their responses, at the uniqueness of their answers, and of how appreciative their audience was of their writing. Reading the responses aloud was important in helping them hear their distinct voice even if their responses were similar to others’. The group work provided a writer/audience context where the students knew they would have an audience for their writing. The discussion revolved around uncertainty in research, about a dialogue between writers and readers, and about receptivity. The final activity focused on why participants were doing the research they had chosen, what motivated them, and what kept them going. This was a powerful and emotional activity but also affirming for individuals, the group, and facilitators.

The exclamation.

The third sentence was the exclamation, the most difficult sentence for graduate students since most had been schooled not to use exclamations. As Matthews suggested: “Exclamation is language as direct expression of the inner life – to

clamour, to cry out – its ideal being to sound the heart’s tone truly. So often the voice of our education insists that we withdraw from talk about our feelings” (Matthews, 1994, p. 94). The exclamation is the outcast sentence in academic contexts because it is spontaneous and excited. There is no time to think or to formulate correct sentences. It is a form of delight and surprise but also horror. There is no detached third person author with the exclamation. Exclamation activities included:

- Write three exclamations about the Escher lithograph
- Write three exclamations of excitement and three exclamations of horror about “Relativity”
- Write three unusual exclamations about “Relativity”
- Write a detached exclamation about the room
- Write a long exclamation and a short exclamation about the room
- Write a heartfelt apology for handing in work to your supervisor late
- Write a statement then change it into an exclamation
- Write about an “aha! moment” in your research
- Exclamations open the heart in wonder. Write about what opens your heart in wonder (research or otherwise).

Although this sentence was difficult for some students in the context of their research, most relished these activities and gave full reign to their exclamations. This sentence opened the discussion on passion in research and why it was important for writing. We talked about conventions and disciplinary requirements that prevented any exclaiming sentences in research writing but where one could subtly convey interest, fascination, and inspiration in writing. We discussed writing with active and passive verbs and how the passive carries connotations of truth and how active verbs humanize writing. The final activity, again, focused on the person and made the link between the individual and the research. Most students expressed a passion for their research and felt a release at being able to express this.

The command.

The final sentence, the command, is about power, control, and authority. One commands when one wants to compel, dominate, or to order. Sometimes we have the right to command. “Command is language as deed, where the sentence is dynamic, imposing will on the world – not what language says, but what it does,” proposes Matthews (1994, p. 134). We suggested to students that in research contexts, command is the authority that comes as a result of naming, questioning, and exclaiming. That once we know a research area inside and out, you can claim authority in writing. To achieve that end, the students were asked to:

- Write three commands about the Escher lithograph
- Make an ordinary command and an unusual one of the room
- Draw “command”
- Write a long command and then change it to a one-word command
- Write three male/masculine commands and female/feminine commands
- State what you can authoritatively say about your research
- Write a paragraph about your research and begin with a command
- Some people are naturally statement-makers, or questioners, or exclaimers or commanders. Which are you? Which sentence are you drawn to?

By this stage students were comfortable in completing these activities and were no longer surprised at what they were asked to do. They also stopped questioning themselves and would write freely. The discussion here revolved around authority in writing: who has it, how does one write authoritatively, can one give away authority in writing, and so on. At this point, we also introduced the idea of how we use our authority as researchers, how we “represent” subjects of research, and whose voices appear in the writing of research.

The final activity was a reflection on how individuals worked as researchers and writers. Many of them found this activity surprising and informative. For example, if students reflected that they were exclaimers, it added to their understanding of why academic writing was sometimes a struggle.

For each of the sentences, we began by asking all students to stand and walk around the classroom and say statements, questions, exclamations, and commands out loud. We wanted them to hear how these sentences sounded and how they changed depending on content, context, and audience. We also wanted to acknowledge the embodied nature of language and writing. The Arts and Humanities cohort embraced this activity but the Engineering students found this less enjoyable.

The sentence activities sought to make participants aware of sentences and words and how they are used in particular contexts (Escher lithograph, room, research, personally). We hoped they would transfer this awareness into their own research. We wanted them to “see” sentences with new eyes and not to take them for granted. We wanted them to see the possibilities and the choices in terms of language, conventions, and personal preferences. We also used the sentences to discuss issues like the holistic researcher/writer who was not compartmentalized into separate boxes of “home” and “university.” Rather, we wanted them to see how they were influenced by the type of research they did and their writing processes. The activity,

“write a statement on something only you can see,” allowed many students to realize that they did have a unique perspective on the world and to develop the confidence to use this in their research. Finally, we used the sentences to talk about the process of doing research and structuring writing: naming, questioning, understanding with awe, and, ultimately, knowing.

Student Comments

Alongside the workshops, the team conducted research. The key purpose of the accompanying research was to study the overall workshop pedagogy for its effectiveness in transforming student perspectives of research and writing. The data collected included observations during the workshops, workshop data collection (samples of student work, reflections on activities), pre- and post-surveys, and program evaluations. We are also in the process of collecting longitudinal interview data to explore the long-term effects of the workshop intervention over time. We deliberately did not collect samples from the “sentence activities.” These activities played a crucial role in building trust, developing group dynamics, and nurturing individuals. We were cognizant of the damage any form of surveillance could do. Since we were committed to freeing students to write in an uncensored manner, collecting and scrutinizing their work seemed counter-productive. We did, however, ask students to reflect on the sentence activities and on the element of “play” in general.

Some students commented on the element of fun and how different this was from usual emotions they felt when it came to writing:

It [was] enjoyable. There [was] no constraint on my mind. Very relaxed. (Engineering [E])

I think it was a fantastic opportunity to feel free to write whatever I wanted. (Arts & Humanities (A&H))

I think the sentence activity was very good. I enjoyed it very much. Although it was ... kind of fun but it [was about] different ways of thinking different things. (E)

...the humdrum of daily life and leading the life of a grad student with work, studies, and social life had taken something out of me completely and this is writing just for the fun and joy of writing. (A&H)

Others commented on the activities in relation to collegiality and the broader group:

It was a fun activity ... it made everything light and bright. You got to know people, and how they think. I liked it. (E)

I found that people think differently when they look at the same picture. Some people think and write about drawing details while others may think about the whole concept and background idea. It was very interesting that I found it hard to make simple statements...although the drawing was complicated. I did not expect to have difficulty. (E)

The comments below illustrate that participants recognized the multiple layers to the sentence activities:

Yesterday's activity was fun and strange! At first glance, it was easy but it was not because you have to look at things in a different way and also, I found it useful for my last night's writing. (E)

Research is serious, to me, but maybe it can also be fun, just like using coloured pens to write down whatever you want to write on the fancy papers. I am the one who has the choice/option and can make the decision. (E)

Yes, I am thinking differently. I find using coloured pens and paper useful [smiley face] at least it makes the hard problem seem friendly and lovely. Now I am confident to write something and think about something. (E)

Some of the play seems not closely related to writing at first glance, but after reflection on it. I find the questions asked quite relevant to writing. These questions make me think about my research and my writing from a different perspective. (E)

Some of the activities opened my eyes to the potential of creativity in writing that I had not thought possible...I loved the use of the Escher print "Relativity," really interesting trying to grapple with that one. So many different and interesting men and women in this workshop from so many different backgrounds as well as cultural backgrounds. (A&H)

I liked [the sentence activities] because I discovered I'm an organic writer that has tried to be too logical and formal. (A&H)

I enjoyed very much the creativity and the ... fun of the writing process. I found it simple, yet deep as concept and practice. (A&H)

...I feel encouraged to not be afraid to keep submitting creatively researched and creatively written assignments. (A&H)

Discussion and Conclusion

What we have argued here is that students experience a process of Othering that separates them from their personal histories, personal interests, and their role as author with voice in their writing. Students often learn “one way” to write in academic contexts and writing experiences are defined by few choices. In contexts where many of the rules are unwritten, obscure, and hidden, it is difficult to gauge right and wrong ways of writing except through a random process of hit and miss. Constantly being on guard and under the surveillance of assessment creates writers who are cautious, conventional, and seek conformity.

Graduate students have the added challenge of pulling together cognitively complex fields into coherent, linear, lucid research dissertations. Research methodology, content areas, and dissertation writing are rarely grouped together in graduate research training. We developed a workshop that drew together these threads. One small aspect of the workshop focused on creativity in writing and thinking about research. The “sentence activities” played a particular role in the workshop. Krumer-Nevo and Sidi (2012) suggest that methods for working against Othering include using 1) narratives, 2) dialogue, and 3) reflexivity. We argue that these sentence activities encompass these three methods.

Throughout the activities, and particularly the final activity of each day, was an opportunity for students to write their own stories, their own *narratives*, to contextualize their own experience, and to link their personal identities to their researcher identities. By reading their writing aloud, participants began to hear their own unique voice as opposed to a disembodied ventriloquized academic voice, which they had become accustomed to using in their writing. Working in groups gave these writers an immediate and supportive contextualized audience. Linking research to the personal, re-connected students to themselves as whole people with histories and a sense of self. These activities also connected individuals to others in the group.

The sentence activities, although in some senses literal in that students became aware of sentence structure and construction, were also metaphorical. They showed what the different sentence types can *mean* in academic contexts. The truth-bearing nature of the statement, for example, was disrupted from its assumed natural and normal position of power. The *dialogue* that resulted from the engagement in what sentences mean in contexts and time and how they can change or be changed allowed students to see through the “natural” and “normal.” We also opened the discussion on what the sentences *do* and how they perform academia. Exclamations, for

example, convey passion and are most often exiled from academic writing. This ongoing dialogue is crucial for students themselves as researchers/writers but also for how they conduct research and how they “write” their subjects.

The sentence activities also encouraged *reflexivity* by questioning the authority of the researcher, how this comes to be written, what alternatives or choices there are and how one can write differently. Participants had often never thought through how they came to conclusions or whether their conclusions carried authority. This growing awareness allowed them to make choices on how to conduct themselves as researchers ethically and poetically. The sentence activities showed students that their unique perspectives were based on “epistemological, ontological, methodological premises” (Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012, p. 305). Awareness of these premises allowed writers/researchers to see themselves aside and in relation to others and not merely as an unvoiced monolithic group subject to the dictates of a discourse.

The key outcome of the sentence activities was to surface the *self* above rigid conventions and authorial anonymity, to connect that self to others who may be undergoing similar processes of alienation, to begin a dialogue that connected rather than Othered, and to encourage a reflexivity where students could recognize the purpose of the activities. While we cannot claim to have reversed the process of Othering through one short workshop, we feel we have begun a process that would be greatly enhanced by more systematic institutionalized graduate training programs along these lines.

Note

1. This research has been supported by an Instructional Development grant from Memorial University of Newfoundland in 2011-12. Ethical approval for this research was granted by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

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Uprooting Social Work Education

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ABSTRACT

In this article, the authors attempt to deconstruct social work education using a metaphor of a “social work tree.” Through reflective dialogue and an arts-based approach, we critically examined the past, present, and future of social work education. This collaborative art project allows us to visually express the colonial roots of social work education and the transformation that is possible when its Eurocentric stronghold is uprooted. We discuss the implications for social work education and suggest ways of moving forward with an allied approach that bridges the gap between mainstream and Indigenous social work education.

Introduction

“(Up)rooting social work” is a metaphor we have used to describe a collaborative art project between a social work academic and five undergraduate social work students in Ontario, Canada. The purpose of the project was to examine how to bridge the gap between mainstream and Indigenous social work to enhance social work education. Using an arts-based approach, we critically reflected upon social work’s past, present, and future, looking specifically at the colonial stronghold of Euro-Western knowledge systems, which marginalize and exclude other voices and perspectives in social work education. We expressed our ideas and hope of bridging the gap between mainstream and Indigenous social work in the creation of a “social work tree.”

This paper builds on a poster presentation that the six authors prepared for the 2012 Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE) conference held in Kitchener-Waterloo. Called *Breaking down Borders and Bridging the Gap between Mainstream and Indigenous Social Work* (CASWE, 2012), this poster presentation unearthed some insightful and thought-provoking discussions between presenters and conference attendees. For instance, it was evident from the discussions that Eurocentric knowledge continues to dominate social work education (Baskin, 2005; Dei, 2008; Dumbrill & Green, 2008; Rice-Green & Dumbrill, 2005; Sinclair, Hart, & Bruyere, 2009). Further, many schools have not yet considered that bridging the gap between mainstream and Indigenous social work is integral to the future of social work education in Canada. In fact, Indigenous knowledge is given little, if any, legitimate role in higher education (Sinclair, 2009).

From the positive responses to the poster presentation and our experiences in constructing it, art appears to be an effective way to stimulate dialogue among students, practitioners, and educators about the past, present, and future of social work education. The creation of a “social work tree” gave us an opportunity to critically examine the linkages between theory and practice, disrupt Eurocentric dominance in the academy, and create space for the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives in social work education (Baskin, 2008, 2009; Dumbrill & Green, 2008; Hart, 2009; Sinclair et al., 2009). As we constructed the tree, we furthered our understanding of social work’s history and objectives of social change. Our collaboration was fuelled by creativity and the telling of a “marginalized story ... one that undermines and destabilizes the oppressive, contradicting the insinuation of hierarchal and self-preserving meaning over contextual and anomalous meaning” (Rolling, 2011, p. 100).

We drew upon John-Steiner’s (2006) study with doctoral students to inform our creative collaboration. In her book, *Creative Collaboration*, she notes that:

[i]n universities, some of the closest bonds are between professors and ... students. In this relationship, we experience the temporary inequality between expert and novice.... The mentor learns new ideas and approaches from his apprentice; he adds to what he learns and transforms it. (pp. 163–164)

At different moments and on different aspects of the project, we were learners and experts collaborating on a project that we believed would help to transform social work education. We remained vigilant to the power dynamics in the collaborative process, and worked to build our partnership upon mutual trust, respect, and shared power.

This article focuses on an arts-based teaching and learning experience in a school of social work. As a pedagogical approach, it opened up new possibilities for us to understand the tensions, contradictions, and opportunities for transformative learning (Feller et al., 2004; O’Sullivan, 2008) and unlearning (Macdonald, 2002) in social work education. Transformative learning offers new ways of thinking, acting, and feeling in order to challenge and resist the forces of domination and inequities in society. Transformative learning has much in common with critical pedagogy (Freire, 1992; Giroux, 1988), anti-oppressive (Barnoff & Moffatt, 2007), feminists (hooks, 1994), antiracist (Dei, 2008b; James, 2001) and anti-colonial (Baskin, 2008, 2009; Dumbrill & Green, 2008; Graveline, 1998; Hart, 2009; Sinclair et al., 2009) approaches to teaching and learning. As a form of emancipatory practice, transformative learning focuses on dynamics of power, privilege and oppression that shape how social differences are experienced and understood (Dei, James, Karumanchery, James-Wilson, & Zine, 2000; Dei, 2008a; hooks, 1994; O’Sullivan, 2008). It also offers new insights by disrupting the Eurocentric academic space and unsettling educators’ and learners’ ways of knowing; challenging taken-for-granted assumptions and dominant discourses in social work education (Baskin, 2008; Fook, 2002; Foucault, 1978, 1980; Kincheloe, 2004; Macdonald & MacDonnell, 2008; MacDonnell, 2009; Rossiter, 2005).

Through our arts-based collaboration, we interrogated some of the core concepts, theories, ideologies, values, and practice approaches upon which social work education was built. We contend that an arts-based project can create spaces and opportunities for critical inquiry and creativity that allows students and educators to attend to the complex relations of power, informing whose voices and knowledge are authorized and legitimized in the academy and whose are marginalized or excluded (Cervero, 2001). We drew upon our teaching and learning experiences to illustrate how an arts-based project can transform social work education. The article begins with a brief discussion on arts-based approach in social work, and then takes a brief conceptual detour before moving to a critical examination of social work’s past, present, and future, through a visual representation of a metaphoric “social work tree.” The article concludes with implications for social work education.

Arts-based Teaching and Learning in Social Work

The field of arts-based education is characterized by an interdisciplinary scholarship. Various academic disciplines, including social work, currently confer notable interest in creativity. In their study of creativity in education, Buckingham and Jones (2001) describe a “cultural turn”—a shift in thinking where creativity is a key ingredient for learners in the knowledge economy. As such, educators and students

are expected to engage in creative teaching and learning methods within the knowledge economy (Craft 2005, 2008; Jones, 2003; Young, 2008).

Like many scholars, we believe that art is a way of knowing, a form of cultural expression that communicates emotions, skills, and insights (Janesick, 2004; Sullivan, 2005). Art is a method of teaching and learning that promotes creativity and knowledge construction that can lead to social change (Janesick, 2004; Sullivan, 2005). Wyman (2004) argues that “at their simplest level, the arts . . . bring aesthetic pleasure and gaiety to our lives. We must never forget that essence of absolute joy, unjustified by any other reason other than its existence” (p.14). Diamond and Mullen (1999) concede that arts-based learning also needs to be about “thinking imaginatively, performing artistically, and taking a risk” (p. 152). A study by Weitz (1996) reveals that the arts “offer opportunities for children and youth to learn new skills, expand their horizons and develop a sense of self, well-being and belonging” (p. 6). Rolling (2011) describes art-based learning as a journey of discovery, free of “walls, barriers or false fronts” (p. 100).

Debates continue about arts’ progressive pedagogy, value, and effectiveness in teaching, developing students’ skills, or addressing social issues and social change (Craft, 2005, 2008; Chang, Lim, & Kim, 2012; Claxton, 2007; Costello, 1995; Gallagher, 1995; Jones, 2010b; MacNeil & Krensky, 1996; Pope, 2005; Sawyer, 2004; Weitz, 1996; Wositsky, 1998). There is also reluctance among some educators to engage in arts-based education. This may be due to limited experience with the arts or with alternative methods of learning. Mont (2009) argues that there is a preoccupation with logical and linguistic-based teaching, failing to acknowledge the similarities between the arts and rational thinking, or how art education may promote advanced thinking and inquiry. Further, Hanna (1994) posits that there is a lack of evidence that arts-based education actually accomplish what it intends. Scholars’ mixed perspectives on arts-based education may also be linked to conservative views of creative learning as inferior to traditional teaching approaches or a lack of commitment to standards (Jones, 2003). Such challenges keep arts-based education on the margins in higher education.

The “Social Work Tree”: Past, Present, and Future

We used the metaphor of a “social work tree” to represent our critical examination of the past, present, and future of social work education. A tree appeared most appropriate because its roots, trunk, and leaves can metaphorically illustrate social work’s past, present, and future. Further, because the profession has mostly followed

a bottom-up, grassroots approach, we can effectively guide the reader through a visual representation of social work beginning at its roots, and continuing through the trunk and up to the leaves. The “social work tree” is discussed below in three main sections: roots, trunk, and leaves (see Figure 1).



Fig. 1: “Social work tree”

A Short Detour

Before beginning a critical examination of social work’s past, present, and future as represented in our “social work tree” above, we take a short conceptual detour to discuss what we mean by the terms “Aboriginal” and “mainstream social work” as used throughout this article.

We use “Aboriginal” as an inclusive term to include Status and Non-status First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples of Turtle Island. The terms “Aboriginal,” “Native,” and “Indigenous” are used interchangeably in the literature (Sinclair, 2009; Smith, 2005), and will be used similarly in this article. However, we acknowledge that significant diversity exists in terms of language, culture, tradition, and philosophical belief (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Fire, 2006). As non-Aboriginal scholars, we recognize that in Canada the term Aboriginal is a legal, cultural, and political term, a label given to the Indigenous peoples of this land by the Canadian government (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). As social workers and educators, we also recognize the dangers of using terms that homogenize Indigenous people despite their diversity.

We follow Baines’ (2007) assertion that “mainstream” social work takes “politics and political awareness out of issues in order to control the issues and those seeking to make social change” (p. 5). Hence mainstream social work refers to perspectives, policies, procedures and practice approaches that maintain rather than challenge the status quo. Baines distinguishes “mainstream social work” from “critical social work,” arguing that in mainstream social work “[i]nterventions are aimed largely at the individual with little or no analysis of or intent to challenge power, structures, social relations, culture, or economic forces” (p. 4). The focus is on individual shortcomings, pathology, and inadequacy with much emphasis on medical and psychiatric diagnoses and little concern for social change and transformation.

Bearing in mind that mainstream social work is constructed on Eurocentric knowledge, and Aboriginal perspectives are not often present in the academy, we set out to make visible the historical and ongoing colonial influence that are at the roots of social work education.

(Up) rooting Social Work: Revealing the Hidden to Advance the Future

A tree is dependent on its roots for nourishment (see Figure 2). The health of the roots determines the health of the tree. The concepts displayed along the roots of our “social work tree” symbolize the origins of the profession, and the historical legacy that continue to influence it today. In this section, we discuss the history of social work through the roots of the tree.

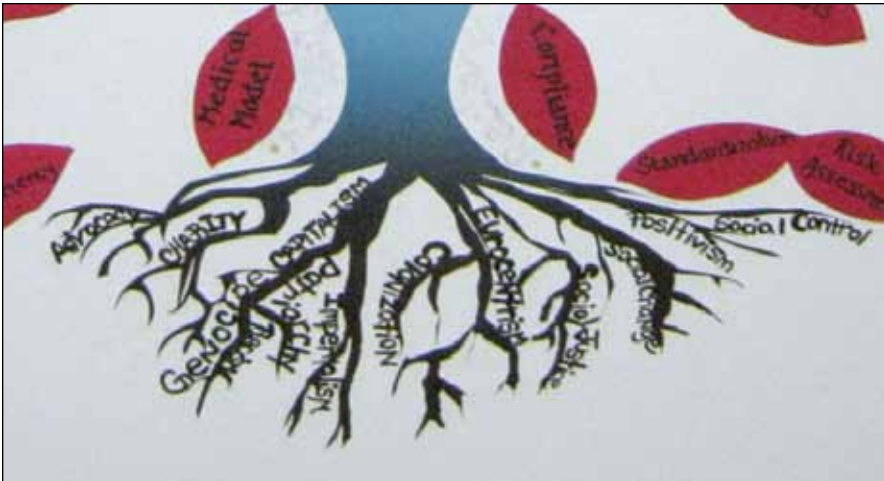


Fig. 2: "Social work tree – roots"

Since its early beginnings in the 19th Century, primarily in the United States and England, social work as a profession has its roots in the struggle to eradicate poverty and the problems associated with it (Elliott, 1997; Healy, 2001; Hokenstad, Khinduka, & Midgley, 1992; Jones, 2002; Weiss-Gal, Benyamini, Ginzburg, Savaya, & Peled, 2009). Historically, social work assisted individuals, families, groups, and communities mainly through charity work (Altman & Goldberg, 2008). From the 1800s, social work in Canada meant relief for the poor, whose poverty was believed to result from weakness of character. However, the rise of the Industrial Revolution left many in poverty. The state viewed the poor as a direct threat to social order, and created a system to support them (Jacoby, 1984). While the system had good intentions, an underlying motive was social control (Piven & Cloward, 1993; Margolin, 1997).

With the rise of charity movements like Mary Richmond's Charity Organization Society (Altman & Goldberg, 2008) and Jane Addams' Settlement House Movement (Lundblad, 1995), social work began to gain more recognition. After World War II, the profession grew with the expansion of the welfare state and the development of public services such as health and social welfare, in which social workers were often employed (Rice & Prince, 2000). The profession grew dramatically in the 1960s and 1970s, as social entitlement to government services became a right to Canadian citizens (Rice & Prince, 2000).

Social work is also rooted in social change and upholding the values of social justice and equity, as well as advocacy for the poor and the oppressed (Healy, 2008). However, the profession is not free of flaws and criticisms (Piven & Cloward, 1993).

The history of Canada is the history of the colonization of Indigenous peoples (Alfred, 2007). Colonialism involves the settlement of territory, the exploitation or development of its resources and the attempt to govern the Indigenous peoples of the occupied lands (Boehmer, 1995). As such, social control by a dominant class takes place through political, economic, and ideological means (Mullaly, 1993). Social work played a significant role in the colonization process. First, mainstream social work was, and continues to be, rooted in Eurocentric/Anglo-American values (Gordon, 1994; Katz, 1986; Mink, 1995; Platt, 1969). These values promote capitalism, imperialism and positivism. Eurocentrism is a practice of viewing the world from a European perspective (Shohat & Stam, 1994). This includes viewing European practices as superior to others, and being largely unaccepting of other ways of knowing.

Colonialism and imperialism have exploited and dispossessed Indigenous peoples everywhere for hundreds of years (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). The powerful colonial institutions, whether they are educational, social, or economic, have also colonized people's minds. This has led to internalized colonialism and the acquisition of "white lenses" (hooks, 1992), based on Western values, ways of thinking, and worldviews. These subtle forms of colonization have led many Indigenous individuals to devalue their own culture and anything connected to it (Alfred, 2007).

Social workers have helped to maintain the colonization of Indigenous peoples, largely through the residential school system and the "sixties scoop" (Alston-O'Connor, 2010). Thousands of Aboriginal children were forced to attend residential schools with the stated objective of cultural assimilation into the wider Canadian society (Blackstock, 2007). Aboriginal children placed in these schools often lost all meaningful contact with their families and community. The legacy of the residential school system, which was inherently a form of cultural genocide, continues to negatively impact Aboriginal peoples (Alston-O'Connor, 2010).

As residential schools failed to meet the goals of assimilation, the child welfare system became the new agent of assimilation and colonization (Alston-O'Connor, 2010). The "sixties scoop," which began in the 1950s, continues (Ball, 2008). A significant proportion of Aboriginal children were and continue to be placed in non-Aboriginal foster and adoptive homes by provincial child welfare agencies (Ball, 2008), which largely employ social workers. Forced relocation of entire villages, dispersal of clans, and urbanization have further disconnected Aboriginal children and families from their communities, languages, livelihoods, and cultures (Sinha et al., 2011). Moreover, "There are more First Nations children in child welfare care today than at the height of the residential schools by a factor of three" (Blackstock, 2007, p. 74). Therefore, while

social work espouses the values of advocacy, human rights, social justice, and equity, it continues to be a colonial tool of the Canadian state (Healy, 2008).

The roots of the tree illustrate the differing, yet interconnected social work ideologies and values upon which social work was built (Murdach, 2011). Empowering values such as charity, advocacy, social change, and social justice co-exist with oppressive ideologies of capitalism, colonization, Eurocentricism, imperialism, positivism, racism, and social control (Healy, 2008). These deeply rooted values and ideologies continue to influence social work education today.

(Up) rooting Social Work: Breaking Down Borders and Bridging the Gap

The concepts of respect, reciprocity, reflexivity, and resistance were selected to frame the trunk of our “social work tree” because of their importance in helping to bridge the gap between mainstream and Aboriginal social work (Fook, 2002; Green & Baldry, 2008). The applicability of these concepts to both Euro-Western and Aboriginal perspectives makes these central pillars to hold up the trunk of our tree. Like Briskman (2007), we believe that critical and progressive social work has some relevance to Aboriginal social work, particularly in challenging Eurocentric knowledge systems in the academy (See Figure 3). The four concepts of critical and Aboriginal social work that frame the trunk of our “social work tree” are discussed as follows.



Fig. 3: “Social work tree – trunk”

Respect is a core social work value and an important principle in Aboriginal worldview (Baskin, 2006; International Association of Schools of Social Work, 2001). We view respect as a central principle in helping to bridge the colonial divide between Eurocentric and Aboriginal worldviews. To that end, we propose a respectful inclusion of Aboriginal knowledge and ways of helping into social work curricula. This is not simply an add-on but a disruption of Eurocentric dominance to make space for Aboriginal knowledges and approaches in social work (Fire, 2006). For instance, entire curricula should be infused with content that examines the history of colonization in Canada, the profession's role in various state colonial projects, and an emphasis on decolonization (Baskin, 2006; Fire, 2006; Gair, Thomson, Miles, & Harris, 2002; Lynn, 2001; Weaver, 1999, 2000a, 2000b).

A respectful integration would ensure that Aboriginal peoples and their diverse knowledge and ways of helping are valued in the academy. A respectful integration should not lead to Aboriginal peoples losing control and ownership of their knowledge systems. However, it should help Aboriginal students feel more welcome in an environment which for too long has disrespected, marginalized, and excluded them (Baskin, 2006; Dei et al., 2000; Fire, 2006). Having respect as a core value and principle in mainstream social work can help safeguard against appropriation and misappropriation of Aboriginal knowledge in the academy.

Reciprocity is a guiding ethical principle within Aboriginal worldview (Lawless, 1992). Reciprocity refers to an exchange; a two-way process of "consistently giving and receiving" (Baskin, 2009, p. 140; Lassiter, 2001, Lawless, 1992). We believe this concept is useful in bridging the gap between mainstream and Indigenous social work education. For example, reciprocity disrupts the mainstream discourse of faculty member as the "expert" and "creator" of knowledge who dispenses information to "passive" and "unknowing" students (Freire, 1983, 1995; Scollon, 1981). It challenges faculty members to be open; to being vulnerable and experience the ambiguities, uncertainties, and complexities of the real world (Parton & O'Byrne, 2000a; 2000b). In reciprocal relationships, educators, researchers, and practitioners share knowledge, control, and power in the teaching, learning, research, and helping processes so that everyone learns and grows from the exchange (Lassiter, 2001; Lawless, 1992; Scarangella, 2002). The principle of reciprocity requires faculty members to be open to collaborating and co-creating knowledge with students, and involve them in tasks that build their own knowledge and skills (Barnhardt, 1986). When relationships are built on reciprocity, they are empowering, and mutual trust and respect are easily developed (Baskin, 2009).

Reflexivity is a multidisciplinary term with varied meanings and interpretations in the literature, and is often confused with reflectivity and reflection; and the terms are sometimes used interchangeably (D’Cruz, Gillingham, & Melendez, 2007; Fook, 2002; Fook & Askeland, 2006; Mosca & Yost, 2001; Rea, 2000; Payne, 2005; Ryan & Golden, 2006). Jones (2010a) defines reflection as “a process of critically examining one’s past and present practice as a means of building one’s knowledge and understanding in order to improve practice” (p. 593). Fook (2002) refers to reflexivity as a critical “stance of being able to locate oneself in the picture, to appreciate how one’s own self influences the research act” (p. 43). Other scholars argue that “[r]eflexivity involves the capacity to develop critical awareness of the assumptions that underlie practice” (Edwards, Ranson, & Strain, 2002, p. 533) and an interrogation of our role and contribution to the construction of knowledge and meaning making (Campbell, 2004; Taylor, 2006). Importantly, reflexivity entails a critical examination of our own subjectivities and social locations (Ali, 2006; Golombisky, 2006; Gray, 2008; Mauthner, 2000; Suki, 2006), and the role that emotions play in the work we do with people (D’Cruz et al., 2007; Miehl & Moffat, 2000). Thus while both reflection and reflectivity allow for the casting of a critical gaze upon practice through reflection in and on action (Fook, 2002; Schon, 1983, 1987), reflexivity is much more complex because it implicates individuals in the work they do (D’Cruz et al., 2007; Edwards et al., 2002; Ruch, 2002).

Reflexivity was selected for the trunk of the tree because it shares similarities with an Aboriginal perspective of exploring the self—of turning inwards to continuously find meaning to enrich our lives and the work we do with people (Baskin, 2006; Ermine, 1995; Fook, 2002). In Aboriginal worldview, there is an acceptance of introspection, of journeying inward to find meaning through prayer, fasting, ceremonies, silence, and so on (Baskin, 2006). As Willie Ermine (1995) states, “Aboriginal epistemology speaks of pondering great mysteries that lie no further than the self” (p. 108). As a critical approach to practice, reflexivity requires the social worker to situate the self in the work, recognize the influence of self on people and contexts, question and acknowledge power relations, and challenge and resist various forms of domination to bring about social change (Cosgrove & McHugh, 2000; D’Cruz et al., 2007; Fook, White, & Gardner, 2006; Parton & O’Byrne, 2000a; Ruch, 2002; Schon, 1983, 1987; Sheppard, Newstead, Di Caccavo, & Ryan, 2000; Speer, 2002; Taylor & White, 2000). Thus reflexivity is central to bridging the gap between mainstream and Aboriginal social work.

Resistance is an important concept in both mainstream and Aboriginal social work (Baskin, 2006; Fook, 2002; Lynn, 2001; Turiel, 2003). It can simply be understood

as an act of rule breaking, non-compliance or an oppositional act that contests institutional power and dominant cultural norms to uncover and confront issues (Darts, 2004; Singh & Cowden, 2009). Acts of resistance may vary from clients refusing treatment to progressive social workers forming alliances with Aboriginal people or social and political movements such as anti-capitalist and anti-globalization activists to bring about social transformation (Baines, 2007; Mullaly, 1997).

Aboriginal peoples have and continue to resist colonization and domination, often by refusing to participate in the Euro-Canadian education system and in Westernized social services (Baskin, 2006; Simpson, 2001; Sinclair et al., 2009). By not participating, Aboriginal peoples demonstrate their resistance to state control, a process that is unacceptable for the ways it negates the sharing of power and inclusion of Aboriginal values and knowledge (Simpson, 2001). As social workers and allies with Aboriginal people, we know our participation is essential in the struggles for re-claiming Aboriginal land, languages, and politics (Dei, 2002).

The creation of a “social work tree” was itself an act of resistance to mainstream social work, which continues to marginalize Aboriginal people and their worldviews. We recognize that very little attention is given to Indigenous knowledges in mainstream social work education. Our aims as allies are to challenge this invisibility and marginality, further develop our understanding, and help to advance Aboriginal social work in Canada. We believe that resistance can sharpen our collective understanding of the ways individuals and groups challenge dominant cultural material and social determinants (Dimitriadis, 2011).

We believe that resistance can uproot social work’s colonial history and challenge Eurocentric practices that have become routinized and standardized in social work (Baines, 2008). The very act of selecting concepts for inclusion and removal from our “social work tree” was an act of resistance. Through critical de-construction and reflexivity, we engaged in a process of “meditating upon blindness, the invisible, the unseen, the unseeable, [and] the overlooked”—a “visual culture resistance” (Darts, 2004, p. 319).

(Up) rooting Social Work: Creating Space and Building Hope for the Future

We have considered the roots, trunk and now we focus on the leaves of our “social work tree” (see Figure 4). The leaves depict the current approaches in social work education and our vision of the future. The leaves reflect the colours of the Medicine Wheel: red, white, black, and yellow. As Thomas and Green (2007) explain:

the red quadrant, focusing on spirituality and new beginnings; the black being the direction of the physical being, sharing of knowledge and strengthening of community; the white representing the mentality, focused on change, re-thinking, re-evaluating; and finally the yellow quadrant the direction of the emotional being, a time of learning, warmth, and growth. (pp. 92–93)

Many Aboriginal people approach health and wellness through the four quadrants, the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual, to maintain balance between the self, other living things, and Mother Earth (Lavallee, 2007).

Our project follows a similar philosophical aspiration as the Wheel—that all aspects of social work, regardless of differences, are interrelated. As Thomas and Green (2007) argue, the Wheel “has no beginning and no end and teaches us that all things are interrelated” (p. 2). The Wheel suggests a continuum, unlike the linear thinking of mainstream social work which often proceeds in separate and disconnected ways.



Fig. 4: “Social work tree – leaves”

The leaves of the “social work tree” represent the diverse elements of both mainstream and Indigenous social work. The red leaves represent the current concepts, values, theories, and practice approaches that are prevalent in mainstream social work. Some of these are anti-oppression and empowerment, postmodernism/poststructuralism, identity/discourse. Due to space limitation, only a few are discussed here. The mainstream concepts that we suggest be removed from social work education are cultural competency, neo-liberalism, standardization, diagnosis, and the medical model. These are depicted by the falling leaves from the tree.

Anti-oppressive practice refers to a framework which addresses structural and systemic inequalities and social divisions in the work with clients (Healy, 2005). It is a “person-centered philosophy, an egalitarian value system and a focus on process and outcome” (p. 179). Anti-oppressive practice has a significant impact on social work education, research, and practice, allowing opportunities for major societal and structural change (Burke & Harrison, 1998; Dalrymple & Burke, 1995; Dominelli, 2002; Lynn, 1999; Mullaly, 2002; Payne, 1997; Razack, 1999). Holding true to its empowerment model, an anti-oppressive approach is crucial in eradicating oppression and bridging the gap between mainstream and Indigenous social work.

The perspectives of poststructuralism and postmodernism also hold importance in mainstream social work education. Postmodernism “involves a critique of totalising theories and structures, boundaries and hierarchies which maintain and enact them” (Fook, 2002, p. 12). It holds the ideological perspective that there is no neutrality and no one truth; rather there are multiple realities and ways of knowing (Fook, 2002). Poststructuralism is linked to postmodernism, and posits that multiple meanings and interpretations always exist (Fook, 2002). Postmodernist and post-structuralist perspectives recognize power as the major contributor to inequality and challenge the colonial teachings that govern social work education. As Foucault (1980) describes, “power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategic situation in a particular society” (p. 93).

Other perspectives that also contribute to the growth of our “social work tree” are strengths theory, constructivism, task-centered practice, crisis intervention, and the solution-focused perspective. As social work continues to pull away from its colonial past, it needs to question, challenge, and uproot dominant mainstream perspectives to make way for Indigenous and Other ways of knowing in social work education.

Having discussed the mainstream concepts represented by the red leaves, we now discuss the concepts that support an allied approach. These are social justice, social action and self-reflection (to name a few), as represented by the black leaves. We believe an allied approach can help to bridge the gap between mainstream and Indigenous social work education.

Social justice is described as an “organizing value of social work” (Swenson, 1998, p. 527). Importantly, the value of social justice “requires that practitioners pay careful attention to their own experiences of oppression and of privilege or domination” (p. 532). Van Soest (1995) argues that social justice involves three components: “legal justice, which is concerned with what a person owes to society; commutative justice, which is concerned with what people owe each other; and distributive justice, which is what society owes a person” (p. 1811). As a central value of social work education, social justice can help to inform an allied approach.

As discussed earlier, the process of self-reflection is “underpinned by a reflexive stance” (Fook, 2002, p. 43). “Critical reflection focuses on change in individuals and has been linked to an agenda for social change through collective action” (D’Cruz et al., 2007, p. 87). The purpose of reflective practice is to “close the gap between what is espoused and what is enacted” (Fook & Gardner, 2007, p. 24). In this way, self-reflection can be utilized to bridge the gap between theory and practice; between mainstream and Indigenous social work by transforming our social justice values into social action. This firm link between social justice, self-reflection, and action is useful in developing an allied approach.

Fook and Gardner (2007) also stress the importance of context within reflective practice, stating that “there needs to be a readiness to respond to what might be new or different about these contexts” (p. 25). They also suggest an “awareness of different perspectives...[and] an emphasis on a holistic approach...and the sorts of knowledge that support relevant practice in complex and unpredictable situations” (p. 26). An allied approach between Indigenous and mainstream social work now exists in some schools of social work but further challenge is needed to push the boundaries to a framework of decolonization.

The yellow leaves represent Aboriginal values that are beginning to be incorporated into social work curricula. These leaves represent concepts such as storytelling, sharing circles, wholism, and holistic methods of healing. The use of sharing circles in Indigenous cultures is a rich form of communicating and capturing an individual’s experiences (Lavallée, 2009). Sharing circles demonstrate the power of

storytelling and has influenced mainstream practices such as narrative and art-based therapy. A healing journey may capture the benefits of being close to nature and elements which heal: “connecting to the land and earth, and using symbolism, such as holding a rock and or being close to soothing water” (Sinclair et al., 2009, p. 137). The cultural practice of smudging, which involves the burning of sacred plants such as sage and sweetgrass, can also aid in cleansing a room, people, and/or objects (Laval-lée, 2009). Such practices are empowering, and allow for “expressing oneself, establishing a connection with nature, engaging in traditions and participating in ceremonies demonstrates the resilience of Aboriginal people and resilience of Indigenous culture” (Sinclair et al., 2009, p. 138).

Our “social work tree” was created to uproot the colonial stronghold of Euro-Western perspective in mainstream social work and to make space for Aboriginal knowledge in the academy. As allies with Aboriginal people, what we strive for in institutions of education is a “synthesis” of knowledges, which Dei (2002) describes as:

shifting to a restructured and re-constituted space where issues of knowledge content and physical representation are addressed in ways to acknowledge the multiplicity of human ideas [and] [a]n educational practice that leads to systemic change rather than a remedial patchwork of unsustainable efforts. (p. 9)

We must continually be mindful that our role as allies is to work with Aboriginal people but ultimately, “Indigenous peoples must own their past, culture and traditions ... and use Indigenous knowledge as a basis for contributing to the universal knowledge system” (p. 10). We can support a decolonizing framework in our classrooms by integrating critical, anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and anti-colonial perspectives in our curricula and programs until they become a way of life (Thomas & Green, 2007). As we let go of colonial frameworks in education, and embrace marginalized voices and perspectives, the social work profession will grow and flourish.

“(Up) rooting Social Work”: Implications for Social Work Education

In this article, we discussed a collaborative arts-based project, which we have called a “social work tree.” Through this metaphor, we have shown social work’s past, present, and future, paying special attention to the colonial stronghold of Euro-Western knowledge systems in social work education, and suggest ways of moving forward with an allied approach that bridges the gap between mainstream and Indigenous social work education.

Using art and the metaphor of a “social work tree,” we have visually shown how social work education was deconstructed from its historical roots, powerful trunk, to the flourishing leaves of the tree. This arts-based approach allowed us to engage creatively and critically with the tensions, contradictions and complexities of social work history. The aim was to show how mainstream social work education has been influenced by colonialism and Euro-Western knowledge systems, to the exclusion of other voices and perspectives. A further aim was to make visible how mainstream social work education could benefit from integrating Aboriginal and other diverse perspectives into its curricula and program. Social work educators can play a critical role in challenging Eurocentric knowledge systems and create space for Aboriginal and Other knowledges to be integrated into social work curricula (Thomas & Green, 2007). Creating space for marginalized voices and perspectives is a challenge for the academy.

We resisted using dominant modalities of plain text for our critical deconstruction of social work education, and instead utilized shapes, colours, pictures, and textures to illustrate our ideas and vision of social work. Through our visual and critical analysis, we have shown the colonial stronghold of Euro-Western knowledge systems in social work education. We have also shown that the legacy of colonization continues to be a reality for Aboriginal peoples in Canada (Weaver, 1999; Thomas & Green, 2007; Sinclair et al., 2009), emphasizing a need for ongoing advocacy and resistance by Aboriginal people and allies. By making visible the roots of social work, we hope to uproot the colonial perspectives upon which social work education was built.

The concepts of respect, reciprocity, reflexivity, and resistance that are represented in the trunk of our “social work tree” illustrate our attempt to bridge the gap between mainstream and Indigenous social work education. These concepts can help us engage in a process of “decolonizing education” (Battiste, Bell, & Findlay, 2002). They can also be utilized as strategies for uprooting and resisting Eurocentric dominance in the academy and make way for marginalized and excluded voices and perspectives.

Having respect as a core value and principle in mainstream social work education can help to advance the profession’s position against colonialism and safeguard against appropriation and misappropriation of Aboriginal knowledge in the academy. Reciprocity disrupts the mainstream discourse of “expert knowledge” (Freire, 1983) in social work education so that marginalized voices are acknowledge and valued. Both reflexivity and resistance aim to challenge social work education by requiring social workers to implicate the self in the work they do with people

(D’Cruz et al., 2007; Fook, 2002) and resist colonization and Eurocentric dominance in Western social service practices (Baskin, 2006; Simpson, 2001; Sinclair et al., 2009).

The leaves of our “social work tree” reflect our critiques, ideas and hope for the future of social work education. We used red leaves to represent mainstream social work, black leaves to support an allied approach, and yellow leaves to represent Aboriginal values that have begun to be incorporated into social work education. By letting go of certain concepts, theories, and practice approaches, we envision a future where Aboriginal and Other knowledges are acknowledged, respected, and valued in social work education.

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A Day at Filastrocca Preschool, Pistoia, Italy: Meaning Making Through Literacy and Creative Experience

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ABSTRACT

In this article,¹ we explore how the library teacher of an Italian preschool with a special mission focused on books, stories, and the imagination uses group literacy activities as a context for encouraging shared meaning making through creative experiences. We take readers inside one day at the Italian Preschool, Filastrocca, providing detailed descriptions and analysis of interactions and activities. We suggest that elaborate extended dialogue among children and the teacher, promotion of empathy through opportunities to take others' perspectives (including book characters'), and group engagement in shared and multi-faceted creativity are important characteristics related to meaning making in the context of relationships. Encouraging creative exploration and play across all domains of intelligence allows the children to develop their individual strengths into a product uniquely theirs.

Introduction

Empathy means the "right time." The important thing when we share daily life with children (in particular when we share moments in play) is not necessarily

to reach an important “truth,” but instead to be able to encounter one another, listening without misunderstanding, without overriding the other’s meaning, in harmony based on deep, mutual familiarity.

-- Donatella Giovannini, pedagogical coordinator with Pistoia, Italy early education system (in Galardini & Giovannini, 2001, p. 98)

... [W]ith the acquisition of speech and narrative capacities, the young child, by engaging in playful dialogues, develops imaginative capacities in which alternatives for action can be represented and expressed. Envisioning alternatives for action and multiple perspectives is a central part of the Italian experience, and it is considered by most to be an important moral sensibility.

-- Robert M. Emde, MD, in his Foreword to *Bambini: The Italian Approach to Infant/Toddler Care* (2001, p. xi)

Empathy, the awareness of another being’s feelings; the ability to take up another being’s point of view. We nurture empathy when we practice seeing the world from new and unfamiliar perspectives. Looking from a window, not into a mirror, we see another being’s point of view, we imaginatively enter into another being’s experience, we feel the pulse and throb of another being’s heart.

--Ann Pelo (In press)

*y*oung children are driven to learn about and understand their world. Indeed, many educators suggest that the role of *meaning making*, or comprehension, in children’s literacy development should be given more emphasis in educational and research communities. As part of their model of “emergent comprehension,” Dooley and Matthews (2009) describe interactions among adults and peers as the context in which children learn to also interact with objects—such as books—to make meaning. This shared experience spanned over time allows children to build expectations that text has purpose and meaning (Dooley, 2011). In a qualitative case study of the learning environment at an Italian preschool, Scuola Comunale dell’Infanzia La Filastrocca (“Nursery Rhyme”), we concluded that this particular school combined storytelling, imagination, and family involvement in an innovative and unique way to create a coherent, legible school environment (see Edwards et al., in press). We suggested that Filastrocca’s environment promotes a community context for “emergent comprehension,” in that interaction among children and adults encourages children to explore possibilities and look for the meaning contained in books and environmental print (Dooley, 2011; Dooley & Matthews, 2009). Consistent with Dooley and Matthews’ suggestions, Filastrocca’s library teacher adopted an

approach to supporting children's literacy development that focused not on basic skill preparation (e.g., decoding), but emphasized the role of meaning making through creative activity in the context of social-emotional relationships.

This paper focuses on Filastrocca Preschool, which has been among the Pistoia, Italy, schools and centers studied by visitors and researchers interested in the progressive and innovative Italian early childhood education practices (e.g., Barrs, 2007; West, 2008). Filastrocca, originally established in 1970 under the name of Fornaci ("Furnaces"), served 119 children aged 3-6 from a socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhood in 2010 (see Edwards et al., in press, for a historical overview and in-depth description). The purpose of this paper is to expand upon our original case study and further explore Filastrocca practices, specifically through providing readers a glimpse of how literacy activities are carried out in a way that promotes emergent literacy skills and creative growth through collective imagination and through fostering empathy for peers and others. Fostering empathy has always been an explicit value of the early educational system of Pistoia (Edwards & Gandini, 2001), drawing on attachment theory, especially as put forward by Emmi Pikler at the Loczy Institute in Budapest, Hungary (David & Appelli, 2001). In this article, we describe and analyze a book-reading discussion and related activity observed during a 2006 visit to Filastrocca. These interactions involved a group of five-year olds and the library teacher Alga Giacomelli, a master educator in the domain of literacy, who was influential for decades in establishing and guiding the preschool's mission focused on books, stories, and the imagination.

Many visitors of the Pistoia schools and centers have been delighted by Filastrocca's distinct school culture and environment (Barrs, 2007; Edwards et al., in press; West, 2008). In this paper, we take readers inside one day at Filastrocca by providing a description and analysis of a reading conversation and related activity focused on the class's exploration of Eric Carle's *The Very Busy Spider* (1984), translated into Italian. It is noteworthy that the Filastrocca community has a special interest in Eric Carle; the author has established a presence in the Tuscan region over the last decade through projects designed to stimulate children's interest in books by introducing his works to teachers, educators, parents, and librarians. The interactions described in this paper occurred not long after Eric Carle made a special visit to the school to share about his books.

Filastrocca's approach to sharing books with children involves a three-stage process, first introducing a book by reading it in narrative style, and then continuing exploration with additional, interactive readings of the same book and extended

experiences that help promote understanding and support creativity (e.g., dramatic play, painting, drawing, collage, theatre, etc.). The observation described in this paper captures the Filastrocca preschool class's second reading of *The Very Busy Spider*. The day before, they had read the book for a first time with Alga and started work on a project of constructing their own copies of *The Very Busy Spider*, involving creating a cover and inside pages of the book.

As will be presented, the rich interactions described below demonstrate several salient features related to the relationship-focused approach at Filastrocca: elaborate *extended dialogue* among children and the teacher; promotion of *empathy* through opportunities to take another's perspective, including book characters; and *group engagement* in shared creativity. This creativity also honors children's multiple intelligences, or "frames of mind," in the theory of Howard Gardner (1983). Children are encouraged to

...find their way to learn across the wide variety of approaches that are offered them, without there being any pressure or favour for one approach over another. The recognition of differing characteristics [of children] encourages a variety of learning styles ... The skill of the teacher is in the balancing out of the differing interests and ideas that the children bring to the group in order to arrive at a consensus, that will be taken up with enthusiasm by all the members. (West, 2008, p. 8, speaking of Gardner's theory in relation to the pedagogy she observed in Pistoia.)

As we shall lay out in the discussion section of the paper, the learning experiences at Filastrocca cultivate all of the different intelligences of children, especially (with respect to this literacy encounter) *linguistic*, *interpersonal*, and *visual-spatial*, but also *intrapersonal*, *logical-mathematical*, *bodily-kinesthetic*, and *musical*. We suggest that the interactions in the interactive reading and follow-up book-making experience support shared meaning making through creative activity.

The Literacy Experience

And here begins the story: setting the stage.

Alga uses familiar rituals to start literacy interactions and activities in Filastrocca's library, officially named *Sfogliando l'Arcobaleno*, or *Paging (Leafing) through the Rainbow*, but called the *Rainbow Library* by the children. Part of the children's library

routine is to have their hands stamped with a red heart, a symbol associated with the children's system for rating library books (more hearts = liking the book more). When children return home from preschool with a heart stamped on their hands, parents know their child has been to the Rainbow Library that day. Children also engage in a group conversation before reading and engaging in literacy activities. The following describes interactions following the hand-stamping and discussion. Readers should also see the linked "**photo story**" (http://www.learnquebec.ca/learninglandscapes/documents/Filastrocca_Preschool.pptx) that illustrates the activities through photographs and textual description.

With the book propped up in her lap, Alga announces to the group of children sitting in the circle of youth-sized chairs that they need to wait for Nicolo, another student who has run an errand, to return before they start reading. She then indicates that she also needs another student to go to the kitchen and relay a message to the staff. A couple of students volunteer, "Me!" but Alga says she needs a "big" child who can complete this errand that is a "little difficult," and requests Bianca's assistance. Just as Bianca is making her way out of the circle to run her errand, Nicolo returns.

"Go Nicolo," Alga prompts him to join his classmates. As Nicolo takes a seat, Alga initiates the activity. "First we have to sing our song, right?" she asks. Then laying the book in her lap, she starts to sway from side to side, rhythmically chanting, "Once upon a time there was a king sitting on a sofa that said to his woman, 'tell me a story.'" The children join in saying the words. One boy taps his foot to the rhythm of the chant. "And the story began, once upon a time there was a king" Alga begins. Then crinkling her face in an expression that suggests she has just said something ridiculous, Alga exclaims, "Not a king!" "Who was it?" she asks as she holds up the book for the children to see.

"A spider!" the children respond.

"A little spider," Alga confirms, smiling. Still holding the book, Alga asks the child what they should do. Should they wait for Bianca to return before they start? A few sounds of disappointment come from the circle of children. Putting her hand up as if to motion, "Stop," Alga responds, "No, let's go slowly and calmly," as she opens up the book. "What could be written here on this little page?" asks Alga as she follows the words on the title page with her finger. One child speaks louder than the others to reply, "The little spider."

"The little spider says Pietro," Alga repeats as she turns back to the cover of the book and points to the picture of the red and green spider. Opening the book again, Alga says, "And here begins the story." As she reads the words on the first page, her voice is not the only one that can be heard. A few children are trying "read" along with the teacher, saying the same words as Alga. Another little voice is making a comment or asking a question, but is drowned out by the surrounding, enthusiastic noise.

Developing empathy: making spider thread and being "a little bit like a spider."

Alga helps to transport children into the world of the spider by allowing them to pretend to do what spiders do, make threads of web. This full exploration of the character and topic has the potential to promote the widening of the children's perspective, which in turn may aid in their ability to engage with the story, topic, and representation through creative activity.

After Alga finishes reading the text about the spider on the first page, Nicholas spontaneously asks, "Why does he get stuck like that?"

"Do you remember, Nicholas? Let's show them we can make a thread." Alga prompts. Nicholas is not the only child to respond to Alga's request. Several children put their hands to their mouths, collecting saliva between their thumbs and pointer fingers. Once they have enough saliva, they hold out their hands, displaying their ability to create thin "threads" of saliva that string between their thumbs and pointer fingers. Based on their quick responses to the teacher's request to make spider web threads, it would appear that these children have tried this before. Children smile and laugh as they make their own spider web thread.

The children are still collecting saliva between their fingers when Alga says, "But Giulio was saying something important. He was saying that the spider's saliva is a special saliva. Right? Tell us why it is a special saliva."

"Because we can't do what a spider does," responds Giulio. "We cannot make a spider web," Alga reiterates. This prompts a discussion among the children and teacher, with their comments sometimes overlapping.

"We are kids," says one child.

“Let’s do what kids know how to do,” suggests Alga.

“We can’t do what the animals do,” says Giulio.

“We’ll do what men and children know how to do. Even the animals don’t know how to do what we know how to do,” says Alga. Several children excitedly respond with their comments, prompting Alga to say, “Let’s speak one at a time, otherwise we can’t hear Pietro. What did you want to say?”

“Yes to everyone, we can do like this,” Pietro responds, making a funny face, sticking out his tongue. Several children laugh and imitate Pietro. Alga, too, laughs, and then makes an attempt to redirect the conversation to spiders again, “But, like spiders do, you don’t know how to.”

“Or like a bunny,” says Pietro.

“Or like a bunny,” Alga repeats. Alga makes yet another attempt to redirect the conversation toward spiders. “But, Nicholas showed us before that he knows how to be a little bit like a spider. A little piece of thread. Little, little,” says Alga, pointing to Nicholas and motioning how to make thread between her thumb and pointer finger (yet not using saliva).

“Me too!” respond several children and a little chatter goes on.

Not leaving anyone out: starting over for a single child.

Alga communicates the importance of each individual child when she starts the activity over for a single student.

Looking down at the book and then back up at the children, Alga asks, “Can we start because Bianca is here?” Bianca had returned a few minutes earlier and is now seated in one of the chairs. The children are still talking about their spider thread, saying, “A little bit! A little bit!”

“A little bit. Okay,” responds Alga. “Bianca, sit here and we will start all over for you.” Bianca is already seated, but Alga makes a special point to emphasize that they are “starting over” for her.

Reading... and interacting.

Alga's style of interacting with children in reading and discussion is characterized by high levels of animation and enthusiastic engagement.

Now that they are "officially" started, Alga proceeds with the activity. The children attentively listen as she reads, "The splendid sun is shining. The wind is blowing. Blowing already in this good morning. It brings with it a spider in a field. The spider gets stuck on a fence and starts to build a spider web. A horse arrived and said, 'Hee-eee, hee-eee, do you want to ride on me?'" Alga switches to a high-pitched voice as she reads the horse's dialogue. She returns to her "own" voice as she continues, "The little spider is quiet." The children chime in saying this last line of text. As Alga finishes reading the page, Giulio adds "Because he didn't know how to ride a horse." Alga confirms this as she turns to the next page. Alga then reads that the spider does not respond to the cow's invitation to join her in eating grass in the field. Giulio exclaims, "Because the spider eats little insects."

"He eats flies, mosquitos, bees..." starts Alga.

"The wasps," interrupts Giulio.

"Also the wasps. Everything that flies gets stuck in his spider web," says Alga. The activity proceeds with Alga animatedly reading about each of the invitations that the busy spider receives from the various farm animals to join in their doings. She shifts in to the "character voices" as she reads the animals' dialogue. "Let see who is coming. The pig arrives and says, 'Do you want to come and roll in the mud with me?'" She makes a snort as she speaks for the pig.

One child imagines himself as the spider rolling in the mud. "The little spider could drown," he says.

Alga repeats, "He could drown. He couldn't go [in the mud]. So what does he do? He makes a spider web and doesn't speak." She then picks up on words she is hearing from Bianca. "Bianca was saying that first he made a spider web like a cross."

Giulio extends Bianca's idea with another observation about the web. "He made a little circle."

Alga repeats Giulio's idea to the whole group, and children begin to speak about the circular aspect of the spider web. They remember how they themselves drew spider webs. One child says, "Slowly, slowly. And then I made it round." Another agrees, "I made it round, too." Alga draws their thoughts together, saying, "Because he does it slowly, slowly, then he makes it round." Pointing to one child, Stella, who is making the motions with her arm, Alga says, "Look at her. How our friend is doing it. Because the spider does it small, small, and then, big, big, big. Show us, Giulio, so we can do it together. And then how our friend, Stella, taught us. Like this, like this." The children use their bodies to practice how the spider produces thread and how it spins a web—rotating their arms in smaller, then increasing larger, concentric circles.

Not so different from spiders: it's like when we eat some animals.

Children next have another rich opportunity to develop empathy by first attending to the situation of a fly that becomes a meal for a spider, and then contemplating a parallel between spiders and people.

"Now let's see what happens. Let's see if he is able to catch the fly. What do you all think? Do you think he will catch the fly?" Alga asks.

"Yes," a child responds.

"He did it," Alga says, and continues reading, "But first a rooster arrived and said 'Cock-a-doodle-do, why don't we go together to catch a fly?' The spider is quiet. He already caught the fly. So do you think this is the same fly?" Alga poses the question to the children, who respond that they think it is. Alga continues, "Is it the same fly that is stuck in the spider web, what do you think? Poor fly. After all, he eats flies like we eat ice cream."

"It's like when we eat some animals," a girl named Stella suggests.

"Sure, good job. Stella said something very right. Did you hear what Stella said? She said, it's true that the spider ate the fly, but we eat meat, too," says Alga.

Children name different meats, "Fish, and rabbits, chicken..."

How much did you like it?

Children engage in a procedure of quantifying how much they like the book that is specifically adapted for their level. This verbal method corresponds with their usual procedure of evaluating library books that involves children rating books by assigning a number of hearts (more hearts equates to liking the book more) (Edwards et al., in press).

Upon finishing reading, Alga elicits children's opinions about the book. After a few children respond that they like the book, but provide little description about what they like or how much they like it, Alga asks, "Which page did you like? Kids, think about it."

"The one with the owl," responds Nicolo.

"The one with the owl. This one," Alga says with the book open to the page with the owl. "You like this one best? How much would you give it? A heart? A lot? A whole lot? What would you give it? A kiss?" Alga tries to get Nicolo to describe how much he likes in a way that the children can understand.

"A lot," responds Nicolo. "Me too," says Nicholas.

"Let's listen to Nicholas," says Alga.

"I liked it a lot, a lot, a lot," the boy responds.

Alga says, "Nicholas liked it a lot, a lot, a lot. Three a lots. What page did you like the most?"

"If you turn to it, I'll tell you," says Nicholas.

"I'll turn the pages and you tell me. This one? This one?" Alga says flipping through the pages. Nicholas responds "no" until Alga turns to the owl.

This initiates the start of an animated book review. Children take turns sharing which animals they like the best and how many "a lots" they like the book. After Isacco reviews the book, Alga exclaims, "Wow! He liked it even more [than the student who said he liked it 7 a lots]! Let's repeat with

Isacco.” Then counting on her fingers, with the children following along, she says, “A lot, a lot, a lot...” until she is holding up eight fingers.

Finishing the book that we started yesterday.

As previously described, Filastrocca’s method of reading books involves: introducing in narrative style and then investigating more through interactive readings and creative activities. The children extend their understanding of the book by engaging with the material in various ways over multiple days.

As the children finish their reviews, Alga suggests, “We need to clap for this book. Shall we do it?” The children jump up from their chairs and enthusiastically applaud, many looking around, exchanging beaming smiles with their peers. Alga helps the children transition to their next related activity by responding to one child’s request and announcing, “Nicholas was saying something. Say it to everybody. Nicholas was saying that he wanted to finish the book that we started yesterday. Go sit at the table and then we’ll start.” Alga hands the book in her hand to one child as she goes to prepare for the activity. Several children crowd around the book-holder to catch a glimpse of and touch the book.

Opening shop: adding pretend play.

In the next section, the children and teacher are transported to a make-believe shop where they can negotiate the prices of the supplies needed to complete their book covers.

The children seat themselves around a table. In front of them, they have the little handmade books. Alga moves from child to child, helping to staple a colorful piece of paper (book cover) around the pages that each child started the day before. Children also have scissors and glue. Alga sits at a smaller table to the side of the children’s table. On her table, the *The Very Busy Spider* book is displayed. Additionally, there are containers of paper of varying colors, sizes, and shapes. Alga says, “Now we’ll open another shop. It’s a shop that sells many papers of all colors. Nicholas and Sara came to buy, let’s see what they buy.” Children take turns “buying” their supplies from Alga, reaching into their pockets to pull out invisible money which they hand over to Alga before returning to their seats with the paper “purchases” that they craft into fences, spiders and webs upon their return to their table. Many children cut strips to go around their cover, just like the wooden frame

they had seen portrayed in Eric Carle's story. Some children focus more on representing the body of the spider, and others more on the shape of the web.

They discuss the price of the paper with one another and Alga.

"How much is it?" one child asks about a piece of paper that Alga suggests would make a good spider web.

Nicholas indicates, "One hundred million Lire." Alga responds, "No that is too much, [instead] one hundred Lire." The children continue to "buy" supplies and work on their books. At one point, Alga says one child owes 100 Lire.

He says, "No, 90."

Alga responds to the bargaining, "My goodness! Pay, okay here's the change. Take the change. Hey guys, I became rich today selling. You all paid me a lot of money." The children continue to converse among themselves and with Alga as they intently paste paper in their books and use markers to add to their books. Alga offers, "Would you all like some music? Should I put a little music on?"

"Yes!," children respond in unison.

"The one with the Lions," one child requests, referring to the 5-year-old's class symbol. With the music now playing in the background and Alga seated at the table with the children as they work on, there is discussion of the children's books and choice of supplies.

The title: Bianca writes it and Alga photocopies it.

Alga utilizes an individual student's contributions to provide resources for the entire group.

Alga asks, "Listen, does anyone want to maybe put on the title of this book?" Several children respond, "I do."

"How do we do it? Why doesn't Bianca write it and Alga goes to photocopy?" Alga suggests. Bianca has a strip of paper on which to write the

title of the book. Though Bianca is ready, Alga is talking with Nicholas and says, "Hold on, Bianca, one moment. This is something important. Nicholas would like some very little things to attach on these strips. He would like to put the little animals."

Upon discussing Nicholas's ideas and helping him with his supplies, Alga returns to the topic of the title saying, "Listen kids, to this idea of Nicholas. That is cute but Alga has to go make a copy. Listen, Sara, would you like to put on the title? Tell me one thing, who would like the title of the book?" All of the children raise their hands, "Me!" "Oh my gosh, everyone wants to. We need to decide something. Bianca will write it, and Alga will photocopy it. Okay?"

"Me too," one child says.

"With all of us, it would take too long. No, Bianca, I'll give you a strip. You can write on it and then..." Alga starts as she addresses Bianca.

Once Bianca has the strip of paper and marker, Alga asks, "Do you want to write all of the title of the book? The Little Spider Who Spins a Web in Silence?"

"Yes, but it doesn't fit," responds Bianca.

"Little, little, write little," suggests Alga. Alga sits next to Bianca, giving her instruction and watching intently as she writes the words on the strip of paper.

Upon Bianca's completion of the writing, Alga asks, "Okay, who wants Bianca's writing, The Little Spider Who Spins a Web in Silence?" Once the copies are made, Alga uses a paper cutter to cut the little strips of paper. Children trim the paper strips with scissors and paste them onto their elaborately decorated book covers, continuing to talk about their work with one another and Alga as they do so.

"Tell me everything about this book."

Alga gives children the opportunity to explain their books while she records the descriptions. Children are allowed to finish at their own pace.

As children near completion of their books, Alga signals the end of the activity by saying, "Today our friends Nicolo and Nicholas will have a lot to do. Yes, you have to put the room back. Who is going to help clean the room? Cleaning the table."

With the title pasted onto the cover, Isacco, beaming with pride, holds his book up to show Alga across the table. Alga says, "Look at Isacco's. He has finished. It came out really well. Look! A beautiful cover page."

Issaco comes over to Alga's table. "Listen, do you want to tell me something you want me to write inside? Let's do this, how the lady that sells, if you want, will be at this table," Alga gestures to the little table with the paper and supplies. "When you are done if you want to come to tell her something about your book, you can come, okay. Come, honey. Sit," Alga says to Isacco as they go to the supply table together. Alga and Isacco discuss Isacco's book, with Alga complimenting him on it. Another child comes up to Alga, explaining that his title will not fit on the cover. Alga suggests, "If you would have put it on top of the circle it would have fit. You can leave it like that. It is missing the little eyes," she points out of the child's spider before he returns to the table. Directing her attention back to Isacco, Alga says, with Isacco's book opened to the last page and her pen poised to write down his responses, "Okay, tell me everything about this book. Did you like the story of the spider?" Isacco tells Alga it is the story of the spider.

"It's the story of the spider. Is that it? You don't want to write anything else?" Alga asks as she writes. Since Isacco doesn't say anything further, Alga accepts that he is finished. "Very nice," she says, "Let's put this book that you have finished, down to dry." Alga attends to the other children about their books, helping them to put their books up on the shelf to dry. Children who are finished select books in the library to independently read as Alga continues to assist until all children are finished.

Discussion

The pace of the above-described activities was relaxed and flowing without distinct "starts" and "stops." A rhythmic chant preceded the reading of the book and helped the children to recognize that they were going to be starting the story. As Alga and the children explored the first pages, they not only focused on the text, but

also spontaneously pretended to make spider webs. Although they had already read some of the book, Alga restarted the story on behalf of one child who had missed the beginning. Much dialogue surrounded the reading, and this discussion was characterized by extensive turn-taking. At the conclusion of the reading of the book, children were invited to provide their reviews and evaluate how much they liked the story, eliciting many repetitions of “a lot, a lot, a lot...” The discussion surrounding the reading of the book lasted nearly 20 minutes. As children gathered around the table to continue making their own versions of the book, children simultaneously worked on their projects and conversed with one another and Alga as music played in the background. Children appeared serious about their work while at the same time enjoying the company around them. The activity concluded with the children discussing their books with Alga. This atmosphere, relatively free of prompts to hurry or rush, allowed children time to have time to engage with one another in collective experience and form new creative ideas.

We suggest that this relationships-focused setting provided opportunities for engagement in creative activity and interactions that promoted shared meaning making. The children and teacher gained a deeper and shared understanding of topics of interest through extended dialogue. Through this conversation and related activities (e.g., making spider webs from saliva), the class develops empathy for the spider. The book does not afford any particular supports for relating to the character—he does not speak; he displays no emotion; he simply weaves a web in silence as other animal characters try to engage him with no success. By comparing their own actions (i.e., diets) to those of the spider and being a little like a spider by making webs, the children move a little closer to feeling the spider’s feelings and experiencing the spider’s experiences. Is this important? We suggest that it equips the children for more effectively making meaning of books and shared experiences. This more advanced meaning making is also a product of children’s related creative activity; as children work both individually and collaboratively to represent the book through creating their own versions, they are expanding the depth of their understanding of the original children’s literature story.

Finally, the experience at Filastrocca fostered creative learning in young children by allowing them to engage their voices and bodies, stretch their imaginations, and employ all their approaches to learning. Table 1 indicates that each of the seven approaches described by Howard Gardner (1983) in *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, was stimulated in at least two episodes of the observed book reading and cover making. Encouraging creative exploration and play across all domains of intelligence helps young children to develop their individual strengths and even

combine elements of several domains into a process and product uniquely theirs. In this encounter, creativity was fostered through oral storytelling and extended discussion; quantifying and evaluating; interactive and imaginative role-playing; reflecting on their likes and dislikes; attention to everyone in the group; employing a variety of artistic techniques and materials; and rhythmic chanting and listening to music.

Table 1

THE MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES (GARDNER, 1983)	EXAMPLE(S) AND DESCRIPTIONS OF OBSERVED INTERACTIONS ENCOURAGING EACH TYPE OF INTELLIGENCE
<p>Linguistic intelligence has to do with the ability to use words, spoken or written</p>	<p><i>Developing Empathy: Making Spider Thread and Being “a Little Bit Like a Spider.”</i> The children engaged in complex discussions of the book, for example, when they talked about the differences between what humans and spiders can do and how the spider spins its web.</p> <p><i>Not So Different From Spiders.</i> The verbal interaction continued as they compared the spider eating flies to children eating meat.</p> <p><i>The Title: Bianca Writes It and Alga Photocopies It.</i> Children integrated writing into their cover-making activity; one child wrote out the title of the book and the other children used photocopied slips of paper to paste onto their book covers.</p> <p><i>Tell Me Everything About This Book.</i> Spoken and written words were integrated for the children when Alga asked them individually to explain their books while she recorded their descriptions.</p>
<p>Interpersonal intelligence has to do with interaction with others and understanding others</p>	<p><i>And Here Begins the Story.</i> The children interacted with one another through shared, familiar rituals, including having their hands stamped with the library symbol and engaging in discussion before reading.</p> <p><i>Not Leaving Anyone Out.</i> Alga communicated the importance of each individual as part of the group, when she started the reading of the book over for a single child, Bianca, who returned to the class after running an errand.</p>

	<p><i>Reading... and Interacting.</i> The children were encouraged to develop empathy and widen their ability to take another's perspective by pretending to do what spiders do—make threads of web.</p> <p><i>The Title: Bianca Writes It and Alga Photocopies It.</i> Alga promoted a cooperative spirit and appreciation of others' strengths by allowing Bianca to apply her good lettering skills to copy the title of the book for everyone to use.</p>
<p>Visual-Spatial intelligence has to do with spatial judgment, visual patterns, and the ability to visualize with the mind's eye</p>	<p><i>Opening Shop.</i> The children decided how to design their book covers and utilize the space on their pages. Many children cut paper strips to frame their cover, replicating the wooden frame they had seen portrayed in the original story. Some children worked to represent the body of the spider, while others focused on representing the concentric circles that were part of the web.</p> <p><i>The Title: Bianca Writes It and Alga Photocopies It.</i> To complete their covers, each child arranged and pasted a strip of paper with the book title onto his or her cover.</p>
<p>Intrapersonal intelligence has to do with introspective and self-reflective capacities</p>	<p><i>How Much Did You Like It?</i> The children were encouraged to reflect on their own likes and dislikes as they chose which animals they liked the best in the story and rated how much they liked the book.</p> <p><i>Finishing the Book That We Started Yesterday.</i> The children also expressed their appreciation for the book by clapping for it.</p>
<p>Logical-Mathematical intelligence has to do with numbers, logic, abstractions, reasoning, and critical thinking</p>	<p><i>How Much Did You Like It?</i> The children quantified how much they each liked the book by evaluating how many "tanto's" ("a lot's") it was worth.</p> <p><i>Opening Shop.</i> Alga helped children explore the concept of the corresponding value of objects and money, as she "sold" art supplies to them to make their books.</p>

Bodily-Kinesthetic intelligence has to do with control of one's bodily motions and the capacity to handle objects skillfully

Reading ... and Interacting. The children used their mouths and fingers to illustrate how spiders produce thread; they stretched strings of saliva between their thumbs and pointer fingers. They also pretended to be spiders spinning their webs, rotating their arms through the air in first smaller, and then increasing larger concentric circles.

Opening Shop. The activity of making book covers involved physically manipulating objects and art materials as they cut, arranged, and pasted pieces of paper and employed markers to draw and represent spider, web, and other elements of the story.

Musical intelligence has to do with sensitivity to sounds, rhythms, tones, and music

And Here Begins the Story: Alga began the book reading with a rhythmic set of familiar words, "Once upon a time..." and the children joined in. One boy tapped his foot to the rhythm of the chant.

Opening Shop: The children all responded, "Yes!" to Alga's suggestion to have music playing in the background as they worked on their books.

In conclusion, we suggest that the observations of Filastrocca Preschool described in this paper provide an illustration of how shared extended discourse, promotion of empathy, and shared and multifaceted creative activity can be intertwined in the process of meaning making in the context of relationships.

Note

1. We gratefully acknowledge the children, families, and teachers of Filastrocca Preschool as the co-creators of this article; and thank the educational officials and public administrators of the Municipality of Pistoia for their openness to our studies. Silvia Betta assisted in the translation of the documents. The University of Nebraska–Lincoln generously supported the research and publication efforts of Carolyn Edwards.

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Carolyn Pope Edwards is Willa Cather Professor at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. She has visited Pistoia numerous times, most recently while also participating in a study tour to Pistoia in March, 2012. She co-edited *Bambini: The Italian Approach to Infant/Toddler Caregiving* (Teachers College Press, 2001), with Lella Gandini, as well as the accompanying video on Pistoia (available from Learning Materials Workshop.) Among her publications are *The Hundred Languages of Children, 3rd Ed.: The Reggio Emilia Experience in Transformation* (with Lella Gandini and George Forman, 2012) and *The Diary of Laura: Perspectives on a Reggio Emilia Diary* (with Carolina Rinaldi, 2008).



Alga Giacomelli, recently retired, was for many years the library teacher at Filastrocca preschool in Pistoia, a school for children from 3 to 6 years of age. She designed the lending library for parents, run by children, and a program that includes the invention of stories, as well as the design and illustration of books by children.



Lella Gandini, Visiting Scholar at Lesley University in Cambridge 2007-2009 and at the University of Arizona 2010, introduced the Italian education of young children from Pistoia and Reggio Emilia in the United States in the early 1980s. For Reggio Children, she serves as the Liaison for the Dissemination of the Reggio Emilia Approach. She is co-author and co-editor of *The Hundred Languages of Children*; *Bambini: The Italian Approach to Infant/Toddler Care*; *Beautiful Stuff*; *In the Spirit of the Studio: Learning from the Atelier of Reggio Emilia*; and *Insights and Inspirations from Reggio Emilia: Stories of Teachers and Children from North America*.



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Annalia Galardini was a founding leader of early childhood services in Pistoia, Italy and Director of Education, Social Services, and Cultural Affairs in the city administration. She is now President of Crescere, providing professional development in the Tuscan region. Prominent at the national and international levels, she has organized in-service workshops in several Italian cities and published articles, chapters, and books about the organization and goals of family-centered services for young children.



The Power of Imagination: Constructing Innovative Classrooms Through a Cultural-Historical Approach to Creative Education

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ABSTRACT

All children have a need for and a right to educational programs that foster their creative ingenuity. This article presents a cultural-historical approach to creative education (CHACE) to cultivate K-5 students' higher order thinking, critical inquiries, and imaginative proficiencies. The text illustrates the application of Vygotskian theory in elementary, bilingual classrooms where interdisciplinary, collaborative, and apprentice initiatives in the arts, humanities, and sciences facilitate the acquisition of literacy, numeracy, and content knowledge. Relationship, affect, and cognitive pluralism are discussed as theoretical cornerstones in a system of activities to nurture children's novel interpretations, enhanced understandings, imaginative problem solving, critical innovations, and artistic creations within a supportive teaching-learning community.

Introduction

The world around us is constantly in flux, demanding adaptation to multi-faceted environments. Our very existence depends on careful observation, creative imagination, innovative problem solving, and collaborative solution making. Creativity has been associated with a few solitary individuals "born" to accomplish great things; schools have isolated small percentages of children in "gifted and talented" programs. However, research reveals that joint problem solving, imagination, discipline, and precision are needed for all domains of human endeavor

(Scribner, 1997). When, in children's lives, are such proficiencies developed? How and where do youth cultivate such complex psychological requisites? We assert that "the very nature of learning is creative" (Marjanovic-Shane, Connery, & John-Steiner, 2010, p. 215) and that all children, especially linguistically, economically, and culturally diverse (LECD) students, have a right to educational programs that foster their creative ingenuity.

Across our careers, we have been privileged to witness the innovation of children and adults; these theoretical, research, and pedagogical journeys have provided resources for us to systematically apply cultural-historical theory into an educational approach that cultivates creativity. While primarily based on the writings of L.S. Vygotsky, our thinking is deeply influenced by the work of Maxine Greene, Eliot Eisner, Kieran Egan, Natalia Gajdamaschko, Gunter Kress, Shirley Brice Heath, and members of the Cultural-historical Activity Theory electronic community. In this article, we offer readers a cultural-historical approach to creative education (CHACE) derived from our scholarly study of the mind and work in K-5th grade content English as a Second Language and bilingual classrooms in the western United States.

Vygotsky's Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Scholars have long debated the nature of creativity without agreeing on a common definition. Vygotsky characterizes creativity as "a transformative activity where emotion, meaning, and cognitive symbols are synthesized" (John-Steiner et al., 2010, p. 12). His cultural-historical framework includes everyday problem solving and creative artifacts capable of producing a lasting, generational impact. Because he ascertains, "Creativity exists not only where it creates great historical works, but also everywhere human imagination combines, changes, and creates anything new," (Vygotsky as quoted in Smolucha, 1992, p. 53) the efforts of teachers and students are defined as imaginative, innovative, and collaborative endeavors (Egan, 2006; Gajdamaschko, 2005).

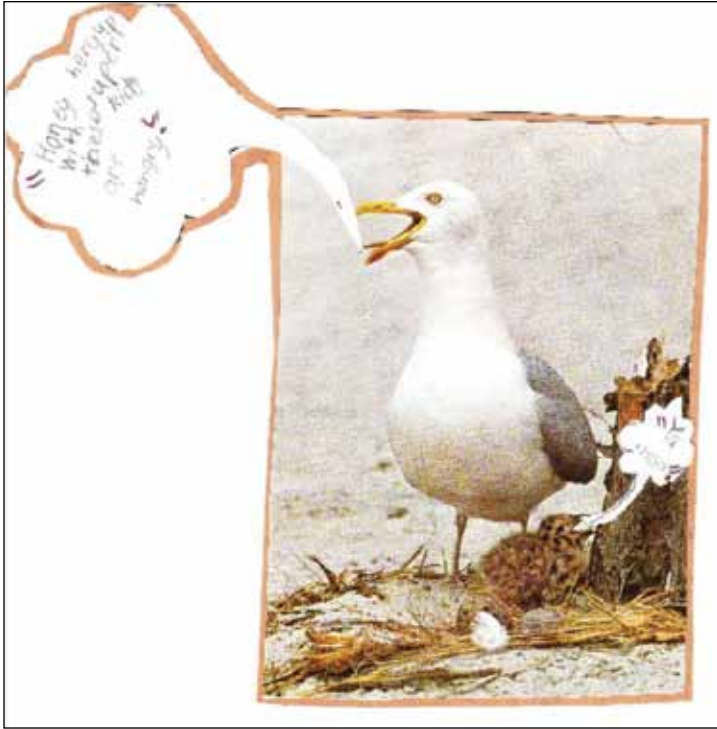


Fig. 1: Claire's punctuation cartoon (courtesy of the artist)

In building on Vygotsky's framework, we propose that *creative education is the mindful, intentional nurturing of a system of activities resulting in novel interpretations, enhanced understandings, imaginative problem solving, critical innovations, and artistic creations achieved with the support of a community of learners and teachers.* The goal of a cultural-historical approach to creative education (CHACE) is to develop children's capacity for higher order thinking, including critical and creative proficiencies associated with inquiry, problem solving, and pragmatic applications in the arts, humanities, and sciences. The aims of CHACE are not at odds with the traditional curriculum, nor the implementation of stand-alone, art curriculums. We propose, instead, an integrated approach that develops the power of imagination. In CHACE classrooms, first graders might learn to correctly apply quotation marks in Language Arts by writing cartoons like the example in Figure 1 where a father seagull exclaims, "Honey, hurry up with supper! These kids are hungry!" Alternatively, fifth graders might film documentaries integrating information from Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics. What is different about CHACE is that higher order thinking is the origin, focus, and product of the curriculum.

Obuchenie: Teaching-Learning as a Connected Relationship

CHACE redefines teaching and learning as complementary, collaborative, and relational processes. This principle provides educators with a theoretical blueprint to direct their choices, communications, and actions including assessments undertaken at the start of each school year. When identifying students' academic challenges in relationship to grade-level performance standards, these diagnostic tools have the potential of reinforcing remedial, polarizing relationships between teachers and students. When correctly utilized to collect relevant information, such measures can reveal what knowledge or proficiencies students need to develop. Teachers can then use this data to strategize and construct individualized, small group, and class instructional plans.

In CHACE, educators might extend beyond these scores to identify the unique funds of knowledge, talents, and interests of their students, families, and communities (Moll, 1990). Imagine the teacher who challenges her elementary students on the first day of school asking, "Which one of you will find a cure for cancer? Who will write a poem that will be read at a presidential inauguration? Win an Olympic gold medal? Play, dance, or act before heads of state? Exhibit at the Smithsonian? Take a photo that changes the view of the world? Devise an invention that helps people and the environment at the same time? This year, we are going to work together to get you closer to realizing these dreams."

Toward this end, CHACE practitioners renegotiate the power relationships that often divide or isolate teachers and students. Educators should not abandon their professional knowledge, adult roles, or seriousness of purpose; rather, the work of teachers and their students is recast in relational terms, replacing one-way, authoritarian banking approaches to education (Freire, 1970) with Vygotsky's obuchenie (1933d). The concept of obuchenie represents teaching and learning as connected, complementary forms of meaning making where teachers act "first among learners" (Miyazaki, 2007). In innovative classrooms, teachers verbally walk students through steps to collectively solve mathematical problems. They can challenge students to identify ways healthy adults resolve social issues, hurt feelings, or come to agreements. Innovative teachers can also model self-protection, self-soothing, and resilient behaviors. They might engage in "think alouds" when reading picture books or novels to the class, verbally illustrating what images come to mind as they interact with texts as expert readers.

In applying these principles, teachers infuse the teaching/learning process with creative insights and solutions. A major assumption in Vygotsky's writings is that creative work is profoundly social as well as individual:

Art is the social within us, and even if its action is performed by a single individual it does not mean that its essence is individual... Art is the social technique of emotion, a tool of society which brings the most intimate and personal aspects of our being into the circle of social life. (1971, p. 249)

This principle has been demonstrated by many children with whom we have worked in the language-literacy arts. In one instance, a fourth-grader, whose father had been accidentally killed, composed a short story about a Diné boy named Little Three Wounds during the Long Walk to Bosque Redondo. The student had confided earlier in the school year that while he had witnessed his father's death as a kindergartener, he did not have any clear memory of the incident and did not like to speak about it. However, the child's narrative reflected specific aspects of the actual tragedy and his feelings about his father's passing. The account combined historical facts about the forced march, the starvation of the imprisoned Navajo, and the child's developmental interests. Amid horse-chasing, hunting, and scenes of family life, Little Three Wounds' family is captured and forced to leave its ancestral lands. At the climax of the story, the protagonist's father is murdered by a U.S. soldier. The child wrote:

The sun beat down on the tall limestone figures that towered over the heads of the throng traveling through the desolate valley. The soldiers had decided to abandon a baby whose crying pierced the ears of the slowly moving cluster. Little Three Wounds' father, in shackles, stopped and said in a serious voice, "I will not go any further away from my home." His Pawnee interpreter told the lieutenant what Yellow Bear had said. The soldier was absolutely furious! The interpreter told Yellow Bear to go on or be killed at the soldiers bidding. Little Three Wounds father remained still with a look of hate on his face.

The lieutenant drew his midnight black and brown rifle from its holster on the side of the supply wagon. He raised the gun to his eye. Little Three Wounds was watching with horror, standing still so frightened. The lieutenant pulled his index finger back. Little Three Wounds covered his face with his hands. The shot whistled through the air for what seemed like eternity to the young brave. His father dropped to the ground.

After a series of conflicts, the student composed a fictitious ending where Little Three Wounds leads his people to safety and food. While historically inaccurate, the child's conclusion combines elements of the Nez Perce flight into Canada that had also been studied by the class as well as the child's own catharsis and reconnection with his mother, concluding the narrative with a powerful, imaginative sentence:

The Navajos traveled through thick and thin on their journey. It was a very long trip, and a hard one, too. Their travels took them fourteen days with the white soldiers about five miles behind them all the way. But, thanks to Little Three Wounds, the white men never caught up.

When they crossed the border of Canada, everybody cheered and hugged Little Three Wounds. His mother kissed the amazing eleven year old boy. His tribe gave him a new name: "He Who Saved His People". The young brave took his father's turquoise necklace and held it tightly in his hand. (Courtesy of the Writer & His Mother)

After reading the story to his classmates, a profound silence fell across the classroom; the fourth graders regarded their classmate with new eyes. A discussion ensued regarding loss and resilience, with a multiplicity of examples offered from the children's lives. Our conversation concluded by listing examples of artists and scientists who had additionally experienced great tragedy in their young lives and who had gone on to contribute to humankind.

Learning and Development Inside the ZPD

In a CHACE classroom, educators intentionally cultivate multiple collaborations between learners and thinkers by consciously connecting novice and expert learners in a host of meaning-making partnerships. Just as the painter selects and mixes colors in the service of illustrating knowledge, so the creative teacher knowingly combines individuals of a variety of ages, proficiencies, and learning styles to enhance learning. These carefully conceived collaborations link children to essential social sources, facilitating the measured appropriation of knowledge, skills, strategies, and dispositions.

In innovative classrooms, teachers might validate, recruit, and extend children's funds of knowledge and academic strengths by assigning "consulting positions" that share student expertise with the larger class. Children in the CHACE classroom can exercise their own agency when referring to a list of peer-writing consultants to help them brainstorm names for a character, indent paragraphs, conjugate the correct tense of a verb, or select a juicy adjective from the thesaurus. A quick peek into an innovative classroom might confirm the presence of parents and community partners engaged in discussions with learners, sharing their expertise and cultural knowledge.

These instructional collaborations form the very structures of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) necessary for learning to take place. Vygotsky (1978) described the ZPD as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). Within the ZPD, learners and partners engage in two-way interactions and collective meaning making, “transcend[ing] the constraints of biology, of time, of habit and achieve a fuller self, beyond the limitations and the talents of the isolated individual” (John-Steiner, 2000, pp. 187–188).

The CHACE approach taps teachers’ professional expertise in order to cultivate joint productive attention, nurture shared and distributed meanings through carefully constructed ZPDs, and implement open-ended or goal-directed activities, role-play, and discussions. It values the application of educators’ sophisticated set of relational resources and social skills including Rychly’s (2012) definition of receptive discourse where teachers employ understandings and strategies related to the dual directionality of language as a distinct form of classroom discourse facilitating student agency, learning, and language acquisition.

CHACE educators make cultural information, academic strategies, and linguistic problem-solving concrete, accessible, and explicit. Real-world analogies can help children make sense of the English language. For example, when asked if they always follow directions, most primary students will say that their home and school behaviors differ. When metaphorically extended to abstract orthographic patterns (the “ea” “bead” or “ph” or /f/ sound in “phone”), children understand that letters, like themselves, don’t always follow “the rules.”

It is essential that teachers highlight social sources and constructs that might be otherwise invisible or unattainable to children and their communities. These resources are often right in front of us as the following account illustrates:

It was a beautiful, sunny spring day in a Northern New Mexico Pueblo. These are traditional villages next to the Rio Grande river. The Pueblo school was known for its engaged teachers and eager students. This day was a little noisy because there was construction going on outside the second-grade class window. Most of the workmen, being members of the Navajo nation, were taller than the Pueblo natives. The children would have liked to speak to them, but their Tewa language was quite different from the Navajo language their guests spoke.

Some of the younger men brought their wives for the weeks they were working in the Pueblo, and one young woman looked a little sad while watching the construction. The children had noticed that she sometimes worked on a loom with different colored threads. They suggested to their teacher that they should invite her into the classroom with her loom; perhaps they could exchange a few words in English. And so they did.

The young wife came several times, and showed them how she combined colors, following a design that she envisioned in her mind. One day, she brought some natural dye, and deepened the color of one of her threads. The teacher brought in books about the famous Navajo rugs and their varied, frequently geometric designs. The students wanted to know more about diverse Indian tribes—some of them their neighbors, others living far away—about their past, and what they shared as Native people.¹

Classrooms as Sites and Sources for Learning

Teachers engaged in CHACE consciously consider and construct all aspects of the learning environment including the physical arrangement of the classroom, schedules, protocols, and routines. One of our colleagues gift-wraps the drawers and cabinets of her classroom in early August. During the first week of school, her students unwrap these gifts and discuss how they will use their resources or spaces. This activity reflects that learning environments serve as both the site and source of learning. Vygotsky's (1981) genetic law of cultural development notes that the knowledge, skills strategies, and dispositions teachers seek to cultivate "appear twice or on two planes. First [they] appear on the social plane and then it appears on the psychological plane. First it appears between people as an interpsychological category and then within the individual child as an intrapsychological category" (p. 163). In order for a particular understanding to fully develop, the mature form must be evidenced or utilized in the innovative classroom.

In the CHACE classroom, furniture, supplies, and other items are labeled with icons sporting children's languages as supports for their biliterate proficiencies. In innovative environments, children might collectively brainstorm a list of classroom jobs to promote the smooth functioning of their community. After deliberating a minimum wage, a student personnel director can work with the class human resources manager to hire specific positions, monitor performance, and advertise new jobs dictated by classroom needs (see Fig. 2). A student veterinarian might take responsibility for the care of a pet, receiving a weekly paycheck from the class bank

for her efforts. Children can then spend their earnings at a Friday auction where recycled toys, books, and other items are bid on in the children's dual languages.

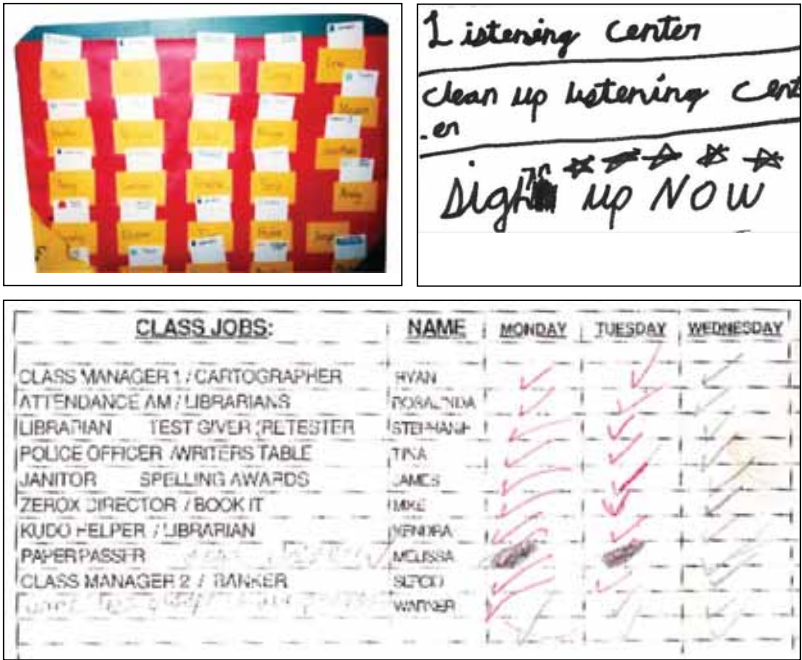


Fig. 2: Job board, announcement, and checklist



Fig. 3: Dual language idiom posters

In the innovative classroom, multilingual dyads might illustrate cultural idioms; children's linguistic and communal knowledge can be recorded on posters that are shared weekly across the course of the academic year (see Fig. 3). On Mondays, children might enter a new bilingual idiom into their personal language dictionaries. Both teacher and students can anticipate interactions, situations, and events across the week when they can appropriately apply an adopted idiom or dicho.

The Resource and Role of Affect

Such deliberate construction of the learning environment recognizes the role of affect as an essential resource in learning established by neuroscientists including Antonio Damasio (2000, 2005). Connery (2011) has written about the "emotional curriculum" interwoven with cognitive objectives "derived from the lived experience of children; their construction of identity in their private and public lives; the response, meaning, and affection they assign to teachers, classmates, and school; and both their individual and collective feelings of agency" (p. 47). In CHACE, the emotional curriculum is made manifest by strategically developing children's positive sense of self-worth and resilience required for repeated risk-taking in the learning process.

Practitioners can deliberately tap children's enthusiasm to fuel excitement for the learning process by actively soliciting what the children would like to learn. These interests can be recorded with suggestions offered by parents and caregivers to incorporate cultural knowledge, multicultural-biliterate proficiencies, and critical perspectives often absent in educational canon. After constructing a curriculum map, educators might share a tentative schedule of when and how the class might integrate state standards, district initiatives, and grade-level curriculum with these topics. We recall that a fourth grader's excitement at the prospect of studying the Great Barrier Reef sustained his engagement across the course of two academic quarters.

Conversely, teachers can also sensitively contextualize the sorrows and struggles children bring to school through their informal play, casual interactions, academic discussions, and formal assignments. It is not only common, but also healthy for students to draw and write about personal tragedies in the writing process. Teachers can utilize narratives about the passing of a pet or another loss to promote positive self-care and the development of wisdom. When provided with safety and respect, children make profound, transformative connections with teachers, classmates, and the curriculum. We are reminded of a discussion on the Underground Railroad with fifth graders which began in an uncharacteristically quiet manner. After

prompting the silent students with a few open-ended questions, a child timidly raised her hand and offered, “But maestra (*teacher*), weren’t they a lot like us?”

The student was identifying with the conditions of African-Americans who sought freedom from slavery in the 1800s by escaping to the North with her family and classmates’ histories as the children of undocumented Mexican laborers. In our subsequent discussion, the children related their own personal hardships, including leaving valued family members, toys, pets, and places behind. They drew parallels with the African-American experience of having to wrap their own feet in rags after the terrain destroyed their shoes. Our discussion encompassed the historical similarities and differences of both groups of people, including geographic boundaries, socioeconomic motivations, and religious and political perspectives. Perhaps the best learning outcome of our session occurred when the children discovered that civil rights law protected them from being illegally removed from school by the Office of Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS).

Creative teachers seek to understand the role of affect in developing imagination (Gajdamaschko, 2005). Vygotsky suggests “the internal logic of feeling will represent the most subjective, most internal form of imagination” (1930/2004, p. 19). Just as emotion impacts imagination, imagination also shapes emotion.

[This is why] works of art created by their author’s imaginations can have such a strong emotional effect on us. The passions and fates of imaginary characters, their joys and sorrows move, disturb, and excite us, despite the fact that we know these are not real events, but rather the products of fantasy. This occurs only because the emotions that take hold of us from the artistic images on the pages of books or from the stage are completely real, and we experience them truly, seriously, and deeply. (p. 20)

Such imaginative experience is often memorable for young children. The emotional aspect of creative engagement often facilitates greater understandings and connections to the curriculum; secondary educators, including Smagorinsky (2010) and Zoss (2010), document this process.

The Playful Curriculum as Imaginative Invitation

CHACE is also distinguished by the development of analytical, expressive, and innovative thought including learners’ common and unique abilities related to cognitive pluralism, multiculturalism, and bilingual-biliterate proficiencies. These

objectives are realized when teachers and students forge connections across content areas in spaces where open-ended discoveries and playful adventures are interwoven into the fabric of the targeted curriculum.

Developmentally, children's play is the beginning of discovery and the construction of novelty. Vygotsky (1993/1976) describes play as an interactive form of embodied imagination. Both Goncu (2012) and Holzman (2010) assert that children construct their relationships to themselves, other individuals, social groups, and the material world through play. Marjanovic-Shane (2010) highlights the relational, emotional, and transformative nature of play as a means by which stress, fears, and aspirations have the potential to evolve into collective meanings through playful activity. St. John's (2010) accounts of young children's free play with musical instruments echo these findings while highlighting Vygotsky's contention that "imagination operates not freely, but directed by someone else's experience, as if according to someone else's instructions" (1930/2004, p. 17).

While play has been emphasized as part of creativity by many psychologists who have recently focused on this topic, Vygotsky's (1930/2004) approach displays his broader view of seeing higher psychological processes as interrelated, psychological or "complex functional systems." The construction of these dynamic systems requires what Pelaprat and Cole (2011) have named "gap filling" from the Russian term "voobrazhenie" translated as "moving into image making." They suggest that imagination is an ever-present part of human thought

and should *neither* be understood as a special ability *nor* as the creation of 'unreal' fantasies... There are fundamental 'gaps' that must be resolved for individuals to think or act in relation to the world. Resolving these gaps through image making constitutes the self and the world in the same process. It is the human form of cognition. (p. 413)

Further, Vygotsky (1934/1987) argues strongly that the development of speech is a powerful impetus for the development of imagination. While fantasy is connected to the visual richness of dreams, language further broadens the child's imagination by presenting the not here, the not now, the not real. He contends, "The child can express in words something that does not coincide with the precise arrangement of objects or representations. This provides him the power to move with extraordinary freedom in the sphere of impressions, designating them with words" (p. 346).

In the larger literature on creative classrooms, the focus lies on the individual teacher or student. However, in CHACE, practitioners can adopt a culturally relevant, curricular framework to systematically and imaginatively scaffold learning experiences for their entire class. For example, at the start of the school year when teaching in separate fourth and fifth grade Dual Immersion classrooms, we adopted the metaphor of learning as an adventurous journey. The language-literacy arts were presented as the vehicle by which the children might realize their dreams. A design competition was held for students to propose what a class aircraft might look like; the children worked as individuals, pairs, or in small groups to illustrate their conception of a Flying Literature Mobile (FLM) (see Fig. 4).



Fig. 4: Design proposal for Flying Literature Mobile (FLM)

After a class vote to select the best design, the artist and teacher constructed the rocket out of butcher paper, boxes, construction paper, and found objects each student brought to adhere to the imaginative vehicle (see Fig. 5). Parents attended a “Back to School Night,” only to discover that their children would appropriate, apply, and refine an integrated, grade-level curriculum, while floating around the cosmos, wandering back in time, exploring exotic locations, and solve critical problems in the Flying Literature Mobile (FLM).



Fig. 5: Flying Literature Mobile (FLM)

A daily class narrative was constructed around these adventures. Each morning, students pounded on the door to read informative communications from the FLM's control center that alluded to, challenged, or targeted specific literacy, numeracy, and content knowledge, skills, strategies, and dispositions. The example in Figure 6 foreshadows the study and application of geographical concepts of latitude and longitudinal lines.

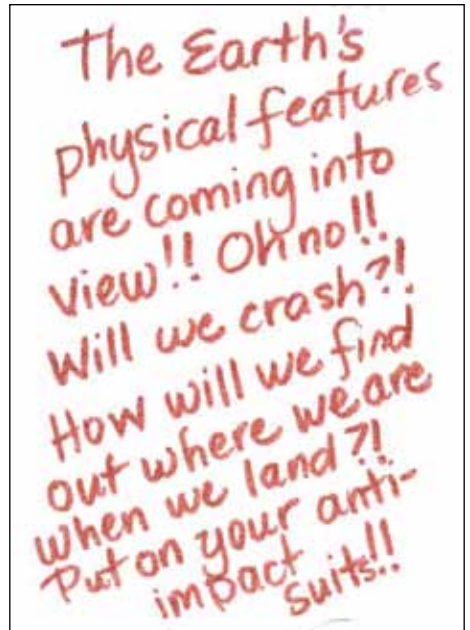


Fig. 6: FLM control center communication sample

Other innovative teachers might frame their curriculum by challenging their classes to agree on an essential question as a curricular prism for student inquiry across the year. Teachers and children have examined topics such as, “What makes a person courageous?” or, “What is justice?” After much spirited debate, one of our fifth grade classes adopted the guiding query, “Who have we been, who are we now, and who will we be in the future?” In the fall, students wrote themselves letters addressing the first two components of the inquiry. These epistles were hidden away in miniature “time capsules” with personal commercials or student videos filmed during the first month of school. At the holidays, students revisited the essential question while evaluating personal progress on individual goals; these statements were then added to the time capsules. In June, the children “liberated” the information in the capsules to assist them in evaluating the literacy proficiencies and work samples they had collected in portfolios throughout the year. In contrast to traditional forms of assessment, the essential question provided both an individual and collective lens for children to assign meanings to their growth.

Cultivating Competence and Cognitive Pluralism

We experience life through all our senses, communicating our impressions through symbol systems. In Vygotsky’s theory, language plays a primary role by which experience is both deepened and transformed. However, he recognized that our semiotic means include visual systems (traffic lights and sign language), kineshetic icons (the Olympic torch), musical notation, the multimodal performing arts, mathematical symbols and scientific reasoning. Sustained exposure to any one of these meaning-making activities requires curiosity and immersion. CHACE provides children with the opportunity to transact with, imitate, and develop multi-modal means. These competencies call upon combinations of Gardner’s (1983) multiple intelligences, including intrapersonal understanding through the exploration of the learner’s shifting strengths and weaknesses when collaborating in the classroom, studio, laboratory, and life.

CHACE recognizes that the role of culturally patterned activities influences the availability and salience of a particular modality. For example, John-Steiner’s (1984) investigation of the impact of Native Southwestern crafts upon Pueblo children’s learning styles found that the children relied on observational learning and possessed highly developed visual skills in contrast to their urban peers. She (1995) refers to these effects of culture as cognitive pluralism, noting that the cross-cultural encounters of Native students and non-indigenous teachers can be either a source of tension or synthesis of modalities and cultures.

Innovative teachers can construct imaginative connections between themselves, their students, and the curriculum by honoring and employing students' cognitive pluralism. For instance, third graders might precisely label the parts of a flower on a giant chart in their native or second language only to act out the respective structural functions in a dance to Aaron Copeland's "Flight of the Bumblebee" (see Fig. 7).



Fig. 7: La Tablas de las partes de la flor / Parts of the flower chart

The entire range of psychological tools, from language, musical notes, mathematical formulas, and other mediating means offered through the arts and technology can be made available to learners. In CHACE, teachers might mediate and co-construct complex information using virtual field trips to the Smithsonian's Egyptian collection, edible ingredients to represent the parts of a cell, or employ video clips highlighting underwater volcanic eruptions. PowerPoint software, like the book commercial created as a preview for Kathleen Krull's (2003) text, *Harvesting Hope* (accessed by clicking here: http://www.learnquebec.ca/learninglandscapes/documents/Harvesting_Hope.pdf), enriches children's prior knowledge while prompting a host of predictions about the text. Conversely, children might internalize, record, and express higher order thinking, academic proficiencies, or content knowledge through a multiplicity of learning formats including song, debate, games, experimentation, art making, and dance. The illustrated verses of a song about seed dispersal, found in Figure 8, can assist student memory and recall.



Fig. 8: Seed dispersal drawing – fuzzies

Similarly, the chronological segments of a book mobile can be used to relate specific periods in the biography of important historical figures like Frederick Douglas (see Fig. 9).



Fig. 9: Frederick Douglas biography book mobile

Artifacts that draw on increasingly sophisticated forms of cognition including application, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis (Anderson & Krathwohl et al., 2000) can be constructed by combining and applying content and genres to spotlight essential, critical, or creative aspects of the curriculum. It is one thing for students to write an outline of the historical conflict between British and American Colonists from their Social Studies text; Vygotsky (1930/2004) describes such as reproductive activity. However, asking children to compose and justify a recipe, rap, or re-enactment of the American Revolution initiates a creative recombination of knowledge, skills, strategies, and dispositions. Challenging fourth graders to write an invitation to a birthday party for each of the planets in the solar system (see Fig. 10) entails reproductive as well as creative thinking, whereby knowledge regarding planetary composition, climate, rotations vs. revolutions is called on in combination with literacy processes to “rework[s] elementsand use[s] them to generate new propositions and new behavior” (Vygotsky, 1930/2004, p. 9).



Fig. 10: Birthday invitation for the planet Mercury

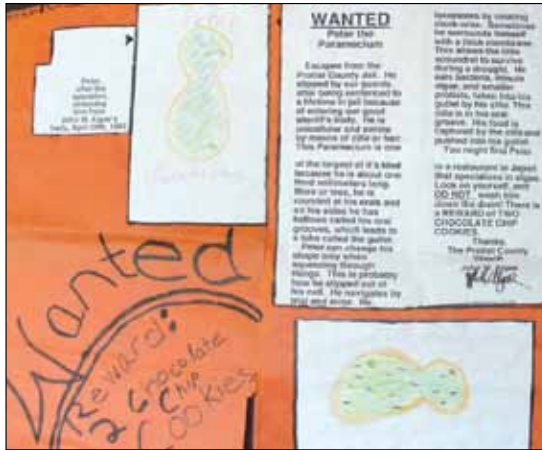


Fig. 11: Wanted poster for Peter the paramecium

Once children are invited to engage in these imaginative ventures, they will construct their own innovative artifacts to reflect curricular knowledge and competencies. Figure 11 displays a wanted poster for Peter the Paramecium composed by two fifth graders after reading about unicellular protozoa in their science text. The artifact includes two mug shots, a detailed description of the criminal, grounds for his arrest, and a reward for his capture, written and fictitiously signed by the Protist County Sheriff. With the exception of identifying general grading criteria with their teacher, the entire project was devised by the two girls.

An Apprentice Approach to Content Development

Vygotsky once noted, "It is precisely human creative activity that makes the human being a creature oriented toward the future, creating the future and thus altering his own present" (1930/2004, p. 9). This premise is especially true for young children in their attempts to appropriate and recreate cultural tools from the preceding generation (Cole, 1996). CHACE builds on Vygotsky's view of students as "active, vigorous participants in their own existence and ... at each stage of development, children acquire the means by which they can completely affect their world and themselves" (John-Steiner & Souberman, 1978, p. 123). The implementation of an apprentice approach further cultivates the power of imagination through fieldwork simulations and social justice projects.

Field apprenticeships provide educators with an alternative venue to construct teaching-learning spaces where children engage in open-ended discoveries and applied adventures. These imaginative ZPDs, like the paleontological study of a second grade class highlighted in Figures 12-14, can integrate the entire curriculum. After entering a class time machine, hiking around the swamps of the Triassic, Jurassic, and Cretaceous periods, and composing an ABC book of the dinosaurs students met in role-play, teachers might bury bones they have saved in a large dirt pile on school grounds. The next morning, the children then convene into scientific teams after being assigned specific roles to engage in a paleontological dig. The students can apply the curriculum acquired across the disciplines to stake a claim, describe their field area, extract specimens, and record critical attributes of their findings. A serious focus can be placed on the proper application of procedures including the use of map coordinates, empirical observation, the metric system, and discipline-specific writing genres. Through the scientific method, the children can playfully explore authentic physical and psychological tools used by professionals, transforming everyday knowledge into scientific understandings (Vygotsky, 1934/1987). After the discovery of specimens in the field (Fig. 12), students might prepare and transport artifacts to a classroom laboratory (Fig. 13) where their findings undergo additional examination, scientific notation, and preservative treatments in new scientific teams. By the end of the unit, the children can design, build, and curate an exhibition for a class museum (Fig. 14). The exhibit might be advertised in school hallways, attended by younger children who receive invitations from siblings or older peers. The final display can be shared with the larger community through a class newsletter or museum catalogue recording the event.



Fig. 12: Specimen discovery at paleontological expedition (courtesy of the students and their families)



Fig. 13: Preparation of artifacts for transportation to the lab (courtesy of the students and their families)



Fig. 14: Museum exhibition of paleontological findings

Finally, CHACE classrooms extend Vygotsky's notion that emotion fuels all human endeavors including scientific discovery, sports, and work for the welfare of others. Social justice projects can similarly provide motivating projects where children appropriate and refine knowledge, skills, strategies, and dispositions while becoming agents of change. For example, our second graders collected a sufficient number of aluminum cans to purchase an acre of rain forest for protection by a conservation group. Fourth graders completed an investigation on nutrition, food, and hunger by sponsoring a school-wide, canned food drive called the Great Donation Estimation Challenge, showcasing their proficiencies in the use of graphs, multiplication, and percentages (see Fig. 15 and Fig. 16). Fifth-grade emergent biliterates decided the best way they could combat youth drug use was to donate Spanish-English recordings of their favorite pieces of children's literature for check-out at the local library. By targeting constructive solutions, children can actualize the old axiom that "knowledge is power." In realizing their dreams, students learn to locate themselves and others in positions of empowerment.



Fig. 15: The great donation estimation challenge graph



Fig. 16: The great donation estimation challenge canned food delivery



Conclusion

As educators confront the destructive effects of test-driven pedagogies, the academic literature on creative education has begun to expand. While we honor the innovative work of scholars in this field (e.g., see Craft, 2005), most writers synthesize a variety of theories and concepts, lacking an integrative framework. In contrast, CHACE's foundation in Vygotskian theory offers a solid architecture for the development of novel and imaginative approaches to learning. Further, in drawing on Moll's (1992) "funds of knowledge," CHACE dialectically unites both individual and social understandings of students. After internalizing the shared knowledge of their communities, social individuals bring this expertise into new environments where it is added to, transformed, and re-imagined through dignified, caring interactions. As distillations of the constant activity of humanity, by sharing the awe of socially produced artifacts, we can help children recognize their own never-ceasing inventiveness.

In this paper, we have presented a cultural-historical approach to creative education by emphasizing the obuchenie that exists between teachers who construct stimulating and imaginative learning environments and children who expand each other's creativity through the complementarity evidenced in collaborative efforts, interactions, and explorations. Rather than focusing primarily on the individual, as is the case in most creativity theories, we emphasize the joint creation of innovative projects by agents, peers, and activists as collective learning adventures. We underscore the central role of schooling in the lives of linguistically, economically and culturally diverse children whose education is too frequently oppressive. In contrast, practitioners of CHACE seek ways to highlight and enhance all children's cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge and resilience. In CHACE classrooms, the power of imagination is honored as students are provided with the expressive means to transform their emotions, memories, talents, and lives in relationship with the knowledge, skills, strategies, and dispositions of the curriculum. Joy, intensity, inventiveness, and risk-taking are embraced. Play is validated alongside other diverse semiotic means, broadening children's functional systems as they are modified and expanded throughout the course of development. Finally, we assert that children's creative activities and engagement in their learning provide a hopeful path to their future and all of our futures.

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Nurturing Creativity and Professional Learning for 21st Century Education: *ResponsiveDesign* and the Cultural Landscapes Collaboratory

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ABSTRACT

This study examines events within a CoLab¹ *3RDSpace: Summer Leadership Institute on Creativity & Innovation*. The analyses are organized into two telling cases and reveal how participants develop a shared understanding of *ResponsiveDesign*, CoLab's theory of inquiry and innovation. Drawing on an interactional ethnographic perspective, the analyses make visible the ways in which concepts of space, language, creativity, and innovation complement one another to form *ResponsiveDesign* as a powerful approach for educators in any setting to transform their ordinary places into extraordinary spaces for creatively confident learning.

Few ideas emerge fully formed. Instead, innovators often try things out and then quickly adjust them in the light of experience. Tinkering seems to play a vital role in all kinds of innovation, involving trial and error, hunches, and experiments that only in retrospect look rational and planned.

(Johnson, 2011, p. 151)

Have you ever wondered how creativity works in teachers' professional lives to harness learning opportunities within formal and semi-formal learning settings? And what might tinkering and prototyping have to do with how teachers develop a shared language and theory to help them collaborate

and thrive within diverse learning settings? Questions around how creativity and innovation can be harnessed, to transform how we think of and design learning experiences, focuses the work we do as the Cultural Landscapes Collaboratory (CoLab, www.ourCoLab.org). The CoLab is a transdisciplinary community of teacher-researchers concerned with 21st century education and learning, asking the bigger question: how can schools and non-school settings become innovation spaces where knowledge is no longer just stored and consumed but rather constructed and innovated upon within and beyond the school setting?

In this article, we share with you our theory of innovation and action called *ResponsiveDesign*. Although grounded in and arising out of over eight years of ongoing teacher-research projects, this study situates our explorations and insights against the backdrop of a five-day institute from the summer of 2012, involving eight American universities and three museums, called *the 3RDspace Summer Leadership Institute on Creativity & Innovation*. We examine the ways we came to develop a shared theoretical and pedagogical understanding of *ResponsiveDesign*, and, the ways we can apply it to our teaching practices in order to innovate them. The participants were National Writing Project (NWP) affiliated teacher-researchers from across the United States, museum educators, graduate students, and one literacy coach from a school district.²

The 3RDspace Summer Leadership Institute on Creativity & Innovation

The experientially and theoretically grounded institute had two mutually informing goals. The first focused on harnessing the CoLab's theory of action called *ResponsiveDesign* in order to unpack how we think about and understand what counts as innovative and creative leadership. The second goal was to harness *ResponsiveDesign* in order to support NWP, Museum, and School District leaders to explore, envision, and enact creativity-centric partnerships among local formal and semi-formal learning settings.

Thus, our *3RDspace* institute goals were situated within the nexus where formal and semi-formal learning settings overlap: namely schools and National Writing Project sites interacting with and learning from museums and library settings. From this overlapping "cultures" perspective, we conceived of our institute as being a "third space," or state of in-betweenness. In this space, participants could explore each other's individual local challenges and prototype radical solutions while concurrently testing *ResponsiveDesign* in St. Louis locales, making them cultural landscapes for learning that led to powerful insights. From this perspective, the name

3RDspace held significance for the group. The number three represented the three E's in *ResponsiveDesign's* methodological processes: *Explore, Envision, Enact*, whereas the *RD* represented *ResponsiveDesign*. Thus the *3RDspace* connotes the making of learning spaces by harnessing *ResponsiveDesign* as a theory of action and innovation.

Our Work's Theoretical Significance and Practical Applications

Although we view our conceptual approach to professional learning as innovative, the need for this kind of work is not new. In the last decades of the 20th century, educational scholars have assisted us to conceive of learning as situated phenomena that is socially constructed within formal school settings (Anderson-Levitt, 2002; Dyson, 1993; Dyson et al., 1995; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Green & Meyer, 1991; Heath, 1983) and outside of school settings within the larger constitutive communities of practice (Córdova, 2008; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002) and families' cultural ways of knowing and being (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Yeager & Córdova, 2010) with which schools interact. Thus, accounting for the interactive nature of in-school and out-of-school learning relationships has been the source of robust scholarship in the last four decades, and that focus is grounded in an even longer research tradition dating back to philosophers and scholars like John Dewey (1916) and John Cotton Dana (1917).

Since the beginning of the last century, scholars have been conceptualizing the role that experience plays in the processes of teaching and learning inside (Dewey, 1916; Heathcote & Bolton, 1994) and outside (Dana, 1917; Montessori, 1969) of schools. Further, how we come to think about school as participatory learning spaces has been influenced by theorists like Paulo Freire and Loris Malaguzzi who, following in the progressive education tradition, pushed us to think critically about how the pedagogies we as educators construct contribute to the awakening of critical consciousness—or hinder it. Thus, a tradition of critical pedagogies has long assisted educators and researchers in formal settings with ways to conceive of schools beyond simply places where knowledge is replicated but where new cultures can be invented (Córdova, 2008, 2010; Freire, 1998).

Knowing is one thing, and we know so much about how learning communities are constructed and the consequences for their particular ways of knowing and being. Yet, doing is another. Though rich in empirical knowledge, in the fields of teacher and museum education we seem to know very little about how to actually harness empirical research, ripe with insights on how learning cultures emerge, and harness those insights to nurture and grow innovative learning communities in our

own backyards. It is this very disconnect between theory and practice, within formal and semi-formal learning settings, that the CoLab has begun to bridge.

In any sociocultural setting, there are elements that challenge educators' creativity in designing extended spaces for learning that connect school with communities and students' learning lives. For example, in the US "teaching for the test" easily narrows down teachers' freedom to design 21st century learning opportunities for their students that build bridges across different communities. Further, teachers begin to narrow (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006; Allington, 2001; Córdova & Matthiesen, 2010; MacGillivray, Ardell, Curwen, & Palma, 2004) the educational potential semi-formal learning spaces have not only for their students, but also for themselves. In fact, Crocco and Costigan (2007) have argued that what has been called the narrowing of what counts as curriculum (e.g., Dillon, 2006)—which they expand to include the impact of mandated, prescribed curriculum that "frequently limits pedagogical options" (p. 514)—has meant that teachers in many schools "often find their personal and professional identity development thwarted, creativity and autonomy undermined, and ability to forge relationships with students diminished" (p. 514).

Globally, both formal and semi-formal learning institutions such as museums and libraries are struggling to respond to 21st century learning demands with "one size fits for all" approaches. These locations whose pedagogical understandings developed in a previous century responding to particular demands of long ago, are now seeking new approaches relevant to the new challenges (Córdova, 2008; Murawski & Córdova, 2012). It seems harder than ever for teachers and students to create learning communities (Dixon & Green, 2009; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group, 1992a, 1992b) that honor students' and teachers' lived experiences as funds of knowledge (Moll, 1994; Moll et al., 1992) to build upon as readers and writers—and researchers.

Thus, we are presented with a daunting task as school and museum based teacher-researchers to learn how to mitigate the disconnect in cultural expectations between teachers as they learned to construct a professional learning community, and between teacher learning communities and the museum environment with its own cultural expectations. As the CoLab, we seek to create sustainable professional interdisciplinary learning spaces to nurture and become the researchers of diverse cultural landscapes, seeking answers to the questions that emerge from our everyday work.

Our Inquiry

While space prohibits a reporting of the comprehensive analyses completed of the five-day institute, our piece is organized as an exploration into a slice of our work, and, concludes with an invitation for collaboration. Questions leading our inquiries:

1. How do teacher-researchers and leaders move from individual to collective understandings of *ResponsiveDesign* as a theory of action and inquiry? Related to this question, we explore how teacher-researchers and leaders harnessed *ResponsiveDesign* to explore, envision, and enact a cultural practice called the *Artifact Box* as an inquiry into teaching practices.
2. How does how we think about space and struggle shed light on how teachers grapple with complex ideas leading to insights about teaching, learning, and leadership? Related to this question, we examine how the teacher-researchers and leaders created and entered transformative spaces for learning when they engaged in community-based art making alongside a professional community-based artist, Takashi Horisaki.

First, we begin by discussing the theoretical and methodological considerations undergirding our work including data and setting. Second, we will discuss what the CoLab is and what its theoretical roots are as an innovative transdisciplinary community of learners, including defining our theory of action called *ResponsiveDesign* and how it works. Third, our analyses make visible the creativity-centric theoretical routes that CoLab teacher-researchers have journeyed by describing the five-day *3RDspace* institute. Against this backdrop, we organize our two analyses in what Mitchell (1984) calls telling cases, which serve as a methodology out of which theory, concepts, and hypotheses can be drawn, leading to further research. We conclude with an invitation for international collaboration with the CoLab.

Theoretical and Methodological Traditions That Orient Our Study

Our views are grounded in an interactional ethnographic perspective (Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group, 1995) that lets us understand classrooms and learning settings as cultures (Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group, 1992a, 1992b) and knowledge as situated and socially constructed. We expand our view by

drawing from the field of museum learning (Hein, 1998; Falk & Dierking, 2000; Hooper-Greenhill, 2007). From these perspectives, our study reveals how teacher-researchers can explore issues pertinent to constructing creativity and innovation-focused learning communities in schools and with museums by drawing on theories from anthropology (Frake, 1977; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Spradley, 1980), critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992; Ivanic, 1994), and literary theory (Bakhtin, 1986).

Data and Setting

The data examined in this study were collected during the five-day Summer Leadership Institute on Creativity & Innovation, July 9-13, 2012 in St. Louis. Data records include video footage, participant work samples, and field notes. The authors collaboratively collected them across diverse learning settings where the institute took place: two art museums, a chess museum, and a fine arts gallery. Ralph, first author, is a university-based researcher. He is Latino, of native Mexican-Indian and Spanish cultural heritage. Kristiina, second author, is a Finnish educational researcher. Third author, Jeff is a white man, and high school English teacher-researcher. Ralph and Jeff co-developed the *3RDspace* summer institute along with fellow CoLab members: Michael Murawski, Director of School Services for the Saint Louis Art Museum; Patricia Swank, high school English teacher; Dawn Jung, university instructor, and Ann Taylor, university researcher. These CoLab leaders and participants are from the eight National Writing Project sites and two art museums totaled 25; nineteen women and six men.

The CoLab's Roots and Routes

To conceptualize the dynamic nature of the CoLab's cultural roots and routes presented in this article, we invoke the concept of morphogenesis (Turing, 1952) and emergence (Johnson, 2001) to help us understand the organic and spontaneous processes inherent in the moment-to-moment and over time nature of how humans socially construct learning cultures at the ground level. Turing posited that complex systems have origins that emerge organically from the bottom-up, not authoritatively from the top-down. Johnson argues that organized complexity emerges over time out of seeming chaos giving shape and physicality to phenomena.

CoLab's origins can be traced back to an idea planted in 2004 in an innovative and synergistic interplay between diverse National NWP sites and the Santa

Barbara Classroom Discourse Group (SBCDG, 1992a, 1992b). At that time, Ralph, the first author, was a bilingual third grade teacher and had just completed his Ph.D. He first conceived of the Collaboratory idea as a space for NWP teacher-researchers to explore their classroom and larger communities as cultural landscapes for learning. Complementing these roots, the routes of action that CoLab members have taken have led them to collaborate internationally with the Learning Bridges research network (www.oppimisensillat.fi) located in Finland at the University of Helsinki, Department of Teacher Education (see also Kumpulainen et al., 2011). In 2005, Finnish researcher Dr. Kristiina Kumpulainen became a CoLab member, leading the group to collaborate internationally with Finnish teachers, teacher education and interdisciplinary research networks on learning.

From this local-to-global, recursive, school-based learning interplay, CoLab's routes further articulated themselves in the form of global teaching and research partnerships between museums and informal community-based institutions with a shared focus on interdisciplinary professional learning (Córdova & Murawski, 2010). Because we are transnationally located, we bring our respective local sociocultural knowledge of educational policy and practice to our work. It is through this synergistic and dynamic collaboration that we develop shared understandings of the particular educational challenges facing educators in both American and Finnish settings.

In 2009, CoLab began to interact with and learn from Stanford University's d.School and faculty. The d.School is an interdisciplinary learning hub, housed at Stanford, where undergraduate and graduate students work together across all disciplines. The d.School draws on a design-thinking approach, an ethnographic process that invites users to generate ideas, insights, and innovation. Our work with the d.School enabled us to name and articulate our own theory of innovation and action, which we named *ResponsiveDesign* (discussed in the next section).

Thus, CoLab's morphogenesis reveals a synergistic concept of action that is informed by seeming disparate places and diverse people, disciplines, and ideas. Our members self-select to collaborate towards a shared goal of building to learn and to innovate upon what is presently known in our learning settings. Building upon its human-centered ethnographic and language centered origins, however, the routes that the CoLab has taken reveal an image of an organic and dynamic self-learning and self-teaching organism without one particular physical space.

What Is *ResponsiveDesign*?

Our *ResponsiveDesign* theory of action grew out of our collective efforts to notice and name the logic-of-inquiry we used in our teacher-researcher work. Therefore, we sought to name our process with language that would account for our ethnographic approach of interacting with and learning from others. In this way our process could be accessible to educators beyond our local setting. The ethnographic practice of “deep diving” into situations helps us to respectfully surface people’s needs (Responsive), while the field of art and design guides us to create prototypes (Design) of practice to be tested in the field.

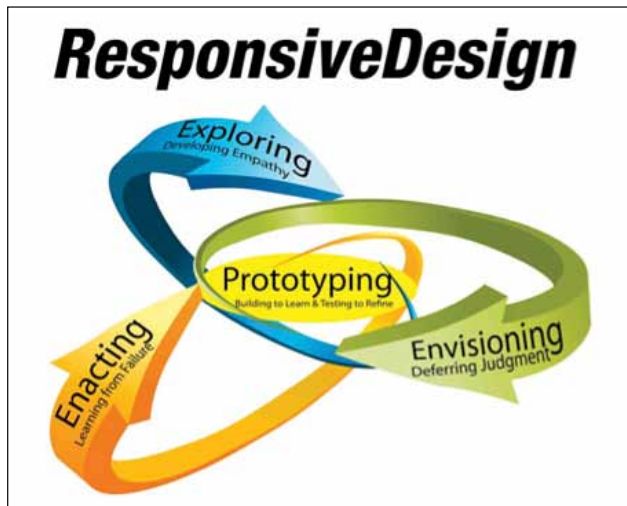


Fig. 1: *ResponsiveDesign*

ResponsiveDesign's epistemology posits that people are natural theory-makers and theory-testers whose works foster in them innovator growth mindsets that can become habits of mind. Through the multiple iterative cycles of rapid prototyping used in its work, by *exploring to develop empathy*, *envisioning by deferring judgment*, and *enacting in order to learn from failure*, participants come to conceptualize their teaching practices as cultural technologies that can be harnessed and innovated upon.

CoLab's theoretical ethnographic and language-centric roots are at the heart of *ResponsiveDesign's* “DNA”: Dive & Document, Notice & Name, Analyze & Announce. This play on words, for us, helps us remember our theoretical cultural heritage and serves to focus *ResponsiveDesign's* purpose as a generative, human-centered, and creativity-harnessing theory of action and innovation.

Examining the *3RDspace* Summer Institute

The National Writing Project's Digital Is Initiative supported eight NWP sites representing diverse universities and communities, to collaborate with the CoLab to enact the 5-day institute. NWP's Digital Is Initiative is funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Digital Media and Learning Initiative. NWP site leaders and museum educators brought their site-based innovation problems and educational quandaries to this more global space, thus creating a "third space," harnessing *ResponsiveDesign*, where they were to learn innovation-yielding technologies that CoLab leaders would guide them through.

Therefore there is a double-meaning in the concept being constructed known as *3RDspace*. One meaning resides in the number 3 representing explore, envision, enact with *RD* representing *ResponsiveDesign*. The second meaning, is a theoretical one, developed by scholars in the last two decades to help us to understand the role that struggle, space, and states of in-betweenness play to help us transform and grow (Anzaldúa, 1987, 1993; Córdova, 2008; Franquíz, 1999; Gutierrez, Baquedano-López, & Tejada, 1999).

Franquíz (1999) drew on Anzaldúa's (1987, 1993) conceptualization of *Nepántla*, a Náhuatl word meaning a non-physical state of in-betweenness. People create *Nepántla* as they navigate within and across physical and non-physical borders. *Nepántla* describes the transformative nature of what happens for individuals and collectives as they simultaneously shape and are shaped by their environments. Across the overlapping spaces where students, teachers and community-based artists live and work, they struggle with complex ideas, experiences, and issues. For example, in the context of a fifth-grade classroom learning about the Holocaust, Franquíz (1999) made visible how students assisted each other to navigate the complex terrain of these social issues and how they applied understandings of inequity and racism to their everyday lives.

On day one, July 9, 2012 the twenty-five participants began the five-day experience at the St. Louis Chess Museum Hall of Fame at 9:30 a.m. In Table 1: *3RDspace* Daily Events, an overview of each day's focus is provided. The analyses in our two telling cases are of events from Day 1, highlighted in green, and Day 2, highlighted in orange.

Table 1
3RDspace Daily Events and Units of Analysis

Day 1 July 9	Day 2 July 10	Day 3 July 11	Day 4 July 12	Day 5 July 13
World Chess Museum	Meet at Cafe Nadoz	Meet at Saint Louis Art Museum	World Chess Museum	Tavern of Fine Arts
Quick-Write: "What are you here, what questions do you hope to have answered?"	Walk to Contemporary Art Museum	Quick-Write: "On Monday, I used to think, now, I am wondering?"	Quick-Write: "What new needs are you surfacing in your local site work?"	Improvise making a dragonfly, octopus and helicopter
Name Game	Dive into painting building with latex with artist Takashi Horisaki	DesignChallenge harnessing ResponsiveDesign: 'the Ideal Vehicle'	"Yes-But, Yes-And" Improvisation as Key	Quick-Write: "What is a 3RDspace?"
What is ResponsiveDesign?	Groups huddle to paint colored latex on stone facade in layers with cheese cloth.	Unpack DesignChallenge experience	Design-Challenge: Building Empathy in cross-site interviews	"What We Do Best" Ben Garcia article as theory to re-see our week together
Patti harnesses RD in an inquiry into My Practice (IMP) with Ralph as ThinkingPartner	Group peels latex	Lunch	Surfacing Needs Statement	Lunch
Lunch	Lunch	Experiencing Responsive-Design in museum setting with Mike leading an IMP with ThinkingPartner Dawn.	Receiving Feedback in Gallery Walk: "I notice, I wonder, What if?"	Bill Donius guides group in creativity exercise from his new book "Thought Revolution"
Debriefing Patti's IMP using the 3X2 technology	Debriefing morning with a Quick-Write: "What did we do this morning?"	Group unpacks Mike's IMP	Lunch	Quick-Write: "As a site leader, now I realize I need to...What if?"
Watch NightLine video on David Kelley's IDEO	Group displays latex art in form of Gallery Walk	Group watches videos of Patti, Mike and other CoLab teachers work with their students in museum and informal learning settings.	Groups examine feedback and classify it leading to synthesizing Big Ideas to develop a prototype for their local problem	Group Crows Sources "What-if" statements
Reflecting Writing on CoLab's NING	Group interacts with artist Takashi Horisaki and learn his ethnographic "Deep-Dive" approach to working with community art.		Group shares prototypes and receives feedback	Group develops pitches for top 6 "What-ifs"
				Final Reflection on NING

Telling Case One: Unpacking and Harnessing *ResponsiveDesign* as Shared Theory of Action and Inquiry

At 10:30 a.m. Ralph, a *3RDspace* leader, asked each participant to do a bit of writing, "as an individual, please take just one minute, and I'll time you, to jot down in your writer's notebooks everything that comes to mind when you hear the word 'explore.'" After a minute, Ralph asked the participants to pair up with particular directions: "Think of the words you are about to share with your partner as your DNA, and if you hear an intriguing association from your partner, feel free to steal it and add it to your list." The pairs were given two minutes to share with each other, and then were called back to attention as a whole group. Ralph repeated the process again with them two more times, this time asking them to entertain the word "enact" and then the word "envision."

After the repetitive process of unpacking individually and then sharing in pairs, their understandings of "explore, envision, and enact," Ralph asked the group to consider a new challenge as he guided the group to consider the purpose for why we share ideas with one another. Table 2 contains a transcript of his framing directions in message units.

Table 2
Framing What Counts as Explore, Envision, Enact

ACTOR	MESSAGE UNITS
Ralph:	<p>00:01:35</p> <p><i>Science writer Steven Johnson talks about the coffee houses of eighteenth century England as being innovation places and the birth place of the Enlightenment. He tells us for much of Europe's earlier history, people drank ale because water was dangerous. Then tea and coffee became available, and people no longer drunk, were buzzed on caffeine sharing ideas in these cramped locations. He calls coffee houses as the place where ideas go to have sex with each other</i></p>

As Ralph guided each pairing to consider itself as an “organism” with its particular understanding of explore, envision, and enact as its working and viable “DNA,” he opened up for the participants metaphorical ways to understand how ideas are shared that may lead to new ideas to emerge. When he guided groups to make a larger organism of four people—with each pairing sharing with the other its understandings of those three words—pairings acted as nodes within networks and their cross-pairings led to networks to become circuits of understandings.

After five minutes, he interrupted the groups to instruct them they had a challenge before them. In the next 10 minutes, they were to take their shared understanding of explore, envision, enact, and theorize, in a visual representation, the ways those three sets of understandings work together. Five minutes later the four groups of four participants were asked to share with the larger group what they theorized the relationship to be among explore, envision, and enact.

In Figures 2 and 3 we see the four groups' articulations of explore, envision, and enact. Group One draws on a holistic and natural metaphor to depict its understanding of *ResponsiveDesign* as a dynamic cycle of life with energy sources, predator, and prey. Group Two draws on a metaphor from earth science depicting *Responsive-Design's* explore, envision, enact as an energetic tornado with "perspectives and ideas that are big and small." The tornado picks them up and throws them out." This group described the force of new ideas to change existing models and perspectives.

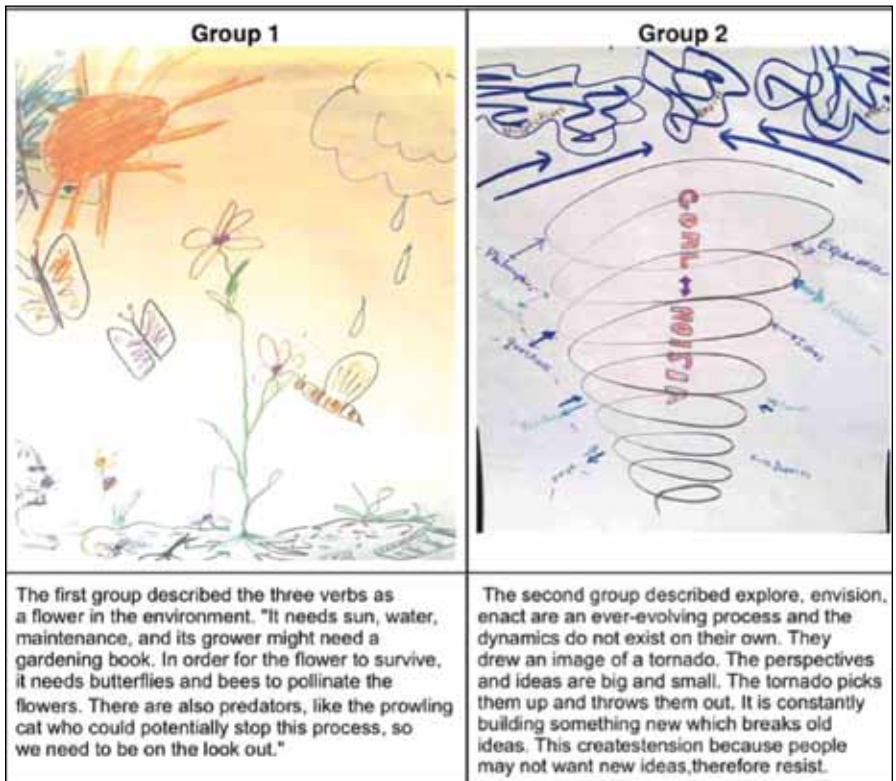


Fig. 2: Groups 1 and 2 make visible shared understandings of *ResponsiveDesign*

Group Three draws upon a cooking metaphor likening the development of new ideas akin to baking bread from onset to loaf. They discussed the seeming disparate nature of the individual ingredients, and, when energy is applied, the result is an altogether molecularly different product: bread. Group Four drew upon the scientific notion of the “Big Bang” to articulate that any inquiry has the potential to take one to unexpected understandings, all within the realm of what is possible to be known within the laws of physics and human understandings of the universe.

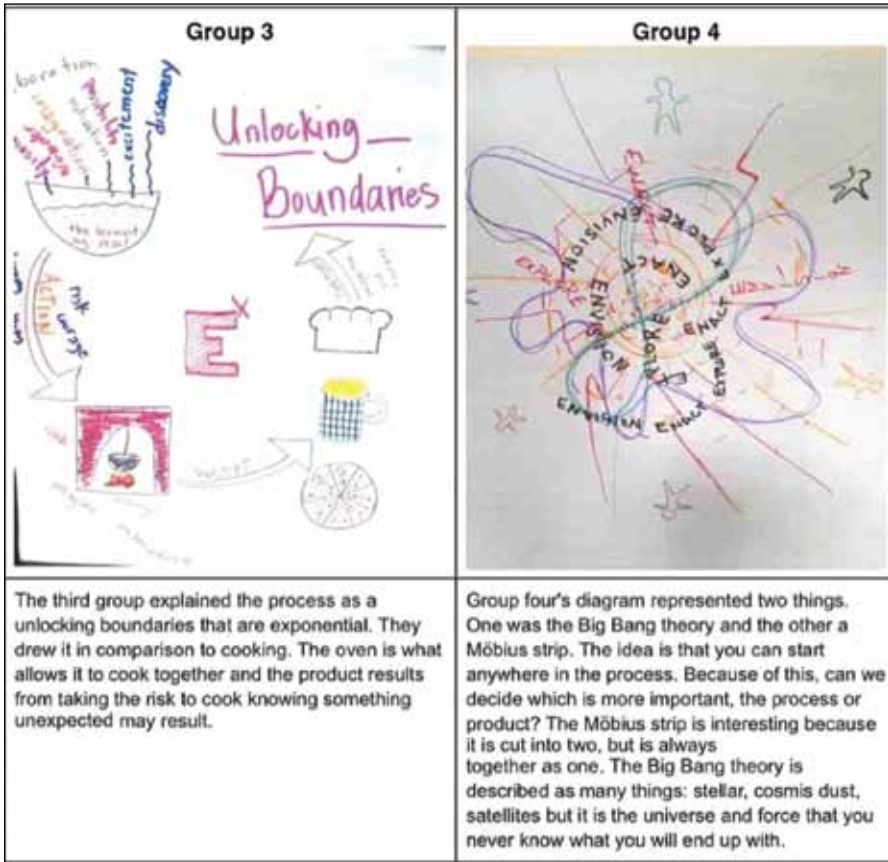


Fig. 3: Groups 3 and 4 make visible shared understandings of *ResponsiveDesign*

When the individual members were afforded opportunities to unpack what each word, “explore, envision, enact,” represented to them, they were drawing upon their individual experiences to make present, or visible, any associations with those words in light of what the prospective *3RDspace* institute had the potential to become. When the individuals became pairs, three times, throughout the first part of the “unpacking” exercise, they acted as individuals-within-a-collective of knowers. After the exercise,

each pair was asked to make sense of its paired understanding of those three verbs that constitute *ResponsiveDesign*. By having had this opportunity to engage as both individual and an individual-within-a-collective (Souza-Lima, 1995) pair, both participants drew upon their individual knowledges to create a shared knowledge.

By harnessing the semiotic processes of inscribing a mediated, negotiated, and shared understanding of explore, envision, enact into a metaphor, each foursome made visible to the larger group its temporal understanding of *ResponsiveDesign*. As each group shared, as an individual cluster of knowledge, the collective understanding of what could count as explore, envision, enact was socially constructed in real-time.

Harnessing *ResponsiveDesign* to Become “Archaeologists” of Each Other’s Lives: The *Artifact Box*

After this public display of individual and shared knowledge of *ResponsiveDesign*, the group had a ten-minute break after which Patti, a CoLab leader and participant, would ask the group to harness *ResponsiveDesign* in a different way, this time as an inquiry methodology as she engaged all members in a lesson. Patti recasted a typical lesson, called the *Artifact Box*, as an “Inquiry Into My Practice” (IIMP), which she wanted to both use to help facilitate community-building among the participants, and, she also wanted the participants to help her critically examine the lesson/IIMP after it concluded. For the CoLab, this IIMP process involves a Pre-Brief conversation between the lead teacher and a “Thinking-Partner.” Then the lesson is enacted. The IIMP process is concluded with a public reflective conversation between the lead teacher and the Thinking-Partner about what took place during the lesson.

The *Artifact Box* is a teaching and learning technology that involves participants collecting items that represent themselves, placing them in a box or bag, and, then setting them up, in a curated approach, in a shared space that will become a “gallery.” Each person then walks around silently in the gallery space, interacting with the curated objects that colleagues assembled for them, leaving feedback guided by “I noticed...” and “I wonder...” on sticky notes placed on the items. After about fifteen minutes of noticing and wondering, all participants return to their own *Artifact Box*, and read through the noticings and wonderings. They are then to select one of the most compelling pieces of feedback and engage in a 15-minute, sustained, moment of writing to address that noticing or wondering. To conclude, participants pair up and read their writing, and, then aloud to the whole group.

IIMP pre-brief.

During the *Artifact Box* Pre-Brief, Patti would harness *ResponsiveDesign's* explore, envision, enact iterative cycles with a colleague, Ralph, as her "Thinking-Partner" to critically examine the *Artifact Box* process. At the CoLab, a Thinking-Partner helps the lead teacher, about to enact a prototype of her practice, to verbally articulate aloud what she will *explore* in the lesson, what she *envisions* will occur, and, when *enacted*, what she wants learners to walk away knowing and caring about. The IIMP's "Pre-Brief" conversation took place in front of the participants with whom she would shortly enact her prototype of practice. This was a process of building empathy, of listening. Acting as Patti's thinking partner, Ralph's role is crucial; he served as the empathy. He guided the pre-brief through a process of noticing: "So I heard you say..." and questioning, "I wonder..." Ralph drew out and makes visible for everyone, Patti's expertise, her locally held wisdom.

Enacting the IIMP.

While enacting her IIMP, Ralph took notes, while Patti guided the group through an hour-long exploration of each other's artifacts as lived experiences, interrogations, and wonderings of those artifacts, which then led to sustained writing in response to those artifacts. In Figure 4, we see teacher-researcher, Jeff's (third author) *Artifact Box* containing fishing fly-ties, pictures of his daughters, and National Writing Project paraphernalia. As the artifact-box inquiry was enacted, each participant dove in, suspending judgment. Each learner attended fully to what unfolded, feeling safe in the knowledge that part of the process would involve an opportunity to debrief, to envision possibilities, to appropriate the learning for his/her own purposes and contexts.



Fig. 4: Jeff's *Artifact Box*

Each member of a learning community was valued as a knower. Each member was supported and pushed to move along the continuum from less expertise to more expertise. In taking the lead, Patti allowed all learners to envision themselves sharing and inquiring into practice.

Debriefing the IIMP.

During the IIMP Debrief, Patti and Ralph reflected upon what they both noticed during the learning experience. She noted that this application of the *Artifact Box* was to support diverse people from across the country to get to know each other, while simultaneously demonstrating how the *Artifact Box* technology worked as an Inquiry Into My Practice (IIMP) using *ResponsiveDesign* as a theory of inquiry and innovation.

After the debrief, Patti asked participants to write reflectively about the entire experience. This reflection written in Jeff's notebook moments after Patti's IIMP provides us with insight about how participants were making sense of and connections with the experience:

What we just experienced actually started several days ago when we were asked to assemble the artifacts—symbolic representations of identity, of experience, of memory. Then, via Patti's instructions, we let our identities ripple out and interact with others, strangers who are less strange now.

Via our [sticky note] noticings and wonderings we conjured stories—powerful stories which reveal connections, which now constitute the fabric squares of this new quilt (the quilt metaphor here is the direct residue of another Artifact Box containing a quilt made for students), Patti guided us from individual to community member and back again.

—Jeff's journal entry, July 9, 2012

Looking back at this event, we notice the intentionality of Patti's leadership. It was not an accident that another teacher's *Artifact Box* became a metaphor that Jeff employed to make sense of the experience. Patti had guided the participants to interact with one another's identity, to slip in and out of one another's stories. We, thereby, were both shaping and shaped by one another. We co-constructed this space for literate action and learning.

The transparency of Patti's leadership, the careful exploring, envisioning, and enacting allowed us to fully attend to one another. We were given space to notice

and wonder. We were given space to be the expert, to be the storyteller, as an attentive and supportive audience solicited our stories from us. Finally, we were guided back to ourselves and given space to wrestle with the “So What?” of the experience, given space to envision a future for the experience both literally and figuratively.

This process of harnessing *ResponsiveDesign* to tackle challenges bridging formal and semi-formal learning settings ensued across the *3RDspaces*’ five days. By Friday, day 5 of the institute, teacher-researchers had become confident navigators of seemingly disparate cultural landscapes of museums and community settings, by exploring, envisioning, and enacting shared inquiries into whose knowledge counts and further refined their individual inquiries and questions to take back to their respective sites. In this way, teacher-researchers were supported to become teacher-leaders as they would return home and guide others to unpack and then harness *ResponsiveDesign* as a prototyping approach to teaching and learning.

Telling Case Two: Constructing Spaces for Struggling With Complex Ideas

A powerful example of *ResponsiveDesign*’s “Explore: Developing Empathy” and the transformative role that space can play in our learning was made visible to us on Day 2 of our time together that week. Community-based artist Takashi Horisaki invited teachers to grapple with seemingly foreign concepts of performance art that document cultural settings. He helped the group engage in his artistic process of making latex castings of architectural features of buildings near the Contemporary Art Museum. Over cocktails and dinner the night before there were playful and coy hints at what the day would bring. Participants knew it would involve latex, but were given little more. This ambiguity of the day’s events asked participants to rely on their unpacking of *ResponsiveDesign*, asked them to understand the work as an exploration. As such, they exercised their empathy “muscles.” They depended upon the support of this emerging community of learners. Further, as a metaphor for classroom practice, Horisaki’s work with teacher-leaders at the art museum challenged certain conventional wisdom—the convention of spelling out lesson objectives ahead of time, of providing copious background notes and information prior to any exploration, for example.

In addition to the cognitive ambiguity of “the lesson,” the day promised physical challenges as well. The blazing sun and forecast excessive heat warnings had folks slathering on sunscreen, hydrating vigorously, and devising all sorts of shade from hats to canopies and tarps. Direction from Takashi and his aides was sparse.

Participants were given a paintbrush, cheesecloth, and a cup of pigment-shaded latex and directed to find a surface to begin coating.

Participants settled into clusters working together on shared parts of the building (See Fig. 5, Picture A). Teachers began discussing and sharing. Discussions ranged from personal stories of family and summers to the sharing of work and research interests. Takashi, the artist, often initiated conversation by sidling up to an isolated or quiet painter and asked questions. A couple of things happened in these moments. Diverse and individual experiences began to ripple out, to both shape and be shaped by the community. In addition, Takashi was able to demonstrate various latex casting techniques while each artist was engaged in the very process. As folks talked and imitated, this knowledge spread through the community.

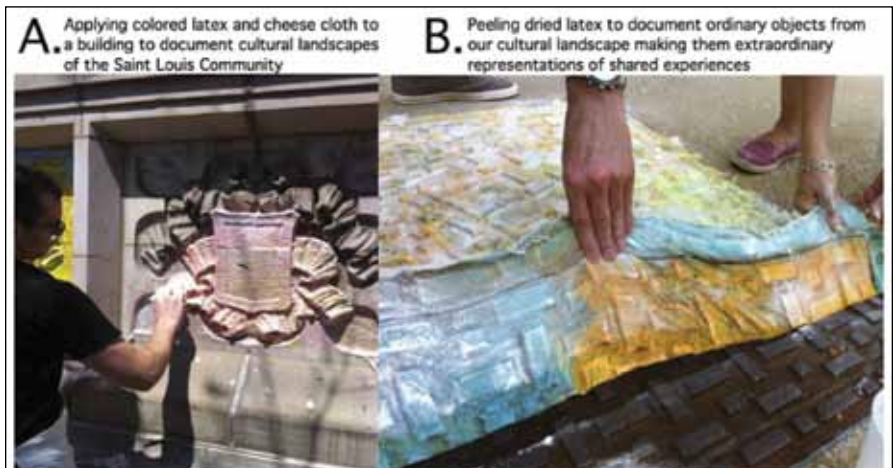


Fig. 5: Documenting our cultural landscapes with latex

Once settled in ambiguity, teachers actually began to attend to what was before them. Expectations and questions about “what is the purpose? What are we doing? What’s the significance?” all receded into the background as an intensive 2-hour “doing” phase emerged. In pushing aside preconceived notions and expectations of educational purpose, participants created a state of in-betweenness and thus enacted *Nepántla*, or the *3RDspace*, into being.

Within the span of two hours, the teacher-leaders’ castings had dried and then began the process of peeling away the latex (Fig. 5, Picture B), revealing a mold of the negative spaces from various parts of the building and sidewalk. Artists marveled

at the surprising and colorful castings—surprised as if they were an unexpected gift, a result of their labor. Each cluster of teacher-leaders emerged anew as community artists whose process and product represented the art-as-meaning-making experience.

After lunch, the day’s experience ended inside The Contemporary Art Museum. The task: to make sense of the “what happened” earlier in the day. First, a Quick-Write summarized the varied individual experiences of the day: “What did we do with that building today...what just happened?” The group discussed, what came to be called the “So What?,” of the day’s experience. Horisaki shared with the group his process of developing his art-making techniques stemming from his childhood in Japan, where he had experienced the consequences of rapid city-growth that led to the loss of historical cultural landscapes. He developed a passion for documenting city landscapes alongside city dwellers to tell the “hidden stories” of the city.

These teacher-leader/artists then had an opportunity to explore Horisaki’s installation at the Contemporary Art Museum documenting elements of St. Louis’ architectural cultural landscapes (see Fig. 6).



Fig. 6: Takashi Horisaki’s latex castings of St. Louis, Missouri

Mike, a participant and museum-based teacher-leader wrote of the day's experience later on the group's blog:

This first word that comes to my mind as I reflect on the day's experiences is ... DISEQUILIBRIUM. Yes, that word that we all run into in teacher ed courses and ed psych texts, but rarely experience in such a deep, raw way as we may have done today. And not only did we experience the dizzying discomfort of disequilibrium (that's a lot of d's, I realize), but we had a new language and new community with which to dissect the experience, share our personal elements of that experience, and take pieces of it away to build something new later down the road. As I mentioned on Monday, I think there is a certain amount of discomfort needed in order to drive the learning process forward in meaningful and transformative ways.

— Mike, July 10, 2012

Mike's insights remind us of the nature of disequilibrium or discomfort as instructive phenomena, and when we allow ourselves to attend to this state of in-betweenness, we can emerge transformed with insights and visions toward new professional action.

Concluding Thoughts and an Invitation to "CoLaborate"

The 3RDspace became a place to explore *ResponsiveDesign* as a shared theory of action and shared way of exploring diverse cultural landscapes. Group members harnessed cultural practices and technologies to dig into their local vexing problems around the Common Core State Standards, high stakes teacher evaluation concerns facing most United States teachers, and the growing interest for schools to open themselves up to develop partnerships with community-based institutions such as museums. *ResponsiveDesign's* explore, envision, enact is an iterative and non-linear process that can yield a logic of inquiry, tailor-made for the user, that guides her/him into a prototyping mindset to rethink ordinary teaching into an extraordinary opportunity for revising and innovating upon failing teaching practices.

When a group of National Writing Project leaders, museum educators, and district literacy coaches develop a shared logic of inquiry as a theory of action, they can harness *ResponsiveDesign's* prototyping energy to co-explore, co-envision, and co-enact innovations to enhance otherwise sometimes static, prepackaged, and

lackluster educational cultural practices. This study focused on just one slice of the dynamic and situated nature of how CoLab teacher-researchers convene as a group to inquire into their respective individual challenges, assist each other to take risks into new territories by harnessing design-centric methodologies, and, thus emerge transformed in and through the *3RDspace* they individually and collectively created for each other.

We close by inviting you, our future colleagues, to join us as we explore, envision, and enact more *3RDspaces*, where we further test *ResponsiveDesign's* application in formal and semi-formal learning settings in international contexts. Together, we can develop and innovate educational innovations for the benefit of 21st century learners.

Notes

1. The Cultural Landscapes Collaboratory (CoLab) is a transdisciplinary community of P-21 teacher-researchers who share a passion and practice for transforming ordinary places into extraordinary creative *spaces* for professional learning. CoLab emerged over time from the dynamic interplay among teacher-researchers from diverse National Writing Project sites, university-based ethnographic researchers, and museum-based educators.
2. For more information see: <http://bit.ly/Xzu6YV>.

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Enabling Creativity in Learning Environments: Lessons From the CREANOVA Project

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ABSTRACT

The paper employs data from a European Union funded project to outline the different contexts and factors that enable creativity and innovation. It suggests that creativity and innovation are supported by flexible work settings, adaptable learning environments, collaborative design processes, determined effort, and liberating innovative relationships. It concludes that learning environments that seek to enable creativity and innovation should encourage collaborative working, offer flexibility for both learners and educators, enable learner-led innovative processes, and recognize that creativity occurs in curriculum areas beyond the creative arts.

Introduction

This article¹ employs the findings of the CREANOVA project (carried out 2009-2012) to investigate how individual, structural, and inter-subjective relational issues defuse or escalate creativity in learning and working environments; and analyzes what lessons can be learned for educationalists who seek to promote creative learning environments. CREANOVA was a major European Union (EU) research project funded by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) of the European Commission (European Commission Project Number 143725-LLP-1-2008-1-ES-KA1-KA1SCR). The project involved universities, vocational education specialists, regional governments, creative and technical experts from the Basque Country (Spain), Estonia, France, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, and Scotland (UK). It investigated how learning environments, workspaces, and design

processes were constructed to achieve sustainable innovation in the technology and creative industries.

Creativity is a “vague” and “elusive” term that has different connotations in contrasting contexts (NACCCE, 1999). Most writers suggest that creativity involves novel ideas and knowledge (Craft, 2005; Goldenberg & Mazursky, 2002). While literatures in the past have conceptualized creativity as a solitary individual act (Saracho, 2002), there has been a recent increasing assertion that creativity is also a group activity (Sawyer, 2012; Sefton-Green, 2000).

Various writers have defined the conceptual frameworks that underpin different definitions of creativity, for example, individual, collective, emergent, and interpersonal, and have argued that our understanding of creativity and its usage is very dependent on context (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Misztal, 2007). In the past, creativity has been synonymously associated with artists and individuals who have changed the world through their inventions and discoveries (Sternberg, 2003). Creativity was conceptualized as an individual process, that happened only with extraordinary individuals and it was linked with divine or artistic quality that could only be delivered by very few super-intelligent or spiritual human beings (Misztal, 2007; Sawyer, 2012; Sternberg, 2003).

Changes in perception now lead us to think that creativity is also collective and it can happen through process, dialogue, brainstorming, consultation, group activity, and facilitation (Craft, 2005; Sawyer, 2012; Sternberg, 2003). This shift to a notion of creativity as a collective process raised questions for the CREANOVA project concerning what environments enabled human beings to be creative in their everyday life and what factors supported their capacity to develop and execute creative practice. It has been argued that creativity is stimulated or comes from an underlying need, e.g., economic, social, personal, technical, and so on (Sternberg, 2003). Hence, the CREANOVA project was interested in understanding the connections between collective and individual issues concerning need and environment, to identify whether there were connections between different factors that promoted creativity and innovation, and to contribute to debates that characterize creativity as an ambiguous concept (Misztal, 2007).

The CREANOVA project sought to respond to writing that had called for a more cogent analysis of creativity (Sefton-Green, 2000). It aimed to examine in more detail the environments, factors, and relationships that enabled collaborative working in systems and to pose both quantitative and qualitative questions of respondents

concerning what a supportive creative environment looked like and how such environments worked. The project sought to carry out factor analysis to examine the comparability and interdependency among four key factors of creativity: need, freedom, environment, and social interaction. It also connected this data to qualitative data from interviews. Before proceeding to identify and discuss the results of the study this paper briefly outlines the methods employed in the study.

Methods

Four sources of information and data.

The project involved a review of international literature in the field that established our conceptual basis; an online statistical questionnaire of people in creative and technical sectors; experimental case studies that piloted innovative and creative learning tools; and qualitative interviews of key experts and creative people who had developed innovative business designs, practices, and strategies. This paper draws from the analysis of the statistical questionnaire and qualitative interviews to raise key questions about the connecting factors that influence creativity and innovation.

Participants

Twelve hundred individuals in companies in the technical and creative industries were contacted in four countries including the United Kingdom, Basque Country (Spain), Finland and Estonia to participate in an online questionnaire. A total of 507 respondents completed the questionnaire from the 1200 invitees, providing a response rate of 42.25%. Among the respondents 148 worked in the public sector, 309 worked in the private sector, and 22 worked in the voluntary sector. Sixty eight respondents were male and 239 respondents were female. As well, 229 were managers or team leaders and 278 were workers or trainee workers. Participants were asked to respond by way of a five-point Likert scale to a series of questions concerning themselves, their colleagues, and their organizations and issues of creativity, innovation and learning. In order to be able to unpack the results in a more in-depth way, 45 key respondents who were identified as having led innovative processes or organizations took part in qualitative interviews in the Basque Country (Spain), Estonia, Finland, Italy, and Scotland (UK).

Results

The results section briefly considers definitions of creativity and innovation before demonstrating the relationship among the four key factors: need, freedom, environment, and social interaction, however, it also demonstrates that there were gaps in the factor analysis and utilizes qualitative data to consider these gaps.

Defining Creativity and Innovation

Creativity is an ambiguous concept that is difficult to separate out from the concept of innovation, as it is a time-bound moment that brings something new into the world that may or may not be useful. The respondents to the qualitative interviews described creativity as the individual and collective ability to produce new ideas and solve problems in ways that had the potential to change the way that people engaged with objects or activities in their everyday worlds (in keeping with a range of authors, e.g., Ibáñez et al., 2010; Mumford & Gustafson, 1998; Woodman, Sawyer & Griffin, 1993). The findings corroborated existing literature that suggested creativity was not only an individual endeavour, but was also collective and collaborative (Faulkner & Coates; 2011; Sawyer, 2012). It also expanded our understanding that creative outcomes, new inventions, discoveries, ideas, and imagination can also emerge through collective processes and interactions within systems (e.g., through collective dialogue that facilitates individuals and groups to come up with new ideas or knowledge or overcome disagreements). This finding supported the work of Csikszentmihalyi (1999), who conceptualized creativity as an outcome of the interplay among a *creative individual* who developed new ideas and possibilities, the *cultural domain* which had a set of symbolic rules and procedures for receiving, preserving and transmitting novel ideas, and the *field* that judged, recognized, and valued the creative process. The findings supported the idea that creativity was perceived not only as an individually motivated intrinsic act, but also as an activity that thrived and emerged in individuals within the system during moments of dialogue that enabled interaction between individual impulses and external environment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). Yet, it also encouraged us to go beyond such writing that mainly focused on the individual (rather than groups) within the system to consider the context of collective, collaborative creative, and innovative processes.

For example, respondents in the CREANOVA project connected the concept of innovation to creativity; sometimes it was suggested that they were the same thing but at other times it was argued that innovation followed on from creative or that innovation as a process enabled creative ideas to come to fruition. People felt

innovation allowed creativity to have practical meaning and stemmed from individuals thinking creatively, unrestricted by conventional or traditional boundaries. Innovation was described as enabling people to solve pressing problems, adapt to changing circumstances, or learn from the past. People suggested that if change processes were to occur smoothly, creativity and innovation should be inseparable from notions of design and that design was a collaborative and inter-relation process.

The findings of the CREANOVA project at first appeared confusing and contradictory, for example, when the respondents suggested creativity and innovation were the same thing or alternatively that one followed the other (Davis et al., 2011; Farrier, Quinn, Bruce, Davis, & Bizas, 2011). However our deeper analysis suggested that it was possible to expand the definition of creativity to argue that it was any act, idea, or product that changes an existing situation. Creativity and innovation were seen as similar activities with the proviso that innovation was a process that involved creativity. These findings concurred with literature that argued creativity was the precursor to innovation, and innovation was “the successful execution of creative ideas or new product by the whole organisation” (Sawyer, 2012, p. 8).

Need, Desire, Motivation, and Inspiration

In keeping with a number of writers (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Misztal, 2007; Saracho, 2002; Sternberg, 2003; Sawyer, 2012), the respondents in CREANOVA project interviews argued that the desire for creativity is both external and internal and that it can be motivated by social, economic, inter-personal, technological, and communitarian factors.

Our status resulted in us choosing an innovative market strategy, unlike our rivals, to maintain market share in the higher elements of the product range. The first reason was to distinguish ourselves from the big producers, who use traditional weighing systems with load cells.

Yes, be more practical. Innovation for innovation’s sake cannot be the objective. Do you get me? You have to innovate for the market. (Personal communication, respondent, Basque Country technical sector)

Internally, the urge for creativity for participants was linked with various intrinsic qualities of an individual such as imagination, self-motivation, the need to develop new skills, determination, perseverance, and so on. Externally, the thrust for creativity came from the impact of structural factors (e.g., changes in market forces, management approaches, performance review, and competition from other

organizations, etc.) on individuals or groups and involved inter-relational issues such as the need to resolve organizational conflict.

There is an important distinction between innovation for me or for my organization which might need something totally new, never done before and have a need for novelty in the full organization (not just one department); easier, more secure and faster solutions; or more transparency (Personal communication, respondent, creative industry Estonia)

Somewhat surprisingly, the factor analysis from the online questionnaire found that creativity and innovation had no significant statistical relationship with need. We surmised that respondents had not fully understood our questions on this topic and concluded that subsequent research should consider rephrasing our need-related questions.

The interview respondents argued that the need to be creative did not always stem from the aspiration to achieve individual gains, but also came from a wish to support others to achieve their aspirations. People stated that being and staying creative itself was one of the most challenging tasks in their job. Despite this pressure they described the challenge to create things in the learning or working environment as highly motivating.

Table 1
Factors for Creativity and Innovation, Environments, Learning, Freedom and Interaction

TESTS OF SAMPLING ADEQUACY, SPHERICITY AND VARIANCE BY FACTOR

FACTOR	KAISER-MEYER-OLKIN	BARTLETT'S TEST (P <0.05)	TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED
Environment 1: organizational goals, policy, and management	.603	.000	40.414%
Environment 2: perceived creativity and innovativeness of organization and colleagues	.666	.000	73.970%
Learning 1: Training on Creativity	.815	.000	76.381%
Learning 2: Training on Innovation	.909	.000	76.442%
Freedom	.667	.000	54.166%
Interaction	.826	.000	45.238%

Table 1 demonstrates that environment, learning, freedom, and interaction emerged from the online questionnaire as statistically significant key factors in creativity and innovation. In the interviews a number of types of work environments were found to enable creativity and innovation. For example, those that had flexible working practice, enabled cultural exchange, supported participants to put abstract ideas into practice by focusing learning processes on everyday concerns, facilitated dialogue (particularly around issues of conflict), and enabled participants to structure their own learner-led activities. It was concluded that when attempting to stimulate creativity and innovation there is a need to balance supportive organizational structures, learning opportunities, interaction between colleagues, and freedom or flexibility to attempt new things.

Environment was found to be about the relationships between people and the social structures that are constructed in organizations in terms of interaction, power-relationships, and hierarchy. Environment included the educational, economic, political, and social systems under which the conditions of innovation and creativity were forged, tolerated, accepted, rejected, or enhanced by people within social spaces (Davis et al., 2011).

Two dimensions of environment were identified: Environment 1 involving organizational characteristics (e.g., design of workspaces, organizational goals, managerial styles, policies, rules, systems, frameworks, etc.). Environment 2 involving perceived organizational creativity and innovation where individuals and groups were enabled by the organizational culture to act autonomously and collectively (e.g., individual experience of training in creativity, individual experience of training on innovation, availability of local learning spaces, worker freedom, and worker social interaction).

Qualitative findings suggested that respondents valued working together in environments that were creative, innovative, and (crucially) designed around the common good. The results implied strongly that creativity and innovation were not “individually heroic” traits. On the contrary, they could be connected to inter-relational sensitivity, gentility, generosity, caring, compassion, and recognition (Davis et al., 2011). Additionally, innovation and creativity were identified as benefiting from processes that adjusted organizational and structural conditions to allow for flexible distribution of roles, themes, and problems. These findings indicated that creativity lay in the connection and interrelationship between the individual and the environment. Indeed, Table 2 demonstrates the correlation scores among the various factors.

Table 2**Correlation Among Factors**

	Environment 1	Environment 2	Learning 1	Learning 2	Interaction	Freedom
Environment 1	-	0.24	0.13	-	0.28	-
Environment 2	0.24	-	0.36	0.32	0.56	0.46
Learning 1	0.13	0.36	-	0.80	0.35	0.20
Learning: 2	-	0.32	0.80	-	0.32	0.12
Freedom	0.28	0.56	0.35	0.32	-	0.39
Interaction	-	0.46	0.20	0.12	0.39	-

The correlation scores in the table above illustrate the complex web of inter-relationships among factors. Most factors were interrelated with the exception of the Environment 1 organizational structure which was not correlated with freedom or learning on innovation. This suggests that some factors co-exist without influencing each other.

Diversity, Freedom, and Interaction—A Condition for Innovation

Respondents to the survey and interviews highlighted the need for diversity and tolerance as a condition for innovation. They suggested that innovation flourished in settings where staff were enabled to challenge traditional approaches, welcome difference, contest hierarchies, experience openness, feel respected, and avoid sanctions for mistakes. Respondents also highly valued work environments that were free from time-pressure anxiety and enabled risk taking, tolerance of ambiguity, autonomy, reflection, self-directed working, and the promotion of high degrees of initiative.

When linear regression was run with all the independent variables in our survey data, very encouraging results were produced. The multiple correlation coefficient ($R=0.629^a$), which looked at the association of all the variables together, including environment, training, interaction freedom, and so forth, showed that the variables were highly correlated and that they predict creativity and innovation in environments very well. The R Square ($R\text{ Square} = 0.396$) meant that roughly 39.6% of the variance in creativity and innovation in environments could be explained by the combination of training, interaction, and freedom, a very good percentage.

Correlations among factors are given in Table 2 that illuminate the relationships between the dependent variable and the influence of the independent variables.

Our ANOVA significance test showed that the model was statistically significant and appropriate. Additionally, our coefficient table showed us that the independent variables positively affect creativity and innovation in environments (e.g., the higher the social interaction in an environment, the more creativity and innovation identified in it). As seen in Figure 1, all factors that correlate do so positively. So, for example, the more freedom there exists in an environment, the more creativity and innovation is identified in it and the more social interaction. The same was found for social interaction, which had the strongest correlation with creativity and innovation.

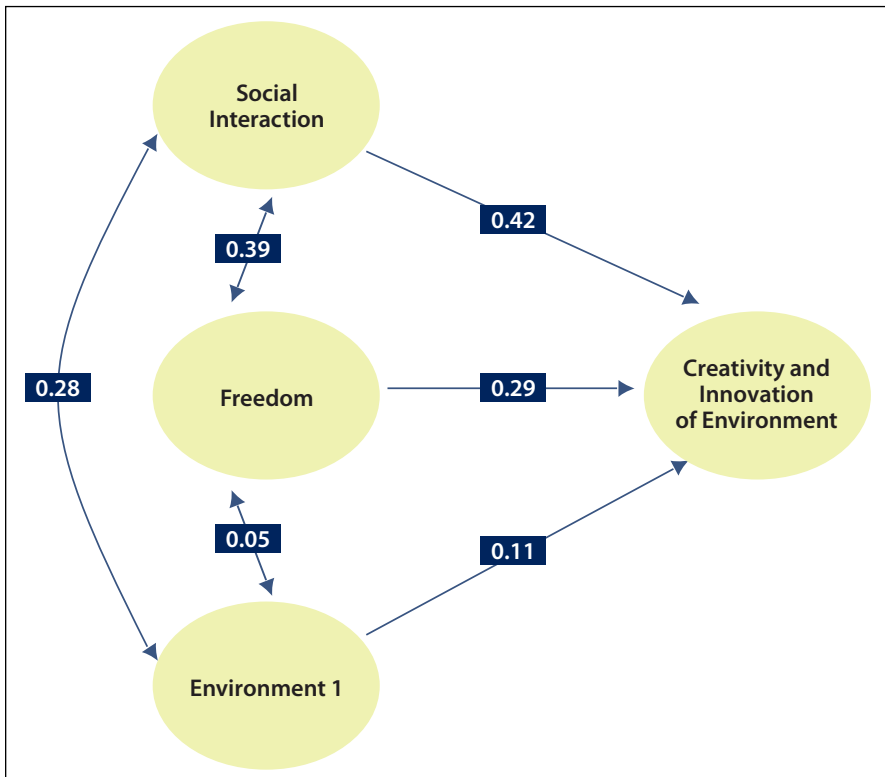


Fig. 1: Influence of 3 factors on creativity and innovation of environment

However, Environment 1 correlated weakly on its own with creativity and innovation and had a non-significant correlation with freedom. Figure 2 illustrates the correlation relationships among the factors after we have removed environment.

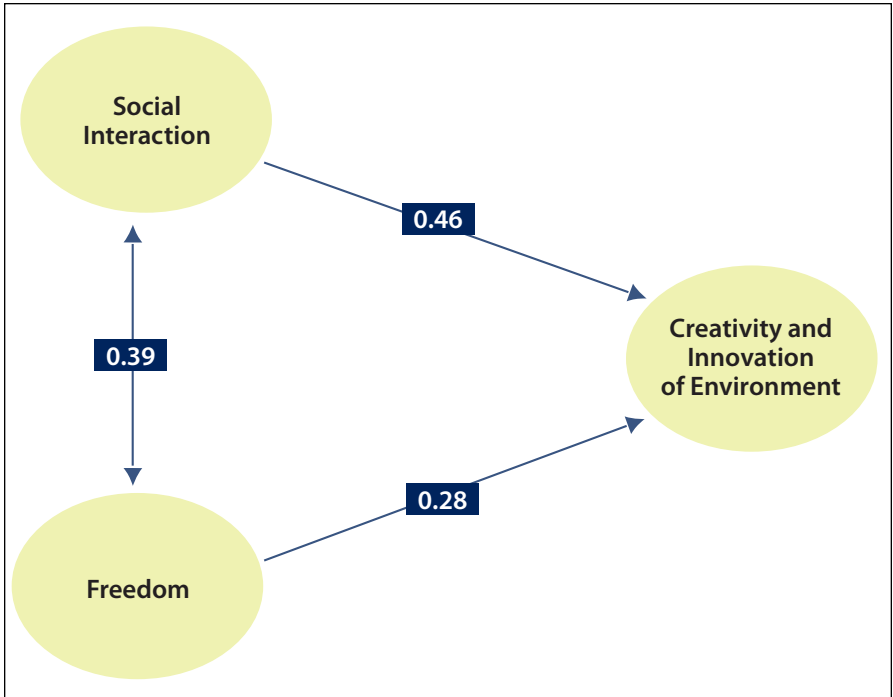


Fig. 2: Influence of two factors on creativity and innovation of environment

When connected to interview and case study data, this suggested that flexible frameworks were more necessary factors than total individual freedom for creativity and innovation. Hence, collaboration seemed more important than individual freedom, that is respondents perceived that, the stronger the social interaction there was in an environment (e.g., the more workers shared the same values, humour influenced their work place, issues of equality and diversity were valued in the workplace); and the more freedom there was (the more people were autonomous to make choices, use personal initiative, etc.), then the more creative and innovative were the environments. This suggested that the inter-relational context within which people are located plays an important part in creativity and innovation. It was possible to conclude that the skill, knowledge, values and experience of a person is not enough to stimulate creativity if the spaces that learners/workers live in are so formally structured or limited that they do not meet people's aspirations to practically utilize their creative potentials (Farrier et al., 2011). In particular, it was argued in qualitative interviews that companies would be wasting money on training on innovation and creativity if the contexts within which people worked did not enable them to be free to interact with others to put into practice what they had learnt from the training.

To innovate, a tradition of innovating must be deeply rooted in all segments of the company. It must be a constant in all areas, from human relations to sales representatives, production and management staff. They must be capable of defending their area, overcoming quarrels, jealousy and in-company struggles. An innovation culture must exist. (Personal communication, respondent, Creative industry, The Basque Country)

These findings support the work of writers that critique top-down management ideas that assume, for instance, that workers needed extrinsic rewards and monitoring (Seddon, 2008). Our study results substantiated other literature that has argued that creativity and innovation can be hindered or crushed by rigid hierarchy, simplification, uniformity and control associated with traditional industrial and school systems (Sawyer, 2012).

On a whole, the environment was seen as an important factor for facilitating creativity and innovation. The CREANOVA project was able to clarify the different aspects of “environment” that supported change (e.g., mentoring, flexible rules, relevant working agreements, technology, well-designed working spaces, teamwork, etc.).

The qualitative findings were also able to suggest other factors that might explain the gaps in the factor analysis; for example, during interviews respondents emphasized the importance of design, planning, and “stick-ability.” Stick-ability was defined as “staying the course” and seeing plans or agreements through to the end. Respondents suggested that a combination of individual and structural factors pushed individuals and groups to stay focused, positive, and creative.

It requires a long-term commitment, one shouldn't give up after the first or fifth failure. People are not the same; not everyone is a developer; some people even suffer from too much freedom. We also need people who are more monotonic and repetitive. (Personal communication, respondent, Finland technical industry)

I suppose creativity is the resource that you have that you can draw on, which then goes in through a design process, and leads you to an innovation. So design is like the glue, we call it the glue between creativity and innovation, so creativity doesn't necessarily have to have a purposeful output and innovation is a new way of doing things and a new way of approaching things, but it has a practical implication and the design process is what links the two of them. (Personal communication, respondent, creative industry, Scotland)

In this way, design (or structure) was identified as a bridge (or the glue) between creativity and innovation. This also suggested that it was as important for people to learn about how to plan innovative processes that enabled them to deliver creative outcomes so as to learn about how to be creative. The final discussion section of the paper connects such findings to literature on learning, innovation, and creativity. The CREANOVA respondents particularly stated that creativity and innovation benefited from collaborative, multi-professional and cross-cultural learning and the final section considers this finding in relation to work-related learning and to children's learning.

Discussion: What Do the CREANOVA Project Findings Mean for Children's Learning?

Participants in the CREANOVA project viewed learning and working contexts as crucial to creativity and innovation. This enabled us to reject traditional behaviourist models of learning that have suggested that people learn from repetition, reinforcement, reward, and punishment (Laird, 1985). In schools these ideas have been challenged by the constructivist idea that learning should enable the learner to analyze, conceptualize, and synthesize their prior experience into new knowledge, and that the teacher or instructor should reflectively facilitate the learning environment when trying to transmit knowledge (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999; Popkewitz & Bloch, 2001). Such ideas suggested children required a certain degree of freedom to be involved with the activity of their choice, but at the same time they also argued that children needed a mentor or facilitator for guidance (Foster, 1971). It is argued that creativity itself is a challenging task, it demands certain skills, and that these skills have to be learnt or nurtured in childhood through training or education. Yet, the preponderance in schools of romantic models of creativity that believed creative individuals are born, not made, offer little room for adult-led nurturing of creativity and also ignored the role of peer group interaction (Sefton-Green, 2000). The CREANOVA project findings bring into question writing that places emphasis on the liberal concept of individual success stimulated by individual teacher-child interaction and suggests that we should reengage with the concept of peer and collaborative learning. Collectivist notions of creativity identified in the CREANOVA project can more easily be connected with writing that highlights the need for flexibility when considering the emerging nature of creative ideas in childhood (Sawyer, 2012). More contemporary writing has connected the idea of individual reflection to group approaches to reflexive learning that highlight the connections among experience,

environment, flat hierarchies, learning, sharing, and reflection. Such writing promotes the idea that change can be stimulated by collective dialogue of everyday problems (Davis & Smith, 2012; Dewey, 1938; Turnbull, 2009), that learning embedded in an emergent activity can enable a qualitative transformation of the entire activity system (Davis et al., 2011; Davis & Smith, 2012; Engeström, 2004), and that there is a strong relationship among learning pedagogies, the construction of children in the curriculum, and creativity (Craft, 2005; Foster, 1971).

Learning pedagogies shape learning environments, both formal ones that are envisaged overtly in educational curriculum documents and informal ones that are underpinned in adult-child interaction (Craft, 2005; Moyles, 2010a). It is not clear that those trying to promote creative learning in schools are able to always utilize flexible approaches to learning that enable children to learn collaboratively. Indeed, arts and media topics are introduced in the curriculum because they are believed to be the subjects best suited to nurturing creativity in children. Yet this leads many teachers to fail to associate creativity with processes inherent in arts-based curriculum—for example, teachers may well overlook the creative planning and design aspects of more science-based topics (Sefton-Green, 2000). There has often been discontinuity in the way creativity is embedded in different curricula. It has been argued that the focus of the curriculum is often on art activities rather than cross-curricular skills and life skills (Craft, 2005). For example, teachers sometimes ignore the suggestions that creativity can be connected to the whole curriculum and disregard the principle that creativity is important not only for visual arts, but it is also relevant in other aspects of learning—in peer interaction, in problem solving, in language socialization, and so on (Craft, 2011).

The CREANOVA project findings suggest that schools who utilize interactive approaches to learning may enable children to develop creative planning, resilience, and “stick-ability” skills that will be very useful in future creative workplaces. The project findings also suggested that a focus on joint problem solving in schools might better enable children to identify with collective and less hierarchical notions of creativity. The CREANOVA project enabled us to conclude that learning environments that seek to promote creativity and innovation should interactively enable and stimulate the impulses, interest, intentions, and actions of the learner (Davis & Smith, 2012). This finding raises questions about how effective we are at promoting learning on creativity and innovation in ways that enable people to learn about innovation as a process. The findings also encourage us to pose questions concerning how effective we are at helping children learn how to plan and develop processes of innovation that enable creative ideas to come to fruition or learners to experience and

overcome uncertainty and discontinuity. We concluded, as others have, that there is an inherent tension in how creativity is pronounced in policy documents and how it is translated into practice in learning environments (Burnard & White, 2008; Craft, 2005; Moyles, 2010a). Although creative agendas are expressed in policy documents, for example, that articulate the need for creative education in schools and emphasize freedom and empowerment, educational practices are bureaucratized through central administration and control regimes and school authorities are pressured to comply with standards through performativity (Burnard & White, 2008).

The CREANOVA findings also raise questions about what approaches stimulate collaborative creativity in childhood. Playful pedagogies are strongly advocated as a means to achieve creativity in childhood, particularly in the early years. Play can be viewed as “spontaneous and joyful, stylised and regulated, revealing imbalances of power and social hierarchy and also as blurring the boundaries of the real and imaginary” (Montgomery, 2009, p. 143). It is postulated that play is a most natural activity that happens in children’s lives across all cultures, that play is universal, and that all children have a natural tendency and inclination towards play (Moyles, 2010b). Papatheodorou (2010) argues playful learning environments provide a pedagogy that supports creative activity, forges strong interaction, enables communication with others, provides opportunity for cooperation, encourages joint problem solving, promotes independence, and enables interdependence.

In reality, at-home play is yet not wholeheartedly accepted among parents; in schools, the concept of teaching as a formal activity reduces opportunities for flexible learning and the value of play in terms of its contribution to “actual” learning is not clearly explicated and understood by parents and teachers (Moyles, 2010a). Indeed, the notion that play activities automatically enable creativity is simplistic and overlooks writing that argues that children often encounter barriers to play such as the inability to interact outdoors free of adults or a preponderance of overtly adult-controlled learning spaces in schools (Moyles, 2010a). The CREANOVA findings suggest that learners have to be able to put into practice their learning in flexible and supportive environments. The project findings suggest there may be a tension between adult- and child-led processes and that a tendency towards adult-structured learning in schools might act to prevent the development of children’s creativity and innovation. All too often children’s play is “overseen” by adult “facilitators” in ways that seem contradictory to the findings of the CREANOVA project.

The CREANOVA project findings suggest that people can be encouraged to be creative and innovative if the spaces they work in value diversity and enable

them to try out new ideas. This brings into question the ideas of those who promote more controlled and adult-led approaches to children's play. For example, Duffy (2006) views creativity and imagination through a developmental lens. This way of seeing creativity suggests certain limits to creativity, (i.e., predictability of creative experiences linked to age and stage of the child). Children are positioned as inferior to adults and adults are promoted as necessary guides of the creative process. The influence of child development theories and the introduction of Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) into early childhood fields across the world has made an impression that child development is universal and it happens at the same pace and level to every child (Papatheodorou, 2010).

Woodhead (2009) has encouraged us to reject crude versions of learning and developmentalism that are based on rigid hierarchies and to engage with more contemporary approaches to development that are concerned with connections among physical, relational and cultural factors that influence changes in children's growth, learning, and well-being. In childhood studies, there has been an overwhelming response among scholars that see children as active agents of their social world (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998; Mayall, 2002), thus, any theory which talks about creativity in learning environments should take into consideration the idea that children are the chief constructors in the creative process and they are instrumental in the meaning-making process of everyday creative activity (Faulkner & Coates, 2011; Moyles, 2010a).

Yet, post-structuralist thinkers have moved even beyond the child agency/adult structures debate to argue in a similar way to the CREANOVA project that freedom and structure can co-exist and support creativity in the same social spaces. Gilles Deleuze (1925-95) and Felix Guattari (1930-92) have viewed the concept of creativity as in-between movements and flows, rather than outcomes of play. Deleuze and Guattari "did not see the impossibility of organising life around closed structures as problematic. Instead, they saw this as an opportunity to experiment with, invent and create different ways of knowing" (Brooker & Edwards, 2010, p. 86).

Though learning takes place while they are playing, children's intention is not always to play in order to learn (Kalliala, 2006). Similarly, play in early years is not always fun and innocent; it can also be political and may have ethical and moral implications (e.g., it can be gendered and involve discrimination) (Grieshaber & McArdle, 2010). In a similar way to the CREANOVA project findings it has been argued that the socio-cultural environment is important for the child to realize his/her agency in play-based learning (Bruce, 2010). Spontaneous, free-flow "divergent thinking" has

been viewed as instrumental for play and creativity in the early years (Sylva, Bruner, & Jolly, 1976), but creativity has also been connected with a combination of divergent and convergent thinking in “possibility thinking” which promotes risk, consideration of alternatives, imagination of new ideas, and posing of questions (Craft, 2000, 2011). Such writing has sought to encourage children’s abilities with regards to imagination, exploration, decision making, and problem solving. It has encouraged teachers to develop enabling contexts, by centring themselves off-stage and utilizing flexible pedagogy that enable children to foster their autonomy by taking space and time to develop ownership of their own discovery-type learning. We can see connections between writing that encourage teachers to work in flexible ways and ideas identified in the CREANOVA project concerning freedom, interaction, and the need for flexible forms of support.

The proliferation of post-modernist approaches to learning has recognized the ability of the learner to make choices/meanings and therefore make alternative constructions of the knowledge of the teacher (Dahlberg et al., 1999). The CREANOVA project findings suggest that such skills will be extremely useful in the creative work places of the future. However, it should be noted that in Childhood Studies such approaches are promoted because they support children to express their identities in the present rather than because they might help with a forthcoming need to be productive adults in the future (Lorenz & Lundvall, 2011; Sawyer, 2006).

The CREANOVA project findings point to the need for learning frameworks and relationships as well as flexibility and freedom. They emphasize the importance of learner-led collaborative knowledge production. The concept of learner-led creativity encourages us to be cautious in our aim to enable children’s creativity, for example, it suggests that those who seek to simulate a shift in thinking and practice on creativity and innovation in early years settings and schools should encourage teachers to avoid assuming that any single activity automatically stimulates creativity. The CREANOVA project findings also suggest that it will be important for adults planning creative activities to: negotiate with children; build on children’s aspirations; be clear about freedoms and constraints; agree on specific shared objectives or success criteria; and allow for discussion, debriefs, feedback. Moreover, the CREANOVA project findings suggest that learning activities benefit from having a focus (e.g., on a shared problem) yet also need to be flexible enough to enable participants to set the direction of travel, can be connected to writing that has argued we need to reconsider constructivist approaches to children’s learning, and overcome paradigm divides and disciplinary boundaries in relation to childhood creativity (Faulkner & Coates, 2011; Sawyer, 1999, 2006, 2012). Such writing has promoted a “collaborative

emergence theory” of collective and complex creativity and has argued that emergent processes are not only cognitive they are also occur as a bottom-up process in systems that involve constant improvisation by their creators (Faulkner & Coates, 2011). For example, Faulkner and Coates (2011) decontextualized the notion of age-related development and creativity in developmental psychology and asserted that children’s creative narratives are collaborative, improvisational, and contextual.

While literature in the past supported either “learner agency” or “teacher agency,” we propose that the mediation between these two and a flexible learning environment is mandatory for fostering creativity. Faulkner and Coates (2011) suggest children’s creative narratives are co-constructed with their peers or teachers in learning environments and they emerge mainly in collaborative processes. This is similar to other work that has argued that learning environments that promote creativity and innovation should involve supportive frameworks that mediate learner-teacher agency, value cross-curriculum learning, recognize collective strength in knowledge production, and balance ideas of autonomy, diversity, and co-option (Popkewitz & Bloch, 2001).

Discourses on children’s creativity that hitherto were dominated by individual, cognition-based psychological theories, thus, are now beginning to take into account the social and political processes involved in everyday creativity. Moreover, our research supports the contention that we need to better understand how children’s interpretations of creative processes and their creative outputs change over time and further examine the nature of their “progressive continuous recontextualisation” of creativity (Faulkner & Coates, 2011, p. 2). Therefore, it is our conclusion that educational settings that seek to promote creativity will benefit from considering how they can better become spaces where children carry out learner-led collaborative knowledge production and spaces where children are enabled to situate learning in their everyday life contexts.

Conclusion

Creativity and innovation are enabled by environments that engage with diversity, celebrate complexity, and value collaboration. We have argued that rather than silencing creativity (e.g., through the imposition of a rigid, strict, universal pedagogy), we should create enabling environments that recognize children’s and adult’s creative potential and employ flexible frameworks to support that potential

to flourish. At the centre of this argument is the idea that creativity is not a gift that powerful managers or teachers should give to workers or pupils. Creativity is something that can be achieved by us all and can flourish in social spaces where people are enabled individually and collectively to achieve their aspirations. Creativity is individual, collective, emergent, and interpersonal; it stems from internal and external sources of inspiration and is motivated as much by communitarian as individual goals. This paper promotes the idea that creativity and innovation benefit from collaborative leadership and inter-personal/interactive design processes that enable issues of conflict to be worked through in teams. It has set out the key environmental issues that support the development of creativity and innovation including design of workspaces, organizational goals, managerial styles, policies, rules, systems, frameworks, training/learning spaces, worker freedom, worker social interaction, and so on. It has encouraged readers to consider what sensitive learner-led approaches to creativity and innovation might look like for adults and children. We would finally like to conclude that our work suggests that educationalists need to move beyond rigid individualist, constructivist and child development notions of learning to more interactive, flexible, and complex positions. Indeed, the creativity of the CREANOVA project itself stemmed from the collaboration across countries of a diverse group of researchers and it stands as an example of what can be achieved when people from different cultures collaborate, explore and joint problem solve in ways that don't assume there is one universal approach to learning or working.

Note

1. This research was supported by the European Commission's Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) Grant 143725-LLP-1-2008-1-ES-KA1-KA1SCR. Professor John M. Davis led the research analysis work package on this project. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Professor John M. Davis, The Moray House School of Education, The University of Edinburgh, Charteris Land, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 8AQ. Email: john.davis@ed.ac.uk

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Identity and Creativity: Putting Two and Two Together

Margaret Louise Dobson

ABSTRACT

“Questions, not method, are the heart of research” (Hendry, 2010, p. 73). Prompted by untutored intuition in the form of questions generated from two stories about teaching and educational leadership, this investigation looks for insights, not answers, to the mystery of identity and creativity. Putting two and two together reveals an intangible “in-between” (Arendt, 1974); distinguishes thinking and knowing (Arendt, 1971); elucidates intuition and intellect (Bergson, 1998/1907); exposes emotion and feelings as vital aspects of reason (Damasio, 1994; 1999); and conspires to revitalize the meaning and purpose of education.

Introduction

In a daring attempt to probe the long-standing mystery of what (or who) constitutes identity and creativity, I shall begin by re-examining two narrative pieces I recently wrote to highlight particular events stemming from my former teaching and educational leadership experience. The two accounts are intended to form a backdrop for the present investigation as well as to elicit useful prompts to propel my ongoing doctoral work, and to hopefully turn up additional clues to substantiate the intimate relationship I detect between identity and creativity. Understanding the nature of this connection may hold important implications for education.

“Questions, not method, are the heart of research” (Hendry, 2010, p. 73). The process of inquiry as I have come to know it has always been instigated by untutored intuitions in the form of questions. Past forays into questions of identity and creativity

have taught me, through trial and error, that the mystery I am investigating will not lend itself readily to a step-by-step procedure; nor will the conundrum succumb easily to attempts to unravel or compile information. *Au contraire*, investigative work of this nature has repeatedly shown that identity and creativity shy away from positivistic analyses, categorizations, and definitions. I have discovered, instead, that meaningful insights “occur” in the same manner that Gadamer describes the happenstance of hermeneutics, the phenomenon of understanding that “goes beyond the limits of the concept of method as set by modern science” and “belongs to human experience of the world in general” (2010, p. xx). I suspect, again from past experience, that any clues to the mystery I am presently investigating will tend to reveal themselves by sudden surprise, and only *if* I am attentive to the rigorous demands of “perceptivity,” defined by Barone and Eisner as “seeing what most people miss” (1997, p. 93). No longer trying to figure it all out, I am interested in putting two and two together based on my lived experience of the mystery under investigation.

For the inquisitive process I describe, storytelling has become one of the best ways I know for paying close attention to the regular, irregular, and downright peculiar aspects of lived experience. A recounting of events can expose significant truths that may otherwise be overlooked. Most importantly for research purposes, storytelling generates more questions than answers, and provides the necessary time and space for introspection and reflection.

The following two stories took place several years apart: one many years ago in Simcoe County, Ontario; and the other, more recently at St. Anthony’s College at Oxford University. The *leitmotiv* in both scenarios is the mystery presently under the magnifying glass, namely identity and creativity. You may recognize aspects of your own experience in the reflection.

Stumbling Upon the Wow! Factor

Like most young people starting out in their careers, I didn’t give any thought whatsoever to the meaning and purpose of the profession I was about to enter. Compared to my preoccupation with lesson plans and classroom management skills, or lack thereof, the intrinsic meaning of education lay carefully and conveniently buried beneath the fascinating and daunting details of my extrinsic to-do list. For all I knew, or cared to know at the time, I was hired by the Simcoe County Board of Education to do “a job.” My job was simply to teach French to high school students according to the

latest methods prescribed by the ministry-approved program that was handed to me on day one. The program was part of a broader curriculum that was part of a larger school system designed and operated by the Ontario government, and legislated by the Canadian government to be delivered according to provincial standards by the local school board officials. For my small part in the big picture, it was all I could do just to do my job. *C'est déjà ça!* Little by little, and quite by surprise, however, I began to discover I *loved* my job! In fact, I took to the classroom like a duck to water. To this day I can remember the surge of confidence I felt when my first district inspector's report came back: "Natural born teacher."

Because I was only a few years older than my Grade 13 students, I learned very quickly that authority in the classroom comes from personal authenticity, not from expertise or know-how which was understandably still very much under construction. Despite my newness to the role, I made sure that my lesson plans were as good as done; my methodology *comme il faut*; and my students' test results commendable. For reasons beyond the obvious quantifiable predictable factors for success, however, there was an unpredictable yet undeniable wow! factor to be taken into serious account: my students *loved* their French classes; and incidentally, so did their French teacher! Whatever the content of *matières*, the French class environment was consistently alive with *joie de vivre*. We were on to something that I definitely did *not* learn at the Ontario teachers' college! And like a grass fire, word of this mysterious, mystical, unquantifiable, unqualified, unknown wow! factor got around. I was asked by the school officials to spread that fire, and was appointed to the role of Supervisor of Moderns for the County to do just that. Soon I was invited to co-author the high-school segments of a new K-13 audio-visual program with a team from the Ontario Ministry of Education. And yet another inexplicable *fait accompli* led to facilitating teacher workshops in Canada and the United States, and to animating an ETV program for teaching FSL in classrooms across Canada. The teaching "job" that I was initially hired to do had quickly morphed into a juggernaut of responsibilities for which I didn't really, at heart, feel prepared. How *do* I teach a wow! factor phenomenon that I had only just recently, just by accident, stumbled upon?

At one of the workshops I came face to face with the core issue, or problem, that I had intuited. In my usual animated interpersonal style of presentation, I could tell that the response of the audience was for the most part warmly receptive to the methodology of the *contexte globale* philosophy I was advocating. Suddenly, however, and seemingly out of the blue, one of the teachers whose tone of voice and rigid posture immediately let me know that she was not happy with the "newest and latest," stood up in a rage. She was not just angry; she was furious! "What about the

grammar?" she yelled at me from her entrenched position half way back in the auditorium. For this teacher, what mattered were the mechanics of the language, "the grammar," both literally and figuratively. There was no trying to convince her otherwise.

I continued to teach and to lead in a variety of privileged positions and circumstances in Ontario and Quebec schools, but the impact of that incident, along with the questions and theoretical hunches evoked by the events of the first few years of my career, have continued to haunt me. How do I advocate the wow! factor when it is so difficult, if not impossible, to define and explain the intangible within the parameters of an institution firmly established in the concrete traditions, concepts, and principles of utilitarian and instrumental aims, where *raison d'être* (meaning and purpose) has been eclipsed by *savoir faire* (skills and knowledge)? Who wants to be reminded that there is more to education than learning "the grammar" or getting "the job"? How do I find ways to convey in a scholarly manner the invisible, immeasurable, nuanced, creative aspects of education? Does it matter anymore *who* is doing the teaching, or *who* is doing the learning? Does it matter as long as "the job" gets done according to standardized tests and ministry guidelines? How do we integrate *what* we do with *who* we are in ways that will allow not just the acquisition of knowledge and competencies, but also the flourishing of the human spirit? Can the wow! factor that seems to have everything to do with *joie de vivre* and passion for what we do *in relationship with others* be taught? How do we create conditions for a creative interplay between teacher and students that can evoke mastery *and* mystery?

Before attempting to respond to the pressing questions generated from the above narrative, I want to present the second account for the purposes of expanding the base and opening up a larger arena for a discussion of related factors. Please fast forward to an international gathering of educational leaders—"The Superintendency and The Principalship"—invited in 2004 to present papers on "Designing Leadership Practices for the Future of Public Education" at the Oxford Round Table on Education at St. Anthony's College at Oxford University.

Is There Room for Creativity in Our Schools?

An air of scholarly tradition pervaded the historical setting of the prestigious Oxford Union, the ambiance tangibly influencing the formality of the day-long proceedings. Each morning we would enter the hall quietly, almost reverently, and take our appointed places around the dark hand-carved oak tables. Delegates' words sounded especially weighty in the echoing chambers of this hallowed space.

Somewhat dishevelled from having just abandoned his early morning duties inspecting Oxford schools, Bill Laar burst through the door and into the chambers like an unexpected gust of wind. Laar had come to speak on his scheduled topic, “Is There Room for Creativity in the UK?” Along with Laar, the proverbial “breath of fresh air” blew strong and mighty into our midst. The rather stuffy atmosphere of the previous deliberations was stirred up and undone in one fell swoop. The timbre of the 2004 Round Table on Education was changed for the duration.

Laar was grappling with the alarming statistics of the teacher drop-out rate in the United Kingdom (UK), and the resultant chaos for British schools. He also named many of the all-too-familiar problems faced by public education everywhere: the underfunding and overtaxing of human and material resources; the intolerable pressures on teachers and students exerted by society’s high expectations for inhuman results; the as yet unmet challenges to truly meet the needs of a diverse student population; governments’ insistent and pervasive implementation of external standardized testing routines despite the cry of educators to the contrary; and the ubiquitous, unrealistic, and often misaligned, top-down reforms aimed at school-improvement coupled with the exponential increase in numbers of parents choosing private schools over public schools—or home-schooling or un-schooling (the latest trend)—in their attempt to protect their children from the real or perceived “degradation” of the public education system.

Laar’s presentation, however, wasn’t just about what was tragically wrong with the present-day situation. His talk soon took an impassioned turn into an envisioning of what education could/should really be all about, namely, creativity. Is there room for creativity in the UK, or anywhere else for that matter? Laar’s vision lauded a well-rounded education that would include every possible kind of exposure to every possible kind of human experience. Through the prolific examples and metaphors he offered, we could literally feel the critical importance in the developing life of a young boy or girl of experiencing the thrill of sailing a boat into the wind, for example; or the sense of accomplishment in learning to play a Mozart minuet on the piano, or the joy of participation in team sports or a school play or musical production.

“Yes, but ... creativity costs money that cash-strapped public schools just don’t have,” was the gist of the initial comments from the delegates who were only too well versed in the bottom-line of school administration. “It’s the politicians and the economists who hold the purse strings; and, therefore, make the decisions as to what constitutes an education, not educators,” continued the thread of conversation. The irony did not go unnoticed: as productivity and fiscal responsibility continue to

squeeze out “expensive” creativity from the public school curriculum, the costs of public schools’ problems appear to be on the rise in equal or greater measure.

It was unanimous. We agreed that creativity, in whatever form it takes, is absolutely essential to education. “Creativity is a way of living; it’s a way of being human,” declared one delegate. “Is there room for spirit in our schools?” asked another. Rather than continue to complain and bemoan the fact (as we were) that education is no longer in the hands of educators, but under the dictates of policy-makers who have little or no interest in creativity, it was thought by some delegates to be high time that we, as educational leaders, roll up our sleeves and take back our calling. There was talk of drawing up a collective statement to that effect that would represent the delegates’ unequivocal agreement on the essential place of creativity in education. A pre-programmed, heavily packed agenda and lack of time—the usual culprits—prevented that statement from ever being written. Perhaps, in some small way, the doctoral work in which I am presently engaged will help to make that unwritten statement one day a reality.

The 2004 Oxford Round Table on Education has not only raised a roof in the Oxford Union, it has also raised several more questions of critical importance to the investigation at hand. What (or who) constitutes “creativity”? Can creativity and productivity work together in harmony in our schools, each potentially enhancing and enriching the other? Does creativity have to cost money that cash-strapped schools just don’t have, or is creativity a luxury only for the privileged few who can afford it? And finally, how could/would creativity and all that creativity might entail in the UK and elsewhere contribute to nurturing and nourishing the complexity and diversity of a worldwide web, the interconnected, interdependent ecological, political, social, and economic reality of the 21st century?

Enter Hannah Arendt

Hannah Arendt (1974), in her remarkable book, *The Human Condition*, has given much thought to the questions I am posing. She says that the source of creativity springs indeed from who we are and remains “outside the actual work process” as well as independent of what we may achieve (p. 211). This is a significant finding in light of the intuitive question at the heart of this paper: Is there a link between identity and creativity? The source of creativity, according to Arendt, springs from the identity of the person, *who*. A subjective completion of critical importance to this

investigation has thus been revealed. To further elucidate the subject, I again quote Arendt who says that *who* “is the unchangeable identity of the person” (p. 193).

Arendt’s perspective contradicts the widely accepted view of identity that is central to most contemporary Western educational programs and reforms. Stuart Hall, for example, says that identity is “constructed”; and that the notion of an integral, originary, and unified identity, or what he calls “essentialist concepts,” has been deconstructed and “put under erasure” (1996, p. 2). The growing ideal in modern society in this regard, says Charles Taylor, is a human agent “who is able to remake himself by methodical and disciplined action” (1989, p. 159).

Based on my early teaching experiences, I find Arendt’s essentialist perspective of the authentic “unchangeable” identity, *who*, to be the most plausible for explaining the source of creativity, or, in this case, the wow! factor. Moreover, Arendt’s following explanations *à propos* the mysterious occurrence make utter sense to me thanks to the resonance of my personal experience with the phenomenon she describes. Arendt explains that when people get together as *who*—aka “essential” identity—and not *what*—aka “constructed” identity—an “in between” opens between them. The “in-between,” according to Arendt (1974), is no less real than the world of things we visibly have in common. Arendt maintains that only love (respect in the public realm) is fully receptive to *who* somebody is. I ascertain, therefore, that the unpredictable, uncalculated, unplanned wow! factor that transpired in my classroom was the result of the inadvertent presence of *who*—perhaps due to the very fact that skills and know-how were still under construction, and assumed-identity-as-teacher as yet under-developed—that allowed the respectful “in between” to open between the teacher and her students. If the wow! factor is the “real” we have in common, where’s the mystery in that? “What about the grammar?” I hear the resounding echo of the teacher’s angry protest.

How differently we might approach teaching and learning if we were to seriously consider the premise that human identity is not *something* that is socially, politically, and economically “schooled,” “storied,” and/or “constructed,” but that human identity is inherently and originally generated as *who* one is, the *source* of creativity. Arendt says that the purpose of her book is to inspire a generation of “job holders” to “think what we are doing” (1974, p. 5). Aligning the purpose of the present investigation with the purpose of *The Human Condition*, I ask *who* is thinking and *who* is doing; *who* is the source of creativity? The pivotal question that remains at the heart of the inquiry, therefore, is “Am I an ‘essential’ *who* or a ‘constructed’ *what*?” Or, “Am I both?” My newly educated guess is that the ineffable mystery of creativity—the wow!

factor—may be understood in the putting of two and two together. Arendt's (1971) following distinction between thinking and knowing complicates the double *entendre* and amplifies the resonance of the complements under investigation.

Thinking and Knowing

In "Thinking and Moral Considerations: A Lecture," Arendt (1971) gives credit to Kant for the important distinction she makes between thinking and knowing, "between reason, the urge to think and understand, and the intellect, which desires and is capable of certain verifiable knowledge" (p. 422). Arendt sees the activity of thinking as "the habit of examining and reflecting upon whatever comes to pass, regardless of specific content and quite independent of results ..." (p. 418). Knowing, on the other hand, according to Arendt, is results-oriented and "no less a world-building activity than the building of houses" (p. 421). I make the connection between knowing and the results-oriented, world-building, goal-driven activities of the dominantly instrumental-utilitarian program of schooling. In the case of the wow! factor narrative, knowing pertains to subject content and material, lesson plans, and classroom management skills and strategies. Thinking, on the other hand, goes beyond knowing, in that thinking "deals with invisibles and is itself invisible, lacking all the outside manifestation of other activities" (p. 433). Arendt cites Socrates as having used the metaphor of the wind for thinking. In reference to the first narrative piece, I make a connection between Aristotle's wind that does, un-does, and re-does thought, and Arendt's (1974) portrayal of *who* and Taylor's (1989) citations of *essential* identity. Any "natural born" teacher knows that it is good practice to have at hand sound knowledge of subject material, lesson plans, teaching skills, and classroom management strategies in the same way that the sailor must have a boat, rudder, sails, maps, compass, and the wherewithal to sail the high seas. However, the teacher and the sailor worth their salt both know that it is the wind that determines the momentary course of action, the momentum, and the nature of the voyage into life's perplexities or into the teaching of French grammar! The personal authority and freedom to act (or teach) is released in perpetual thinking. From that perspective, perhaps it could also be deduced that conditioned behaviour and trained professing is determined and held in check by conceptualized knowing.

"If it should turn out to be true that knowledge ... and thought have parted company for good, then indeed we would become the helpless slaves, not so much of our machines as of our know-how..." (Arendt, 1974, p. 3). This is an alarming prediction

in light of the fact—again according to Arendt—that we have lost *who* we are in *what* we do. It would seem from the above warning that thinking is an integral part of the authentic *who* that has been lost in the artificial *what* of man-made constructions. In carrying this notion further, I make a distinction between education and schooling that is critical to this investigation. It would seem from the above consideration, that thinking (thought) is central to creativity, and can be drawn forth (*e-duced*) through education; while knowing (cognition) is central to productivity, and can be taught (*in-duced*) through schooling. In putting two and two together, I begin to discern the links between “essential” identity (*who*), thinking, creativity, and education; and “constructed” identity (*what*), knowing, productivity, and schooling. Education and schooling are not the same. Has schooling overtaken education? Have education and schooling parted company for good?

Along with the distinct, yet complementary, essential *who* and the constructed *what* of identity, and the distinct, yet interrelated and interdependent aspects of thinking and knowing, another related duo of distinction conspires to both complicate the matter and elucidate the mystery. The next elusive pair to come forward for examination is intuition and intellect.

Reigniting the Lamp of Intuition

Henri Bergson (1998/1907), an eminent French scientist turned philosopher, examines the complexity of relationship between intuition and intellect. Bergson says that intuition, what he calls, “the best part” of the power of consciousness, has been sacrificed to intellect. The following excerpt from *Creative Evolution* illustrates the resonance I detect between Bergsonian theory of human consciousness and Arendt’s (1971) reinvigoration of the Kantian distinction between thinking and knowing:

Consciousness, in man, is pre-eminently intellect. It might have been, it ought, so it seems, to have been also intuition. Intuition and intellect represent two opposite directions of the work of consciousness: intuition goes in the very direction of life, intellect goes in the inverse direction, and thus finds itself naturally in accordance with matter. A complete and perfect humanity would be that in which these two forms of conscious activity should attain their full development. (Bergson, 1998, p. 267)

Bergson explains what he means when he says that intuition is the “best part” of the power of consciousness. He says that it is only when we place ourselves in intuition

that we can pass from intuition to intellect. From the place of the intellect we shall never be able to pass to intuition, he says. Yet, it is the intellect that has dominated intuition in the present-day humanity of which we are a part. The consequence of the pre-eminence of the intellect in human affairs is explained in the following continuation of the above citation:

This conquest, in the particular conditions in which it has been accomplished, has required that consciousness should adapt itself to the habits of matter and concentrate all its attention on them, in fact determine itself more as intellect. Intuition is there, but vague and above all discontinuous. It is a lamp almost extinguished, which only glimmers now and then, for a few moments at most. (p. 268)

Bergson suggests that what he calls “fleeting intuitions” ought to be seized by philosophy, first for the purposes of sustaining them, and then for expanding them and uniting them together. According to Bergson, the rationale for advancing in this work stems from the fact that the more one advances, the more one will perceive that intuition is mind itself and, in a certain sense, life itself. Thus, says Bergson, is revealed “the unity of the spiritual life” (p. 268). And, thus another significant two are put together by Bergson in a compelling argument for the complementary and equal partnership of distinct opposites.

Emotion, Feeling, and Reason

The French word *intuition* more closely approximates the English word “feelings” than that of the word “instinct” which is the commonly used English translation to be found in Bergson’s work. According to neurologist and neuroscientist Antonio Damasio (2003), until only recently little has been understood about the nature of feelings. “Elucidating the neurobiology of feelings and their antecedent emotions contributes to our views on the mind-body problem, a problem central to our understanding of who we are” (p. 7). Moreover, maintains Damasio, “understanding what feelings are, how they work, and what they mean is indispensable to the future construction of a view of human beings more accurate than the one readily available today.” Why? “Because the success or failure of humanity depends in large measure on how the public and the institutions charged with the governance of public life incorporate that revised view of human beings in principles and policies” (p. 8).

According to Damasio, “Feelings form the base for what humans have described for millennia as the human soul or spirit” (1994, p. xvi). Damasio sees identity and creativity in the same light that Arendt (1974) and Bergson (1998) envision a complete and perfect humanity in which both aspects of consciousness are fully developed and working together. For Damasio, feelings are the connectors; storytelling and the Arts the inducers, a way into “the homeostatic refinement ... the biological counterpart of a spiritual dimension in human affairs” (2010, p. 296).

The most vexing of all questions writes Damasio in *Descartes’ Error* is this: “How is it that we are conscious of the world around us, that we know what we know, and that we know that we know?” (1994, p. xvii). The intriguing question at the heart of this investigation brings me full circle to the conundrum of the first narrative. The wow! factor that I accidentally stumbled upon as a beginning teacher, and the unplanned phenomenon that I wasn’t able to articulate at the time, or “teach” in my workshops, could not have been reasonably addressed because there were few scientific explanations and little scientific interest to substantiate the mysterious occurrence. “Only during the past decade has the problem finally entered the scientific agenda, largely as a part of the investigation of consciousness,” says Damasio (2003, p. 184).

Damasio calls intuition “the covert, mysterious mechanism” by which we arrive at the solution of a problem without reasoning toward it (1994, p. 188). Because the creative process on which the progress of science is based operates on the level of the subconscious, when we witness signs of creativity in contemporary humans, explains Damasio, we are probably witnessing the integrated operation of sundry combinations of these devices. Damasio’s astute, all-encompassing observation moves this investigation towards a broader comprehension of the link between identity and creativity and the important implications of “the integrated operation of sundry combinations of these devices” (p. 191) in the scientific investigation of consciousness as well as in a revised rationale for accommodating creativity in education.

Making the Connection

The aim of education, according to Christopher Winch (1999), is to prepare children for adult life. The purpose of schooling is to instruct, socialize, and qualify students for political, social, and economic utilitarian-instrumental advantages; however, the meaning of education (from the Latin root, *educare*, to draw forth from

within) goes beyond the one-sided positivistic view of schooling. Deep within the heart of the educational matter, there is a persistent and determined search for self, a *who* that is not artificially engineered (i.e., moulded by concept and constructed by will), but originally generated and authentically expressed from within.

Understanding the mystery of identity and creativity requires that we “think what we are doing” (Arendt, 1974, p. 242); that we reignite the flame of intuition (Bergson, 1998/1907); and that we include emotion and feelings as integral aspects of *reason* (Damasio, 1994; 2003). Making the connection between *what* and *who*, knowing and thinking, intuition and intellect, and mind and body may turn out to be the real “job” of the modern-day educator. A dynamic interplay of the differences may make all the difference in how we envision ourselves in the future.

The concerns for the future of education as expressed by the educational leaders at the 2004 Oxford Round Table on Education challenge the status quo of modern schooling, and advocate a revised rationale for a *reasonable* accommodation of creativity. By all accounts, it would seem that a “revised view of human beings more accurate the one readily available” as articulated by Damasio (2003, p. 8), is in the hands (and minds and hearts) of educators. Reverberating from the hallowed halls of the Oxford Union are two remaining questions: Is there room for creativity in our schools? How could/would creativity contribute to nurturing and nourishing the fragile well-being of the interdependent, interconnected worldwide web?

The more I understand the mystery at the heart of this investigation, the more I doubt the sustainability of present-day conceptualizations of constructed identity and instrumental productivity as useful rationales for success in Western school programs and reforms. The propensity for *savoir faire* (knowledge and skills) no longer seems feasible if we are to take seriously into account the list of all-too-familiar problems cited by Bill Laar and the delegates at the 2004 Oxford Round Table. In advocating room for creativity, the educational leaders envisioned the possibility of moving toward a well-rounded education that would include both *savoir faire* (knowledge and skills) and *raison d'être* (meaning and purpose). The health (wholeness) of the interconnected, interdependent world in which we live might very well hang in the balance.

Conclusion

Visionary educational scholar Maxine Greene (1995) defines educating for freedom as letting people choose their own way of being in the world. She sees in imagination the untapped inner resources of youth. Of the “in-between” (Arendt, 1974) that opens between people when they come together as *who*, Greene says, “There are worldly relationships, and over that, there is the delicate web of human relationships” (1998, p. 23).

The delicate web of human relationships that I have experienced in schools tells me that creativity does not need money as much as it needs will. When room is made for creativity in the hearts and minds of educators (room for *who* we are, and room for the “in between”), I am convinced that all manner of means will quickly materialize to accommodate the intangible wow! factor. As I recall school life—the vibrancy of reading circles, the excitement of awards assemblies, the exuberant all-school singing, the dancing, the musical production extravaganzas, the costumes, the artwork displays, the science fairs, the hard work, the lunch-hour sports, the mathematics videos, the larger community involvement, the partnerships with universities, the student council’s voices, and the tension-filled growing pains generated between stakeholders in the collaborative creation of their school’s Success Plan—I can vouch for the fact that creativity (the “real” we have in common, Arendt, 1974) does not cost money that cash-strapped public schools just don’t have. As one teacher put it very simply, “When we’re together, stuff happens!”

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Narrative Insights: A Creative Space for Learning

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ABSTRACT

Through this scholarly personal narrative, the author offers insight into how student creativity can be engaged or neglected. While the narrative highlights the potential conflict between students' lives and their schools, the hope lies in the illuminative power of stories of difficulty. By interweaving narrative and theory, the author sheds light on the conditions that inhibit creativity, and emphasizes the capacity of teachers to locate creative, compassionate spaces for themselves and their students.

Introduction

If you want to write but feel you can't, you are not alone (Elbow, 1998). What is it that makes writing simultaneously appealing and daunting? In "Writing without Teachers," Elbow claims that many of us have an internal editorial filter that we place between our creative thoughts and the page, and that this "is partly because schooling makes us obsessed with the 'mistakes' we make in writing" (p. 5). How can we as teachers help students move beyond the fear of writing and lead them to its appeal? Perhaps we need to move beyond our own fears—to write and share our own stories with our students. We need to create opportunities for students to be comfortable writing with their teachers, rather than without (or for) them.

In the short piece, *Lessons, in Writing*, I explore personal memories of schooling that surfaced when I engaged in writing practices that were part of a graduate education class. Using scholarly personal narrative (Nash, 1994) to reach into my own pedagogical past, I found a creative space for representing the difficulty that arises when teachers correct students' "mistakes" of language. I present this narrative as a location for dialogue about home language, school language, and teaching.

By interrupting the personal narrative with scholarly quotations, I direct teachers to works that provide further insight into the links between language, narrative, and identity. The symbiosis of personal narrative and scholarly text points teachers to the possibilities offered through creative engagement with stories of our educational selves.



LESSONS, in Writing

"I trust you will use writing as a method of inquiry to move into your own impossibility where anything might happen—and will"

(Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005).

Monday. Social Studies.

Above the green chalkboard, curling posters of the provinces form a neat line from west to east. British Columbia's dawn redwoods. The prairies. The crags of Newfoundland. Beneath them, with equal precision, is the perfectly executed script that we must record. We copy the notes obediently. Mrs. Dominion circles, silent, hands on hips. She patrols the rows, nodding her approval to those who reproduce her elegant penmanship.

My hand sends the pencil across the page, an effortless translation of words from board to paper while my mind roams elsewhere. I am not in the room. I am not copying notes. I am anyone else but me and anywhere else but here.

CRACK!

Mrs. Dominion's precious silver chalk holder has dropped onto the floor next to my desk. The tiny clip lying lengthways along the barrel has broken, and on its descent the chalk has streaked a white line onto her navy slacks. Leaning over to pick up the fallen bullet, Mrs. Dominion's eyes fix on my page. She straightens.

- *Your margins!*
- *Yes?*
- *They're drifting.*
- *Oh...yes.*
- *They're positively unmoored.*
- *Yes. Um...I'm sorry, Mrs. Dominion.*

- *Class, you will mind your margins! THIS (my looseleaf flutters in the air) is unacceptable. It's uncontrolled!*

Mrs. Dominion puts her chalk holder carefully onto the desk and smooths the white blemish from her slacks. Then she tells us to go home and find out more information for our exchange projects on the fishery. Finish our research about what goes on in our community, and come back next week with something about what makes this tiny island in the Bay of Fundy work.

"Canadian identity is not unified or seamless, but shifts according to the particularity of language, geographical affiliations, and historical circumstances"
(Sumara, Davis, & Laidlaw, 2001).

Wednesday. Home.

I know quite a bit already. After all, I always saw the boats go out, waited for my dad to come back after being away for a week, dreaded church on Sundays not just because the minister scared the bejesus outta me but mostly because after the service, the menfolk would head to the wharves. It would be a long week, but our mothers made it go by with Koolaid, Kraft Dinner, grilled cheese. Serial sunburns and sand in our swimsuits as we played hide and seek, laid in the grass, and counted the stars.

Friday afternoons we'd wait at the end of the wharf, sitting on the hood of the car until someone called out here they come! Mothers would pull on shirttails and try and keep us from going near the wharf edge. The men aboard would stand and wave as the bow of the boat met each wave and came closer, closer. We'd have been cleaned up, face cloths dragged across our mouths and our small hands like flags flapping off their poles and popsicles melting down our shirtfronts. We'd look out! as the heavy ropes were flung onto the wharf and looped around the pilings. Then there was the slinging of duffle bags and thump, thump, thump, six landings of unwashed fish clothes, followed by the men, climbing up the ladders and over the lip of the wharf. The lifting, lifting, hugging of kids while mothers made sure no one was too close to the edge. Mothers moved over and dads went behind the wheel, driving home for Friday night baths and creaky bedsprings. Saturdays were for baked beans simmering in molasses, golden loaves of homemade bread, full clothes lines, and mowing the lawn with Dad.

"As a conscious professional pedagogue, I find the need to tell my stories, mostly to myself but sometimes to others, to make meaning of my existence"
(Fowler, 2006).

Friday. Home.

I've asked my dad about the seines and sheds, asked him lots of questions about how they used to smoke the herring, what kinds of nets they use now on the seiner, who gets to do what. He's told me lots of stuff; told me about the herring his mum used to bone down at the shed, how her fingers were raw and stiff and sore. Told me about the golden smell in the rafters of the smoke house where they hung the herring sticks row on row. Different game now, he says, and tells me about the long old steam down to Yarmouth, half asleep in the wheelhouse, pitching along with the waves. Climbing down into the engine room—*he keeps it neat as a pin* mum says—he checks the gauges and makes sure everything is just right. They set seine after midnight, shine their lights and wait for the silver slips of fish to come to them. They circle, circle, tighten the purse and bring it up, a boiling surface of scales and flesh that gets pumped aboard and measured by the hogshead. This is what he gets up to, Dad tells me, when he goes out in the boat on Sundays, comes home on Fridays. But he doesn't mention the little bandaid-like patch he puts behind his ear to keep him from pitching his guts overboard, or how he ripped the heck outta his shoulder when he went overboard last time they were down in Novi—these are the bits I catch by mistake, when I'm not supposed to be listening.

"Different languages and different discourses within a given language divide up the world and give it meaning in ways that are not reducible to one another. Language is how social organization and power are defined and contested and the place where one's sense of self—one's subjectivity—is constructed"

(Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005).

Monday. Social Studies.

We're all ready to tell our bits about the island fishery. We're gonna combine our projects and put them all in an envelope and send them off to a class of farm children on the prairies. They've probably never even seen the ocean or been aboard a fishing boat. Probably don't even know what a kipper is.

Gleaming with the fill of stories Dad told me, I was ready. And when Mrs. Dominion asked me the question on Monday, what did you find out, Marcea? I couldn't wait to tell. Breathless with excitement, I began.

I found out about the fish scaler. It's the machine they use to take the scales off the herring. They use the scales to make fingernail polish! I didn't know that before. Anyways, my dad told me about the scaler on the herring seiner, and on Sunday before they left, I seen the way it works.

You what?

My dad told me about the scaler on the herring seiner, and on Sunday before they left, I seen the way it works. I repeated, slowed, convinced she hadn't heard. She ignored us a lot. I also reckoned she might have a problem with her ears, you know.

But that wasn't the problem. The problem was me. Mrs Dominion smiled that same little smile she got on her face whenever she was ready to pounce on one of the small children abandoned to her care.

You what? She asked again, although it didn't sound much like a question. And I was neither breathless nor enthusiastic for this retelling.

I seen the scaler, on the seiner down at the wharf, and I seen how it works. I can tell you what I seen...

No, you can't, she said, as I turned red, red, red...

and she began to write on the board, and I grew small, small, small...in my chair.

You will write 100 times for tomorrow...I will never say I seen.

Today.

And I haven't. I've never said it again. I wrote those hundred lines. Hunched over the kitchen table I held two pens in my cramped hand to scrawl in shaky lines across the looseleaf. Thought of my dad out on the boat, bit my lip, and moored my error tight against the margins. And with each line, these words of my father were erased forever from my own discourse and etched into ink, locked onto the page.

"To embrace narrative is to live into an image of the self, a construct of who we wish, or fear, to be. There can be nostalgia associated with such images, too: the point of the story, after all, is to comfort us, to help us make sense of what we think we were, or imagine we have become"

(Zwicky, 2006).



I embraced narrative in a graduate class where the freedom to write without censure gave rise to creativity. As we moved through writing practices (Luce-Kapler, 2004) that encouraged us to reach into the educational stories of ourselves, I entered places long forgotten, deeply buried, but in need of surfacing. And as these experiences of stifled creativity and voice were given space to emerge, they became transformed into stories of power and realization. How had my own teaching been influenced by my experiences as a student? How could I move beyond censure?

Fowler (2006) suggests that through a process of narration and analysis, we can enact intentional pedagogical movement and more productive pedagogical relations. Through our willingness to engage in the storying of difficulty, we can safely illuminate the underside of teaching, and confront those experiences that are difficult to accept or know. Fowler identifies stories as places where we can store our difficulties, hold them in the vessel, or *temenos* of analysis, and learn from them. *Lessons, in Writing* represents a narrative exploration of the tensions presented when negotiating the borderlands of identity. By holding this story in the *temenos*, by analyzing the interaction of the teacher and student and family and community, I open a space for dialogue about the disruptive and discouraging nature of correction, censure, and enforced conformity.

By examining our untold stories, we can come to know ourselves in ways that make us better teachers. Last year I shared *Lessons, in Writing* with my students, who are teacher candidates at a faculty of education. I was encouraged by the connections they made to their own experiences as students, and their desires for themselves as teachers. One teacher candidate sent me a copy of Carol Ann Duffy's poem, "Originally," and highlighted the lines that brought these texts together for her. Another shared her experience of linguistic difference and isolation when she entered university and left the linguistic familiarity of her small town. She expressed, haltingly, her sense of being not "quite as good as, or as educated as" the others, because of the way she spoke.

These connections point to the possibility created in sharing stories of pedagogical experience. Teachers are always at the borders of the geographies of identity that we claim or deny. The geographies of our childhoods continue to be places we inhabit in conscious and unconscious ways. By examining our pasts, we can come to understand that the traces of our histories, our geographies, sometimes imprint themselves on our bodies and in our voices. We can begin to understand that—as teachers—we are also texts our students read. And by sharing these experiences through narrative, there is an opportunity for pedagogical moments to emerge, for

intertextual and interpersonal connections to be made. There is a creative, intimate, trusting space that opens when we search for and share narrative insights.

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Portraying Children's Voices Through Creative Approaches to Enhance Their Transition Experience and Improve the Transition Practice

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I have made a case for using creative approaches to facilitate educational transitions. I have presented examples from research and practice which suggest that creative activities can be used in multiple ways to portray children and young people's voices. I argue that these voices, as well as the process of being heard, can help modify existing transition practices, identify new transition practices, and enhance children and young people's ability to manage change. Theories of self-esteem, resilience, and emotional intelligence have been used to explain the psycho-social processes that a child, or young person, goes through during transitions, as well as how creative approaches can be used to support these processes.

Educational transitions, when children move from one context and set of interpersonal relationships to another (Jindal-Snape, 2010a), can be a period of anxiety for many children and young people¹ (Adeyemo, 2007; Jindal-Snape & Foggie, 2008; Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2008), and can lead to substantial declines in self-esteem, academic motivation, and achievement (Wigfield, Eccles, Mac Iver, Redman, & Midgley, 1991). However, transitions can be, and should be, a time of excitement due to increased opportunities and feelings of progression. Important changes take place as children navigate this journey, such as changes in relationships, teaching style, environment, space, context for learning, and so on (Fabian & Dunlop, 2005).

According to recent research (Jindal-Snape, 2010a), for children and young people to have positive transition experiences, there should be an increased emphasis on involving those most affected, especially the children themselves, in planning and preparation for transitions. Galton (2010a) has stressed the importance of schools listening to the voices of pupils. Researchers in the area of primary-secondary and post-school transitions have tried to listen to the voices of children and young people (e.g., Jindal-Snape & Foggie, 2008), whereas few researchers in the area of transition to primary school (e.g., Dockett & Perry, 2004) have managed to portray the voices of very young children. In addition, even when data has been collected from children and young people it is not clear whether the children/young people found data collection techniques such as questionnaires or interviews meaningful. There are serious methodological and ethical issues in this context, with only a few researchers using other ways that might be more meaningful to the child or young person and adopting a stance that children should be active and effective partners in research (e.g., Dockett & Perry, 2011). Future transition research and practice needs to focus on listening to the voices of children in ways that are natural and meaningful to them. Researchers and practitioners really need to engage with children to gather their perspectives, not only to understand their unique experiences, but also to ensure that they are active participants in determining transition practice and programs. Innovative and creative ways of listening to children should be considered, for example, the Mosaic Approach (Clark & Moss, 2001, 2008), which uses different ways of collecting voices such as giving children disposable cameras and through observation (Jindal-Snape, 2010b), and then piecing together the data to get a fuller and clearer picture.

The rationale for the use of creative approaches provided in this paper is also supported by other research. In the context of 19 creative learning case studies from Scottish schools, Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) (2004) reported that one of the main outcomes for students was a sense of personal success. Similarly, in the United States, Schacter, Thum, and Zifkin (2006) reported that creative teaching methods substantially improved student achievement. Research conducted in the United Kingdom also indicated that these approaches could lead to increased levels of pupil motivation and engagement (Bancroft, Fawcett, & Hay, 2008; Craft, Chappell, & Twining, 2008; Cremin, Burnard, & Craft, 2006; LTS, 2004; Wood & Ashfield, 2008), increased levels of confidence and imagination associated with creative environments (Galton, 2010b; LTS, 2004), enhanced ability to face challenges (Galton, 2010b) and increases in resilience (Bancroft et al., 2008).

Further, other researchers have also suggested that creative approaches can enhance children and young people's emotional development and social skills

(Bancroft et al., 2008; Galton, 2010b; Matthews, 2007; Whitebread, Coltman, Jameson, & Lander, 2009). Whitebread et al. (2009) suggest that play promotes self-regulation, and Bancroft et al. (2008) suggest that it can enhance interpersonal skills, including greater willingness to play with others, value each other's work, and engage in negotiation.

However, how does one go about using creative approaches to facilitate transition by building in strategies to enhance children's self-esteem, resilience, emotional intelligence, and agency? This paper draws on some examples of creative approaches and activities that are grounded in the theories of self-esteem, resilience, emotional intelligence, and agency. The examples presented here demonstrate how we can listen to the voices of children with the aims of facilitating their transitions and improving existing transition practices.

Examples of Creative Activities Used in Transition Research and Practice

This paper discusses some of the creative activities that I have used for transition research and that practitioners have used in practice. The aim is to give both researchers and practitioners a clear rationale of why these are appropriate and important ways of facilitating transition, and an idea of how to implement these in your own research and practice. The examples aim to provide you with insight into how, if carefully implemented, self-esteem, resilience, active learning agency, and emotional intelligence interact in the context of transitions leading to positive spirals of successful adaptation.

Let us consider some of these theories before we move on to the examples. In the context of transitions, Jindal-Snape and Miller (2008, 2010) used Mruk's two-dimensional theory of self-esteem which looks at the students' experiences and interactions in the light of self-competence and self-worth (Mruk, 1999). This two-dimensional theory reflects the belief that how people feel about themselves is dependent, not only on whether they see themselves as worthwhile people, but also involves judgments about competence in a set of domains considered important to them. Therefore, to have high self-esteem, children must feel confident both about their sense of self-worth ("I am a good person entitled to respect from others") and their sense of self-competence ("I am able to meet the challenges I face in life") (Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2010, p. 13). During transition, the sense of self-worth

and/or self-competence can be easily challenged, based on changing relationships with peers and teachers as well as the perceived ability to undertake higher level academic tasks. Therefore, it is important that children are able to go through transitions without their self-esteem being adversely affected. Self-esteem can be an important factor in developing resilience to challenges during transition. Resilience has been defined as a dynamic process of adaptation and the ability to thrive when faced with adverse situations. Resilience research (Luthar, 2006) suggests that whether an individual is resilient or not, is dependent on internal attributes (e.g., self-esteem) and the protective factors in their environment (e.g., positive relations with teachers or peers). Therefore, resilience becomes important, during both transition research and practice, as it provides us with insight into how we can ensure that children are resilient during this period of significant change; which for some might create adverse situations (Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2008).

Similarly, Adeyemo (2007, 2010) has focused on emotional intelligence interventions and suggests that children and young people need psychological skills and resources that can help them with adaptations, adjustments, and an understanding of self that is required to navigate this journey. He suggests that this is because they need skills to relate with peers and teachers, and also to understand their own emotions and use that understanding to relate to others. The ability to regulate one's own emotions and, in turn, to be able to manage those of others requires a degree of self-regulation and agency. This agency can be developed better when children experience autonomy and feel in control. Other researchers have also discussed the importance of the "active learning agency" (i.e., "a capacity for intentional and responsible management of new learning," Pietarinen, Soini, & Pyhältö, 2010, p. 144), "active participation," and/or "feeling in control" in successfully navigating the transition process (Akos, 2010; Galton, 2010a; Jindal-Snape, 2010b). This can lead to increases in motivation to learn, resilience and self-esteem, especially the two-dimensional self-esteem seen in terms of self-competence and self-worth (Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2010).

Photographs

Photographs can be a powerful medium for listening to children's voices as well as helping them prepare for transition. Photovoice has been used as a participatory action research method that enables "participants to use their photographs to elicit emotions, feelings, and insights about topics that may have been shrouded in silence" (Lopez, Eng, Robinson, & Wang, 2005, p. 326). It has been used to provide opportunities for participants to speak from their own experiences, to see connections between them, and to share these experiences in order to discover the root

cause of some problem (Freire, 1970, cited in Cooper & Yarbrough, 2010). As such, photographs can be used to discuss issues that might be of importance to children when making the move to another school or school year. The child can take control of the situation by deciding on what photographs to take and being able to express his or her views fully.

Gorton (2012) gave children in a nursery setting a digital camera and asked them to take photos of their own setting. She then asked each child to sort these using "happy," "sad," and "ok" faces and downloaded the photographs onto a laptop computer. The children were given a card with each face (happy, sad and ok) on to indicate their choice. They also had the option to point to an icon of the same face on the computer. She repeated this process with the children when they were in primary school, and asked them to take photos of their new setting and then to sort them as mentioned earlier. These photos and allocated faces were used to discuss children's feelings about leaving nursery, what they were excited about, what had worked well for them, and more importantly why. This seemed an effective way of collecting the views of 4 to 6 year olds who had autism as this gave them an alternative way of communication. Their views, along with the views of their parents and professionals who had worked with them, provided insights into how transition practices could be improved, as well as this triangulation of perspectives providing methodical rigour to the data collected through photos and highlighting when the views of adults and children did not match.

In the context of primary-secondary transitions, photographs taken by others have also been used to probe children's views about transition and transition practices by showing them photographs of abstract objects and asking them to use the images to project their excitement or concerns regarding transition, and evaluate the system in place (Jindal-Snape, Baird, & Miller, 2011; see Board Game later for an example). On the basis of previous feedback from parents about problems experienced by their children due to lack of familiarity with the physical environment and significant people in a primary school, for the next cohort, the head teacher provided photographs of significant others and important places that the child and parents could look at before starting school. In an online questionnaire, administered six months after their children had started primary school, parents highlighted the photographs as one of the most beneficial aspects of the transition preparation undertaken by the school (Jindal-Snape, 2009).

... useful having photos which we showed to our son every now and then to remind him that school was approaching, "this is your teacher, this is your classroom" etc etc. A very useful tool for getting them into that way of thinking. (p. 8)

According to Davies (2011), using cameras can help children see familiar objects in an unfamiliar way and also to observe them from a different perspective. As mentioned earlier, in Jindal-Snape (2009), nursery school children used the photographs taken by *others* to look at unfamiliar objects and people to familiarize themselves and develop a bond prior to starting school. Therefore, photographs became an important way of capturing views as well as an important familiarization tool, thus providing crucial opportunities to children to understand their own emotions and prepare them better for the new environment leading to enhanced resilience.

Sketches

Children's drawings can be very powerful in conveying messages that they might be consciously and subconsciously giving to others. Sketches were used to find out children's views of transition (Jindal-Snape & Foggie, 2009; Jindal-Snape et al., 2010). They were asked to draw freely to indicate their expectations, concerns, experiences, etc. These were then used to generate a dialogue with them. Figure 1 shows an example of how a child felt after the induction day at a secondary school (Jindal-Snape, Miller, & Baird, 2010).

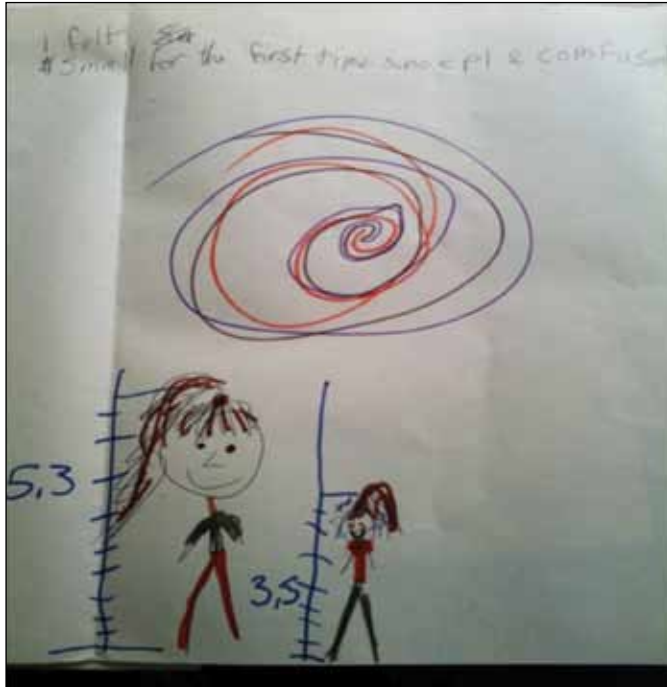


Fig. 1: Sketch to express views regarding the move to secondary school

As you can see, she also added that, "I felt small for the first time since P1 (first year of primary school) & confused (confused)." However, the symbolic nature of the change in height represented by the scales on the left and the two images of the girl show her feelings even more clearly.

Similarly, in another study, after failing to get much dialogue going with young people about life transitions following participation in an alternative curriculum project, their sketches gave a good forum to start the discussion (Jindal-Snape & Foggie, 2009). Figure 2 provides an example of such a sketch.

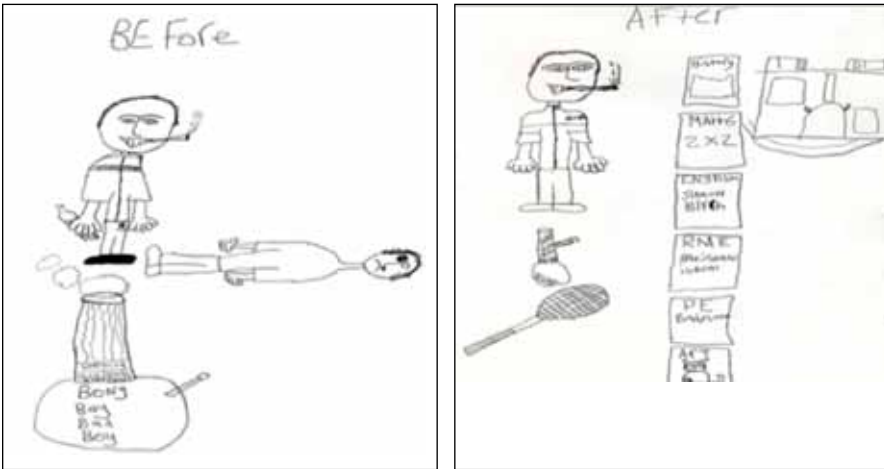


Fig. 2: Example of young person's voice regarding effectiveness of an alternative curriculum project

As you can see, in the two sketches the young person was able to portray different aspects of his life (Figure 2). This sketch is powerful as it visually conveys how much the use of drugs had reduced, and how instead of lying around the house, the young person started taking different lessons and playing tennis. It portrays aspects that probably words alone could not. Most importantly, it acted as a springboard for discussion. In this type of creative approach, however, it is important that we do not end up becoming gatekeepers (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002, cited in Davies, 2011) and make value judgments of their sketches or perceived to be doing so by children and young people. There should be a shared understanding that the sketch is important to convey their experience and not for its aesthetic value. Again, this opportunity to express themselves fully gives children a sense of agency as the discussion is controlled by them on the basis of their sketch. Further, both sketches provided opportunities to express their emotions, thus facilitating a good understanding of their self

which would help regulate these emotions in the future, leading to better emotional intelligence and resilience.

Board Games

As mentioned earlier, when working with children, it is important to consider ways of collecting their voices in a way that is more natural or meaningful to them. Playing comes naturally to children and its role in early years is well documented (Davies, Jindal-Snape, Collier, Digby, Hay, & Howe, 2012). However, there is also evidence that games-based approaches can support creativity at all ages (Cremen et al., 2006; Cumming, 2007; European Commission 2009; Miller, Hudson, Miller, & Shimi, 2010). According to Davies (2011) a skilled practitioner can involve children in “sustained shared thinking” (p. 36) by engaging effectively in children’s play.

A board game² was used to collect views of 11-12-year-olds about their experience of primary to secondary transition (Jindal-Snape, Baird et al., 2011). This board game was designed based on research conducted by Jindal-Snape in the area of primary-secondary transition in Scotland between 2006 and 2010 as well as on research carried out by others (e.g., Galton, 2010a). The areas included in the text on the board game were highlighted as aspects that facilitated successful transition if implemented well, and areas of concern or excitement for children (Jindal-Snape, forthcoming). Data, on which the text in the game were based, were collected by Jindal-Snape from young people, their parents, and professionals regarding experience of transition along with an in-depth review of literature in this area. The board game was piloted with three children in the age group of 10-12 years and refined on the basis of their feedback.

After the focus group was over, the children were asked about their views on using a board game to facilitate it. Feedback was very positive; children said that they found it easier to respond to questions as part of the game rather than responding to questions posed by an adult researcher.

I thought it was good. I thought it was better because the last time someone came they were just asking questions. So I liked this better because you get to have fun as well.

It was interactive.

It was a good way to get us talking.

Although this board game was specifically created for this purpose, it is possible to adapt commercially available board games.

The same board game can be used with children to help facilitate transitions. The teacher or parent can use the scenarios in the boxes as cues for discussion about school. The scenarios can be used by teachers to provide information to the children; or by parents to make a note of questions to ask the child's primary/secondary school teacher/s. This game can be used in small groups with children in class. The object of the game³ is not to win but to have a good discussion about these areas and make a note of any areas that should be discussed with the primary or secondary school teachers/parents/child in future.

Similar board games can be used with children about to start primary school. Some student teachers have used the board game and provided positive feedback about it.

My students (student teachers) have used your board game with their pupils when on placement in schools. They have provided very positive feedback on how the game was effectively used with children.

(Personal communication, Gwen Boswell, 7.12.2011)

According to Gandini, Hill, Cadwell, and Schwall (2005), on the basis of observations in Reggio Emilia schools in Italy, regularly practiced dialogue can support and sustain a culture and community that thinks together, with interpersonal exchange, negotiation of conflict, and comparison of ideas and actions supporting this process. This board game can provide children, parents, and teachers with an aid for creating such dialogue, clearly linking with emotional intelligence and opportunities to practise resolution of any conflicts. This can also enhance the resilience of the child by effective support provided in these dialogues by family, teachers, and peers.

Storybooks

Parents in Jindal-Snape (2010c), and Hannah, Gorton, and Jindal-Snape (2010) suggested that children should be given a chance to practise activities and rules that are new to them in a simulated setting. This is similar to the drama approach discussed later. With this in mind the author created storybooks for children focusing on different issues such as making friends, uniforms, bilingualism, and so on.

For example, one story book is based on research with children moving to primary school (Jindal-Snape, Snape, & Snape, 2011) that suggests that children's worries revolve around making friends, knowing the difference in rules of the primary school compared to the preschool setting, adults expecting them to be independent, and dealing with different behaviours according to the context they find themselves in (Jindal-Snape, 2010b). The objectives of this storybook are to explore children's worries about starting school, rehearse in a safe environment the possible actions in response to others' behaviour, discuss possible consequences of their actions, and to explore positive ways of making friends.

The story can be used with an individual child, or a group of children, to discuss the different responses that the child/ren might have to a scenario. The facilitator involves them in the story by asking what they might do in a similar situation, and provides opportunities of talking through their reaction to the situation and potential consequences. The basic story starts with a scenario, such as this one, where some children are playing and one child comes and pushes another child.⁴

The children are then asked to discuss what might happen next. They can talk about reactions of other children; reflect on the consequences of those actions, feelings of each child in the scenario, and reasons behind those feelings. These are good opportunities for enhancing the child's emotional intelligence. Some options of what might happen are given in the story, but the idea is to let the children take ownership of the story and develop it in whatever direction they want to, with the purpose of enhancing their active learning agency. The examples of consequences in the story can also be used to discuss the change in rules, children's concerns, positive ways of making friends, and so forth. It is worth noting that the second and third authors of the book are 10 and 8 year-old children who designed the options, consequences, and dialogues. This was done to ensure that the story was meaningful and natural to young children and portrayed their voices rather than that of the adult (Jindal-Snape, Snape et al., 2011).

The storybook was piloted with children, parents, and professionals and refined on that basis. The feedback so far has been positive. However, data has not been gathered to see its impact on transition experiences and is an area worth exploring in future. Again, storybooks with age appropriate characters in a relevant context can give children opportunities to personalize (I would...) or depersonalize (She should...) and practise what they would do in a similar scenario (Boal, 1995). Storybooks like these can be used by practitioners and parents; ideally this idea can be used to create their own stories.

Creative Drama

As mentioned earlier, it has been suggested that prior to transition, children/young people should be involved in simulated role-play, drama, and story-telling to provide opportunities to express their transition concerns and tackle them in a secure and familiar environment, thus making them more resilient. Creative drama can again be used as a means of constructing a plausible real-life scenario in which the actors can depersonalize their actions and responses in the guise of “playing the character” (Jindal-Snape, Vettraino et al., 2011, p. 2). Creative drama is important for children engaging in the experience of moving schools as it helps them understand the process of change and ways of managing that process. Similar to Boal's (1995) metaxis, “the state of belonging completely and simultaneously to two different, autonomous worlds; the image of reality and the reality of the image” (p. 43), children can participate in drama and observe how they, or others, might behave in drama and reality. If this creative drama is based on their context, it can provide them with opportunities to learn and rehearse real-life situations in a safe environment. The environment is safe as it is part of their natural environment with familiar peers and teachers, and they have the additional protection of playing out “somebody else's life” rather than their own. They can play out important scenarios, their reactions and consequences to their reactions within the protected guise of “drama”—a fictional piece of work. This can then free them up to openly reflect and debate, gain a greater understanding to help interpret potential real life situations, make appropriate behaviour choices to engage with those situations, and learn from the successful outcomes of those situations (Jindal-Snape, Vettraino et al., 2011). Other research has also suggested that such creative activities can enhance a child's confidence and self-esteem (Jindal-Snape & Foggie, 2008) and promote resilience (Akos, 2004; Newman & Blackburn, 2002). You can use different scenarios such as first day at school, bullying, making friends, peer pressure, and so on for creative drama. Ideally these should come from the children themselves through other drama games, sketches, stories, and so forth that the teacher might already be using in class.

Drama professionals have also been positive about the use of drama for transitions (Jindal-Snape, Vettraino et al., 2011):

... I think it's the power of drama that we do create a level playing field ... and also begin to discover voices we never knew existed, the children never knew they had...

As soon as you ask children about what's going on in their head they won't tell it. But when you create a character ... then it becomes a lot easier ... (then) there is

no sense of exposure or vulnerability there . . . we've created a believable enough character where children from P7 (final year of primary school in Scotland) to S1 (first year of secondary school in Scotland) face similar sort of problems – suddenly they are freed up . . . (pp. 7–8)

Therefore, when discussing “level playing field,” “no exposure or vulnerability,” they are suggesting clear links with resilience and self-esteem. An example of creative drama activity is available in Jindal-Snape, forthcoming.

Discussion and Conclusion

The examples from practice and research evidence suggest that children's self-esteem, emotional intelligence, agency, and resilience can be enhanced through involvement in creative approaches such as drama, story-telling, and games-based learning. In this way, children and young people are provided with secure exposure to transition related issues and given opportunities to tackle them. Overall, it can be seen that whether we listen and portray voices in the context of research or practice, creative approaches can help improve transition practice for individual children and others. As mentioned earlier, research suggests that creativity frees children and gives them a voice to articulate their views (Bancroft et al., 2008). Above all, a combination of different creative approaches (as well as in conjunction with more traditional approaches) gives each child the opportunity to choose what he or she might be most comfortable with and interested in. Although these creative techniques have some similarities with the ideas behind the Mosaic Approach, they are different in that they have been structured based on transitions research with a strong grounding in theory. Also, they are based on over 30 years of international research on school transitions.

These approaches provide children with opportunities to control their environment and the context of learning. They are creating their own world—whether real or fictitious. The elements of creativity not only engage and motivate them, but also the process, and indeed the output, can lead to increases in self-esteem. Further, as was mentioned by professionals in Jindal-Snape, Baird et al. (2011) and Jindal-Snape, Vettraino et al. (2011), creative approaches provide a level playing field for every child. They suggest that this is because the focus is not on academic skills, but is about “active learning” and imagination.

Being able to practise real-life scenarios in a safe environment with peers and adults they are familiar with, can prepare them for such situations in a new environment. Being able to understand the consequences of potential actions helps them manage risks in their new environment. They are able to rehearse key life skills in the "make believe" world of drama or storybooks. They develop emotionally and socially, and become more resilient. As Newman and Blackburn (2002) have said, it is important not to avoid risk, but to successfully manage it. These creative approaches give opportunities to do just that. If we see transition as an ongoing process (Jindal-Snape, 2010a), we need to keep using these approaches even after the move has been made. On the basis of this, I propose a model that establishes the links between creative approaches, voices, and subsequent improvement in transition experience (Figure 3). This model suggests that voices heard through creative, and child- and young-people-appropriate techniques, can have multi-fold benefits. It can help practitioners revise existing transition practices as well as identify new techniques that can be used (In Figure 3, starting in a bottom-up manner, these are the two boxes on the left and middle of level 3). For instance, Galton (2010a) gives an example of how a group of children suggested that instead of schools just giving a map of the secondary school for a tour of the school (commonly existing transition practice), schools could set up a treasure hunt which could involve working in teams using that map to find their way around the new school (a suggestion for new transition practice). Further, creative approaches can be used for the child to learn to manage changes and work through any issues. Carrying on with the above-mentioned example, the treasure hunt will provide a child with the opportunity for problem solving in a safe environment with peer support, where concerns of "being lost" will be overridden by the game of treasure hunt (In Figure 3, starting in a bottom-up manner, this is the box on the right of level 3). All these lead to a child feeling more in control and having a more positive sense of self-worth and self-competence reinforced by adults' willingness to listen and modify their practice. All these then help the child have more positive transition experiences and also act as a buffer against any negative experiences thanks to increased self-esteem and resilience.

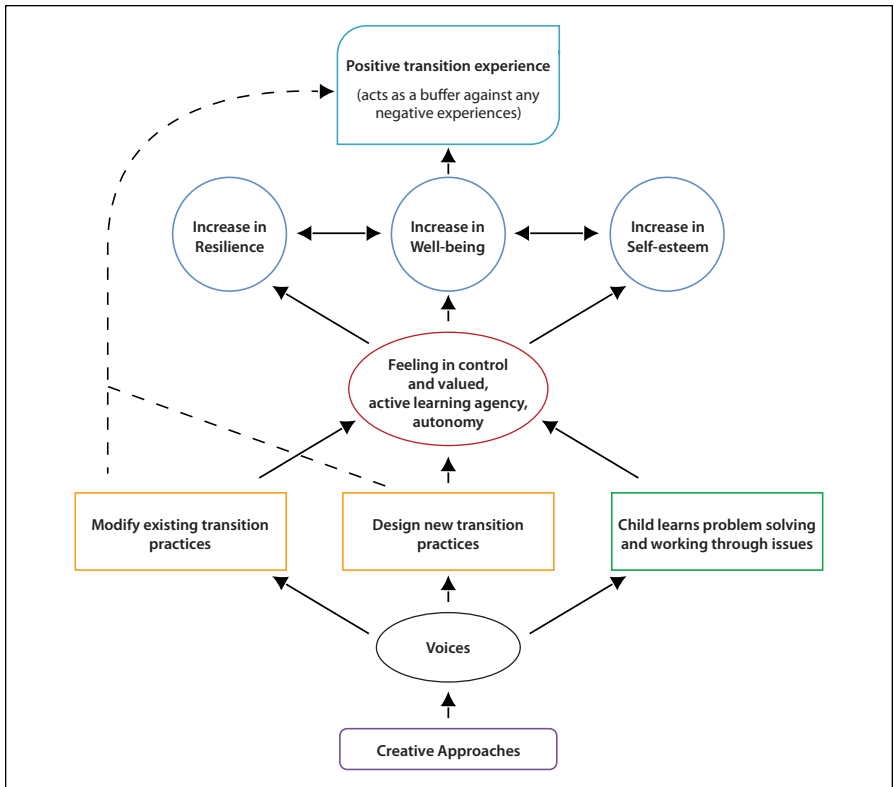


Fig. 3: Using creative approaches to portray voices to facilitate transitions through enhancement of resilience, well-being, and self-esteem

Potential Issues and Considerations

It is also important to understand that not all adults are comfortable using creative approaches. In a study done by Jindal-Snape, Baird et al. (2011), some teachers did raise concerns about knowing less than the children when using computer games during the transition process. Other research into creativity has also suggested that some teachers are not comfortable and they need training in facilitating creativity (Jindal-Snape, Vettrano et al., 2011). This also places an increased responsibility on teacher trainers to use similar creative approaches with student teachers to provide them opportunities to take such risks and develop the confidence to “let go of control” and allow for more autonomy. Davies et al. (2012) suggest that it is important to provide continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers that helps them discuss their preconceptions of creativity, gives opportunities to have dialogues around models of creativity and pedagogy, and provides opportunities to develop their own creativity.

Researchers have also pointed out barriers to using creative approaches in schools, namely, statutory requirements, organizational barriers, and pedagogical barriers to taking risks (Davies et al., 2012; Wyse & Spendlove, 2007). However, given that there is increasing evidence of the benefits of using creative approaches, the educational policy and practice has to change. To create a school ethos which is conducive to creativity, supportive leadership is very important (Grainger, Gooch, & Lambirth, 2005). In the context of Scotland, with the emphasis on Curriculum for Excellence (LTS, n.d.) and assessment for learning, this might become easier. In other countries where similar curricular reforms have taken place such as New Zealand, Italy, Sweden and Finland, again there is more scope for the use of creative approaches, and indeed there are some very good examples of how they are used (e.g., Peters, 2010).

Notes

1. In this paper, "children" refers to individuals up to 11 years of age and "young people" denotes individuals aged 12 to 16.
- 2-4. Please see <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/eswce/people/djindalsnape/transitions/> for further information.

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Creating Mentorship Metaphors: Pacific Island Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

The authors facilitated three inter-professional mentorship workshops in Fiji and Tonga, which were part of a series of such events that they recently conducted across the Pacific region. These workshops, in turn, formed part of a larger, ongoing leadership initiative co-sponsored by several local, regional, and international organizations. The purpose of each workshop was to facilitate each multi-disciplinary cohort of leaders in attendance to begin to create an adaptable mentorship model that would fit their unique Pacific contexts. One task within these model-development sessions was for each cohort to create metaphors that they believed best encapsulated the essence of their specific mentorship approach. In this article, the authors summarize aspects of that creative process, present several metaphors that the three cohorts generated, and raise implications regarding future mentoring initiatives.

Introduction

Interest has expanded worldwide regarding the role of leadership development within educational and professional organizations (Allen & Eby, 2007). Furthermore, the practice of mentorship has also been recognized as a key component in this developmental process (Rombeau, Goldberg, & Loveland-Jones, 2010); and as such, mentorship has spawned a considerable body of research (Rose Ragins &

Kram, 2007). Within this research, the ability to be creative has been identified as an indispensable attribute of effective leaders and mentors in any context (Chang, 2011b; Gardner & Laskin, 2011).

In our own recent research on the mentorship process (e.g., Johansson-Fua, Sanga, Walker, & Ralph, 2011; Ralph & Walker, 2011a; Ruru, Sanga, Walker, & Ralph, in press), we described the series of mentorship workshops we facilitated, in which several cross-disciplinary cohorts of educational and professional leaders began to develop mentorship models to suit their unique cultural contexts in the Pacific region. A key activity in the workshops we conducted was for participants to create and refine relevant metaphors to further clarify the particular mentorship model they were developing. In this present article, we describe that metaphor-creation initiative.

Purpose of the Study

Our purpose in this study was to (a) summarize key aspects of the creative process that workshop cohorts from Fiji and Tonga demonstrated, and (b) describe some metaphors they created to conceptualize the mentoring process in their respective cultural and organizational environments. Participants represented a variety of educational, governmental, business, and religious organizations; and they attended one of three mentorship workshops (one of which was held in Tonga and two in Fiji). The complete series of 11 mentorship events, of which these three workshops were a part, in turn formed one segment of a larger, previously established leadership initiative that had been organized and/or co-sponsored by several local, regional, and international organizations (see Johansson-Fua et al., 2011; Ruru et al., in press).

Literature Review

Mentoring Processes

Universally, there has been a growing attentiveness to the quality of the mentorship process conducted in all professional disciplines and occupations (Carnegie, 2011; Rose Ragins & Kram, 2007), which in turn has been accompanied by a corresponding increase in the number of related research efforts, publications, conferences, and websites that have appeared during the past three decades (Chun, Sosik, & Yun, in press). At the same time, however, concerns have been raised (Allen, Eby,

O'Brien, & Lentz, 2008) about how much of this new mentoring research has been overly dependent on such elements as: cross-sectional designs, self-reported data, single data-gathering methods, and quantitative/correlational approaches conducted in field settings.

Consequently, we decided to address some of these limitations by conducting several inter-professional studies in which inter-professional leaders designed their own mentoring models tailored to their local contexts. This research also investigated the extent that the leaders found *Adaptive Mentorship*[®] (Ralph & Walker, 2011a, 2011b) useful in helping them accomplish that task (Johansson-Fua et al., 2011; Ruru et al., in press).

Many mentorship scholars and practitioners have conceptualized mentorship as a developmental process by which an individual with more knowledge and skill in a field (i.e., the *mentor*) assists a person with less knowledge and skill (i.e., the *protégé*) to develop in these areas (Ralph & Walker, 2011a). Regarding the *Adaptive Mentorship* (AM) model, we have shown that the mentor must first adjust his/her leadership response or style to appropriately match the task-specific developmental level of the protégé. We derived the AM model from early contingency leadership approaches (Fiedler & Garcia, 1987; Hersey & Blanchard, 1988), cognitive developmental theories (Piaget, 1973; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978), and situated and experiential learning models (Kolb, 1984; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Subsequently, as the protégé increases his/her *competence* and *confidence* in performing the skill-set being practiced, the mentor must adapt/adjust, in inverse proportions, the corresponding degree of *task* direction and *support* given to the protégé (Blanchard et al., 2010; Ralph & Walker, 2011b).

The quality of mentorship will be influenced by the characteristics not only of the work setting or professional culture, but also of the broader society within which the mentorship process occurs (Allen & Eby, 2007). However, the related research has repeatedly confirmed that the core element undergirding successful mentorship practice, universally, is the prevalence of positive interpersonal relationships between/among the mentorship participants, whereby partners' mutual needs for acceptance, affiliation, and belonging are fulfilled (Fletcher & Rose Ragins, 2007; McManus & Russell, 2007).

Creating Metaphors

In this report, we have conceptualized creativity as an intellectual process by which individuals incorporate cognition, originality, flexibility, and imagination to both frame and solve problems (Gardner, 2011; Lindsay & Davis, 2012; Robinson, 2011; Sternberg, 2003). Creativity has always been part of human activity; and it has been studied and promoted by leaders in all contexts for centuries (Gardner, 2011; Sternberg & Kaufman, 2011). Today, social, political, and commercial organizations in every sector not only espouse creativity and innovation as essential to all facets of human existence, but they also commit considerable resources to educate/train their members to develop their inventive thinking abilities, and their imaginative and problem-solving capacities (Chang, 2011a; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Medina, 2008; Osborn, 1993).

With respect to promoting creativity to enhance human cognition, people in all cultures have created metaphors to describe and explain phenomena and events in life (Danesi & Mollica, 2008), and to help them clarify meaning and deepen understanding of their lived experiences (Costa, 2001). Metaphors have been defined as “comparisons that create mental images by connecting the familiar with the less familiar” (Cornett, 2011, p. 99). Moreover, related research-literature (e.g., Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), as well as individuals’ personal communicative experiences, have confirmed that metaphorical and figurative language has not only been an integral component of human discourse, but that people are also often unaware of its prevalence in regular communication (Levin, 1988).

Kovecses (2002) surveyed the research literature on conceptual metaphor to ascertain the sources that were most often used, and he identified six source-domains: the human body, living things, manufactured objects, human activities, the environment, and processes from the field of physics. Over the years, people have used metaphorical language to create and/or elaborate meaning, to expand understanding (Boroditsky & Ramscar, 2002), to shape public opinion, and/or to influence decision-making behavior (Thibodeau & Boroditsky, 2011). In more recent times it has been included as part of narrative inquiry within the qualitative research paradigm in the social sciences and humanities (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Tompkins & Lawley, 2006).

Research on the use of metaphors has appeared in the literature of several professional disciplines, such as: Architectural Design (Casakin, 2007); Education (Mewburn & Pitcher, 2011); Geography (Reed & Peters, 2004); Management (Gray, 2007); Nursing (Streubert & Rinaldi Carpenter, 2010); and Psychology (Newell, 2008).

Moreover, some sources (e.g., Jensen, 2006) have suggested that metaphors have been identified, at least in some form, in the research literature of nearly all professional fields.

Our search of the literature (e.g., Casakin, 2007; Garner, 2005; Gray, 2007; Ortony, 1993; Tompkins & Lawley, 2006) identified several advantages of employing metaphorical and figurative language in research: metaphors provide a vivid, compact, and expressive way to convey complex information; they help reveal hidden assumptions and unarticulated beliefs; they enhance comprehension and retention of complicated concepts/relationships; they evoke emotion and stimulate imagination, creative thinking, and innovative problem-solving; and they promote reflection and arouse action.

On the other hand, several authors (e.g., Carpenter, 2008; Garner, 2005; Jensen, 2006; Newell, 2008; Schmitt, 2005) have identified potential drawbacks regarding the inappropriate use of metaphors in research, such as: (a) metaphors may be incompatible with the reality of the situation; (b) they may distort, obscure, trivialize, or misrepresent events; (c) they may be confusing for parties from different cultures or backgrounds; (d) they may ignore some facets of a process; or (e) if used, they should be supported with triangulated data from other relevant sources.

With respect to these limitations, Reed and Peters (2004) advised scholars/practitioners to acknowledge possible caveats; to attempt to address uncertainties and ambiguities that may appear; and to be resilient when interpreting metaphors and/or discussing their implications. Moreover, researchers who study metaphor usage have identified several forms and have employed a variety of idiosyncratic terms. For instance, Jensen (2006) reported four metaphor categories (i.e., *active*, *inactive*, *foundational*, and *dead*); and Reed and Peters (2004) mentioned three forms (i.e., *landscape*, *spatial*, and *ecological*). Thibodeau and Boroditsky (2011) studied how metaphorical language was powerful but often hidden, in that people generally did not realize that the metaphors within the messages they received actually shaped their subsequent reasoning and decision-making.

Researchers, themselves, have employed varying numbers of research metaphors. For example, Ph.D. students listed three basic research metaphors: spatial concepts (e.g., expressed in words like *field*, *region*, or *area*); travel expressions (e.g., *path* or *journey*); and actions (e.g., *design*, *construct*, or *build*, Mewburn & Pitcher, 2011). Moreover, post-doctoral researchers portrayed research in four metaphorical ways: *explorative*, *spatial*, *constructive*, and *organic* (Pitcher & Akerlind, 2009).

Thus, even though researchers generally acknowledged the value of using metaphor, we found that there was little uniformity.

With regard to relating metaphors to mentorship, Ganser (2008) found that mentors, themselves, represented their mentoring practice in a variety of ways, such as: *family or relation* (e.g., serving as a parent, counselor, or friend); *sports* (e.g., serving as a coach or a lifeguard); *directive* (e.g., serving as a navigator or a pilot); or *nurturing/developmental* (e.g., serving as a gardener or a tailor). By contrast, Busen and Engbretson (1999) had indicated nearly a decade earlier that some of these same metaphors could also be used in a “toxic” sense, whereby the protégé would have little or no input into his/her professional development, but was merely a passive recipient in the process. Some of these toxic metaphors were: (a) being *sculpted*, whereby the protégé lacked any voice in his/her growth; (b) being directed by a person who behaved like a “*show-business parent*,” in that the mentor was an overbearing choreographer of the protégé’s performance; (c) being a *slave*, whereby the protégé subserviently obeyed “the master,” or (d) being nurtured in a *garden*, whereby the mentor was the nurturing agent doing everything for the protégé.

We found that Edelson (1999) presented one of the most incisive explorations of adult creativity. He reviewed the contributions of prominent scholars (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Boden, 1990; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Drucker, 1993; Osborn, 1993; Rothenberg, 1990; Wallace & Gruber, 1989), who studied how creative adults functioned within work and educational settings. Edelson’s synthesis of the related research confirmed that all humans have creative potential, and that creativity will be enhanced in organizational environments when leaders actively support imaginative and innovative thinking/action among group-members.

In our literature review, we observed that although there was nearly universal recognition of the importance of promoting creative thinking to solve local, national, and global problems, there was also a lack of agreement among practitioners and scholars with respect to common terminology and uniform strategies related to these solutions. It was clear that when creating mentoring metaphors, each society, culture, profession, occupation, or organization reflected its own history, traditions, and ways of knowing (Huffer, 2006).

Methodology

Participants

The 94 leaders who attended our three workshops represented universities, colleges, schools, government ministries, private businesses, international aid agencies, and church/religious organizations from Fiji, Tonga, New Zealand, and Canada. Thirty-seven leaders attended the Tonga workshop, 35 attended the Lautoka (Fiji) workshop, and 22 attended the Suva (Fiji) event. The three cohorts were drawn from a broad cross-section of disciplinary and inter-professional backgrounds (e.g., managers, teachers, school principals, professors, social workers, nurses, police officers, government ministers, church ministers, or NGO administrators). These cohort-members had been previously recognized by the sponsoring organizers as being mentorship leaders in their respective fields; and these mentorship workshops formed one segment of a broader leadership-development program that had been organized across the Pacific region. Therefore, the workshop planners had formally invited these individuals to attend the workshops.

Method

To collect data regarding attendees' creation of mentorship metaphors, we used a qualitative research approach (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010), and wrote verbatim notes of delegates' comments during the metaphor-creation process, especially during *talanoa* (or discussion/debriefing, Halapua, 2008) sessions. Two members of our research team triangulated these comments with data we collected both from (a) semi-structured conversations with individuals and focus-group before/after several sessions; and (b) field-notes we kept of our observations of pairs and groups who were engaged in the workshop deliberations.

We organized the workshop activities according to our prior understandings and assumptions, which we derived both from Pacific island cultures/values/epistemologies, and from the broader research literature related to effective professional development (e.g., Fullan, 2007) and facilitating creativity with adult learners (Edelson, 1999). For instance, we offered a variety of workshop sessions, such as: individual reflections (e.g., "What does mentoring look like for you?"); paired discussions (e.g., "Share a story with a partner regarding a powerful mentoring experience you had."); small-group interactions (e.g., "What metaphor best captures these themes of effective mentorship?"); and whole-group syntheses (e.g., "In the light of our deliberations, what might effective mentorship look like?"). We built into these sessions an ongoing, reflexive, and iterative dimension, in which participants were invited to respond (and to suggest modifications) to the deliberations.

Findings

As we have reported elsewhere (Johansson-Fua et al., 2011; Ruru et al., in press), we were pleased with the overall results of the mentorship workshops, in that: (a) all attendees evaluated the workshops as valuable; (b) an authentic spirit of trust seemed to pervade the sessions, not only among the attendees, but also between the attendees and the facilitators; and (c) participants created several mentorship metaphors, which not only incorporated many of the generic attributes of effective metaphors as mentioned earlier in this article, but which also reflected specific cultural, historical, and traditional values and beliefs of the *Pacific Way* (Lawson, 2010). Because of space limitations, we have selected and summarized only a representative sample of the metaphors that the participants created.

Fijian Metaphors

Bure. The *bure* is a Fijian house that shelters people from rain, wind, and sun. Its interior is cool in hot weather and warm on cooler days; and in the safety of the *bure*, teaching, learning, and nurturing of the young takes place. Stories of inspiration, imagination, and motivation are shared; and laughter and crying are permitted and encouraged. It is a metaphor for the environment within which effective mentorship occurs in any setting.

I ketekete. In Fijian, *i ketekete* is a metaphorical basket of wisdom, within which are stored the values and customs that Fijian society deems important. In the basket are the heritage, histories, songs, and dances of clan and tribal groups, which are guarded by clan trustees who rank highest in the clan hierarchy. From this basket, mentors draw out needed wisdom and skills to pass on to protégés in their development.

Kava pounding. *Kava*-making is a daily activity in Fiji, in which the kava root is pounded into powder, in preparation for mixing and drinking the beverage within the traditional *kava* ceremony. In this metaphor, the pounder represents the mentor who shapes/challenges the protégé to achieve worthy goals and fulfill responsibilities. The *kava* root represents the protégé, who is "influenced" towards positive change. The grog pot, in which the roots are ground, constitutes the environment within which mentorship occurs.

Loloma. *Loloma* is Fijian for love, and this metaphor conceptualizes selfless love as the connector between/among everyone within a mentoring relationship.

Love is the foundation for a caring relationship in family, school, work, and community. Every participant is considered unique, made in God's image; and each one needs to receive/give love and guidance to develop optimally.

Noqu salusalu. In Fiji, *salusalu* (an intricately woven flower garland) is used to honor dignitaries, guests, and designated citizens. The *salusalu* makers' good intentions and character are also represented by the different blooms and fragrances skillfully designed and woven with a desired pattern and purpose. The plaiting process requires the *salusalu* maker's patience, skill, and creativity, which symbolize a mentor's care and integrity, who seeks to promote and enhance the protégé's development.

Another aspect of the *salusalu* metaphor is that parents often refer to their children as *noqu salusalu* (my garland). In this regard, children are expected to honor their parents and grandparents. In a further meaning, Fijians also refer to people as *salusalu ni vanua* (garlands of the land), or as guardians of the integrity of their family heritage by gracing the "shoulders of the land." Each new generation is expected to conduct themselves honorably in morally responsible and ethical ways. In like manner, the ultimate mentorship goal is for protégés to grace their communities, after undergoing a process of purposeful shaping by their mentors.

Ulu ni vanua. *Ulu ni vanua* refers to a mountain, and metaphorically, to one's formation, growth, and maturation. In a similar way that a mountain depicts strength, resources, constancy, and protection, a mentor is expected to create a protective atmosphere, within which a protégé will ultimately develop into a *ulu ni vanua*. Because the *ulu ni vanua* is elevated, humans look up to it and emulate it; and the mountain simultaneously is considered to view all creatures under its protection with an outlook of care. The *ulu ni vanua* is also able to produce its own resources, such as rivers, streams, and forests that provide plant and animal life for the sustenance of people in its jurisdiction. Likewise, mentors will provide necessary support and guidance for protégés under their watch.

Vakai sulu. The Fijian *masi* (tapa cloth or bark cloth) is significant, in that it was used traditionally for ceremonial purposes such as weddings and conferring recognition. On such occasions, the *masi* symbolized the person being clothed with the honor that he/she received. For Fijians, *vakai sulu* or being clothed by one's family with a Fijian *masi* signified receiving the family's blessings and treasures. Being clothed upon with the *masi* of different *tapa* patterns and multiple layers of wrappings, the honoree was acknowledged, affirmed, appreciated, and respected.

Upon being clad with Fijian *tapa*, the honored person was also deemed to have been endowed with the gifts of leadership, and was expected to perform that role competently and judiciously. Regarding mentorship, the *vakai sulu* metaphor depicted an achievement in the mentoring process, in which the protégé was receiving “treasures” to be used, enjoyed, and celebrated in the public arena and for the community’s benefit.

Va vakada. In the process of growing yams, Fiji farmers would erect a bamboo scaffolding (*i vakada*) to support the developing plants. Because yams are of the creeping variety, they need a structure on which to grow and entwine. The scaffolding acts like a bridge along and across which the yams creep and weave their way toward the natural sunlight. The *i vakada* assists the plants to develop in a productive manner, to avoid over-crowding around the roots, and to obtain sufficient sunlight. In like manner, the *va vakada* or scaffolding metaphor depicts adaptively mentoring protégés within a nurturing environment.

Veiyacani. Naming is of considerable significance in Fijian society; and being named after another person is a privilege of honour. A child is commonly named after a senior person, usually from within the extended family or clan. The namesake then is expected to carry on the heritage, legacy, and identity of the named person’s family, together with the dignity and respect associated with the family name. The younger person is entrusted to extend and preserve the reputation of the inherited name. In turn, the senior person assumes a mentorship responsibility for the bearer of his/her name. From the time of naming, the mentor takes responsibility for his/her namesake, as adviser, counsellor, and provider of care.

In Fijian society, the mentor often helps finance the protégé’s education and sustenance, and may show the protégé a biased degree of favouritism. The protégé’s parents may also seek the mentor’s advice in cases where disciplinary guidance is needed for their child. This entire *veiyacani* relationship typifies an effective mentor-protégé relationship.

Vinaka Vaka Niu. In Fijian, *lutu na nui lutu ki vuna* means “coconut fruits will fall around the coconut palm.” Once a dried coconut fruit has fallen to the base of the tree, it will become a vara (seedling), provided that the necessary elements are present to promote germination: fertile soil, spacing, transplanting, and mulching.

All parts of the coconut palm are used: its leaves for *sasa* for weaving baskets, fans, and roofing; its stem for furniture, doormats, and house-posts; its husks for

magimagi (sinnet), scrubbing brushes, or firewood; its flesh for food, medicine, and oil; and its shell for containers, eating utensils, or ornaments. With respect to mentorship, the *vinaka vaka niu* metaphor also has several related idioms. In Fiji Hindi, *Jaisa bees boge waisa paoge* means “you reap what you sow”; *o na seva gia na bua ko a tea* means “the fruit doesn’t fall far from the palm/tree”; and *na vutu ka lakikasa* means “your mentoring may not come to fruition immediately, but one day the protégé will eventually actualize the teachings that will have made mentor’s mentoring all worthwhile.”

Vunilagi. In Fijian, *lagi* means *heavens*, and *vu* means source. In some parts of Fiji, *vunilagi* refers to the horizon or the heavens where the sky begins. This concept can represent the goals of mentoring the protégé, who pursues aspirations, ideals, achievement, and success. The *vunilagi* model could therefore emphasize promoting the protégé’s quality and sustained excellence. In an educational or professional development context, the *vunilagi* image could highlight the purpose of mentorship as the protégé’s achievement, both in its specific and general senses.

Tongan Metaphors

Pununga. The *pununga* metaphor represents a bird’s nest in which the mother bird (mentor) nurtures the baby bird (protégé), by bringing to the nest the necessary materials to enhance the latter’s development (i.e., the experiences, feelings, insights, values, and beliefs that promote protégés’ success). The nest (environment) is a safe haven for the neophyte, where he/she is free from stress and danger, and where protégés’ problems are not compounded, and where they can find privacy and time to reflect.

This environment is safe but not stifling, and caring but not intrusive, where the mentor helps the fledgling learn to fly. Other processes in the nesting process with implications for mentorship are: selecting the location of the nest (tree, water, land); constructing it (as coarse on the outside, soft on the inside); sharing it with other protégés; and eventually leaving.

Fale-lalava. This metaphor represents Tongan house-building or *faletonga*. A *faletonga* begins with sinking pillars (*pou*) or coconut trunks into the ground. The *faletonga* frame has a structural frame (*kahoki*), upon which the roof (‘*ato* made from coconut leaves) is set.

The quality of the connections between the pillars and the roof shows builders' construction skills (*tufunga lalava*). In earlier times, Tongans used coconut ropes (*kafa*) to connect (*lalava*) each part, thereby linking each frame with the pillars. House builders were identified by the *lalava* designs that connected each linkage of the frame with the pillars. With respect to the Tongan mentorship process, the four golden values of respect (*faka'apa'apa*), loyalty (*mamahi'ime'a*), reciprocation (*tauhivaha'a*), and selfless service (*lototo*), together with explicit Christian moral values, were qualities of successful Tongan mentors.

These virtues are represented by the supporting pillars of a *falelalava*, and the *faletonga* roof includes Tongan traditions, cultures, family histories, and certain western values. In this metaphor, a Tongan mentor is one who integrates/balances these elements, by guiding the protégé toward an outcome of excellence, in the same way a *lalava* connects/links the pillars with the frame and the roof. Similarly, just as the *faletonga* (Tongan house) is a place of hope, belonging, and acceptance, the effective Tongan mentor is able to create an environment that is welcoming to protégés, who may have previously experienced coldness and separation in the outside world.

Fetākinima. *Fetākinima* is to lead by taking a person's hand and encouraging or gently pulling him/her to come along. A common sight in Tonga is young people holding each other's hands, or putting an arm around one another when walking. It shows a bond between two people that runs deeper than mere physical contact. Feeling safe in the immediate presence of another means that trust, respect, love, and honesty exist between them. This bond is critical in the *fetākinima* metaphor, because partners experience more safety together, and they can move more securely than if they were alone.

When forming the *fetākinima* bond, the partners can each learn about the other. As depicted in the *Adaptive Mentorship* model, the person in the mentoring role learns how to adjust to the protégé's particular developmental needs. A related strength of the *Fetākinima* metaphor is that both partners walk side-by-side: at certain times in the mentorship journey, the mentor may take the lead, but at other times the protégé may lead. As the relationship matures, they will work together, take turns, and even exchange roles as peer mentors.

Discussion and Implications

With respect to the creative *process* exhibited by attendees during the workshop-sessions, we observed that—whether interacting in pair-, small group-, or whole group-settings—they appeared to be sincerely involved, enthusiastic, and often animated in expressing/critiquing the ideas presented. We also noted that participants not only quickly engaged in each activity, but that they were also able to maintain this intensity of interaction throughout the deliberations (Johansson-Fua et al., 2011; Ruru et al., in press). We attributed this high level of engagement in the creative process to the characteristics of the participants and the organizers. On the one hand, the attendees were motivated, uninhibited, and eager to contribute and collaborate. On the other hand, the workshop leaders (particularly the Pacific island team-members, Professors Johansson-Fua, Ruru, and Sanga) had previously established (and had maintained during these workshops) the pre-requisite conditions conducive to fostering such creative energy among these cohorts. Three such conditions that had been identified by the scholars cited in our preceding literature review were: (a) evidence of sustained support of such efforts by recognized leaders (e.g., by providing attendees with release time, resources, and recognition); (b) promotion of participants' professional development and self-efficacy; and (c) allowance for participatory flexibility, unpredictability, and personalization of members' idea-sharing and feedback-interchange.

Regarding the *product* generated from the creativity deliberations, the cohorts produced several metaphors that fit largely into the organic category related to the processes of biological growth and nurturing (Ganser, 2008; Kovecses, 2002; Pitcher & Akerlind, 2009). Each of these organic metaphors not only reflected the cherished values and experiences of the regional and local cultures, but the metaphors also exemplified the generic, positive traits attributed to research metaphors, which we highlighted earlier in this article (e.g., clarifying meaning, evoking emotions, guiding action). Moreover, these metaphors helped to broaden participants' understanding, to clarify complex realities, and to suggest creative solutions for adapting mentorship to match the developmental levels of individual protégés across the disciplines (e.g., Carpenter, 2008; Ralph & Walker, 2011a).

The predominant themes in both the Fijian and Tongan mentoring metaphors reflected the peoples' connection to their families and to nature. Citizens of Pacific island nations are typically devoted to close-knit community relationships, to the tradition of recognizing the sea and land as essential to their livelihood and well-being, and to the *Pacific Way* (the latter referring to their emphasis on collaborative

dialogue, respect, inclusiveness, flexibility, adaptation, and balance, Huffer, 2006). Yet at the same time, citizens of each country also identify particular aspects that characterize their respective unique cultural, linguistic, historical, and traditional contexts (Sanga & Chu, 2009). These facts were demonstrated by the similarities and the differences among the metaphors described above.

At the same time, we noted that the workshop attendees readily recognized limitations in the metaphors, such as: (a) the possible misinterpretation by outsiders; (b) an emphasis on certain elements but neglecting others; and (c) the presence of culturally biased subjectivity (Carpenter, 2008; Ganser, 2008; Garner, 2005; Huffer, 2006). Nevertheless, we wholeheartedly agreed with the following statement from a participant, who responded to our invitation sent to all attendees a few days after the workshops, soliciting their input to our initial workshop-report that we had e-mailed to all attendees shortly after each workshop:

Any of the metaphors suggested by the participants in the workshop can be adapted to fit our settings. What's important for me is that the selected model must be guided by those Pacific values we articulated in the workshop: responsibility/loyalty, maintaining reciprocal relationships, and compassion/humility/willingness.

We found that the attendees intently engaged in creating mentorship metaphors that were relevant and realistic to their particular cultures and daily lives. Because two members of our workshop team were from Canada, we Canadians initially thought that attendees might resist our efforts, perceiving us as “external agents” somehow trying to force them to accept a foreign model. However, our concerns were alleviated when the attendees openly and candidly considered and critiqued the AM model, and subsequently adapted/incorporated the portions of the model that resonated with their own contexts and values. Participants also ignored those parts of the model that did not fit with their contexts. In fact, in one concluding session, an attendee thanked the team for the opportunity to assess the AM model and to preserve what was helpful. “After all,” she chuckled, “Your model is called ‘adaptive.’”

What we found most impressive in all three venues was not only how readily all participants engaged in the creative process of adapting generic mentorship principles to fit their unique contexts, but also how helpful they reported seeing this collaborative, cross-disciplinary process. It is the sincere hope of our entire team that the momentum generated by this initiative might be sustained by the cohort members as they continue their quest, in turn, to mentor a new generation of leaders in their respective settings across all sectors in the Pacific region.

Overall, we believe we achieved our objective of facilitating an interdisciplinary group of interested mentorship scholars and practitioners to evaluate one mentoring scheme and to adapt it by creating innovative approaches to meet the contextual needs of their unique settings—across professions and across cultures. Based on the written and oral comments (including invitations to the team to conduct follow-up events) that we received from the workshop attendees (Johansson-Fua et al., 2011; Ruru et al., in press), we, at the time of this writing, are preparing follow-up initiatives for these venues and are planning new workshops for other international locations.

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Working With a Student Model in a Creative Non-Fiction Workshop: Charging Joint Creativity

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ABSTRACT

In this arts-based inquiry, I examine how a student model creative non-fiction essay develops students in a third-year creative writing workshop as critical readers, editors, and writers. Over the course of two semesters, student writers reciprocally acquire strategic knowledge and enhance their creativity. Plural voices emerge in the dialogue between the model student/writer, her peers, and my curriculum as evidenced in the narrative excerpts composed and revised by the student; in her peers' critical feedback; and in students' reflections. Exploring this collaboration, I envision affording more opportunity for student model writers to share their evolving knowledge in both traditional and online classrooms.

Introduction

As a teacher of expressive writing and practitioner of the writing arts, I search for ways to trigger my students' creativity and prepare them with a repository of strategies so they can become autonomous writers who will shape their own future writing communities. There is a dichotomy at work here: I aim to create conditions in a writing classroom that will foster a student's individuality while connecting that student to a network of relationships. Including student models as part of my reading component has proven to be an instrumental step in my quest. One student model, the focus of this study, was a dynamic vehicle for just such student growth.

Two questions drive the inquiry: How would reading a student model nurture the individual writer and enhance creativity in a collaborative setting that is the college creative writing workshop? Secondly, what strategic knowledge will students gain from one another? I hope to present an illustration of a partnership, what Fritjof Capra (1996) characterizes as “pervasive cooperation” between my classroom student writers and the student model writer, as they promote their development and alternate teaching and learning roles.

In the fall of 2008, I taught an introductory third-year creative non-fiction course, open to all students who had completed their requisite composition credits. The course is generally capped at twenty-two; students enroll both from the writing program and from programs across disciplines here in this North Country liberal arts college, which is part of the SUNY system. The original model, “Cocoon,” was written by a student, D. Andrews,¹ in the first semester. With her permission, I then included that essay in the second semester curriculum (Spring 2009) as a model in the thematic units of family story and writer interacting with nature. Second semester students studied and mimicked facets of the model and, importantly, provided constructive feedback to D. Andrews, thereby reciprocally sharing and intelligently applying new knowledge to their respective writing.

This inquiry rests on systemic thinking. I build in this inquiry on Fritjof Capra’s call for relatedness, insofar as it applies to the teaching of creative writing (Lipszyc, 2006). Teaching and writing are complex epistemologies; I value the movement between systems of thought as I decode the intricate processes of these two practices.

To think systemically as writer/teacher/researcher:

- a) I think in terms of interconnectedness; meaning I derive in this inquiry will come from the experience of context (Capra, 2004);
- b) I search for a non-linear, non-hierarchical understanding of relationships within the whole (Capra, 1999).

In my adherence to a non-linear, non-hierarchical view of teaching writing, I describe a cyclical exchange which arises in a number of contexts in this inquiry. These contexts include: student model, D. Andrews’ influence on the 2009 classroom of student writers; feedback from that classroom community back to the student model writer; and students’ reflections during the process. Leadership in this context was systemic, shared, with responsibility extended to the whole. As a teacher, I acted as a leader of shared processes that empowered students (Capra, 2002; Dewey, 1938).

Impress of the Student Model

I design writing courses where reading and writing have equal footing and where students become better writers by example, namely, by reading the exemplary work of those writers who preceded them (Murray, 1989; Prose, 2006). Along with an eclectic variety of professional models ranging from Amy Tan, Annie Dillard, Bruce Chatwin, and Lee Gutkind, I present student models for reading material in thematic units. I integrate a select number of these student model essays to challenge students with material just beyond their grasp but not too removed from their needs, drawing from Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development. Applying this theory to the teaching of creative writing, I afford students the space to critically ask questions about the model and their own writing; to glean significance from their new experience and act upon it with newfound maturity; and to build strategic knowledge with other students. My goal is that any number of these models will inspire students who might apply or mimic in their writing some figurative trope or rhetorical pattern from that model.

As Barone (2000) informs, the needs of my students and the writing environment press upon and shape each other. When, in 2009, I conducted a semi-structured interview with one of my students, Jerome, about the comparative educational value of using both student and professional models, he spoke frankly of the apprehensions he faced and about how D. Andrews buoyed his self-confidence. Jerome had returned to school after service in Iraq. He had an inquiring mind and an imaginative flair for writing. A certain amount of anxiety about facing the blank page was normal for all writers, I assured him in our conversation. Nonetheless, he maintained, D. Andrews' work propelled him to envision the possibility of writing. Her work was purposeful and more closely approximated his own writing. Here are excerpts of his responses:

By using a student model, you made it more real...

We should look at professional models too because... there is a reason Annie Dillard is held in such high regard. Still, most students, I think, feel they wouldn't be able to match a professional writer...it would be like me playing basketball with Michael Jordan...But, here it is like playing against a friend in high school who goes on to play on a professional team...

In reading the student model, I saw how purpose could be given to a piece. As I read her work, I was drawn to it, I cared about it, and I saw that she learned from it. I knew that is what I wanted to do... (Unpublished Student Responses from Semi-Structured Interview, April 2009)

A close read of D. Andrews' model facilitated a central teaching objective I noted earlier, that students would integrate figurative or structural features of a text they admired. D. Andrews' essay begins with extracts of Shelley's poem, "The Sensitive Plant" and a quote by Keats (1816/1959): "The poetry of earth is never dead," (p. 19) paying homage to nature and orientating the reader to the world of the cocoon, the title of her piece. As Jerome had suggested, his peers were influenced positively by features of her work in their own writing, thereby writing what Murray (1989) calls "parallel texts." A number of students in the 2009 classroom began their creative non-fiction essays with a quote. The introduction in the model fired for them. When asked in journal and exam responses to reflect on what element resonated for them, students responded as follows:

I loved how D. Andrews introduced the paper using a quote...

I didn't initially think of it as student's work but something professionals would do... Starting out with the poem quote was bold—it was a bold step for a student to take, and I felt it was a great way to focus the piece. (Unpublished Student Responses from Exam and Journals, March-May 2009)

A second tool or strategy D. Andrews applied also surfaced in students' writing. With the collapsing time line in creative non-fiction, D. Andrews used asterisks. A number of students mimicked this feature to help organize their essays. Jerome referred to this problem-solving strategy on the final exam as he reflected on narrative elements which challenged him and took on new critical significance:

After my story began to come together, I was stuck on how to arrange it on the page. I had time lapses, and they needed to be noted somehow. Again, D. Andrews came to my rescue. I liked her simple strategy of using the asterisk for time and focus breaks, so I used the same method. I had no qualms about doing so, as her piece was presented to us as a way to learn. (Unpublished Student Response on Exam, May 2009)

A complex view of writing emerges. Students set goals and created an image of the task that depended upon the strategies they were learning (Flower, 1990). They then proceeded to write, integrating features of text that came before them in the discourse community of the creative non-fiction writing classroom (Bawarshi, 2003). With these features, they were applying newfound strategies in their own work. Since the model approximated their own writing, Vygotsky's zone of proximal development paved the way for learning, and for the individual agency and belief that generates writing, which I recognized in students' journal responses (Capra, 1996, 2002; Elbow, 1973).

D. Andrews' narrative moved students emotionally and launched them into critical thinking about their own writing. A student further commented in her journal on the "great sensory detail that caught the reader's attention early in the piece" (Unpublished Student Response, April 2009). Another highlighted the angle of the piece, the cocoon, which provided the subject of the essay and unified it. Finding a subject, the student understood, was integral to the genesis of writing. In the following response, the student discovers his distinct writing subject even as he sets D's model alongside his own.

D's piece was incredibly helpful to me, as I saw how she was able to work a hook into her writing without it feeling artificial. I then started off to find my hook. I remembered the strong emotions connected with teaching my daughter to ride a bike. This was my hook. I had ridden my bike everywhere, and it is also a nearly universal event. Most children have their parents help them learn to ride their bike, and I wanted to tap into this common event as a point of reference for the reader. It closely matched D's cocoon idea, yet was not copying her idea. (Unpublished Student Exam Response, May 2009)

Another factor accounted for the success of the model. Because the student model's process was made more transparent to them, students were all the more drawn to the essay. While teaching the course that spring, I informed students about changes D. Andrews and I discussed in our one-on-one classroom conferences. For example, I relayed her need to fill in narrative gaps that were too abrupt for the reader (the details of which I will discuss shortly). In our semi-structured interview, Jerome mentioned this explicit part of my teaching because it elucidated for him what process could be and because it made the essay all the more accessible. In the next quote, Jerome is reading with a heightened awareness, like a writer (Prose, 2006) working with a curriculum where reading and writing were interdependent, where the two practices evolved in the "contrapuntal action" so necessary to the way writers work (Murray, 1989). Observing D. Andrews' thinking and writing processes as a model, Jerome was intent on adapting useful strategies for his own purposes (Halasek, 1999).

After my initial reaction to her piece, I really looked at her work and became more aware of the thinking behind the writing, of the plan she followed through. I was helped in this way when you said in class what her work looked like originally and when you gave us a description of her writing process. This really brought down the intimidation factor and allowed me to appreciate the process of writing. (Unpublished Student Responses from Semi-Structured Interview, April 2009)

Let me now provide an excerpt from the first half of D. Andrews' essay, to which the students refer. In a piece of evocative writing that merges writer interacting with nature and family story, D. Andrews revisits her childhood fascination with living creatures. Her "hook" is established and her sensory detail replete. As a reliable narrator, she re-creates a child's sense of discovery and the self-satisfaction she felt about her new experiential knowledge.

My brother, Curtis and I were explorers within the confines of our backyard. We loved to see the small pieces of life that would otherwise be ignored—grasshoppers, frogs, beetles, and the like. Curtis would even find small, skinny garden snakes and gently pick them up by the tail. We would look at the strange creature—Curt, from arm's length, and me from a slight distance. It would wriggle in the air awkwardly, contorting its slender body into a corkscrew as it was lowered delicately down to its familiar grassy territory. Once again on terra firma, its verdant form would slip into the grass and slither away, unharmed but grateful to be away from children's prying fingers. We would watch the spectacle, barely blinking.

It was in this spirit of discovery that we came upon the cocoon. It was a miracle of sorts, or at least that's how it seemed to us at the time: a brownish-gray shape made of gauzy material, hanging innocently from a rail on our backyard fence.

"Mom!" we shouted, begging her to come outside. "Look close! You can see the caterpillar inside!"

"Well, look at that!" She smiled.

We were proud. We knew all about caterpillars and Cocoon.

Metamorphosis was a popular topic in elementary school science classes, so we felt especially qualified to observe the real-life experience. Over the next few weeks, we checked in on our bundled-up little friend every day. With time, the gauze over him began to thin and, when the cocoon became backlit by the sun, we could see the silhouette of tiny, premature wings. We longed for the day that the butterfly would come out, fully formed and ready to fly. I hoped we would watch the cocoon break open, to see a born-again creature emerging like a chick cracking its way out of an eggshell. (Unpublished Student Narrative, Summer 2009)

Reversal of Roles: Classroom Students Inform the Student Model Writer

At this juncture, I shift the lens primarily toward the student classroom writers as editors of the student model essay. Attending to writers' concerns when reading the model, students subsequently contributed to D. Andrews' work with two important edits: in adding back story, and in her rewriting of the conclusion with more nuance and subtlety. Through this process of joint analysis, reflection, and revision, the exchange remained respectful. Students informally dialogued, had working conversations with text, with each other, and with me as they gained membership in a writing community of practice. In turn, the student model writer refined and embellished her piece as she met the needs of her audience.

Adding back story.

From my experience, revisions often entail filling in narrative gaps, thereby removing implausible shifts for the reader. During the fall semester, D. Andrews fast-forwarded from the careless killing of the cocoon by her cousin Barry, a childhood playmate, to Barry's funeral, where she mourned the loss of his potential. Barry died tragically at nineteen. I informed her during our classroom conference in the fall that I was not emotionally invested enough to care about Barry's loss since I knew so little about the young man. Prompting her, I discovered that Barry had addictions and that he had sped-driven along a narrow town road, wrapping his car around a telephone pole. Armed with this information, I suggested a possible connection between the boy's casual disregard for nature and his carelessness about his own life. I was modeling for D. Andrews the kinds of connections writers make, finding a pattern of meaning upon which to thread a thematic motif through the narrative. She incorporated my feedback for more back story to a degree in her next version with moderately improved effect.

More was needed. D. Andrews would learn to fill breaks in the narrative with detail in order to achieve a more "satisfying and expressive relationship among the parts that constitute the whole" (Eisner, 2002, p. 75) and to win the credibility, empathy, and engagement of the reader.

In the Spring semester class, a student, Dave, echoed my need to know more about Barry in his quick write, but he *expanded* on my earlier response with specific questions, providing constructive feedback.

I would have liked to see more of a back story on Barry. What was he like in high school? What were his parents like? What is the author's opinion of what caused Barry to become this way and not like the author? These are

questions that would make the story much more interesting. (Unpublished Student Quick Write [Journal] Response, April 2009)

I contacted D. Andrews via e-mail and informed her of the ongoing study of her narrative model. In the following response, D. Andrews addresses her readers' needs, readers who were "immediate participant[s]" (Bakhtin, 1986).

Thanks for sending the student comment. I'm so glad your spring students were interested and took time to offer feedback. It really is incredibly helpful. I have struggled with the idea of writing background....I know the story needs it, and it is part of my plan for my next revision. It's just one of those things that really needs to be handled delicately. (Unpublished Student E-mail Response, May 2009)

With time and distance and the respect afforded to her by peers, D. Andrews' tone was open and gracious. The interdependence among students who were not physically in the same classroom was evident to me. Here, too, D. Andrews acknowledges how challenging it is to find a balance in the rhetorical act of writing. We e-mailed one another on the need to inform readers enough while giving them ample room to make their own meaning. She voiced ethical concerns, as well, inherent to creative non-fiction, a genre where writers reveal truths about family and make public what is private. D. Andrews was becoming more cognizant of the skill required to mediate with language when writing narratives about our fragile and precarious lives. School semester was now over, but our communication continued into the summer.

I'm trying to find a good balance between honesty and compassion. I feel like readers have to be a need-to-know basis, but at the same time, they need enough information to draw their own conclusions. It's a very fine line for me to write along. (Unpublished Student E-mail Response, June 2009)

As D. Andrews edited, she gained perspective on the narrative essay as a whole and on its details. She was discovering the piece she had to write (Bell, 2007). To compose the back story that my student, Dave, had recommended, one more element came into the complex mix—the realm of intuitive consciousness. Emotions intensify that consciousness and propel the writer to find a way to translate emotion into an aesthetic form (Hague, 2003).² D. Andrews wrote to tell how she *sensed* it was time to write. Two years had passed since Barry's death. An anniversary of death loomed.

A few days later, I received passages that met readers' needs for more detail without providing easy, succinct answers. She wrote about Barry's broad shoulders, his work ethic, how he would wake up before dawn to help a local dairy farmer with the morning milking, how the two of them graduated high school in their caps and gowns. Barry was now a more developed character with whom readers could empathize.

b) Rewriting the conclusion.

We learn on a continuum from our students. When my spring semester class read the conclusion of the essay, students remarked that D. Andrews had strained too hard for imagery, that the passage contained too many metaphors. I had somehow missed this, but my students alerted me to a further need for revision. In her symbolic effort to contrast herself from Barry, D. Andrews wrote:

There is however, a difference between a plant that blooms and one that shrivels into the shade; a monarch butterfly and a moth that flies into the hungry orange tongues of bonfire's flame. It is the signal an antenna reads from its own struggling body, the perception of self when the wings are tickled with a flame's taunting warmth. The moth either flies to the fire, or retreats into musty darkness. Given the chance, a butterfly leaves its cocoon. (Unpublished Student Narrative, Spring 2009)

In the role of intermediary, I e-mailed D. Andrews about the students' response, which was collective and unanimous. Evocative as the writing was, I could now see through my students' astute eyes and ears that the number of figurative devices blinded me, so that I didn't know which image to recall, which truth to hold on to. D. Andrews was highly receptive to the feedback, particularly after time had lapsed and the emotional and psychological distance between herself and her work gave her a clearer view of how the words impacted one another. She was also receiving this feedback from a community of peers, not from a reader who assessed her work quantitatively. The writing classroom became what Noddings (2002) calls an "artistic medium," a democratized shared process of inquiry where change was called for appropriate to the needs of the students at that point of their writing.

By mid-July, I heard back from D. Andrews. Her process was idiosyncratic and complex. She reenacted how she found the pieces of the puzzle by going back to the origins or impetus of the writing with the poem "The Sensitive Plant" for a key to the meaning she would make. That poem was a variable "along with the right state of mind, poor penmanship, and an expansion on the prior draft..." (Unpublished Student E-mail Response, July 2009).

The last link of the narrative fed back into the first. In the excerpt below, the graduation brings the characters together. I present the final paragraph, which I suggest satisfies and illuminates without preaching, as the writer acknowledges the tenuousness of our lives.

Even now, we stand together in those pictures, smiling despite the uncertainty of where our lives are about to take us. We'll stay that way until, decades from now, the photographs age and yellow and decay. Until then, we remain in that moment when, despite any of life's injustices, we are together—linked inextricably to the great unknown promises the future has in store for us. Promises, which, in that moment, we each have a lifetime to fulfill. (Unpublished Student Narrative, Summer 2009)

Educational Implications

Alongside D. Andrews' noteworthy capacity as a writer is the inclusive dimension of the community of student readers and writers who depended on one another, who were inspired by her model essay, who integrated common elements from that essay into their own writing to good rhetorical effect, and who improved the model essay through their feedback over the course of time. Creativity was enhanced through the interchangeable roles students assumed as informed readers and writers.

Student classroom writers specifically benefited by the setting of goals and by writing with a keener sense of purpose; they gained from the hope they felt in approximating the student model; and they developed as writers from the figurative and structural features of the student model they included. In turn, the student model writer better solved challenges particular to the genre and to the trauma her narrative relayed through the feedback of student peers (in-class response) and teacher as facilitator (online).

Online feedback proved to be a viable teaching tool between myself and the student/model writer. While the student model writer assumed ownership, I facilitated by negotiating meaning when necessary and by offering suggestions as an informed reader. In examining this inquiry now, however, I envision a more visible role for a model student writer who could be brought into the class in real time, or could be incorporated, with that student writer's permission, more actively into the curriculum through technology. Students in the classroom could communicate their views and edits directly to the student model writer online through forums or blogging, for

example. Why not open up online dialogues in a more recursive loop between student model writers (from former classes) and current students so that they construct meaning together and revise more effectively?

I end with Jerome's words as he looked back on the semester, on his building of writing strategies and burgeoning self-confidence. Jerome makes connections between his past learning and experience as he looks forward to the future quality of his writing. By accessing this student model in the structure and design of my curriculum, I left space enough for him to develop and create with the courage writing necessarily takes.

I feel now I am unafraid to take risks. I know that it is acceptable to push boundaries. I am also more able to piece smaller ideas into a larger theme. My writing is still in the toddler stage, but I feel I now have a framework to work with. (Unpublished Student Exam Response, May 2009)

Notes

1. Pseudonym.
2. Hague works with the Jungian concept of intuitive consciousness which she synthesizes and applies to the creative process.

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Creative Literacies and Learning With Latino Emergent Bilinguals

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ABSTRACT

Research documents the benefits of implementing pedagogical practices that foster creativity in order to prepare students for a changing future and to meet the needs of emergent bilingual learners. Designing pedagogical invitations that make room for creativity is especially urgent given educational policies in the United States which privilege decontextualized, standardized learning aimed at “testable” skills, often in opposition to more expansive multilingual and multimodal learning opportunities. The current study explores how multimodal literacy experiences grounded in bilingual learners’ sociocultural realities stimulated creativity and allowed students to demonstrate and practice their creative abilities.

Introduction

As bilingual, former Spanish-English elementary teachers, we remember having space during the year to explore creative opportunities for teaching and learning. In the last decade, The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) era in the United States has pushed schools to prioritize test results, and by extension, test preparation, over culturally responsive and transformative learning experiences that invite students to be designers (Kress, 2003) rather than passive recipients of knowledge. This shift in policy and practice is limiting opportunities for more creative, and potentially more engaging, modes of learning and of expressing what is learned,

many of which are not measurable through test performance. As a result, students are often ushered into an artificial curriculum that does not respect their diverse profiles.

Research documents how this shift has disproportionately affected students from historically minoritized populations, such as language learners and children living in poverty (Menken, 2008), as many families with privilege opt out of neighborhood schools towards private or more pedagogically progressive contexts, and schools labeled as “failing”—overwhelmingly those that serve students of color—adopt remedial curricula in an effort to raise test scores. This has been the case for the students with whom we work: first graders in a Spanish-English bilingual program whose families are primarily Latin American immigrants. As a result of the growth of Latino students in U.S. public schools, there is an impetus on studying the educational progress of this population. The focus, however, has been on making conclusions based on standardized assessments, which solely measure basic knowledge and skills and too often document student failure rather than create opportunities for academic success.

Practices focused on factual learning for immediate higher test performance restrict students who are acquiring multiple languages—henceforth referred to as emergent bilinguals (García & Kleifgen, 2010)—who tend to perform better than monolinguals in measures of divergent thinking, or creativity (Ricciardelli, 1992; Hommel, Colzato, Fischer, & Christoffels, 2011; Okoh, 1980, cited in Kharkhurin, 2007), and who benefit from pedagogies which are personalized and employ multiple modes for learning (e.g., hands-on, visual, and kinesthetic). Insisting on teaching with the primary objective of passing a test is privileging some learners while failing those who don't fit within the social/academic U.S. norm.

This manuscript documents students' engagement with a technology-mediated biliteracy pedagogy that valued students' cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992) and sought to create instructional Third Spaces (Gutiérrez, 2008) that blended home and school. Drawing on notions of the multiple literacies needed for an increasingly technological and global future, our pedagogy did not ask students to replicate a teacher-directed model of writing, as is the case with many standardized curricula, but to intentionally utilize varied available resources, including multiple modes of representation, for actively designing (Kress, 2003) texts along student-generated purposes.

We found that as a result of participating in these pedagogical invitations, first grade Spanish-English bilingual learners created written products that

demonstrated enhanced creativity. Based on Irby and Lara-Alecio's (1996) characteristics of Latino bilingual gifted students and Kharkhurin's (2010) investigation on bilingual nonverbal creative behavior, we define creativity in student writing in terms of: (1) Complexity in format by integrating imagery, text, and add-ons (i.e., sticky notes or pieces of paper); (2) Richness of Imagery demarcated by number of elements (i.e., contexts and/or people); (3) Richness of Text which refers to multiple contexts or scenarios expressed through writing; (4) Amount of Text; and (5) Expressions of Feelings and Emotions. Below, we detail the theoretical frameworks of language and literacy learning that inform this work, and go on to examine creativity in student writings as informed by our study.

Conceptual Frameworks

There is consensus in the educational literature about the need to better serve the growing language-learning population across the United States (García, 2001; Darder, 1995; Flores, Tefft-Cousin, & Díaz, 1991). The increasing focus of such pedagogies, however, has often promoted acquisition of English at the expense of the native language. Literacy policies in particular have resulted in top-down curricula that emphasize decontextualized skills, rather than valuing literacy as a process of interaction that is not merely cognitive (Scribner & Cole, 1981).

Conflicting with such skills-based curricula, there is a long-standing body of research that documents children's engagement with literacy in ways that draw on out-of-school practices, community heritages, and cultural and linguistic resources (e.g., Campano, 2007), including use of multimodality (Siegel, 2012) and new technologies. Thus, literacy is not merely textual decoding but also the transmission of and participation in cultural events mediated through symbolic artifacts and language (Cummins, 2004; Dixon-Krauss, 1996; Vygotsky, 1997). Emerging research in the area of biliteracy provides windows into language arts practices that aim to develop more linguistically inclusive pedagogies (Franquiz & de la Luz Reyes, 1998; Medina & Campano, 2006). This includes literacy programs that foster a sense of shared power between teachers, students, and families, in which learners' cultures and home languages are valued (Cummins, 2004).

Our work brings together social practice theories of literacy as a process of participating in communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) within hierarchies of power (Freire, 1973; Street, 1995) with community and family funds of knowledge

(Moll, 1992) to create school opportunities for learning based on students' cultural and linguistic resources—making the instructional context a hybrid Third Space (Gutiérrez, 2008). This perspective draws on frameworks that conceptualize learning as a dialectic between collective and individual activities and sense-making (Engeström & Sannino, 2010) across a range of contexts, and whereby contradictions and tensions are not barriers but the source of new “expansive learning” (Engeström, 1987). The current friction between curricula geared to a testing model and students' family and community knowledge may, through biliteracy pedagogies such as the engagements we feature in this article, present opportunities for expanded teaching and learning that recognizes emergent bilinguals' funds of knowledge. We focus here in one of our findings: that such pedagogical invitations foster bilingual students' creativity.

Relevance of Creativity in Education

The rapidly changing nature of our society has implications for the kinds of proficiencies that will be necessary for a 21st century work force. Creativity may contribute to the advancement of science, mathematics, arts, and technology, and could fortify individuals' ability to problem-solve and adapt. According to Aljughaiman and Ayoub (2012), “creative ability is of great importance in the economic growth and development of emerging regions” (p. 159). Thus, education that fosters creativity supports students in meeting the unpredictable demands of their future reality (NACCCE, 1999), provides teachers with more opportunities to support and assess diverse learners (Antink Meyer, 2012), and impacts critical-thinking skills, motivation, and engagement (Amabile, 1998; Eyster, 2010; Lederman, 2007).

Pedagogically, creativity becomes especially important in the language classroom (Akinwamide & Adedara, 2012). Akinwamide (2007) enumerates seven dimensions of the connection between language learning and creativity: 1) Language is generative and results in creativity; 2) Creativity triggers learning; 3) Some people become motivated as a result of inspiration which makes them create something of value; 4) Creativity improves self-esteem; 5) Creative work in the language classroom can lead to authentic communication and cooperation; 6) Creative tasks enrich classroom work; and 7) Creative thinking is an important skill in real life. Despite its importance for the education of all students, but particularly as a key stimulus for academic growth for emergent bilinguals, creativity has not been well represented as a topic in bilingual education research, and does not hold a significant position in educational practice (Boden, 2001).

There is some research documenting the relationship between pedagogy and creativity. For example, Aljughaiman and Ayoub (2012) studied the effects of an enrichment program with three units on upper elementary gifted students' creativity. During their enrichment program, which lasted six weeks, students were exposed to a problem-based theme and created a project of their choice in groups (e.g., research paper, website, and video). The study resulted in significantly enhanced analytical and creative abilities in the experimental group in comparison to a control group. Geissler, Edison, and Wayland (2012) found that an instructional intervention improved college students' ability to engage in creative discussions. Fleta Guillen and García Bermejo (2011) document pedagogies that promote language, content, and literacy in English by stimulating the creativity of the learner through the arts. Rather than measuring creativity per se, the authors asked students to use their creativity in movement and music for telling stories, and concluded that these stories were means of internalizing language and literacy growth.

Research shows that bilinguals have enhanced creativity when compared to monolinguals (Ricciardelli, 1992), with the bilingual practice influencing the underlying processes and mechanisms of creativity (Hommel et al., 2011). The sociocultural environment—learner's home and community experiences—plays a key role in this process of creative and divergent thinking (Kharkhurin, 2010). Our instruction sought to capitalize on these home resources for learning within school contexts.

Our review of the literature indicates the benefit of implementing pedagogical practices fostering creativity both for preparing students for a changing future and for better meeting the linguistic and learning needs of emergent bilingual learners. The current study explores how literacy experiences grounded in bilingual learners' sociocultural realities stimulated creativity and allowed students to demonstrate and practice their creative abilities.

Research Questions

In order to explore bilingual students' creativity in the literacy classroom, we grounded our work in the following guiding questions:

1. Will an instructional sequence involving expansive literacy activities grounded in learners' sociocultural realities and mediated by technology result in first grade bilingual students' enhanced creative performance in writing samples?

2. What are the distinguishing characteristics of creative written products bilingual students generate when invited to share their home and community experiences orally and visually?

Methodology

Participants

The contexts for the study are two public elementary schools in a large Northeastern city. A total of 93 first graders participated in this study. Fifty-four children participated in the instructional sequence (27 and 27 in each of the two classes respectively). Fifty-three of these children identified as Latino, and all received free lunch. Due to absences, only 48 were included in the quantitative analysis we feature in this article. The majority of the children's families, and many of the children themselves, were immigrants from Latin America. The dual language program functioned on alternating days according to language. The Spanish teacher was bilingual; the English teacher did not speak Spanish, but showed a resource orientation to the children's native languages and an appreciation and understanding for Latino culture. Both planned collaboratively and were highly regarded at the school.

In addition, 37 bilingual students were in the control group (two classes with 18 and 19 students each). Thirty-five identified as Latino, and three spoke both Spanish and Mixteco, an indigenous Mexican language. Thirty-five participants received free or reduced lunch. Due to absences, only 28 students were included in the control group for the quantitative analysis we feature in this article. This school followed a rollercoaster dual language model, switching English and Spanish instruction daily while alternating language mornings and afternoons. The Spanish and English teachers met the same characteristics as those in the instructional group.

Biliteracy Pedagogies Procedure

For one semester, we met biweekly with the students and teachers in our study around a series of writing experiences that extended beyond print text to multiple modes and media (Kress, 2003) for representation. The biliteracy activities were designed to tap into students' creative, linguistic, cultural, and experiential resources, and were mediated by the use of the cameras to document their families' and communities' daily experiences. Our intention was also to shift agency from teachers to students regarding what counts as literacy and is worth telling in a school setting.

To engage students in the proposed biliteracy pedagogies, we asked them to utilize low-cost digital cameras to document: 1) their family meals and daily activities; and 2) their community experiences. As children brought their photographs to school, they generated oral stories around the photographs in small groups. From these oral narratives, they decided which visual texts they wanted to print out. These selections became the basis for writing using a variety of formats and themes.

The multi-modal composing consisted of: 1) Writing down stories based on the self-selected images; 2) Creating digital comics using Comic Life software and writing the dialogue and captions for each element in the sequence; 3) Drawing paper-based comics documenting their immigrant stories and family/community experiences; 4) Using talk and thought bubbles to render the perspectives of different figures in an image; and 5) Creating a *Collage of my Worlds* using photographs, labels, and art materials to write, draw, and symbolically represent their culturally and linguistically hybrid worlds.

Throughout, we intentionally emphasized to children that they could utilize any or all of their languages to communicate their stories, both orally and in writing. We also focused on multiple ways of conveying meaning beyond language, in particular through the use of visuals such as drawing. The implicit message students received was that their stories were worth communicating in school and were appropriate themes for rigorous academic tasks.

Children's work was bounded in a book and shared with teachers, researchers, classmates, and parents in a final celebration. Children took digital copies of their photographs and the book home and they were encouraged to read it and share it, and to continue to add to it over the summer. Before and after the biliteracy curriculum, children were asked to write a story about their families and were given unlimited pieces of blank white paper to create their stories. No further instructions or materials were provided.

Data Collection

This is a mixed-methods study blending ethnographic and participatory approaches with quasi-experimental quantitative design. Our aim in combining qualitative and quantitative data was to triangulate findings and provide a more robust understanding of our research question (Denzin, 1978) regarding the effects of multimodal biliteracy pedagogies as well as students' negotiation of such curricular invitations. The purpose of a quasi-experimental design is to test descriptive

causal hypotheses about identified manipulable variables. Quasi-experiments do not traditionally employ random assignment (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). The qualitative (Erickson, 1986) and practitioner research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) component of the study documents how students engaged with the multimodal literacy experiences we designed and facilitated.

Data sources for the project include: 1) Pre- and post-writing samples asking students to draw and write a story about their family; 2) Children's written products (i.e., digital texts, comics, collage); 3) Audio-recorded and transcribed class sessions, group interactions, and children's discussions of their photographs; 4) Fieldnotes and researcher reflective memos; and 5) Interviews with the teachers and students.

Data Analysis

We analyzed the qualitative data thematically in a recursive and iterative process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), identifying patterns both in the content of children's works, as well as in the process by which children engaged in composing stories. For the quantitative analysis reported on in this article, we focused specifically on students' pre and post bilingual writing samples.

The quantitative analysis followed several steps. First, the authors read all the writing samples to extract outstanding trends in the data. Then, in an effort to avoid the use of standardized test results that fail to fully portrait bilingual students' creative abilities, and based on the literature on the measurement of creativity, we identified several elements applicable to analyzing creativity in children's writing and drawing. We designed a creativity rubric as a lens to more systematically examine children's work. The development of the creativity rubric was informed primarily by two reports on gifted/creative characteristics particular to bilingual learners. One is Irby and Lara-Alecio's (1996) work identifying 11 characteristics of Latino bilingual gifted students. Among these characteristics, they include strong cultural sensitivity and familial connections, preference for collaboration, creative performance, and elaborate imagination exhibited through oral and written language and rich imagery. The second is Kharkhurin's (2010) investigation of bilingual verbal and nonverbal creative behavior based on college students who had emigrated from the former Soviet Union and spoke both Russian and English. Kharkhurin identified five verbal and 10 nonverbal criterion-referenced creativity indicators using the standard ATTA assessment procedure (Goff & Torrance, 2002). The identified nonverbal indicators were: 1) Richness and colorfulness of imagery; 2) Expressions of feelings and emotions; 3) Future orientation; 4) Humor: conceptual incongruity; 5) Provocative questions; 6)

Abstractness of titles; 7) Context; 8) Synthesis of two or more figures; 9) Internal visual perspective; and 10) Fantasy. These indicators informed the conception of the creativity rubric in the present study. The resulting rubric included five elements and is shown in Figure 1.

Creativity Characteristics	0 Points	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points
Complexity (format, imagery, and/or text)	<i>No images or text</i>	<i>Only images or text with no adds-ons (i.e. glued pieces of paper, cut out bubbles)</i>	Imagery & text but <i>separated</i>	<i>Integrates 2 modes of representation: Imagery with text or includes adds-on to product (i.e. comic)</i>
Richness of Imagery (number of elements, e.g. contexts & people)	<i>No images</i>	<i>1-2 elements on image</i>	3-10 elements on image	<i>> 10 elements on image or inclusion of multiple contexts (i. e. several consecutive drawings)</i>
Richness of Text	<i>No words</i>	Text describes <i>one</i> context (scenario, e.g. park)	<i>Two</i> contexts (scenarios, e.g. Park and home)	<i>More than 2</i> contexts (scenarios) <i>with elaboration</i> (e.g. describing what happens in street, then home, & then park)
Amount of Text	<i>No words</i>	<i>Up to 30</i> words	<i>31-50</i> words	<i>> 50</i> words
Expressions of Feelings and Emotions	<i>No reference to feelings</i>	<i>1</i> reference to feelings	<i>2</i> references to different feelings	<i>3</i> references to feelings

Fig. 1: Creativity rubric

Two raters who were bilingual in Spanish and English assessed the writing pieces' creative characteristics using the rubric. A total of five different scores (Complexity, Richness of Imagery, Richness of Text, Amount of Text, and Expressions of Feelings and Emotions) were obtained for each pre- and post-writing sample. One of the authors scored all the samples, while a second reviewer scored 38% of the products. According to Kennedy (2005), the current convention is that 20% is a minimal baseline and 33% is preferable for adequately assessing the consistency of measurement. Using Kappa coefficients (Cohen, 1960), the inter-rater reliabilities obtained were between .71 and 1.00. Landis and Koch (1977) characterized values .61-.80 as substantial. Nonetheless, to improve inter-rater reliability, cases of disagreement were discussed until an agreement was reached.

Prior to performing the statistical analyses, the scores in each characteristic of creativity for the writing samples students wrote before the instructional sequence in both instructional and control groups were compared to determine if the groups' levels differed significantly. One-way between groups' analysis of variance was used

to determine initial differences between the two sets of scores. As shown in Table 1, there was a statistically significant difference between the instructional and the control groups on pre-instruction scores on students' writing samples for the scores in all five characteristics of creativity.

Table 1
Pre-instruction ANOVA Means From Treatment and Control

CHARACTERISTICS	F	df
Complexity	4.43*	(1, 74)
Richness of Imagery	6.71*	(1, 74)
Richness of Text	15.74***	(1, 74)
Amount of Text	75.75***	(1, 74)
Expression of Feelings & Emotions	5.23*	(1, 74)

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

Consequently, a one-way between groups' analysis of covariance was conducted on the pre- and post-creativity scores from students in the instructional and control groups. The independent variable used was the group students belonged to (instructional or control) and the dependent variable was students' scores in the five creativity criteria after the instructional sequence. Participants' pre-instruction scores were used as the covariate in this analysis.

Findings

Table 2 presents the post-instructional group's means and standard deviations for the different characteristics of creativity.

Table 2**Means and Standard Deviations for Pre- and Post-Dependent Measures**

CHARACTERISTICS	M				SD			
	INSTRUCTIONAL N=48		CONTROL N=28		INSTRUCTIONAL N=48		CONTROL N=28	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Complexity	1.90*	2.08	1.64	1.57	.42	.71	.62	.50
Richness of Imagery	1.85	1.92	1.25	1.04	.80	1.13	1.24	.96
Richness of Text	1.19	1.81	1.82	1.61	.61	.84	.77	.83
Amount of Text	1.38	2.15	2.68	2.21	.67	.82	.55	.83
Expression of Feelings & Emotions	.48	.73	.96	.93	.65	.94	1.20	1.15

The results of the analysis of covariance, adjusted for pre-instruction scores in the characteristics of creativity are shown in Table 3, and illustrated in Figure 2. These results reveal that there was a statistically significant difference between the instructional and control groups on post-instruction scores in four of the five characteristics. Namely, the statistically significant differences were in: Complexity, Richness of Imagery, Richness of Text, and Amount of Text. Once again, all effect sizes were small according to Cohen's (1960) guidelines.

Table 3**ANCOVAS' Results Comparing the Post-Instruction Means of the Two Groups**

CHARACTERISTICS	F	df	df
Complexity	7.32***	(1, 73)	.23
Richness of Imagery	6.94**	(1, 73)	.09
Richness of Text	4.07*	(1, 73)	.05
Amount of Text	11.46**	(1, 73)	.14
Expression of Feelings & Emotions	0.06	(1, 73)	.001

*p<.05**p<.01.*** p<.001

The changes that took place for each characteristic from pre to post the instructional sequence are best illustrated in Figure 2.

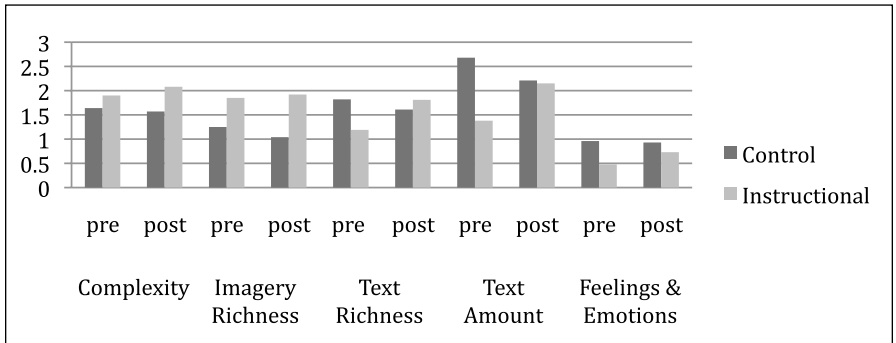


Fig. 2: Pre/post results for creativity characteristics

As can be seen in Table 3, the change in the Expression of Feelings and Emotions category was not statistically significant. When looking at the frequency of occurrence, children in the instructional group included feelings and emotions in their pre-instruction writing samples in 24 cases and 39 cases during the post-instruction. On the other hand, the frequency of occurrence in the pre-instruction writing for children in the control group was 34 instances, versus 26 in the post. These results show that, even though the changes were not significant statistically, children in the instructional group added more feelings to their writing pieces as a result of the instructional sequence, while children in the control group actually reduced the number of references to feelings and emotions.

Therefore, quantitative analysis confirms that the instructional sequence involving expansive literacy activities grounded in learners' sociocultural realities and mediated by technology resulted in first grade bilingual students' enhanced creative performance in writing samples for at least four of the identified characteristics. Amount of Text is the characteristic most impacted by the instruction, and Expression of Feelings and Emotions the least.

The qualitative analysis supports these findings and adds information to address our second research question. We identified several distinguishing characteristics of creative written products bilingual students generated after participating in these instructional invitations, which we describe in the section that follows through examples of student work.

Illustrative Examples

Our qualitative analysis confirmed that, at the end of the instructional sequence, participating children's work showed enhanced creativity in terms of Complexity, Richness of Imagery, Richness of Text, Amount of Text, and Expression of Feelings and Emotions when compared to the non-participating group. To illustrate this, we first present a representative example from Juan, a student in the control group.

Juan

Juan's pre-writing is shown in Figure 3 and his post-writing is in Figure 4.



Fig. 3: Juan's pre-instruction writing

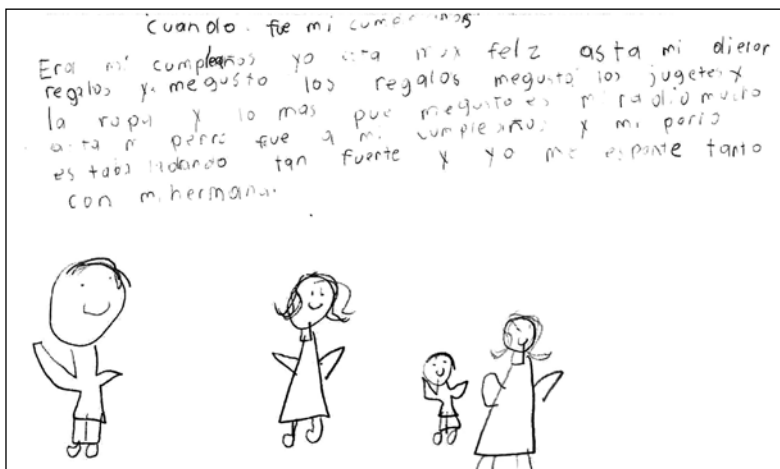


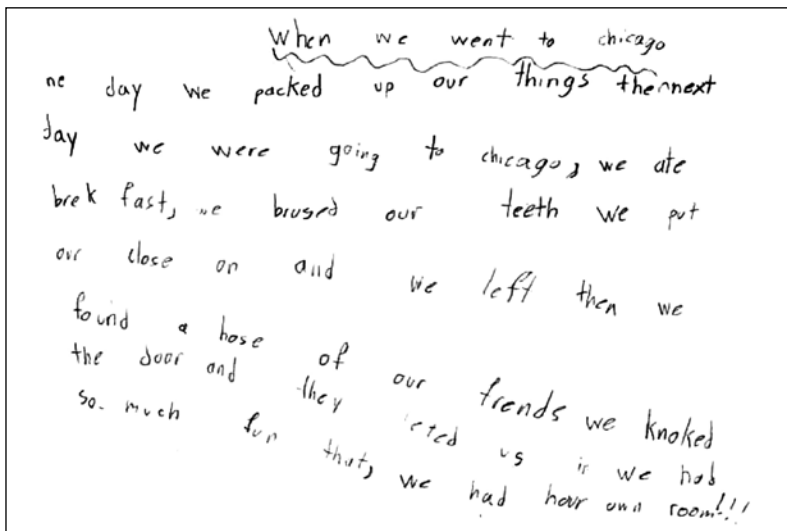
Fig. 4: Juan's post-instruction writing

A few differences from analyzing Juan's pre to post products can be identified, but these are not directly related to the creativity indicators. One difference is that in the post-writing experience the student wrote a title "cuando fue mi cumpleaños" [when it was my birthday], which was absent during the first written product. Additionally, the presentation of the lists of elements is more elaborated in the post than in the pre (i.e., "tacos, tostadas, arroz con habichuelas" [tacos, toasts, rice with beans] versus "me gusto los regalos, me gusto los juguetes y la ropa" [I liked the presents, I liked the toys and the clothes]). The analysis of these pre-post student products revealed no robust characteristics in relation to enhanced creativity. Both written pieces describe one context and include a general and simple picture. In both pre and post samples, the student enumerates elements of a sequence rather than elaborating in the story and including a variety of scenarios. The lack of creativity in the final products generated from students in the control group suggests that creativity, unless it is stimulated and valued, does not spontaneously increase as a result of students' schooling experiences. In fact, the results show that scores assigned to students' final products actually decreased in three measures of creativity (Complexity, Richness of Imagery, and Richness of Text).

Samples from students who participated in the pedagogical invitations revealed enhanced creativity as operationalized in terms of the described characteristics. Several representative sets of writing are presented below to convey the range of work produced in the class.

Julia

Figure 5 is an example of what we considered a complex final product.



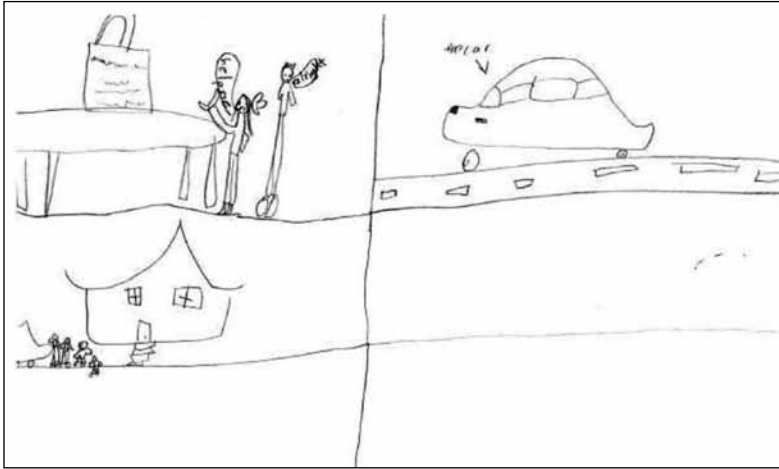


Fig. 5: Julia's post-instruction writing

Julia, the author of this piece, included a title and a story spanning three contexts (preparing for a trip, arriving at her friend's house, and her emotions once at the destination). Her work extended onto a second piece of paper, with visual representations of the story sequence. The first drawing corresponds to getting ready for the trip, and adds new elements to the written composition—a girl who appears to be the author saying “help me” while a taller figure, a family member, replies affirmatively. The second drawing shows their medium of transportation, and the final panel depicts four people arriving at a house. The white space on the page suggests that had Julia been given more time to complete the visual text, she may have included additional elements.

Comparing this final work with Julia's pre-instruction writing sample (Fig. 6), there is evidence of differences in complexity, and by extension, creativity.

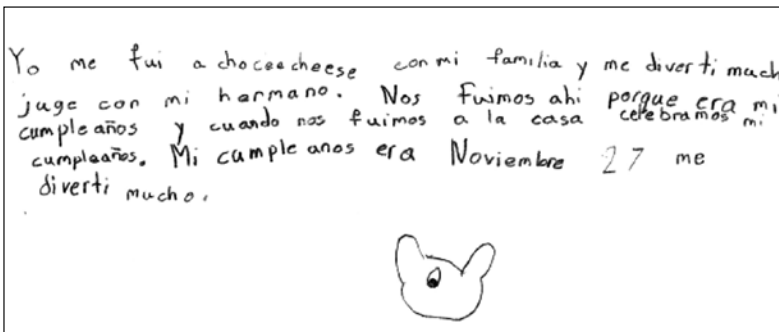


Fig. 6: Julia's pre-instruction writing

The initial sample reads:

I went to Chuck E. Cheese with my family and I had a lot of fun I played with my brother. We went there because it was my birthday and when we went home we celebrated my birthday. My birthday was November 27 and I had a lot of fun [our translation].

While Julia also included here references to feeling/emotion, the pre-instruction writing piece contained fewer words than the post (42 versus 69), and elaborates on two contexts of the celebration (the arcade location and her home). Julia also included a drawing in this initial writing, but it is not as developed as that of her post-writing sample. We can assume it was intended to be a representation of the Chuck E. Cheese character, though it is in the early stages of completion. In comparison to the post drawing, this image is simpler and less developed, containing neither words nor multiple elements.

This difference in the complexity of the drawings and the integration of images and written text was present in the work of most of the children who participated in the biliteracy instruction. Contrary to the common assumption that as children learn more and become more sophisticated in their writing, they no longer need the support of drawing, we found that complex writings were enriched by progressively more complex drawings and that written and visual elements were highly integrated and complemented each other.

Carlos

The synergistic relationship between words and pictures holds even in cases where the writing does not initially appear more sophisticated, but where complexity is conveyed through the integration of written and visual text across scenarios. A representative example can be found in Carlos' pre (Fig. 7) and post (Fig. 8) writing samples. Juxtaposing these works reveals enhanced creativity following participation in the instructional sequence.



Fig. 7: Carlos' pre-instruction writing

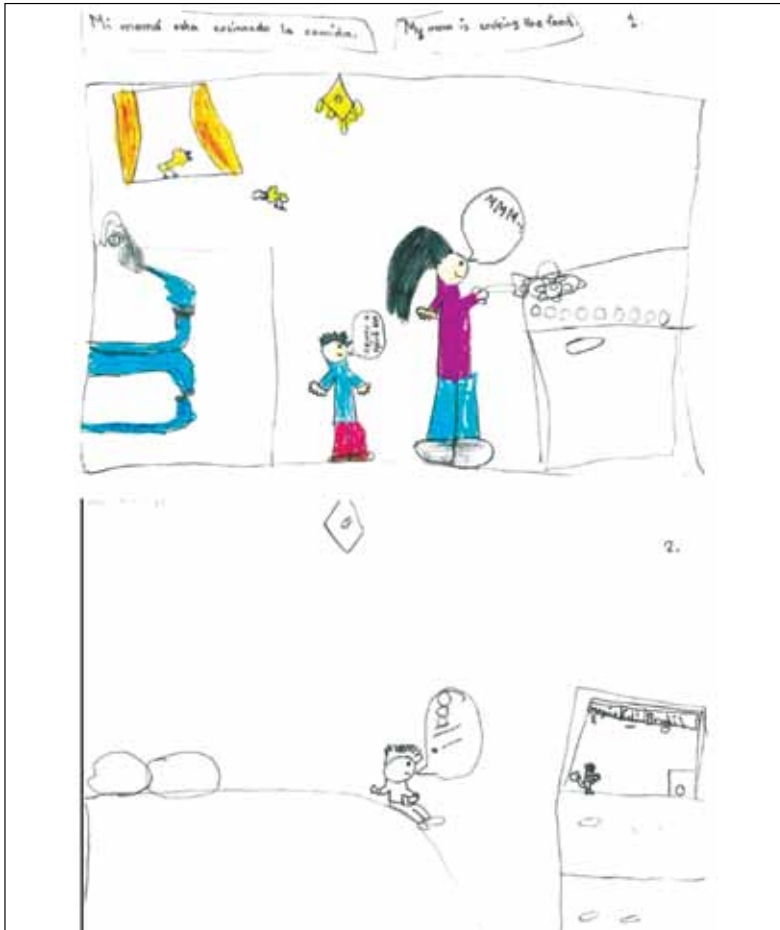


Fig. 8: Carlos' post-instruction writing

Carlos' pre-instruction writing presents a story on a singular piece of paper. He includes three complete sentences, and while both text and visuals are included, these dimensions appear only partially connected. By contrast, Carlos' post product includes two pieces with drawing and writing, which are closely connected. Atop the first page, he writes, "my mom is cooking the food" in both Spanish and English, an articulation which encapsulates the essence of that scene. The drawing below shows Carlos talking with his mom as she cooks. Carlos also included text within the illustration, extending the initial title/sentence as he explains, "I like food" in Spanish and his mom expresses how good the food is with "MMM..." The dialogue captures the interactive nature of the experience, rendered in the home language.

Carlos then moves his visual/written composition to a second page (carefully numbering at the top right-hand corner in the sequence), this time depicting himself watching a televised soccer game in another part of the home. The word "Goal!" uttered by the figure and the print on the tv screen "Megico[sic]: 2, Brazil: 0" and "Gol! [Goal!]" introduce important details. The two-piece work communicates important aspects of Latino culture, indexing both the particularities of Carlos' family and how they spend their time together, as well as broader cultural pastimes and even national allegiance, as Carlos cheers on his country's team. There is an innovative use of visuals to convey depth, as languages and traditions mix in Carlos' lived experience. Interestingly, the themes of soccer and family dinners are present in both the pre- and post-writing samples. However, through the integration of multiple languages and modes in the latter version, Carlos is able to create a more specific account of topics he considers important. Even the fact that Carlos chooses to pull out his crayons and include color is telling, since during more standardized writing experiences at the school such materials were off-limits.

Jackson

Another set of examples from a student in the instructional group provides an opportunity to unpack the affordances of biliteracy pedagogies that draw on children's languages and worlds through the use of multiple modes and media. Jackson's pre-instruction writing is shown in Figure 9 and the post-instruction writing is in Figure 10.

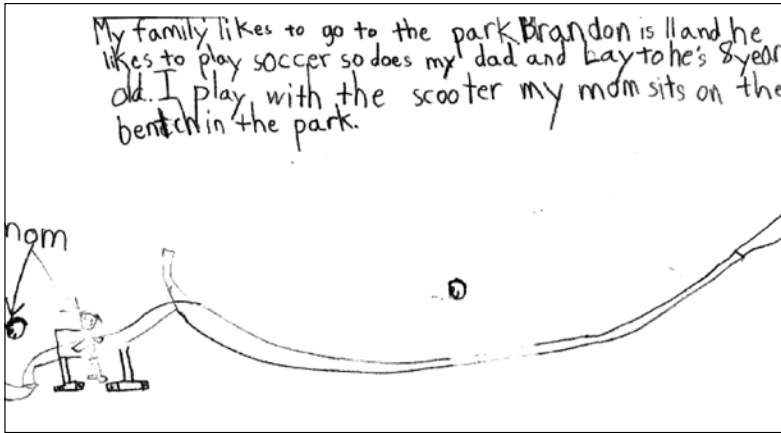


Fig. 9: Jackson's pre-instruction writing

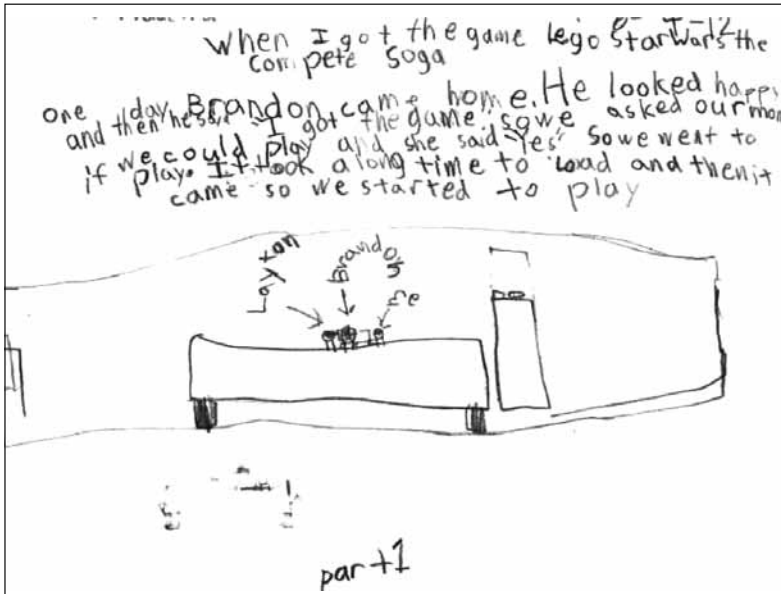


Fig. 10: Jackson's post-instruction writing

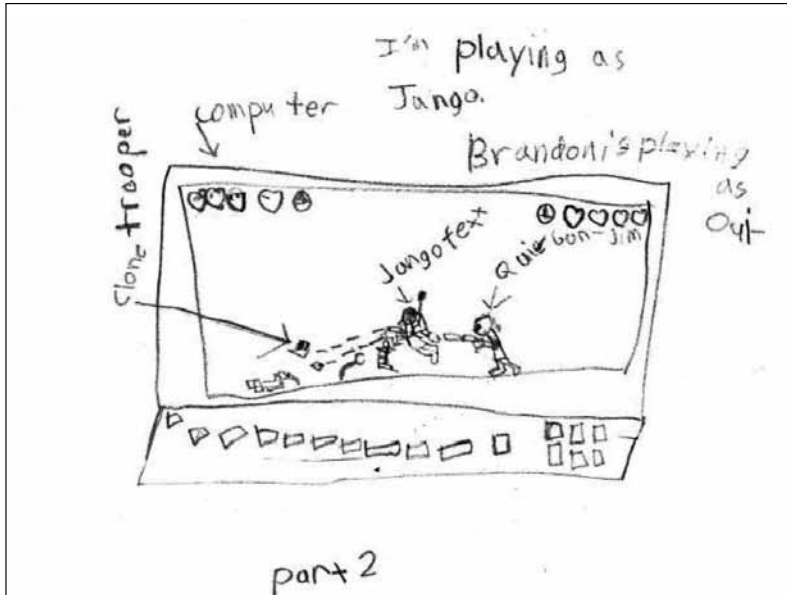


Fig. 10: Jackson's post-instruction writing (cont.)

It is evident not only that Jackson wrote more in the final piece, but also how he manipulated verbal and visual text to create a multipart account that echoes features from other popular culture texts, such as movies and video games. The 10-word title synthesizes the three-page story with impressive vocabulary for a seven-year-old—“When I got the game Lego Star Wars: The Compete Soga [Saga]”. Jackson’s detailed description includes story language (“one day”), direct quotes, and connecting words such as “then” and “so.” His visual text is not subsumed to the print, but extends the verbal account, providing details that would be difficult to convey with words alone. Part 2 begins with Jackson’s identification of who is taking on the identity of each character in the video game (“I’m playing as Jango.”). The visual image that dominates the page transports readers into the game itself, with labels denoting the characters, a battle taking place mid-screen, and icons at each corner denoting available lives and the remaining resources of each character. This rendering is complex yet efficient—what would take a great deal of space to describe in words is rendered visually in a way that conveys not only accuracy but also immediacy. Part 3 of Jackson’s work includes a conclusion to the movie/book he had created. By contrast, Jackson’s pre-writing more dichotomously separates verbal and visual modes, and does not exude the same level of enthusiasm for the topic represented.

Towards Inclusive and Creative School Literacies

Upon concluding our biliteracy study, we held a classroom celebration where the first graders could share their work, and were gratified by the overwhelming number of family members in attendance. This show of support is a testament to the possibility of creating school opportunities for learning that take seriously the value of family, and underscores the creative resources in the community that directly or indirectly inform the children’s academic work. Our interviews with students regarding this project show that they possess a mature understanding, not always shared by teachers, of the importance of integrating family stories and community experiences into their schoolwork. The children made comments such as the following:

A mí me gustó hacer historias y dedicárselos a mi familia porque me recuerdo algunas veces de cuando estaba paseando con mi papá y mi mamá a la panadería y a lavar. [I liked making stories and dedicating them to my family because I remember times when I was walking with my mom and dad to the bakery and to do the washing].

A mí me pareció bien porque pude escribir todo de mi comunidad y mi familia porque creo que los lugares que visitamos son emocionantes y divertidos. [I liked it (the instruction) because I was able to write everything about my community and my family, because I think that the places we visit are exciting and fun].

Students continually expressed their excitement for the project and cheered whenever we handed out printed photographs, cartoon strips, scissors and glue, or computers as materials for composing beyond only paper and pencil.

In the current educational climate, bilingual learners are increasingly subjected to standardized curricula that homogenize experience (Campano, 2007) and reward sameness at the expense of individualized, self-directed learning. By participating in expansive school literacy activities that took seriously the value of their heritage, students were able to exercise agency in communicating aspects of their lives traditionally left outside the school curricula. Through photography, comics, digital texts, writing, drawing, and storytelling, children manipulated and blended multiple modes of expression to convey aspects of their identities they identified as important. Rather than passively hew to a delineated writing trajectory, the flexible opportunities for composing allowed students to be active designers (Kress, 2003) of texts, and created contexts of shared power in the classroom. The multimodal biliteracy pedagogies also resulted in more creative, complex, and personal representations than the traditional one-piece essays school requires children to write.

When students were given opportunities to blend their cultural and linguistic identities with their academic pursuits, and when the curriculum privileged children's choosing of how to represent their stories given an array of verbal and visual possibilities, they flourished creatively. Furthermore, even though such analysis and discussion are beyond the scope of this manuscript, we found evidence that students' literacy skills also improved in the participating group of students more than in the non-participating control group. Our findings suggest that cultural engagement, academic achievement, and creativity are not mutually exclusive, but may exist in a synergistic relationship. We encourage further studies to investigate this interconnection.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the journal editors, anonymous reviewers, and Gerald Campano for their insights on previous drafts of this article.

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Steppingstones to Appreciating the Importance of Play in the Creative Act

Joe Norris, Brock University

ABSTRACT

This paper documents how the literature on creativity has inspired a professor to live and teach creatively. Through a weaving of stories with the literature, the paper demonstrates that praxis is achievable and can be fun! It is hoped that the stories will inspire the readers to take risks and become more playful and creative in all aspects of their lives.

*And each must fashion, ere life is flown,
A stumbling block or a stepping-stone*
R. L. Sharpe (1948, p. 306)

Prologue

Building upon Aoki's claim (2005) that teachers live in the zone of tensionality between the curriculum-as-planned (the hypothetical) and the curriculum-as-lived (the experience), this reflective paper first articulates how the literature on play and creativity has provided me with theoretical steppingstones upon which I have built my practice. It then provides a few concrete stories that serve as exemplars of how these influences have inspired me to live/teach/perform playfully. The aim is to provide a collage or buffet of abstract thoughts and concrete actions from which readers can choose morsels to their own liking that will enable them, if

they choose, to counter the hegemonic position of “work” and restore the work/play balance so necessary to our existence.

Robinson (2009) believes that we are taught out of creativity and Wagner (2012) promotes classrooms in which “intrinsic motivation and creative-thinking skills are far more essential than mere technical knowledge” (p. 57). I concur. It is my belief that the over-instrumentalization of the current educational system has created an ethos of convergent learning that desires/demands a predetermined answer/outcome and that the divergent nature of creativity, imagination, and play is systemically discouraged. The aim of this paper is to join with Robinson, Wagner, and others in promoting an environment of play both within and outside of the educational system.

Act 1: Artistry-as-Inspired

Research at the University of California at Berkeley regarding key insights that lead to successful scientific discoveries found in interviews with scientists that the main activity that seemed to influence successful results was play. The more these scientists were able to enjoy light, seemingly off-purpose games and activities while engaged in research, the greater were their successes at breakthrough discoveries. (Cloe & Goldsmith 2002, p. 11)

Whether one works, plays, or studies in the arts, humanities, sciences, or business, “play” plays a vital role in enabling acts of creation and co-creation. As described in the quote above, play is a disposition towards a task that fosters thresholds of possibilities, from which fresh ideas can emerge. Neilsen (2002) defines such a threshold as a “liminal space... a waiting space, a green room” (p. 208). Play, then, requires patience as one experiments with existing ideas until new ones emerge. The “when” cannot be dictated by a deadline or strategic plan. Whether it is something novel that seems to come from nowhere or is something that we knew but didn’t know that we knew, play acts as a midwife facilitating new insights, inventions, practices, treatments, or artistic pieces.

Harman and Rheingold (1984) remind us that the root of imagination is “magi,” meaning from another place. The Magi in the Christian faith came from another place and (magi)cians bring rabbits from another place through empty hats. The i(mage)s that we see through our eyes initiated elsewhere and our i(magi)nations create things that seem to come from a place unknown. To be creative, means to be in a state of openness to the unknown, a place of possibilities, a place that a playful environment fosters. Harman and Rheingold call this waiting, “incubation,” comparing

it with a computer going offline to work in the background, as other tasks are done. But the creative process is much more than waiting. Gordon (1961) claims that the perspiration stage occurs prior to incubation, as one gathers ideas and materials from other sources and commences to work/play with them in an attempt to have a breakthrough thought and/or new creation. A lot of preliminary work is necessary before one waits.

McGuinness (2007) claims that if previous “work” (perspiration) has occurred prior to the waiting, the stage is incubation; if not, it is procrastination, as the work must come first. I partially agree. Root-Bernstein and Root-Bernstein (2001) discuss how a “playful” spirit underpinned the “work” of the scientist Alexander Fleming who was infamous for his ability to play both socially and at work. “Nor did Fleming confine his playful spirit to after-hours only. He played at work – or, more accurately, he played with his work” (p. 247). Fleming drew pictures on agar plates and while the scientific community initially ignored him, these seemingly frivolous activities were the initial stages of his research with penicillin.

Sometimes play is the prerequisite not only to incubation but also to perspiration. Most often I need to play myself into the mood of creating/writing. Drama teachers call these warm-ups. Once there, I can get down to the task at hand. I often take this stance when I become blocked as a writer. I leave the task and “play” a computer game or tidy my desk, or... When I return refreshed, the flow, most often, returns. In my early years I considered this “goofing off” but through the insights of Harman and Rheingold, I now embrace “play” as a natural and healthy aspect of the “work” that I do. It creates a healthy waiting space. The perspiration, incubation, and illuminations stages may not be as linear as the theory suggests. The act of perspiration can take many forms and need not be restricted by rigid methodologies and techniques. Root-Bernstein and Root-Bernstein’s book, *Sparks of Genius* and Harman and Rheingold’s (1984), *Higher Creativity* document many such cases of playing in the arts and sciences. Intuitively playing around with things can be serious work (perspiration).

Cottrell (1979) blurs the line between play and work with the phrase, “Play is the work of the young child” (p. 2). Implicit within the statement is a trace to Derrida’s concept of logocentrism (Culler, 1982). The English language is based upon binary opposites with one term considered dominant and/or positive and the other subordinate and/or negative. In addition to denotative meanings of words, within them are previously embedded cultural biases. Day is preferred over night, with the perception that evil happens most often in the dark. Our culture has a longstanding history of considering males dominant and only within the last century and one-half has some

semblance of equality emerged. In research, objectivity (male) has been valued over subjectivity (female) and work, not play, is preferred in schooling. The list exploring the hegemonic structures with our language can be a long one, much longer the meager example below.

Table 1
Dominant and Subordinate Structures With Language

DOMINANT (or Good) Hegemonic	SUBORDINATE (or Bad)
Day	Night
Male	Female
Objective	Subjective
Reality (Fact)	Fantasy (Fiction)
Work	Play
Create	Destroy
Rational	Liminal (not in spell checker)
Certainty	Uncertainty
Science	Art
Left Brain	Right Brain

To make the concept of logocentrism explicit, each year, I ask one of my students to make a paper airplane and then throw it. After picking it up, I first talk about how creative that act was, outlining the sleek design and the ability to reshape a flat piece of paper so that it could fly. Then, I unfold the plane, commenting on the act's destructive nature and how difficult it will be to take notes on it, the paper's intended purpose. The problem is embedded within our language. We often choose to place value on one aspect of our actions, our desired one, ignoring its other characteristics. But Shiva is not only the goddess of destruction—she is also the goddess of transformation and rebirth. In every act of destruction there is an act of creation and vice versa. I relate how a logocentric analysis can be applied to the work/play dichotomy.

Musicians play instruments, athletes play sports, and in drama, as young children, we may have done role-plays for our personal enjoyment, but, at times, we rehearse them to show to others and call that product, a play. Our educational system reinforces the subordinate position of play with an implicit bias where subjects that use the word "play" are not considered core but designated as optional. Play is a

misunderstood state. The hidden curriculum (Flinders, Noddings, & Thornton, 1986) of schooling predominately creates an ethos away from the arts and creative acts in mathematics and the sciences. The hegemony of standardized testing practice that seeks convergent responses discourages the “thinking outside-of-the-box” or the divergent mentality so necessary to play and creativity. There is a lot of “collateral damage” (Nichols & Berliner, 2007) with creativity being but one example.

Phrases like, “Stop playing around,” “I’m just playing,” and “Get back to work” demonstrate the inherent privileging of work. Black (1987) confronts this by calling for the abolition of work by providing a counter hegemonic discourse. Wing (1995) found that children categorized tasks directed by another as work (extrinsically motivated) and that play was more autonomous (intrinsically motivated). Refuting Cottrell and others, she claimed that, “In contrast to the early childhood maxim ‘play is the work of the child,’ in children’s minds, play is not work” (p. 227). For these students play and work were considered distinct, with the power of logocentrism underlying the difference. Our young learn quickly the cultural denotations of words.

This socio-linguistic categorization, however, ignores the use of play in one’s early years. When referring to infants, we claim that they are “playing with their hands.” The term “work” is seldom used to describe the development of these psychomotor skills. Infants experiment with their bodies until their desired actions match their intents. The same happens with language development. An infant’s babbling is a form of play where the child experiments with sound until she/he finds those that match the culture in which she/he was born. Children play naturally with no imposed external expectations. Play, then, could be considered synonymous with (experi)ment and (experi)ential learning. Through natural living our young play around until they discover things worth keeping.

This occurs often in the arts. Artists and students experiment with sounds, images, and gestures as they explore and assess their emergent compositions. In fact, they form hypotheses, immediately test them and then make adjustments. Their work/play is similar to an immediate bio-feedback loop. Those in the arts apply the scientific method daily as they experiment and revise as they go. Interestingly, this is most often labeled play, not work; art, not science. I contend that the scientific method is frequently employed in every art form and class although it is not labeled as such. Like work and play, with creativity, there is also a blurring of art and science.

Play and work, then, appear to function more as adverbs than verbs. They provide our attitudes toward the tasks at hand. Any task can be categorized with

either of these two terms. One can “work” the piano or “play” with numbers. Imagine an accountant leaving the house in the morning saying, “I’m off to play.” While this may be more accurate, it runs against our cultural beliefs. The work world *ruiz*.

Play is also valued by engineers who often use the term play in reference to the flexibility of a structure. A bridge will collapse in the wind without some flexibility and a building will topple in an earthquake if there is not enough play in its design. Rigidity can be a dangerous thing in the physical, social, and educational worlds.

Some business literature also supports the value of play. Freiberg and Freiberg (1998) in their history of Southwest Airlines discuss the importance of humor in the workplace. They report practical jokes and playful incidents concocted by employees. They claim that,

These people are scrupulous about working hard and zealous about having fun—so much so that many people want to know, “Who these nuts are?” they are impassioned about treating each other like family...many outsiders think they are hokey and unquestionably nuts. (p. 3)

Southwest Airlines even has a humor manifesto. Similar to Fleming, Southwest Airlines encourages employees to play at work. The same attitude is found at the Pike Place Fish Market (Lundin, 2000; Lundin, Christensen, & Paul, 2003). Instructional management programs have been designed based upon these fish mongers’ abilities to play at work.

Bakke (2005) also recognizes the value of an intrinsically motivating workplace, a place in which people conduct tasks because they want to.

Winning, especially winning financially, is a second-order goal at best. Working according to certain timeless, true, and transcendent values and principles should be our ambition. A major point of this book is to suggest a broader definition of organizational performance and success, one that gives a high priority to a workplace that is filled with joy for ordinary working people (p. 18).

“Work”-places and schools need play and flexibility so that those who dwell in such places find them humane. To be human is to have humor, the ability to laugh. It defines us as a species. We are called to be creatures of joy in all aspects of our lives. Part of that joy comes from the pleasure of creating things (Buber, 1947). The call to

create is natural, our birthright. I (1989), referencing the Bible as a literary and/or religious text, claim that if people were made in the creator's image and the first image of the "creator" is that of a creator, then it is our right and responsibility to create.

But the ability to play and create is fraught with inter and intrapersonal obstacles. Robinson (2006), claims that "If you are not prepared to be wrong you will never come up with anything original" and I believe that our school system places more obstacles in the way of, than steppingstones toward, the creative act. Over the years I have learned to unlearn the specter of the judge and just do (Madson, 2005). I do bring in the judge/editor but at a much later date. Over time I have begun to realize that having the judge present too early inhibits the play so necessary to the creative act.

I remember taking a full-day mask workshop with Richard Pochinko in 1976 (circa) and being asked to lie on my back and with my eyes closed and paint the inside of the imaginary box in which I was contained. At first, I was careful, making certain that I got everything right when suddenly I was struck with the idea that the workshop leader had no idea what I was doing. My movements became freer and the colours more vivid. I switched to a roller in one hand and a brush in the other. I had fun painting inside and outside of the metaphorical lines.

Nachmanovitch (1990) believes that the biggest obstacle to creativity is fear of the judge and in Pochinko's workshop my externally fostered internal judge had disappeared. The paint flowed (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) freely as the cork to my imagination was released. Through twelve years of schooling I had learned to get it right based upon ever-watchful eyes. "Please the teacher" was deeply engrained into my psyche. The workshop was a turning point for me. I consider this event, at the age of 24, my creative birth date. It was on this day that I discovered the "courage to create" (May, 1975), way too late by my standard. From then on I embarked on a path of trying to reclaim my playful self both in and out of school and over the years many readings and workshops assisted me in appreciating the importance of play and utilizing it in my teaching, artistry, and living. This became my self-designed curriculum.

Fantasy is also a misunderstood component of play; sadly it too is often used pejoratively. It is not the "real world" as skeptics would argue. Prospero's claim that "We are such stuff as dreams are made on; and our little life is rounded with a sleep" (Shakespeare, 1972a, p. 1563) is marginalized. When we are told not to daydream, those "seemingly off-purpose games and activities" are discouraged, play ceases to be, and potential creativity is lost.

One steppingstone in reestablishing the value of play is reclaiming the role fantasy in our lives. Harman and Rheingold (1984) report that Elias Howe's breakthrough with the invention of the sewing machine came in the form of a dream. We ARE the stuff of dreams. The chairs that we sit on are based upon the imaginations of thousands of people from the first person who sat on a stone, to the one who found wood to be softer, to the person who carved wood to better shape her/his behind, through those who worked with metal, fabric, and synthetics and the designers who created the multitude of shapes and styles. Each day we actually sit on a conglomerate of fantasies. Dreams, while of value in and of themselves, can also have utilitarian purposes.

I do most of my writing after awaking from a deep sleep and often find that I write best (like now) when I first wake up. It is this state where my brain free flows and the judge is suspended for a much later future edit (also done). I call it the "twilight zone" (Norris & Greenlaw, 2012), a time when I metaphorically paint within my imaginary box. That twilight place is one of my thresholds to the fantasy world, a place where I can imagine. Such places need fostering and as artists we have learned to create our own thresholds and as teachers of the arts we assist others in finding/creating theirs.

While common practice is to distinguish work and play, I encourage the conceptual collapsing of this binary opposite, to move beyond Wing's observation and create a world in which we do things for self (play) and for the Other (work). Such is the call of Buber (1958). One balances self in the world of Others when one attempts to achieve an I-Thou relationship. One achieves joy, not merely from the act of playing, but with the recognition that such joy can be and most often will be shared with others. Play for the self alone can lead to self-centeredness. Unlike Black, I do not call for the abolition of work but for removal of its hegemonic position. With work to balance play, one becomes centered-in-self, recognizing that Others are I's to themselves. The restoring of the balance of work and play, in addition to epistemological and ontological reasons, has an axiological one. We share the sandbox, classroom, staffroom, and playground.

Act II: Artistry-as-Lived

Kopp (1972) believes that we can learn vicariously by listening to the stories of others as we resonate with certain aspects and incorporate them into our own beliefs and actions. Barone (1990) calls such resonance a conspiracy where the reader breathes (spires) con (with) the narratives presented. The following vignettes provide

just a few concrete examples of how I have attempted to live and teach playfully with the hope that these stories may serve as steppingstones for others.

Appreciation of accidents.

Nachmanovitch (1990) cites Miles Davis' slogan, "Do not fear mistakes. There are none" (p. 88). He claims that a pearl is made from a grit of sand and that we must learn how to make pearls. Long before I read this quote but shortly after I had taken the Pochinko workshop, I found myself cast as Professor Strychnine in the pre-musical version of *Spring Awakening* (Wedekind, 1912). After one scene we exited stage right and picked up umbrellas, ran quickly under the stage and back up the other side to enter after a short scene between the two. During a dress rehearsal the umbrella stuck upside down, forming a bowl instead of an awning. Rather than delaying my entrance to fix it, I went with it. In this production the professors all wore masks, so the director had to query who had the upside down umbrella. I raised my hand and he responded, brilliant, keep it. During a subsequent rehearsal, the rain came and the umbrella filled with water. This bizarreness added to the macabre nature of this funeral scene.

Had I tried to remove this metaphorical grit, the scene would have missed these elements. Since then, I have come to appreciate mistakes and advocate the looking for pearls. Mistakes can be regarded as unforeseen play that invites us to respond differently, like a tree to a summer breeze. Do we resist or accept?

In directing a scene about the many responsibilities of a teacher we piled a number of boxes in an actor's arms. In one rehearsal, they toppled. From then on, we made them topple. The acceptance was, in part, due to my previous experience with mistakes. I have come to recognize that creativity is not always deliberate, that one steppingstone towards play is the embracing of mistakes and, when appropriate, turn them into pearls.

Risk taking in teaching.

Nachmanovitch (1990) also claims that creativity is not about having unlimited resources but about working with the givens. Building upon this concept, I decided to take a risk/experiment and try something new in my teaching, uncertain of the outcome. I asked the students to wander the campus and return with a collection of "clean garbage." I explained the task no further. They returned with leaves, pop cups and everything in between. I then put them into groups and asked them to create the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet* with their collection and then explain their choices. The result exceeded my expectations. They played outside of the cliché

and found dimensions of the scene that expanded our collective understanding of the play.

The students working with their givens created something original. Had they been told to find things to create the scene, their creativity would have been reduced to what was already known. Not knowing the second task actually increased the potential for something new, as the known can be an obstacle in and of itself. This also provided an insight for my teaching/planning. From the experience I concluded that it is not always best for teachers and students to know what will emerge. We, too, must model risk taking and take leaps of faith. Visions can be restrictive. By keeping ourselves in the dark, we expand our thinking by playing with uncertainty. Since this experience, I have created many lessons with this discovered principle.

The acceptance of the intuitive, liminal, and dreams.

I was asked by a colleague to give a guest workshop on *The Sandbox* (Albee, 1988) to her high school drama class. Again, I tried something new. I asked the students to bring in a collection of magazines and tear out phrases and pictures that intuitively spoke to them in a way that related to the play. I joined in the activity and two of the images that I chose were a large fork and a man in a wheelchair. Once we each had a sizable assortment, I asked them to assemble their collection into a collage and find a relationship among what they had chosen.

For my collage, as I placed the wheelchair on the fork I experienced an “ah ha” moment. The play is about how the young eat their elders. Student comments were as insightful. The final part of the lesson had the students not only share their collages but also tell us, based upon their collages, how they might direct the play or design its set. Their articulation of their understandings of the play went well beyond what would be typically expected. Their openness to playing with another medium was an indirect intuitive route to new meanings.

Harman and Rheingold's (1984) examples of the invention of the sewing machine, the discovery of mathematical formula, and other breakthroughs that emerged from dreams reinforced my belief in the intuitive and I continue to create lessons in which I ask my students “not to think.” I believe that we can overthink and shut down relevant parts of the brain that are the wellsprings of great ideas. Too much planning can get in the way of the liminal and throughout my teaching, I encourage my students to play with their ideas in different ways, to take risk and leaps of faith. Most often this results in better work/play. My mantra is, “I don't know where I'm going but I do know how to get there.”

Trusting play.

I recently changed an activity that I do with a course of graduate students (practicing teachers). Previously, I created five centers, one with puppets, one with hats, one with Orff instruments, one with props, and the fifth was my computer with iTunes open. I equally divided those assembled into five groups and they took turns going to each station to complete the tasks written on the sheets of paper before them. During the summer of 2012, I eliminated the iTunes and puppets centers and asked three groups to just go to one center and play. As expected, initially, they had a tough time. Slowly they became more animated and genuinely built upon each other's ideas. The group with the props became pirates and invaded the hat group and escaped with some of their booty. The Orff group paraded around clanging their newfound instruments. Frivolous? Absolutely! But they achieved that playful state that was so necessary for us as we researched and wrote a play about the lived-experiences of teachers.

For me, play and creativity is about disposition, a state of being. While knowledge and skills are necessary, they, without a state of playfulness, lack luster. Nachmanovitch claims that we need both technique and freedom from technique and I agree. To be creative is to enter a state where you trust in the act. Madson's (2005) subtitle to "Improv wisdom" sums this state up, "Don't prepare, just show up". While desired, I have encountered various degrees of student resistance, as they have been enculturated into a means-ends (Peattie, 1960) mentality. Many expect certainty and are skeptical of an emergent curriculum.

Zone of proximal development.

As a result of student skepticism, I attempt to eliminate the fear of the judge; to promote risk taking and to take leaps of faith into the unknown (easier said than done when I am also the giver of grades). Even with third-year undergraduate drama students and after-degree drama education students, there exists a fear of being watched by their peers. Many continue to report that they censor their actions to avoid being thought silly or wrong. Their creative actions are stifled by such a disposition. I search for activities that wean them from such fear.

In one, I have them all in a circle, facing forward. Their arms are outstretched, horizontal to the floor and their hands are folded together. I ask them to raise their thumbs that will serve as batons as they "conduct" the music that I will play. I then ask them to turn out, so they see no one but themselves. As the upbeat music plays I add different isolations: "conduct with elbows, chins, eyebrows, tongues, knees, baby toes, etc." As they conduct the music, they are moving in atypical ways. Eventually, they

are moving about the room in parallel action (not interacting with one another) and reach high, low, to the left and right as I side-coach isolations, combinations, levels, and directions. I avoid the word, dance.

During the debriefing that always follows, students comment on the gentleness of the progression and that the facing-out enabled them to become comfortable with the exercise. To create a playful atmosphere, as teachers, we must determine both the stumbling blocks and steppingstones. For me, student comfort, relaxation, and trust are essential. I design activities that build upon where they are emotionally (Goleman, 1995) so that I can playfully invite them to other places. Adapting the theory of the zone of proximal development (Woolfolk, Winne, & Perry, 2006) that tends to focus primarily on cognitive ability, I apply it to the creation of inter and intrapersonal dispositions, systematically removing obstacles and building steppingstones to play. When activities do not succeed it is sometimes due to asking too much too soon.

For/with other.

In my early years I detested writing. My extroverted side considered the private time required for writing as punishment. My muse was elsewhere. That changed the summer following grade seven. I took the compositions written that school year, read them at a public speaking contest and won. With a sense of audience, creative writing found a purpose. It is no accident that my research work in both playbuilding (Norris, 2009) and duoethnography (Norris, Sawyer, & Lund, 2012) is collaborative. I think/play/create best with my mouth open in communion with the Other.

As a former teacher of English, I understood the reluctance that many of my students had to writing, and created some opportunities for them to write collaboratively. Photos were distributed to pairs and each, without conferring, was to write a sentence about the photo and pass it to his/her partner. The paper went back and forth with some students creating their best writing in response to the Other. They became each other's muse as they played collaboratively. They wrote for each other. According to Briggs-Myers and McCaulley (1985), seventy-five percent of our population is extraverted. Their best playgrounds/classrooms are interactive ones. It behooves us, as teachers, to create spaces with the recognition that the Other can provide a) a sense of audience so necessary for some as it provides a sense of purpose and b) that some play/create best in the company of others. Removing the hegemony of silence and creating opportunities for collaborative interaction can foster creativity in the majority of our students.

The importance of surrender (a confession).

It was the last day of classes prior to the December 2012 break. The previous week was a field trip and I was anxious to reestablish a focus so that we could depart with a strong understanding of the play that we were writing, a springboard so to speak, that would propel us into the New Year. I initiated a check-in with students and we commented on the field trip and clarified questions on the assignment due the following week. We did what I ascertained was the appropriate amount of playful activities. After the break I was determined to get to task (work). As the third-year undergraduate students sat in a circle on the floor, I passed out file folders to store our collective thoughts and was ready to begin when I was bombarded with a series of cascading comments,

Can we play a game?
(Students in unison) Yes.
Come on, its Christmas
Etc.

I put the stuffed lobster that I use as a talking stick on the floor and made it my pillow as I laid down in utter capitulation. I mocked tears. My mind raced. "We already had the obligatory warm-up. How dare they! When we get closer to performance, they will complain that we didn't have enough time. They just came back from a break. They should be ready by now!"

They were insistent.
Sure, I said
Can we, really?
Obviously they didn't believe me.
Isn't that what I said?
Yay! (in unison).

One student suggested Pterodactyl, a game that I did not know. It was an elimination game, the type that I seldom favour as these create winners and losers. But by now I was drained and listened.

"Everyone curls their upper and lower lips inward so that their teeth are never seen. Someone in the circle starts looking either to the person to his/her left or right and says, 'pterodactyl!'. Each person in turn passes it but if teeth are shown, that person is eliminated. The receiving person can reverse the direction by making a pterodactyl sound."

Lots of laughter ensued and for about eight minutes we played with about six people remaining. (Try to keep your lips curled in while laughing. It isn't easy.) We then got back to the task with gusto.

The irony of this story is that it happened after I wrote most of this paper. I too am susceptible to the ethos of the task. In my rush, I failed to listen. Sometimes surrender is also a necessary aspect of play. It means "cultivating a comfortable attitude towards not knowing, being nurtured by the mystery of moments that are dependably surprising, ever fresh" (Nachmanovitch, 1990, p. 22). Play requires a deep listening to the moment, accessing the present need and responding accordingly. Walking the talk is more difficult than it looks. Living in the zone of tensionality between the curriculum-as-planned and the curriculum-as-lived is a common state.

The above are but a few of the many experience that I have had in trying to live and teach in a playful way. We all have our stories, and by sharing them we assist others in reinforcing what they already do, provide new pathways to their imaginations, and/or point out obstacles to avoid. As the Bard says, "The play's the thing... (Shakespeare, 1972b, p. 935) so I conclude with the "F" word, "fun." I had fun writing this piece. Was it work or was it play? I'd say both. For me, the binaries have collapsed.

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Fostering a Creativity Mindset for Teaching (and Learning)

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ABSTRACT

Teaching is a creative practice that requires the kind of open-minded, whole-hearted, flexible, improvisational (yet knowledgeable), and performative orientation that I refer to as the “creativity mindset.” Fostering such a mindset amongst preservice teachers can be challenging, since they often see their future teaching-selves as altruistic yet authoritarian subject matter experts. Underpinning these views are narrow conceptions of teaching, and of how we learn. To what extent can an experience of creative, performative pedagogy transform these views, and foster a creativity mindset for teaching (and learning) amongst preservice teachers?

Introduction

Creativity remains a significant priority within education. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has published reports on creativity and schools (1999); The National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE, 1999) signaled the importance of maintaining creativity within curriculum and pedagogy in schools across the United Kingdom; and within the recent return to a national approach the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2012) features creativity as a general capability to be cultivated within all subject areas.

In order for creativity to be a priority within schooling we need teachers who understand the nature of creativity and appreciate its pedagogical value. However, creativity is not usually high on the list of reasons for choosing teaching. In fact, those

drawn to teaching often have stereotypically didactic views of teaching based on autobiographical experiences of the classroom (Lortie, 1975; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Indeed, some research indicates that commencing first year pre-service teachers choose teaching because they feel a) they are experts within particular subject areas, and hope to share that expertise with their future students; b) they are “fun” people to be with; and c) they envision their future teaching “selves” as friendly but informative authoritarian figures within a classroom (O'Brien & Dole, 2012). More extensive psychometric studies (see Watt & Richardson, 2012) illustrate the multidimensional nature of choosing teaching. These reasons include personal utilitarian motivations, intrinsic motivations, and ability-related beliefs. But such studies only serve to highlight our local experiences within teacher education programs. That is, when faced with visions of classrooms in which learning and teaching practices are represented as dialogic, inquiry-driven, creative practices—as opposed to the knowledge-heavy, didactic models of teaching and learning of personal visions—many preservice teachers feel challenged and uncomfortable (O'Brien, 2011, ATEA).

How do we effectively encourage preservice teachers to more readily embrace creativity as an important pedagogical process and agenda? In this study I was particularly interested in the perceptions and beliefs about learning and teaching that may be indicative of positive orientations towards the place of creativity in education. The aim was to foster a “creativity mindset” for teaching and learning.

Creativity in Learning and Teaching Contexts

Indeed, classrooms filled with dialogue, inquiry, collaboration, innovation, connectivity, and creative practices are the hallmarks of *effective* contemporary pedagogy (Gore, Griffiths, & Ladwig, 2004; Lingard, Hayes, & Mills, 2003), and not just the purview of creativity itself. So the pedagogical value of cultivating creativity in the classroom is well argued elsewhere (Jeffrey, 2008; Sawyer, 2012). What is missing however are more powerful conceptions of how teachers may *adapt* core beliefs or mindsets related to teaching, learning, and pedagogy in ways that more fully embrace the potential of creativity.

For example, there is general acknowledgement in the field that creativity, as it would be usefully applied to education, is not so much a fixed trait that an individual might possess, but rather a process of higher order thinking and engagement that is learnable by all (Craft, 2003; Jeffrey, 2008; McWilliam & Haukkaa, 2008; Sawyer, 2012). This perspective disentangles creativity from the Arts and related notions of uncommon genius. Instead, creativity is conceptualized as a sustainable, replicable

intellectual practice that transcends subject areas and informs innovation and knowledge growth (McWilliam & Haukkaa, 2008). This view makes creativity an “ordinary” process that is generally accessible (Craft, 2003) and teachable (Jeffrey, 2008), and certainly well within the reach of the motivated teacher (Sawyer, 2012).

In fact, Sawyer (2012) reviewed a range of research that produced recommendations for building creativity in the classroom. His synthesis of the “teacher behaviours most commonly associated with creativity” (p. 4) include: i) openness of attitude and perspective, an inclusive classroom culture in which collaboration and the cross-fertilization of ideas is valued; ii) the deliberate cultivation of surprise and the unexpected as fruitful learning opportunities, that is closely coupled with iii) trust and a safe environment for risk-taking, in which time is allowed for thinking and incubation; iv) the development of students’ self-efficacy; as well as v) support in the resistance to conformity of peers; vi) fostering of problem-finding, idea generation, questioning of assumptions, and imagination of alternative perspectives and viewpoints; based also on vii) the mastering of factual knowledge; viii) explicit modeling of creativity.

Jeffrey and Craft (2004) draw on extensive empirical research in their explanations of creativity in education, and make a useful distinction between “teaching creatively” and “teaching for creativity.” Teaching creatively involves the development of materials and approaches that foster students’ interests and motivation in learning. In contrast, and of interest here, is the notion of “teaching for creativity” which relates to the forms of teaching that intend to develop students’ own creative thinking and behavior. Teaching that develops creativity in students entails the development of the common capabilities and sensibilities of creativity (curiosity, creative processes and practices, etc.), the encouragement of young people to believe in their creative identities, as well as the development of a sense of agency and self-determination in the learning process.

Building on this work Jeffrey (2008) suggests that the characteristics of creative pedagogies include: the development of meaningful experiences that offer and reinforce social identities and roles for students; creative learning processes such as intellectual enquiry, possibility thinking, engagement with problems and a range of intelligences; and altered teaching and learning relationships (such as those that enable students to negotiate and/or lead learning).

The common thread across the discourse on creativity, teaching, and learning is that implementing creativity effectively within classroom contexts requires

significant reframing of learners, learning, and teaching (Jeffrey, 2008; Jeffrey & Craft, 2004; Sawyer, 2012). Sawyer (2012) suggests this is based on the differences between traditional views of classroom practices (instructionism) as opposed to more progressive, constructivist views of learning. Jeffrey and Craft (2004) hint at the need for inculcation into the values and principles of practice inherent within the creative process. Just as the foundation of creativity's place in education is anchored in a view of creativity as an emergent, tangible, replicable process of engagement—so too must the teaching of, and for, creativity be rooted in more fluid, flexible beliefs about how we learn and how we might teach.

Dweck's (1999) research on the relationship between personal beliefs and effectiveness or success seems particularly relevant here. In her work she makes a distinction between "fixed" mindsets and "growth" mindsets. People with fixed mindsets see their personal qualities (intelligence, talent, ability) as stable and unchangeable traits. Those with growth mindsets see such qualities as amenable and are thus more fluid in their view of learning and approach to life. A fluid or growth mindset seems particularly applicable to teaching for creativity. That is, teachers would need to see the qualities of their students and their personal teaching capabilities through a flexible, fluid lens in order to effectively facilitate creative pedagogical experiences. What might that mindset entail? How would we encourage its development?

Drama, Storythread, and Improvised Pedagogy—An Intervention

At the heart of this paper are the experiences of our pre-service teachers, documented as they participated in an extraordinary pedagogical event. Over the last two years a small contingent of our Bachelor of Education students have been invited to participate in, and observe, the unique educational adventure that is the Pullenvale Environmental Education Centre or PEEC (<http://peec.org.au/>). The PEEC offers a range of educational resources and support processes, but most significantly provides on-site learning experiences for primary or elementary school children from across the state. These learning experiences incorporate creative teaching strategies and in particular are anchored in the pedagogical practice of *Storythread* (Education Queensland, 1994). *Storythread* pedagogy aims to connect learners to real people, places, issues, and events, and to help them understand and apply curriculum content, through the use of story and drama, investigations, games and play, attentiveness, deep reflective responding, creative response and interpretive walks and engagement in the environment. A *Storythread* unit of learning begins with a story (often written and created by the teachers at PEEC) that captures a key issue in need of further exploration. At PEEC these stories are often based on environmental

sustainability and/or the impact of human change on nature. Classroom teachers are provided with a range of preliminary resources and materials to introduce their students to the story, and they facilitate introductory and exploratory activities to build engagement in the story's themes over several weeks. This gives the students an opportunity to engage authentically and deeply with the issues at hand, and to build knowledge and understanding of the related curriculum content. Eventually, the students are able to "step into" the story as they attend an immersive excursion at PEEC, facilitated by the talented PEEC teachers who role play various characters and scenarios, and who over the course of the event engage the students in puzzling over and solving the particular dilemma or problem.

Storythread pedagogy has similarities to Scottish Storyline (Bell, Harkness, & White, 2007) in that a) fictionalized stories are used/created to capture and represent curriculum content in its application to authentic social scenarios; that in turn b) act as stimuli for active learning processes that aim to enlarge and bring the concepts of note "to life" for students through the use of drama, role play, visual arts, inquiry, collaborative problem solving, and similar strategies over time; and therefore c) foreground the *processes* of active and inquiry learning as a pedagogical priority. In contrast, Storythread appears to distinguish itself from the Scottish Storyline approach by its emphasis on engaging students in extended dialogue and focused attentiveness activities, and in the case of PEEC, by its emphasis on the exploration of values related to the environment. The potential of these strategies for engaging even very young children in new levels of awareness and commitment to action shows much promise (Tooth & Renshaw, 2012; Renshaw & Tooth, 2009).

Importantly for this study, both Storythread and Scottish Storyline pedagogies recast the role of the teacher. As with many active learning pedagogies, teachers design active learning scenarios (set a context, provide potentially fruitful resources, design and sequence learning activities to engage students in various forms of investigations, etc.), and artfully facilitate emergent learning experiences (monitor and guide learning, whilst restraining from traditional forms of "content" delivery). These forms of pedagogy are highly dialogic, and require the kind of "improvisational" teaching that Sawyer (2004) refers to. Indeed, they require and perhaps epitomize Schön's notions of reflection-in-action (1983). In Storythread (and potentially in Scottish Storyline) pedagogies teachers do not provide students with extensive content, but rather engage and facilitate their students' search for information, scaffold and guide preliminary ideas, subtly sharpen and refine emerging understandings of content, and carefully navigate the development of values and potential action—all as part of the pedagogical process. It is this "shift" in pedagogical perspective (from content

delivery to creative and active learning facilitator) that can be most challenging for preservice teachers. Few will have experienced the extensive use of story, drama, role-play, and fiction as mechanisms for engaging in curriculum content. And while many are keen to be "great" teachers who can motivate and inspire their students, most are unsure about *how* they can achieve this in a classroom setting. For these reasons I hoped that this intervention would effectively offset the sometimes didactic models of pedagogy our preservice teachers experience as university students, and that they would begin to comprehend the potential of more creative pedagogies within their own practice.

For the intervention, participating pre-service teachers were provided with a two-part experience. The first part entailed an all-day professional development workshop in which the staff at PEEC review and discuss their unique approach and the storythread pedagogy. This workshop covers and discusses the extensive range of supporting materials and educational resources that the centre develops and provides to schools. The second part involves a return visit to the PEEC Centre and an opportunity to observe and follow the activities of visiting school children as they participate in an all-day "in the story" experience. These follow-up sessions are typically five hours in length, and comprehensive in nature. Only two preservice teachers were permitted to attend any particular follow-up session as these days were primarily designed for visiting schools, and the presence of additional visitors needed to be minimized. These days proved invaluable as they provided a first-hand experience of the storythread pedagogy as it was implemented with up to 60 school children and their teachers/carers.

As part of the attendance requirements of the PEEC experience, all participating preservice teachers (n=24 in 2011; n=23 in 2012) completed a short answer survey in which they were asked to self-report beliefs and perceptions related to learning, teaching, and their potential future self as teacher. The survey had a number of items, but I have selected items as having particular relevance to this paper's focus, including responses to themes such as:

- *I see learning as...*
- *I describe myself as the kind of teacher who...*
- *A surprising or unexpected theme/idea/understanding I have taken from this experience is...*
- *This experience has helped me to...*

Responses to each item were collated and thematically analyzed (Flick, 2009). Soon after the PEEC experience the preservice teachers were required to complete an interview. Interviews were based on a simple schedule of themes that asked participants to report experiences and new understandings gleaned from the experience, and included questions such as:

- *How did learning and teaching happen in this context?*
- *What surprised you most about learning and teaching in this experience?*
- *What is your understanding of learners and learning?*
- *Tell me about the teaching and learning practices that most impressed you and why?*

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and a thematic analysis was undertaken to identify and illustrate the variation of responses to each question or theme.

The Emerging Nature of a Creativity Mindset

The overarching focus of this project was to track the impact of an intervention that enabled the preservice teachers to be explicitly trained in, and to observe the implementation of, a highly creative pedagogy. I hoped that this intervention would evoke transformation: an opening up of narrow views of learning and teaching. My hunch was that this experience would elicit new ways of thinking about learners and learning; teachers and teaching; the nature of pedagogy; and about themselves as future teachers. And that in turn, perhaps less directly, I felt preservice teachers would begin to orient towards the powerful potential of creativity in learning and teaching.

Just as such perceptions can be seen as indicators of shifting teacher identities, of “becoming pedagogical” (O’Brien et al., 2012), so too are they indicators of how our preservice teachers are orienting towards their future pedagogical self.

In this section I exemplify and discuss preservice teacher perceptions that emerged in relation to learning, teaching, and pedagogy, and frame them within the qualities of teaching for creativity that have been laid out in the recent literature.

Views of Learning and Learners

It is not uncommon for preservice teachers to assume that students learn through relatively passive processes in which the teacher, textbook, or some other external source provides the “knowledge” to be learned. While some hold more

sophisticated views of learning in the broadest sense, most equate classroom or school-related learning with traditional models of instruction and simplistic learning theories (such as information processing and memory). At best, preservice teachers acknowledge that it is possible for learning to occur through creative means, but very few have direct experiences or in-depth understandings about how this might happen.

The PEEC intervention and in particular the experience of storythread and drama in pedagogy elicited broader views of the nature of learning. That is to say, the opportunity to observe that school students first had as they participated in role-plays and dramatized illustrations of various events, as well as in interpretive walks and guided attentiveness sessions seemed highly influential in broadening the pre-service teachers' views of learning:

It was intriguing and interesting. I felt that it was the way most students learn. Children have more ways to learn other than from computers. Opportunities to learn never cease. (Chris, 2011)

I now see learning as an active participation in the process of pedagogy. (Eric, 2012)

I learned that in order to get kids to respect the environment, you can't just tell them that they should, they need to experience the environment and be in a place and be a part of it and then they will respect the environment and actually want to protect it and preserve it without having ideas forced upon them. (Beth, 2011)

For some preservice teachers these observations made them aware of assumptions they had made about learning and of what learning could entail:

I've always said it's a bad thing to assume you know what your students are thinking or learning, and this was sooo clear today. The kids I thought hated the day because they said this a number of times were actually the ones that had all the right answers at question time. So for me this demonstrates not only never assume but also knowledge and understanding can reach a child even if they are not "having fun" or rather they were having fun. (Loris, 2012)

Something we are constantly doing in all kinds of ways. You can learn things even when you don't realize you're learning! (Elizabeth, 2012)

Others noted the significance of the students' agency and involvement in this pedagogical situation. As the PEEC teachers enacted various scenarios and invited the school students to join in "in character," the preservice students noted the potential power of storythread and drama to enable even very young students to engage and participate in their own way. To "invest" emotionally and intellectually:

[I was surprised at] how implicitly it can occur, and how the children's curiosity is a natural catalyst for learning and discovery. (Paige, 2012)

I was surprised at... That everyone can appreciate it in their own way. I spoke to a small group of boys who were hesitant to express their feelings to me, and the ways in which they would go about solving some problems in the Hoodwinked scenario because (and I'm only speculating, because I got the sense that this was the case...it certainly was when I was in grade 5!) they were "too cool" for the activities the rest of the class were participating in...but as time progressed they were completely engaged with the story and were enjoying themselves, and were subsequently some of the more active members in the discussions Lucinda facilitated. (Stephanie, 2012)

That it was not all directly linked to the topic/story of the day. The reflection of the grade 3 student who said she had learned such an amazing understanding of respect simply blew me away—that is, when asked what they has learned one particular little girl responded with some along the lines of "That when we treat people with respect and help them when they need help our friendship will go a long way." She was a grade 3 student! (Whitney, 2012)

What was most striking to the preservice teachers was the compelling nature of a creative pedagogy for engaging and holding the intellectual and emotional interests of the students. As the following extracts illustrate, the preservice teachers developed an emerging awareness of, and a renewed appreciation for, the impact of a meaningful learning experience that was at the same time comprehensively informative:

I think learning is a powerful tool in the lives of those who value it, and provides them with more opportunities to reach their potential in life. Even a basic understanding of certain ideas and concepts provides individuals with the capacity to question...and I think this is important in recognising your place in the world and how to prevail above any given situation. You can't let anyone other than yourself dictate your life—learning provides new experiences and the resources to allow individuals to make their own informed decisions. (Stephanie, 2012)

The students' growing passion as they became more immersed in the activity—I think that by the end of it, they all had a pretty strong ecological identity and sense of right and wrong regarding the environment...they became more passionate, it was really lovely to see. (Stephanie, 2012)

These extracts illustrate significant shifts in the preservice teachers' views of learning and learners. These shifts reflect an emerging orientation to important aspects of creativity in learning and teaching. For example, their apprehension of the process of learning broadened and they became aware of the potential for learning to occur in the kind of "altered spaces" that Jeffrey (2008) describes. As the first few extracts indicate, the preservice teachers showed some surprise that learning could (and should) involve more than direct instructional methods (see particularly Chris, Eric, and Beth's comments), yet still include and creatively build on a strong foundation of knowledge (as Sawyer, 2012 has argued). We see glimmers of more complex understandings of learning as being driven by curiosity and personal engagement (much as Jeffrey & Craft, 2004 have suggested). And as the last two extracts in this section indicate, the preservice teachers were deeply impressed by the genuine level of engagement and "passion" the students developed during the learning experience. Understanding the power that meaningful engagement as part of creative teaching and learning entails is a common thread in the literature (Craft, 2003; Jeffrey & Craft, 2004; Sawyer, 2012).

Views of Teaching and Teachers

Just as the preservice teachers began to change their views about learning and learners, they also became explicitly aware of the well-crafted, deliberate practices of the PEEC teachers. They were impressed by the way in which simple classroom management strategies that were consistently integrated into the pedagogy were effective without stopping the flow of the activity.

At one level this shift was focused on the potential of employing interest and engagement for offsetting (or managing) the students' behavior:

There were few behavioral issues, and when there was the teacher simply found a moment to address it in a calm way. (Aisla, 2012)

The teachers' form of behavioural management—keeping the students engaged, and reinforcing the "RESPECT" high-5 thing; the children becoming so genuinely immersed in the learning. (Lorraine, 2012)

But at another level the preservice teachers also became aware that teachers aim to do much more than just “teach the curriculum” and “control the class.” They connect to what is interesting and relevant to students, provide safe learning environments, collaborate in the learning process, and direct their attention to facilitating connection and negotiated engagement (letting behavior management take care of itself):

Using a different approach such as this challenges students on many levels. What they learn is not just facts on paper, but also attitudes, problem solving, social and community involvement, and psychological development in learning behaviours. (Eric, 2012)

A teacher has to help the students want to learn—the teacher needs to engage with & interest them (Elizabeth, 2012)

There is more to teaching than pedagogy, it is also about bringing together the students in a safe learning environment. (Felicia, 2012)

How involved the teachers got into the acting out of the story, but took a back seat when it came to behavior management. (Morag, 2012)

To use story telling excites children and extends their knowledge. The way the teacher excitedly engaged with students while upholding control. (Aisla, 2012)

Some preservice teachers were surprised and impressed by the deliberate positivity and enthusiasm for learning cultivated by the teachers. This is an important shift as many preservice teachers problematize the role of teachers and can easily feel too overwhelmed by various pressures and opt out of teaching creatively, or teaching for creativity. As this extract illustrates, the PEEC teachers modeled a highly positive learning relationship as well as some concrete strategies for engaging learners, which, in turn, inspired and influenced the preservice teachers:

The positive nature of the staff of PEEC. They were incredibly knowledgeable and positive about their work and it was a real pleasure and inspiration to work with educators who were so positively responsive to not only the students’ experiences but ours as well. They had a solution for every problem. The value of their work at PEEC in many ways is so simple but so complex it was interesting to see how it had been overlooked in my own education at primary and high school (I never had an opportunity like this at school). (Loris, 2012)

And as the following extract captures, the in-depth observation of teachers teaching creatively “in action” afforded some deeply impressive and long-lasting shifts in understanding the potential role, position, and relationship to students that teachers can cultivate:

[A surprising thing I noticed about teaching was] how to change the position of power in a classroom so that students are able to take control of their learning (and in that discover their own learning). (Beth, 2011)

These renewed views of teachers and teaching experienced by the preservice teachers reflect a growing awareness of creativity in teaching. These included many of the teacher behaviours commonly linked to creativity and learning synthesized by Sawyer (2012) and the characteristics of creative teaching outlined by Jeffrey (2008). These included: the development of trust, a sense of safety and self-efficacy for students (indicated here by Elizabeth, Felicia, and Morag); the modeling of positive and generative creative processes and behaviours (in Ailsa and Loris’s comments); as well as a range of related cognitive, social, and emotional outcomes (outlined by Eric). Beth’s comment is both indicative and significant. For a great majority of preservice teachers the greatest challenge to their emergent teaching identity and practice is the stubborn vision of teacher as “sage on the stage”—even those willing to consider alternative pedagogies struggle to see their roles and place as teacher. The extended observation of the PEEC teachers in action appeared to loosen these views significantly. Instead, we see evidence of the preservice teachers awareness of *altered* teaching and learning relationships (Jeffrey, 2008) and the understanding that in stepping aside from a “leadership” role per se, students could take control and discover their own learning.

Views of Pedagogy

Setting aside the complexities surrounding its meaning, I use the term pedagogy here to refer to the interrelationship and qualities of interaction that arise between teachers and students as they collaboratively navigate and negotiate the learning space. Just as our preservice teachers initially hold simplistic views of learning and perceptions of teaching as an authoritarian, instructional process, they assume pedagogy to be a highly didactic, linear, and structured relationship. The opportunity to observe teachers implementing creative, active learning forms of pedagogy certainly disrupted these assumptions, but in ways that seemed to enable the preservice teachers to readily embrace an alternative perspective and philosophy almost instantaneously.

Storythread makes good use of narratives and the story-telling experience to engage students in some core concepts and life-like contexts. The teachers at PEEC also use storythread to set up generative, problem finding and problem “responding” learning scenarios. These often take the form of extended dialogues in which the PEEC teacher is “in character” and leads a discussion asking the students to solve a problem or generate some potential solutions. Our preservice teachers found the educational potential of this pedagogy to be highly illuminating and personally inspiring:

I believe narrative is a wonderful means of learning and combined with the other elements of Storythread Pedagogy (attentiveness and reflection) forms a powerful teaching tool. I'm a strong believer that learning needs to be situated in real-life contexts in order for it to be memorable, and that's exactly what Storythread aims to achieve. I also love the creative, hands-on elements behind it and would love to learn how to inspire my students to use their whole bodies when learning (e.g., full sensory, mind body engagement). (Anna, 2011)

[What surprised me was] the idea of creating that interesting way of teaching through stories and drama linking subjects together. (Nell, 2011)

[What surprised me was]...It turned learning into an adventure with the children the adventurers. (Whitney, 2012)

As these comments indicate, the preservice teachers began to more fully appreciate the potential of this pedagogy for establishing (as Jeffrey & Craft, 2004; and Jeffrey, 2008 propose) relevance of meaning for both individual students and the group; ownership of knowledge; control of the learning process by students; and innovation and intellectual inquiry:

The excitement of the kids—it was almost tangible and certainly contagious (so perhaps they escalated because of me?) Arrival, entering the “rocket ship,” meeting Arlec, in the forest while exploring and discovering new and interesting things...the level of excitement would not have veered below 8 out of 10. (Paige, 2012)

Extended role-playing as they did with Hoodwinked; I had not anticipated that they would be effective with students as old as grade 5, anticipated that they would be made more apathetic by peer pressure—now that I know they can be engaged with this method I would definitely like to incorporate it. (Rachel, 2012)

Shifting a person's perception, when you learn something, especially through experiencing it hands on. It is a journey, different for each person, individual, absorbing and using information at different paces and levels. And, the more tools, such as Storythread and Productive Pedagogies, a teacher can effectively and appropriately use, the better the student outcomes because they are engaged and connected with the topic and therefore more inclined to become active self-directed learners. (Paige, 2012)

The PEEC pedagogy incorporates notions of “deep attentiveness” based on the tenet that learning is driven by attention. In this process the students are taken to a place in the outdoors that is unfamiliar or new, and asked to sit in quiet stillness for between 1-5 minutes. Afterwards they take turns sharing a comment about what they noticed—an attentiveness statement. The power of “deep attentiveness” was felt by a majority of our preservice teachers, many of whom continued to reference this strategy in their learning journals for one of their courses. Eric’s comment below captures this impression:

Using the magnifying glass to take photos of tiny flowers and berries (now in frames on my lounge room wall) and hearing the attentiveness statements read back to us. Experiencing the intricacies of the role play with the grade 5 students. I did not expect it to be so involved and to see how the students progressively got more involved in the story (even the difficult/skeptical students) was quite enlightening. (Eric, 2012)

For many of our preservice teachers, they found the incorporation of “content” within such pedagogies an unexpected yet welcome attribute. This helped to shift more stubborn biases that creative learning and teaching compromises engagement in “real” content:

[What surprised me was] Deep listening, as an activity to increase concentration rather than just as a relaxing activity; the group poem activity, as an engaging way to create group connectivity...and the preparation for Hoodwinked; the activities were interesting and very content oriented despite their dramatic focus (not that drama isn't interesting, I just expected that the activities would be a lot less focused on teaching content and historical context). (Rachel, 2012)

As Jeffrey (2008) carefully describes, creative pedagogies can (and do) incorporate relevance and meaning for students, a sense of ownership and control in the learning process, as well as innovation, whilst facilitating valued intellectual

processes like inquiry, possibility thinking, and the engagement in problems. That our preservice teachers became aware of these qualities—together with what Sawyer (2012) describes important foundational knowledge—as an intentional aim of the storythread pedagogy is an encouraging indication of an emerging “creativity” mindset.

Views of Self-as-Teacher

Arguably the most important component of a creativity mindset for learning and teaching would entail a particular view of oneself as teacher. Jeffrey and Craft (2004) argue strongly that such a view must be based on a “learner-inclusive pedagogy” and the philosophy that teaching for creativity is less about “performance”—as Sawyer (2004) has proposed—and more about developing young people’s capacity for creative thinking and behavior.

The PEEC experience had a wide-ranging impact on preservice teachers’ views of “self-as-teacher.” This may have been due to the immersive nature of the intervention, in which preservice teachers could see and experience first-hand the implementation of creative pedagogies by teachers who appeared “just like them”:

I think that learning to teach through narrative is a valuable skill to hold. I would like to broaden the way I think about teaching and I think that the best way to do that is through experience. The content would be relevant to me due to my major in history. I think this would be a useful tool to use while teaching history to younger grades. (Erin, 2011)

I got really absorbed into the Mrs. Muddle-up “I wonder” activity and actually thought she was a real person for a moment. I found this really engaging and felt inspired that if I run Storythread Pedagogy with my own future students that they will experience something similar. (Anna, 2011)

I would definitely like to place more elements within my future teaching curriculum that will promote attentiveness and the reflective process. (Freya, 2011)

I’ve always thought I would struggle to communicate to young children and so I want to be a high school teacher, but after today I was surprised to learn I can communicate with them after all. (Loris, 2012)

As the preservice teachers became more willing to reconsider their future teaching identities, they embraced the potential of creative pedagogies for prioritizing the social roles of their students over their own role as teacher (Jeffrey, 2008) as well as the significance of encouraging the creative identities of their students (Jeffrey & Craft, 2004):

[This experience helped me to]....further break free of highly structured, traditional methods of teaching and embrace a new form a learning that is backed by some consistent research. I really want to see how this Storythread Pedagogy works and have more practice at utilizing all my senses to learn so that I can help my students do the same. (Anna, 2011)

[This experience helped me to] understand another way of teaching, and myself understand another way of learning. (Demi, 2011)

This has helped me to think about myself in terms of...being an animated extrovert, and not afraid to make a "fool" of myself (appropriately); being observant, noticing students' peaks and troughs in their learning and emotional well-being; being inventive and resourceful, to not be overly artistic but to create and hopefully inspire others to create amazing items—sculptures (clay, recycled goods), pictures (different textures and mediums), written (poetry and stories). (Paige, 2012)

In one sense, these revised views of "self-as-teacher" represent one of the most important qualities of a creativity mindset for teaching and learning. Craft has argued consistently for creativity to be less about what the teacher does and more about who the *learner* is and can be (Craft, 2003; Jeffrey & Craft 2004). Incorporating a view of oneself as teacher that is centred on the facilitation of the learner's identity and social role (as it is emerging within Anna, Freya, and Erik's comments above) is one of the most challenging shifts for our preservice teachers to navigate (O'Brien & Dole, 2012; O'Brien et al., 2012).

Concluding Comments: The Importance of Teachers' Perceptions of Learning, Teaching, and Pedagogy for a Creativity Mindset

Proponents of creativity in education have argued for the place of creativity in the classroom (Burnard, 2006; McWilliam & Haukka, 2008), proposed various types of teaching behaviors for the facilitation of creative learning (NACCCE, 1999; Sawyer, 2004, 2012), and delineated a range of empirically evidenced practices that enable teachers to foster and build opportunities for sustained creative engagement (Jeffrey & Craft, 2004; Jeffrey, 2008). However, in this paper I have argued that a *creativity mindset* is fundamental to such initiatives, and that such a mindset is underpinned by particular ways of viewing and understanding the nature of learning, teaching, and pedagogy within creatively oriented contexts.

As the analysis here aims to illustrate, a creativity mindset for teaching and learning might potentially incorporate flexible yet sophisticated perceptions of learning; a willingness to see teaching as a process of collaborative learning and the careful orchestration of multifaceted learning experiences in which the teacher is not always central; and most importantly, the kind of open-minded, open-hearted, courageous visions of self-as-teacher that casts the students into lead roles and teachers as occasional director and frequent understudy.

The challenge for teacher education is that such a mindset may be counter-intuitive to the majority of people who initially choose this vocation. Adding further to this challenge is the didactic nature of university education, where our preservice teachers experience very limited models of good pedagogy, and rare glimpses of *creativity* as learning and teaching priorities. While the intervention reported here has some financial and organizational drawbacks, the impact on preservice teachers' growth is significant. Our challenge then, within teacher education programs, is to provide similarly immersive and extended opportunities for our students to observe and absorb the potential of creative pedagogies implemented by *everyday* (yet in many ways, *extraordinary*) teachers.

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Debate, Deliberation, Design, and Delivery: Deciding (Whether or) Not to Go by the Book

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ABSTRACT

This article shares one junior faculty member's account of how she and her students debated, deliberated about, decided to, and ultimately reshaped a traditional, foundational Principles of Education course in an undergraduate teacher education program. Three former childhood, art, and theater education students highlight their experiences, observing connections between their own and their instructor's creativity and evolving philosophies of education. Together, they illustrate issues they confronted while reflecting individually and collectively on how and whether to creatively teach and learn, while also being constrained by practical, systemic realities.

Debate

The argument in the memo, sent from a male senior faculty member to junior faculty members, went like this:

...students are much too quick to want a personal philosophy,...I worry about the conflation of a 'personal' philosophy with a developed philosophy of education. It isn't that they aren't connected, but that an examination of the latter should precede the development of the former. That is, any personal philosophy should be the result of first studying what experts have had to say about the issues important to a philosophy of education.... (Correspondence from PI Committee Member to C&I EDLS 201 Revision Committee Members, Fall 2010)

No amount of discussion when the curriculum review committee met could persuade senior faculty that students' arrival with pre-formed "philosophies" of education could be points of departure for straying from descriptors attached to course curricula designated in the General Education as "Philosophical Inquiry" (PI). Perennially oriented, the dominant opinion was that students' experiences should be relegated secondary to classic thinkers'; junior approaches were dismissed as being imprudent:

...philosophy is far too important to be left to the philosophers, and, in addition, is essentially interdisciplinary in nature... this doesn't excuse folks from engaging with what experts in the field have had to say about the important philosophical issues, and it seems to me that an introductory philosophy course should largely be an introduction to what some of those experts have had to say.... (Correspondence from PI Committee Member to C&I EDLS 201 Revision Committee Members, Fall 2010)

This debate, ironically, might have been exactly the opposite twenty years earlier when 1990s P-16 educators were initially asked to respond to globalization. Innovation, creativity, and "lifewide" creativity were being applied broadly and increasingly valued (Craft, 2003). Educators were responsible for contributing to economic advancement. Today, notions of what creativity is or could be remains a topic of philosophical debate; though this is not this article's core focus, increasingly, it has become apparent in the U.S. education system that counterpoint voices supporting arts-based learning and alternative pedagogies or assessment forms have dwindled. New York State educators at all levels are under federal pressure to "Race to the Top." Annual performance program reviews (APPR) depend on models such as Danielson's Framework for Teaching (2011) in which "creativity" is to be demonstrated at proficient and distinguished levels by teachers; otherwise, one might be judged as incompetent—even dismissed, despite being tenured. Resources and funds available for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs increase the need for evidence in the accountability movement. Standardized instruction and evaluation force documentation of quantifiable rather than qualitative outcomes. Widespread pressures, from early childhood throughout teacher preparation programs, literally force time for creativity out of prescribed curricula.

At SUNY Potsdam in the School of Education & Professional Studies, this junior faculty author and her co-author students teach and learn amidst this pressure. SUNY Potsdam accounts for student outcomes, primarily, by submitting quantitative reports to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) through an electronic portfolio system (TaskStream taskstream.com). Teacher

education candidates' dispositions, or "soft skills," are documented in seven broad areas, primarily in two dimensions: how candidates are "willing to take risks and show comfort with uncertainty" and when they "recognize and respect one's own diversity and that of others." Indicators show that a candidate: "tries unfamiliar techniques, encourages students/peers in taking risks, uses instructional resources that incorporate or depict alternative points of view, uses instructional practices that respects/reflect diversity among participants, (and) seeks divergent points of view" (CE/EC Dispositions, 2009, SUNY Potsdam). Students are required to earn three credits in the aesthetic experiential (AE) mode and three in the aesthetic in the critical and discriminative (AC) domains of the general education curriculum (http://www.potsdam.edu/academics/general_education/moi/index.cfm). Art education and theater education majors are exposed by nature to creative pedagogy. Childhood and early childhood students also take a course in Creative and Sensory Experiences (Birth-Grade 2).

Specific definitions about what it means to be "creative" have shifted since 1990 to include valuing: ordinary people rather than genius; process versus product; and, qualitative characteristics more than quantitative measurements (Craft, 2003). Culture-specific values, as well as policies and practices within formal and informal education settings, practically influence how teachers are able to enact their philosophies of education. Junior faculty members (without tenure, such as I was at the time) may succumb to social limitations, however, to avoid political sanctions; instructors may become socialized into submission, or experience suffocation of their creativity (Craft, 2003).

Senior faculty rebukes (such as those in the memo) clearly revitalized the creativity debate:

...the obvious tension between...the idea of the concept of creativity being at all limited is paradoxical in itself. For it would seem that creativity is an open-ended concept, concerned with the development and application of possibilities – and thus inherently *unlimited*. (Craft, 2003, pp. 117–118)

My relative confidence in unorthodox teaching methods did little to stave off senior faculty members' scrutiny or attempts to squelch my choices of materials. The debate about EDLS course design, purposefully chosen arts-based exercises and non-western readings, intentionally attempting to expand students' philosophical understanding of what it means to teach, learn, and serve in diverse educational communities conflicted with my belief that philosophy is and should remain a topic of unresolved (and personal) exploration.

Deliberation

More pragmatic issues centered on getting the syllabus approved. I suspected my primal reaction to being thwarted was not unfamiliar to veteran educators. Although our department had provenance over this course, it appeared that less robust syllabi retained the “PI” designator, for instance. Nevertheless, students enroll in foundational classes prior to methods or fieldwork courses. Central outcomes are supposed to focus on contextualizing philosophies historically; students are expected to synthesize and articulate evolutionary, professional teaching philosophies. Creatively demonstrating understanding of core PI concepts did not appear incompatible to me with philosophical inquiry.

Among faculty within the Curriculum & Instruction (C&I) department assigned to tweak the syllabus during the renewal process, I took a less essentialist and perennial approach than previous instructors. Revisions reflected student-centered, constructivist, critical, and comparative theoretical approaches; I wanted students to be creative and to take risks by producing arts-based rather than solely text-based conceptualizations of their philosophies. Unfortunately, these brought our syllabus under close scrutiny. There appeared to be a fundamental dispute about *how* (or whether) junior faculty should be allowed to (creatively) teach the course, a discussion Kenkmann (2008) describes is increasingly occurring in adult education and higher education circles, though rarely about philosophy courses. However, inhibiting teachers’ and students’ creativity by centrally controlling content and teaching-learning strategies or, supporting it by appropriate organizational climates (Craft, 2003) fundamentally reflects an institution’s values and is demonstrated by these actions. This ultimately serves to diminish or enhance teachers’ and learners’ self-efficacy, as well as to force convergent or nurture divergent thought (Fasko, 2000-2001). It was this realization that most upset me.

The C&I team (and I) interpreted the curriculum committee’s criticism to mean that “expert voices” should outshout students’. Our debates centered on whether best approaches should be inductive or deductive. Differences became painfully obvious when readings and assignments were closely scrutinized. Nowhere on the list of philosophers we were urged to consider was a female or non-Western thinker, for instance, though text (Parkay & Stanford, 2010) and anthology (Chartock, 2004) readings approved previously contained excerpted references of each. Non-“classic” (e.g., Freire, 2005; Reagan, 2005) selections were now criticized as straying into “XC” (cross-cultural) designator territory. These criticisms reflect what Craft identified as two of the dangers of complacent and resistance approaches to curricula. The first indicates that, “...we have a curriculum and a framework which acknowledges creativity and

which connects creativity – ...so we need do nothing else than implement the curriculum as if it were unproblematic” (2003, p. 124). To temper this criticism, we C&I educators attempted to adopt “alternative assignments” suggested: an argumentative paper, a counter-argumentative paper, and a counter-counter argumentative paper. Oh—and one debate. In other words—retreads of traditional means of “philosophical inquiry.” Craft’s second position is that educators who implement creative approaches are polarized and represent “the Other.” Tensions between members of the curriculum committee, represented solely by faculty from the School of Arts & Science, versus the School of Education & Professional Studies, clearly surfaced during our curriculum review process. These tensions were overt and went unresolved; we felt viewed as “the Other”—as marginalized, less competent, strange and deficient in our worldviews about, ironically, curriculum and instruction—our supposed area of expertise. When the EDLS 201 course syllabus ultimately did not receive a PI designator, education students were made exempt from earning PI General Education credit to graduate. The temporary “solution” did not, in my opinion, resolve the deeper issues—which were in large part about creative license to demonstrate teaching and learning processes.

Design

My reaction to centering students’ experiences primarily in text, in verbal and written (or other linguistic forms of) debate was firm. Arts-based means of processing students’ lived school experiences became a way of encouraging them to examine socio-cultural shaping by their families’, teachers’, schools’, religions’, and communities’ educational values—prior to bringing out the “experts.” These aligned with fundamental objectives of the course syllabus, which claimed to examine:

1. the nature of knowledge as it applies to the education profession
2. the metaphysical, epistemological, and axiological underpinnings of prominent educational philosophies and philosophers associated with each
3. how philosophies of educators materialize as goals and objectives within historical eras, political communities, and as socio-economic conditions change

Arts-based or non-western based “ways of knowing” were not mutually exclusive with these objectives. I was, at the time, in the midst of doctoral studies, and had experienced my own philosophical epiphanies through non-traditional means; perhaps this is why I was less willing to compromise: in spite of extensive experience as a classroom teacher, I was, still more idealistic—even as a junior faculty member. Immersed in examining narratives and critical incidences, using self-study methodology, I was committed to the philosophy that students’ life experiences mattered.

Post-modernism came alive for me in arts-based classroom exercises such as Readers' Theater, found poetry, and collage. Teachers formally liberated the thought that students' voices or "ways of knowing" count! These ideas lucidly emerged through arts-informed exercises in an interpretive inquiry course (Butler-Kisber, 2010) and collage exercises; as Gunn (2010) points out, philosophical inquiry is both about skill development and knowledge acquisition. I was hoping to re-create this in EDLS 201: I wanted students to creatively explore what it means to teach, learn, and serve. Influenced by idealist, progressivist, pragmatist, realist, social reconstructionist, critical theorist, and feminist readings and activities—I hoped students would demonstrate a personal (albeit emerging) understanding of philosophy of education by creative means. I believed students could (or should) mine personal experiences *first*, begin to analyze primordial influences, and determine for themselves how viewpoints about teaching, disciplining or managing students, or manipulating curricula are affected. Essentially, I wanted to empower students to challenge status quo and find alternative modes of existence (of thought) or ways of demonstrating their knowing (Craft, 2003). It was disheartening to me that a course review committee would co-opt a colleague's philosophy so fundamentally. As students in my sections were slated to become certified early childhood, childhood, and secondary teachers, as well as theater and art education majors, I could not envision being philosophical just by "thinking" rather than by "doing" (Kenkmann, 2008); instead, I found 25 ways to develop creativity by Sternberg and Williams (as described in Fasko, 2000-2001) to be a useful conceptual guide in choosing strategies, as my students' multiple learning styles (and certification tracks) would certainly demand active approaches.

Delivery

As an operational premise for EDLS 201, I decided students should focus on life histories. Narrative inquiry approaches supplemented graphic representations. I shared collage and mixed methods to contextualize autobiographical information and revealed what values, experiences, and struggles in life impacted my own teaching and learning. I encouraged students to explore media and began overtly provoking assumptions around other students' and teachers' ideas (using text readings as a backdrop). I asked students to question typical research notions of objectivity, whether there differences exist between the researcher and the researched, etcetera. Melding auto ethnographic traditions with self-study, I shared my own research, noting how critical incidences centered on "epiphany event(s)" (Denzin, 1989) and "turning point(s)" (McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2001 in Chase, 2005, p. 652).

Reactions to using creative methods or forms of assessment in this course were not always immediately warm, comprehensive, or accepting. Many students

stuck with papers, for instance, while a few created posters, and one or two created web-based versions of their lives set to music using Garage Band. To encourage risk-taking, I tinkered with rubric language about the “creative” elements. Students ventured further and produced more aesthetically pleasing and thought-provoking pieces. Over time, students have warmed to using non-text based means to represent autobiographies. Gaining permission to showcase examples of previous students’ work, I bring in examples of alternate means of representing life stories—one friend’s non-traditional “tea-box” representing her child’s birth announcement, or drawing from the respectable collection of student-donated samples (of quality *and* sub-standard work). Both are instructive. Displaying students’ work (along with the rubrics) to assess, prior to assigning projects, allows me to discourage mimicry, encourage originality, and, though I get some of the former, I long for more of the latter. Students’ work becomes inspirational, I find, when student-centered versus teacher-centered instruction occurs. Learning becomes reciprocal and integral to my own teaching-learning process and launches a ripple effect among students.

One piece that always captures students’ imaginations is a painting (Fig. 1) of a student’s “inner eyes”; in this, unique differences between existentialist and essentialist paths that a novice teacher found herself considering are encapsulated.

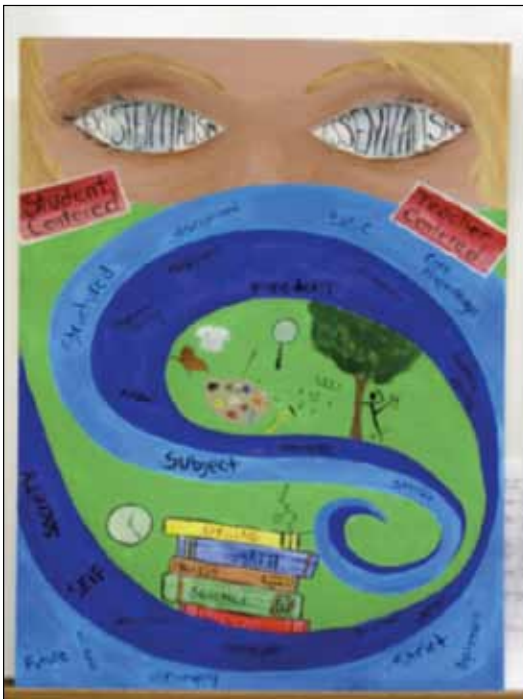


Fig. 1: J. Robinson, May 2011 (Used with permission of artist)

Novice teacher candidates instantaneously relate to this artist's dilemma, as my veteran colleagues also do. They imagine traipsing along, pondering how best to nurture students' love for learning. Even as a seasoned faculty member, I acknowledge the invisible power I wield. I wrestle often with how best to guide students to uncover their philosophies of education without authoritatively imposing my own. This student artist captured this dilemma in the piercing eyes. Philosophical decisions about teaching go to the heart of creativity when designing curriculum, crafting choices about how to teach, so that students can best learn and we best serve a community.

Deciding (whether or not) to go by the book.

My overall attempts to nurture creative displays or personalized educational philosophies have included social justice through the arts, but these elicit mixed reactions from students who are not used to nor comfortable with alternative classroom structures. Some students prefer traditional, lecture-based and objective assessments. With less faith in "radical" or "ambiguous" methods, they make their discomfort known. While I am comfortable with their discomfort, they clearly are not. Heightened political implications of being untenured in education contexts have made me apprehensive about leading students astray or too far from "schools" of thought and expectations, as well. As I have been reluctant to purposefully offend senior faculty, I also worry about preparing students to confront harsher evaluation processes. I am not completely naïve about reappointment or about consequences of disregarding judgments of one's "teaching effectiveness."

Kress (2010) vocalized how ambivalent attempts to motivate creativity may result (inadvertently) in alienating students, describing them within the conceptual framework of post formalism, and recalling the theoretical process of *bricolage* presented by Maxine Greene (1988). Cook, Smagorinsky, Fry, Konopak, and Moore discussed *Problems in Developing a Constructivist Approach to Teaching* (2002) and the fundamental disconnect in teacher education programs between how concepts are defined (or not) and modeled (or not), as well as how students appropriate them. When creativity as a concept is vague, not valued within education, or is marginalized, at best, within educational institutions, students and teachers lack power to unleash full potential to solve problems or create new knowledge. In a global and diverse information society, we depend on innovation to advance our economy. The role of creativity and STEM fields are not mutually exclusive. Building disciplined innovation through lesson structures that scaffold learning experiences in teacher education programs (Sawyer, 2006) would appear to be a promising way of addressing creativity.

The students' view.

I turn now to students to reveal their experiences in EDLS 201. Donna, Gina, and Kathy lend their creative voices and share how they creatively explored core course concepts.

Donna is a first generation high school and college graduate; her confidence and willingness to take risks socially caught my attention in the first few EDLS 201 classes. Raised in Florida, she struggled in public schools, and gained success after moving to New York by enrolling in regional vocational Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) programs and studying at the Long Island High School for the Arts. At SUNY Potsdam, Donna's academic skills continued to be bolstered by involvement in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) (<http://www.potsdam.edu/support/eop/index.cfm>). Donna's goal was to become an art teacher, concentrating on Studio media, Advanced Drawing and Painting and Digital Photography. Donna framed my instructional approach as "student centered with a focus on ...choice theory... leaving room for flexibility to meet the needs of the students..." She claimed this affected her learning due to the "flexibility in class structure as well as (the) teaching approach...(it) open(ed) doors for me and allowed me to take risks and be creative... (allowing) me to respond artistically in an academic setting." In this photo essay (Fig. 2), Donna imagined herself as a (student) teacher:



Fig. 2: Donna Cappel – Imagining self as a student teacher

Donna elaborated on how her creative images reflect her professional dispositions, philosophy of education and classroom management style, enabling me to evaluate connections she made with course content:

...The first image represents auditory learning, the second is tactile/kines-
thetic learning and the last is visual learning....An analogy that can help to

explain the auditory pose is when you go hunting, you crouch down to listen to the deer approaching. Just like hunting, a teacher needs to get down to the students' level and listen. The tactile/kinesthetic pose has hands-on experience [as my] touching the branches of the tree is symbolic of how teachers touch the lives of their students. Finally the visual learning style is represented with me up in a tree looking out onto the horizon because not everything can be touched or heard, but has to be seen as well. I incorporated all three learning styles into every lesson that I create in order to fit the needs of every student...These images also support the nature vs nurture debate to teaching...As every good teacher knows, you need structure in the classroom but you have to make room for flexibility to meet the needs of your students. The trees help to support this concept, since a tree has a strong structure but also has flexibility in its branches to obtain the need of sunlight. My outfits also help to support this concept. The dress is the same in each image which represents structure and professionalism, but the pants and shoes help represent flexibility since (the students) are all different.

Donna's creative arts background, admitted challenges in traditionally structured learning situations, and persistence had emerged early. I noticed her highlighted, carefully transcribed text notes. Peers could see Donna did not shy from opposing viewpoints or questioning status quo; I valued contentious class discussions, as 20% of "class participation" was evaluated in the overall course score. I imagine that Donna would laboriously have prepared written assignments but, if I weighted these along with quiz and essay scores more heavily, these forms of assessments could have easily masked Donna's depth of understanding. Instead, by creatively risk-taking, she had an ability to express fuller comprehension of course concepts and I had opportunities to assess her understanding more authentically. We both progressed in our development as teachers.

Gina was a theater education major. She was confident taking creative risks, did not require support that reluctant students need, and was comfortable with non-traditional teaching and alternative assessments. When I initially asked students to introduce each other and demonstrate multiple learning styles, it was clear Gina enthusiastically would welcome activity-based assignments to achieve course objectives. Gina described my instructional style as being "free spirited." While Gina perceived my role as the instructor as lateral to the students' process of learning, rather than central, she also repositioned how she saw herself—becoming an active, engaged learner. She observed that:

... (I) let the process of the who, what, where, and why questioning happen first among the students. This technique gave us the room to make discoveries, or to create hypothesis. It made (us) realize that a teacher is...some-one to guide us through and help us if we fall off the horse, but not to hold our hands and do the work for us...(to) let you feel comfortable exploring avenues that are unlike yourself.

I agree that my role as teacher educator positioned students intentionally to explore and connect experiences to course objectives but I have found *that is not always successful* and that, indeed, the difficult and real work of being a creative, constructivist, student-centered teacher does not guarantee learning outcomes—especially with students who are NOT like Gina.

Assisting students to connect text-based concepts with their prior experiences is the goal of creative processes, and the arts-based methods I use to guide their self-discovery and philosophical inquiry becomes *more important*, to me, than students' adoption of any one philosophy of education. Gina described how this occurred for her:

I had never really categorized my teaching methods with a philosophy, but through ...exploration ...I can now say what I am, and what I am not... (because we) tackle(d) the topics that in other classrooms maybe seem uncomfortable, but were completely valid to discuss in this classroom.

When I attempt to engage students in social justice topics, such as educational inequity, conversations and activities require risk-taking on students' and my part. I have found, that while my identity (even as a relatively junior faculty member) includes being a "boundary-pusher," many of my students (and colleagues) do not welcome this persona, philosophically or pedagogically, as easily into their experiential base.

Gina explained how she learned about boundaries teachers have to cross, though she describes realities faced by those who dare not cross them:

In my experience as a student, I see teachers afraid to get personal with their students. Personal in a professional manner. Maybe lazy to get to know them, or they do not use assignments that are relatable to the students' age-appropriate experiences or lives. In EDLS (201) assignments were being manipulated to analyze my own life experiences, and relate them to teaching strategies and situations... I had to write about six campus experiences,

describe them, what I learned from them as a teacher, person, etc. By simply relating assignments to individuals' experiences you can engage a student more easily, especially students younger than the college level.

Gina's fear is not singular. I find, while teaching, whether raising tough topics for discussion, or sharing exemplary products that are not universally acceptable in all contexts, in public schools in particular, I sometimes crush "free spirits." I am very mindful that novice teachers will find themselves under pressure of high profile assessments, public accountability, practical and philosophical limitations—including the very real threat of job loss. It is not surprising that teachers, even those who are experienced or who have relative security in the forms of seniority and tenure, find themselves unable or reluctant to use students' (or their own) lives as bases for creative curricula. I am reminded of how Gina described the juggling she does with these philosophical ideals within her realm of experience:

In my mind creativity in the classroom involves implementing the arts into strategies and assignments in all topics... But sadly I am discovering that the idea of teaching to the individual and getting to know and understand your students and what strategies benefit them seems to fit into a category that only 'creative' teachers utilized, or constructivist teachers. This should be an implemented strategy across the board. I find it crazy that teachers do not know the names of the students that they give the grades to, or that they teach every student the exact same way, and expect them all to be successful. As a prospective teacher grades K-12, it is easy to put myself in the shoes of a High School student because it was not too long ago I was sitting in a row of desks, like I was in some prison, while a teacher talked at me for hours. I was a C average student in High School, constantly put down by my teachers and passed on to other ones when a teacher was too lazy to really work with me, or understand me. EDLS 201 gave me insight with scenarios as well as ideas to make sure I do not become one of these teachers. Creativity is breaking the standard row of desks and having everyone physically learn in the classroom...it is encouraging thought and questions, rather than making students sit silent for hours hindering their spirit, individuality, and eagerness to make discoveries.

As an art education major, *Kathy* gave concrete form to Gina's pleas. Whereas Gina's active, questioning, and participatory style naturally exuded in class, Kathy's graceful character revealed itself in more measured manner. A contemplative learner, she was one, I discovered in her written autobiography, who had endured personal

family tragedy at a very young age. As a result, Kathy channeled her expressive energy privately, reflectively, but very powerfully—on canvass and in constructed pieces. An early assignment asked students to investigate current controversial education issues; from Kathy, “homelessness” elicited an oil painting. It was apparent that any rubric I could devise (not to mention paper, series of debates, exam or essay questions) would have confined Kathy’s responses to concepts centered on philosophical inquiry. By the time final evaluations arrived, I eagerly anticipated how Kathy would reveal her comprehensive conception of education principles we had explored.



Fig. 3: Kathy Irwin – Two classrooms, May 2011

In supplemental text (required of all who choose performance options), Kathy explained:

I chose to create miniature class rooms (Fig. 3) that depicted two opposing philosophies, one that was essentialist and one that was progressive...I made by hand small wooden tables, desks, and chairs that really gave the rooms a sense of being in a class. In the progressive classroom I arranged the room so that the tables would form students into groups for discussions and projects rather than individual rows where the students couldn't speak with one another. I made a variety of work stations including, a computer station, reading corner, and a science station. This entire group-activated environment encourages students to work as a team. On the opposite room I arranged the seats in rows and tried to create a very bland non-colorful class suggesting the more traditional style class that tends to neglect the arts and focuses more on core subjects and less on the creative process.

By creating these two rooms from scratch with my hands and my own imagination I was able to see the process by which I understood each of these philosophies and each detail that made each one unique. I was able to see visually what these ideas were about as well as show my other classmates my ideas behind the philosophies...it gave us a chance to see the principles explained in a new light.

Kathy's project was constructed simply out of cardboard and wood with meticulous attention to every facet of the learning environment. It has spawned "copycat" versions in subsequent semesters and much discussion about philosophy of education. I use the models to launch concrete experiences and to teach about abstract concepts. No student has yet articulated an analysis of the relationship between practice and theory in as great detail as Kathy did—I suspect because the other students lack the creative experience of constructing their understanding around the philosophical questions Kathy examined while choosing to think deeply, and make decisions to represent to others publically how to illustrate her understanding symbolically.

Kathy also created Invisible Boundaries (Fig. 4), which was awarded Best of Show in the SUNY system. Describing this piece, she reflected on how artistic media assists her to clarify her personal identity:

... helped me to grow as a person and has made me who I am. I use my painting and ceramics as an expressive form to communicate my emotions. During my four years at college I lost my mother to pancreatic cancer. After her death I thought that I wouldn't be able to go on. My art saved me....my theme is about confinement and strength. I depict tension within the human figure where I commonly place my figures in spaces of discomfort and claustrophobia. I use exaggeration of color, texture, mark, and gesture to really bring the figures alive with agitated raw emotion. My work is as much about the process, technique, and the style as it is about the content. The way that I express myself is by working through the layers of a work and allowing it to change and grow as the process naturally occurs. I found myself going to my work for personal therapy as well as for my grief; my artwork gave me a sense of hope and accomplishment in a place that seemed so bleak.

Kathy's creative pieces express anguish that underlies the creative professional teaching and learning persona. "It goes to show that art with true passion and feeling behind it can really resonate with others without words, but still communicate so much meaning."



Fig. 4: Kathy Irwin – Invisible barriers

The level of detail and analysis that Kathy included in art projects submitted for EDLS 201 demonstrated deep understanding of core course concepts and far exceeded complexities I would derive from student essays submitted on traditional assignments. In using art to express her comprehension, both procedurally and in terms of content, Kathy crossed philosophical boundaries—both of knowing and of doing. She bridged theory with practice, personal with professional. Kathy concluded that:

The creative process of working on a project if it is a painting, sculpture, or a project from a non-art (i.e., EDLS 201) class allows for a sense of discovery in ideas, concepts, and feelings that one might never see from a traditional standpoint. Allowing a creative approach to any lesson allows for new boundaries to be crossed and encourages growth and risk taking. I have learned from experience that the only way to move forward is to challenge yourself and to take risks, knowing that it may not always work out the way you planned, but you will never know if you never try.

I would concur. While creative exercises in EDLS 201 (and other classes) have failed miserably (and some students have not been hesitant to let me know!), I am cognizant of my very limited formal art or theater training. I am by nature, unconfident, somewhat introverted and insecure about performance-based assessments

myself. I, too, persevere over mixed student comments, and wonder whether I should heed those who lobby for more lectures and quizzes, demand less passion (about social justice issues) or more specificity about “what the instructor wants” on projects. Rubrics intentionally contain broad descriptors; ultimately, my desire for retaining creative options appears to be outweighed by my concern over students’ grade point averages. While I remain reluctant to spell out “creativity” indices, I am also occasionally tempted to include more perennial key content (vocabulary, for instance), because of pressure to prepare teacher education candidates for certification exams and annual performance program reviews. Requiring students to identify state department of education acronyms elicits complaints and finding creative ways to teach these essential elements eludes me. Retrospectively reviewing student comments, I wonder to what degree my philosophy and creativity have become entwined in teacher candidates’ developmental processes. Attempting to evoke creativity within my students is an exercise that, ultimately, lies within each learner’s prerogative—to adopt or discard this as part of their critical thinking, decision-making and philosophical inquiry practices.

Conclusion

In this article, I described decision-making processes I went through redesigning a foundational, Principles of Education course—in conjunction with my students’ experiences. I outlined my own philosophy of education and how I attempt to motivate teacher education candidates using creative, learner-centered methods of instruction and assessment. Three former students also shared interpretation or examples of how they connected course content, creatively, to their own learning. We described challenges faced within our learning and teaching contexts; I suggest these may mirror those that teachers face when they attempt to implement creative pedagogy or qualitative methods of assessment, given changes occurring in New York State and U.S. education systems.

Despite my best efforts at inspiring and perspiring with my students to become a more creative thinker, teacher, and learner, I face limitations as an instructor. Taking learners’ needs into account in my classes and building comfort with ambiguity are disposition cited formally in SUNY Potsdam’s teacher education assessment guides; these indicate that colleagues in our institution require the freedom to take risks, as well. Allowing my students to creatively demonstrate how they process understanding of course content by actively participating in the Principles of

Education class is, for me, the epitome of centering teaching and learning practice around philosophical inquiry. Without being placed in a forced, contrite, or trivialized state (Kenkman, 2008), it seems the creative process ultimately requires sophisticated skills, knowledge, and an open mind—on the part of teachers and students and the community in which they learn—alike. It is one that resonated, at least to the three students whose voices are represented here. While they may have experienced relative freedom to learn in a creative environment—learning the liberating aspect of being, what Gina referred to as a “free spirit,” for other students, this may not have been the case.

My experiences as a teacher educator and junior faculty member have provided a self-critical examination of how I experimented to reshape a traditional course in an undergraduate teacher education program. My former students’ experiences, represented by Donna, Gina, and Kathy, show how childhood, theater, and art education students made observations of their own evolving philosophies of education. Together with my experience, we shared a collective understanding of what it means to attempt to creatively teach, learn, and serve, recognizing that we are all constrained by practical realities in the contexts where we work. Finally, questions we raised may serve to underscore for others what it means to innovatively think or add new knowledge to the field, while practicing the art of teaching.

Realities shared here have not entirely dictated my methods, and I have not returned to an essentialist or perennial core curricula. It is my hope that my teacher education candidates will, in spite of the increased emphasis on adopting and returning to scripted, commercialized, and prepared programs of instruction in school districts, also find concrete possibilities to be creative. Teacher education students arrive in classes with expectations and training to think about curriculum, classroom management, and assessment in a particular (and less creative) form. What I (and, in turn, my students) do (or choose not to do) *will* impact whether (or not) they are, in turn, able to become gainfully employed. Yet, the pragmatic reality of teachers’ positions influences how idealistic, experiential, social reconstructionist or radically critical thinkers their students will become. This, in turn, influences how creative we practitioners want to—or are able to—become. With this in mind, I must and do, ethically and creatively, consider how to balance my philosophy with students’ needs, urging them to do the same.

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Gina Marie Bilardi comes from Long Island, New York and has performed at the Apollo Theatre, the Duplex Cabaret, and off Broadway. Inspired by working with PINK, Katherine Mcphee, Jason Robert Brown, Patrick Wilson, David Clemmons Casting, Frank Wildhorn, and Nancy Carson Casting, she has used earlier performing experiences at Long Island High School for the Arts Summer Academy and The Future Stars Summer program as a drama instructor to apply it to her current work as a senior Theatre Educator major in her current collegiate setting.



Donna Cappel was born in Hollywood, Florida, raised as an only child by a single mother, and is the first of her family members to graduate from college. She is pursuing a graduate degree at the School of Visual Arts in NYC and hopes to teach art. She credits her teachers at the Long Island High School for the Arts with inspiring her interest in student-centered teaching and in a variety of art: drawings, paintings, art history, photography, computer graphics, ceramics, and sculptural anatomy.



Kathy Irwin is from Oswego, New York. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with a concentration in painting and attributes her love and passion for art to her family. Both parents impressed artistic values on her, urged her to experiment, and encouraged her to get her hands dirty to explore her creative side. She believes hard work and having an open mind are two of the most important ethics in her art.



The Creative Research Process: Delights and Difficulties

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on an arts-informed approach to education research aimed to critically develop and promote teachers' creative practice and understanding of creativity for both pupils and teachers. The creative research process is described to reveal how it developed 20 students as researchers in a secondary school in England. The students' perspectives impressed artists and enlightened expert researchers into new ways of thinking and doing research. A reciprocal relationship was developed that unravelled novel data and promoted pupil voice.

Introduction

The action education research described here aimed to explore creativity in one secondary school in the North West of England. Researchers, artists, and students worked alongside one another to embark on a creative research process to uncover what creativity means and how it may be enhanced. The creative research process is detailed and reveals how it can facilitate pupil voice, improve the skilled researcher's proficiency, and enhance student research expertise. Questions about how to negotiate differing roles between facilitator and researcher/artist and students and student-researchers are explored, as are the challenges concerning reporting creative findings in different formats such as in the form of poems, objects, or drawings.

The use of arts-informed approaches to educational research has become of significant interest in recent years, with some studies reporting the potentials and difficulties such methods can bring (Prettyman & Gargarella, 2006; Thomson, Hall, & Russell, 2006; Bagley, 2008). There has also been a rising recognition that young people have valuable contributions to make within their schools (Fielding, 2004; Bragg & Fielding, 2005; Leitch & Mitchell, 2007). In addition, some researchers have commented on the valuable insight that arts-informed approaches can foster when working with young people. Pupils can articulate their thoughts and display their experiences in a non-written format (Russell, 2007). Moreover, using arts-informed approaches helps the research process by being flexible and interactive.

Alongside the increased attention given to arts-informed approaches, there has been a rise in policy and research interest in what makes a creative school (Jones et al., 2007). Understandings about what creativity and creative learning are remain complex. Sefton-Green, Thomson, Jones, and Bresler (2011) define creative learning as extending beyond arts-based learning or the development of individual creativity. Rather, it covers a range of processes and initiatives at the individual, classroom, and whole school level that share common values, systems, and practices aimed at making learning more creative while also appreciating young people's potential.

Schools are increasingly being encouraged to "personalize" their curriculum, accelerate pupils' learning, and close gaps in achievement between the rich and poor (Thomson & Gunter, 2006). Consequently, many schools are turning to the potentialities of pupil voice to help bring about school improvement and change (Watts & Youens, 2007). This project endeavoured to help pupils and teachers understand languages of creativity using the knowledge and skills of a range of creative practitioners while simultaneously developing the pupils' capabilities as researchers.

The School

Wade Deacon High School is a co-educational, comprehensive, community school for 11-16 year olds. Located in the North West of England, it has 1121 pupils drawn from a large catchment area. Originally a grammar school founded in 1507, this school has an impressive long driveway leading to a striking architectural building that dominates the entrance to the school. Wade Deacon was deemed a good school by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) in 1997 with many outstanding aspects. In 2008, 95% of pupils gained 5% or more A*-C grades. The school has vast sports facilities, fields, and space. Staff and school promotional documents proclaim high expectations held by teachers and pupils.

In September 2008, the school applied to become a Creative Partnerships (CP) Change School: status which they intended to use to develop and embed a creative thematic approach to curriculum development, ongoing Continued Professional Development (CPD), and to transform teaching and learning throughout the whole school community. The focus of the Change School Programme was summarized in the following question:

How can 'Big Thinkers' in Creativity, Teaching and Learning help kick start and embed a creative approach to Teaching and Learning, within a cross curricular staff team, and ultimately across the whole learning community, planning for a new 'Creative Thematic Curriculum' across year 7 and beyond.

(Tender document, 2009)

The Creative Research Process

This project emerged as a result of a negotiation process between the school, CP, and the Aspire Trust—a Merseyside-based arts education development agency that works across the UK to provide creative and educational support for schools and communities. Aspire formulated the change school brief into a research project entitled, "LookingUP at Wade Deacon": named partially due to the school's remarkable structural design, impressive school displays, and high achieving status, and partially in acknowledgement of the implicit processes of *LookingUP* in research contexts; as a means of finding out, while simultaneously respecting and celebrating the school's physical structures and aspirations.

LookingUP at Wade Deacon was conceived of as

...an arts based research project which aims to critically develop and promote teacher's creative practice and understanding of creativity in the school. We want to establish the project as a rigorous, educationally driven piece of work which essentially asks questions of the creativity agenda, as opposed to providing a 'big sell' which exhorts everyone to buy into it. Whilst there will be staff there who are sympathetic to developing creative practice, there will of course be staff who are more cautious, need to be persuaded of the value and purpose of that agenda – and, understandably, may look more askance at approaches which rely on sales techniques as opposed to sound educational approaches.

(Project description, April 2009)

The project that was designed by teaching staff and Aspire aimed to identify creative practice in five departments including Arts, Design Technology, English, Mathematics, and Physical Education to encourage staff to discuss, empirically test, and reflect on what makes effective creative practice in the classroom and involve staff and pupils in the examination of how arts-based practice and methodologies can enhance creative processes in their classroom pedagogical practices. Twenty year 7 pupils (aged 12-13 years) were allocated to participate in the program. This group was off school timetable for a week to work with the team of practitioners previously identified.

Rather than embark on possibly fruitless discussions about definitions of creativity with pupils and the research team, this project introduced pupil researchers to the concept that the presence of creative processes could be detected through a series of “creativity lenses” (Owen, 2009) which could be used to focus on what conditions are present if creative teaching and learning is to be encouraged. The challenge on this project was to translate this work into language suitable for year 7 pupils (and arts researchers) without losing the integrity of that work. Nick Owen, author and Director of The Aspire Trust, presented the pupils with a selection of graphics which were to represent the lenses in question. Pupils were asked to look through the various lenses of creativity with a view to facilitate their work as analytic researchers and understandings about how to do research and how to look out for creative teaching and learning in the various classroom observations.

A creative practitioner team who had subject specific skills and interests across the five subject areas worked as researchers, workshop facilitators, pupil mentors, and conversation catalysts between pupils and staff. The creative team included a number of professionals practising within their known field; this in itself promoted an exciting flexible research process whereby different practitioners gave distinct insight into their understandings of creativity and how to conduct this art-based action research. A group of six performing and visual artists (including a poet, sculptor, artist, composer, video-maker, and actor) and researchers were brought together to comprise the research team with the pupils. This unusual mix of professionals and pupils (adults and teenagers) allowed for a special reciprocal relationship to be built between all participants that acted as fertile ground to enhance the creative research process. Different ways of seeing and doing research unravelled as the phase two research unfolded.

The creative practitioners were each assigned to a particular subject area at the start of the project but eventually moved across disciplines as the week developed and the common timetables changes and restrictions occurred.

The first day involved developing the pupil's research skills. After a basic research skills presentation led by Lisa Russell, pupils were asked to find out something new about their hall. The hall was where the group was located for the majority of the week; this place acted as a gathering ground for the team, a place to learn and share ideas. It was a central part of the school physically and metaphorically.

Pupils were separated into groups as advised by a teacher and were told to work with one practitioner across their affiliated field of interest. Pupils were allocated from all year groups and across the achievement spectrum. One practitioner worked with one group at all times while others (Russell and Owen) floated across research teams to gain an overall perspective of what was going on. Each creative research team identified creative practice in each subject area through pupil and practitioner observation, conversation and sound and visual images with staff and other pupils in those classes across all year groups. The team analyzed and disseminated data to each other and to the senior management team at the end of the week. Some cross-over between the various subjects occurred with some groups researching the same lesson; this allowed for different groups' perspectives to be shared, facilitating triangulation and giving the research teams an overall sense of what creativity can mean in different sorts of classes.

Each team came up with its own identifying name, and had its own "private" notebooks and one larger communal "shared" notebook to write field notes, gather artefacts, reflect on the day's events, analyze its findings, and develop its conclusions. Pupils also had access to a Dictaphone to record staff and pupil interviews and sound bites of "noise" in lessons, an iPhone to access the Internet and record visual and audio data, a camera to take photographs of still images, and video cameras to record movement and face-to-face interactions and interviews.

Pupils, researchers, and practitioners worked together to obtain 21 staff interviews along with over 400 photos that included different areas of the school site, pupils learning, teachers teaching, and research artefacts. In addition to the pupils gathering information, the practitioners and researchers gathered written field notes, photographic evidence, and recorded interview data and film on the creative research process. Practitioners and researchers recorded and analyzed how pupils were becoming researchers, how the school as a whole were responding to them, and how they could facilitate the pupils in gaining rigorous data while expanding their research expertise and understandings about creativity.

The Delights

1) Generating different sorts of data.

In addition to more traditional ways of generating data such as written field notes, interviews, photographs, sound bites, and video imagery, more unusual forms of data started to emerge; these developed from the practitioners' workshop and the "students' eye" (Thomson & Gunter, 2006).

The practitioners' expertise was drawn upon in both individual research groups and in whole group contexts such as in workshops whereby practitioner expertise was explored and shared. These interactive sessions were done intermittently throughout the week to help stimulate pupils and give them a break from the intense research learning task, while also offering them insight into what creative practice in different arts-related employment contexts can mean and thus developing their understandings and analytical capabilities.

A recording of the practitioner and researcher discussion from the first morning's events reveals their concerns about how the practitioner can facilitate the pupils' ability to express their findings.

Poet: I think it's great working with kids like this, because they'll see stuff that we wouldn't see; the challenge we have is to get them to articulate what it is they are seeing and to discriminate so that they can actually work out what it is they are seeing.

(13/07/09)

Pupils accessed a variety of media in which to express their thoughts and communicate their opinions, analysis, and findings. This is something that developed throughout the week and was certainly not set in stone from the outset; rather, it grew as our relationship with the pupils matured and our common aims became more apparent.

Communal and private notebooks.

Research groups had their own identifiable communal notebooks—somewhere for them to write notes, stick in artefacts, and bring together the day's findings and thoughts. Each pupil also had a matching private notebook: a smaller notebook that was theirs alone to record whatever data they desired via whatever means. This allowed pupils to be brave in their thoughts and feelings as it was "private" in the sense that only they had access to it unless they agreed otherwise.

During the “finding something new about the hall” task on the first day, encouraged by the public artist, some pupils gathered artefacts such as disregarded used coffee cups. Throughout subsequent lesson visits, others collected bits of old sports equipment rope left behind on the sports field, flowers and grasses from the fields (to record smell as well as visual artefacts)—things that the so-called established researchers and practitioners may have left behind unquestioningly. These items were used as a forum to open up discussion about meaning and use of space as well as physically taken and stuck into the communal notebooks (where physically possible). Using familiar items in this way helped pupils to articulate their thoughts and feelings and gave them a focus for their work.

Movement.

Inspired by the dancer and film crew, the practitioners and researchers used the idea of movement. Movement was a key component to the week’s events; it served to stimulate pupils, to wake them up, to think about things in a different way, and gave them a different medium to express themselves.

Poems.

During a workshop given by our composer, explaining how she wrote for the orchestra, a boy mischievously asked if she wrote for the triangle. Our poet suggested viewing this comment as a poem. This event reminded him that poems can come from anywhere; they are not confined to a specific place, discipline, or even to the conscious intention to write poems. The following poem was thus born:

*I hate maths
I hate science
I hate school
I only love the triangle*

Inspired by our poetry-writing workshop session, some research groups started to use poems as a way of reflecting on their findings in order to analyze and bring together their thoughts and experiences.

Drawings.

Other pupils preferred drawings and scribbles as a means of recording data and reflecting upon practice.



Fig. 1: Drawing of colleagues and composer researcher (Neil 15.07.09)

One boy (Neil) created this drawing during one of our feedback sessions—he did this without prompt and even without realizing its value; this was then collected as a piece of data that recorded a pupil's interpretation of our research process. The fluid creative research process allowed the team to conduct student-led research, offering the students a sense of ownership over their project while revealing to researchers and artists the students' way of seeing the process. Data was being generated intuitively by students.

2) The reciprocal relationship.

By the middle of the week the pupils were finding their own ways of generating data and facilitating their understandings of creativity and creative practice, many of which challenged the practitioners and researchers' view of what constituted data and how to enhance pupil voice. A reciprocal relationship developed between pupils, practitioners, and researchers, whereby each group challenged the others' way of thinking about creativity and doing research.

During the first day's session on developing the pupils' research skills, pupils were challenged to "find out something new about their hall." It was on this task that the skilled education researchers and practitioners started to learn from the "students' eye" (Thomson & Gunter, 2006) and develop their own research skills. For example, our ethnographer had set ideas about what types of written notes should be recorded when entering a research environment. Written notes would usually include recordings of time, actions, behaviours, interactions, relations, descriptions of physical space and how it was used, people's dress, role, and actual speech. One group looked at the disregarded rubbish on the floor and had conversations about what meanings these

items could possibly have. One pupil held a used polystyrene coffee cup and talked about how the hall was normally used by staff—this is what this item symbolized to them. I (Russell), an education ethnographer, was intrigued by this; I started to realize that items I may usually overlook held significance. When asking the pupils about how they found this item, pupils said that they started the research task by looking on the ground.

Different groups approached the task in different ways and uncovered various sorts of information. One group, inspired by the research title, “LookingUp,” were immediately drawn to a disco ball hanging from the ceiling; this item looked somewhat out of place and inspired the group to find out more. By interviewing the Site Maintenance Manager (SMM) they found that the hall had previously been used for ballroom dances and the like but was no longer used for such activities. The pupils showed real research skills by jumping at the opportunity to talk with the SMM, a gentleman who had a sound take on the history of the hall given his fifteen years of staff membership to the school. This not only demonstrated the pupils’ curiosity and skill needed to find out a new piece of knowledge about their school hall, but it also revealed that they were confident enough to look at their familiar school hall in a different way, through non-pupil eyes and via researcher lenses.

The researchers and practitioners started to make note of the pupils’ different ways of seeing their school and on subsequent observations implemented new observation techniques they would otherwise have disregarded. They made a conscious effort to look down and then up, in addition to studying people’s movements, mannerisms, and speech. Together, the creative research team had developed a different way of seeing and recording the physical research space. The ground and what lay on it became more intriguing. Furthermore, they became more aware of “overlooked” items such as used coffee cups and thus started to develop their own data collection techniques and assumptions about what makes a research artefact. We felt as though our own ethnographic skills were challenged and developed by studying the pupils’ take on research. On the first day, Russell articulated how the students as researchers stimulated her own working practices as an ethnographer. This excerpt is taken from dialogue between the artists and researchers.

They (the pupils) looked around at what was on the floor, they looked at objects that I would pass off as a piece of junk but which obviously had meaning to someone and held some purpose – even though it might just be a chocolate wrapper.

I'd never go into a room and look at what's on the floor and what's been cast aside. Because I've been doing this for quite a bit of time I've become quite set in my ways and a little bit lazy in terms of what I'm looking for in a classroom and how I go about it... so I've developed my practice in terms of doing research through different eyes, looking at things in a different way.

(14/07/09)

3) The development of pupil voice.

Working as part of a creative team, in addition to utilizing an array of arts-informed approaches, facilitated the pupils' ability to express their findings and analyze data. The development of pupil voice was partly assisted via the reciprocal relationship built up between practitioners, researchers, and pupils; a partnership of trust, admiration, and intrigue was developed.

Artist: The more open you are, the more intelligent their response will be, no matter what we think as adults. You know I've got specific ideas about how to do research; they too will have their own specific ideas.

(13/07/09)

This work aimed to develop the pupils as "student researchers" before moving them to the next stage of becoming advocates for curriculum change in the school by suggesting and implementing ideas about how to make their school more creative.

Using art-informed approaches certainly aided the pupils' ability to conceptualize "creativity" and how it worked within their school while also allowing them a different medium in which to voice their opinions, talk about their experiences, analyze data, and disseminate results.

Using an array of arts-informed approaches during this creative process allowed pupils to pick and choose what mediums they preferred to adopt in what circumstances and thus facilitated their understandings about creativity and ability to conduct research and disseminate findings.

Initially, there was some concern about the pupils' research capabilities and grasp of the complex concept, "creativity." However, pupils responded well. When asked what it feels like to be creative, one pupil replied, "*you don't always know you're being creative but you are—creativity doesn't have to be in the moment but is something*

that is a process." Furthermore, they developed their own analytical concepts such as "self-managers" when describing what it meant to be a pupil in a creative lesson. It meant for pupils to have some degree of autonomy in the lesson content, to be involved, and to be able to take responsibility for one's own learning experience. During a high jump lesson visit based around an X Factor theme whereby pupils are separated to take on different roles of judges of the high jumpers' performance, high jumpers and photographer, one pupil verbalized the analytical concept "self-manager" and contextualized it in his private written notebook and later during discussion. He described it as *"giving pupils options, options to take on different roles."* Although this complex concept had been discussed in previous lessons prior to this research, it also showed a pupil able to grasp analytical notions and use them in other contexts.

In addition to facilitating pupils with their ability to conduct research and express their opinions, the project aimed to implement change at a curriculum level. Immediately after the project, the head teacher declared her willingness to investigate whether a student-led workshop could be delivered whereby the pupils involved in this project would lead a CPD session for staff in which pupils would help staff understand their perceptions of what makes a creative school and a creative lesson with a view to implementing change.

This action-based research project had thus achieved its aims of developing the school's own capabilities and resources to implement a change for the better in its own working environment.

The Dilemmas

1) Fighting familiarity.

One of the initial concerns the researchers and practitioners had related to how they could facilitate pupils' abilities to look at their school through researchers' eyes rather than the eyes of a pupil—a role with which they were very familiar. Surprisingly, many of the pupils demonstrated immediate dexterity when it came to separating themselves from the "pupil" role, and quickly showed an ability to fight the familiar during the task of "finding something new out about their hall" on the first day.

Interestingly, many pupils physically moved to the stage area of the hall, as this was an area many of the pupils had not visited before. They found this area

intriguing, described it as usually “off limits” and thus were drawn to its peculiarities. While this demonstrated ability for the pupils to see their school through different eyes, a confidence to see the familiar as unfamiliar (Delamont & Atkinson, 1995), it also became a source of contention in future days, as pupils wanted to hide in the stage’s nooks and play on the piano. The pupils’ adeptness to explore areas where they had never been and ask questions to older pupils in the school and staff developed and flourished throughout the week’s events.

The researchers and practitioners were enthralled by the pupils’ analytical and research abilities in addition to their growth in confidence as “student researchers” and “agents of social change.” Pupils used the research equipment available to them in the lesson visits with certainty, focusing closely on other pupils, taking intimate shots, and recording probing responses from both staff and pupils. In knowing their school and obviously feeling a relative sense of security within it, pupils were able to gain different, sometimes more intimate photos and interview data that may otherwise have been collected from the skilled researcher.

As researchers we sometimes feel intrusive in our data collection techniques and take time to build a rapport with participants (Russell, 2007). However, these pupils demonstrated an immediate adeptness when it came to accessing intimate data. Unlike other researchers (Thomson & Gunter, 2006), these pupils (on the whole) did not fear asking questions to older pupils and staff; in fact, as their confidence quickly grew they gained a sense of autonomy from the process. This allowed for different sorts of data such as close up shots of older pupils doing high jumps that an outsider such as a researcher may have questioned taking so soon into the field-work process.

2) Negotiating roles and research practices.

Although practitioners (Thomson et al., 2006) and researchers (Becker, 1967; Lappalainen, 2002; Russell, 2005) have questioned their role during research conducted in schools, professionals in this instance automatically had a dual responsibility and as such experienced a constant negotiation between two roles. As “facilitator,” they had to develop the pupils’ research capabilities and the pupils and staff’s understandings about creativity. As “researcher,” they documented, analyzed, and concluded findings on the creative research process.

Moreover, the practitioners and researchers questioned their role in terms of discipline. The hall stage, for example, became an area of contention; pupils wanted to roam free around that area consistently: they hid in the dark crevasses and in

amongst the equipment, played the piano, giggled and played in an area which was usually forbidden. Researchers and practitioners started to question their role: was it to discipline or was it to let the pupils roam free and stimulate their imagination? After realizing that some pupils were disrupting other pupils working on the project, pupils were asked to keep quiet so as not to disturb others. A decision was made that if pupils did not want to conform they could leave the project, as we were “not teachers” and were not prepared to replicate the school’s discipline code. Pupils were offered the opportunity to leave the program if they wished. No pupils left the project due to discipline issues but it remained a source of contention, with teachers sometimes thinking the practitioners and researchers should be taking more control of their pupils in the school environment.

Towards the end of the week, some pupils had noticed that teachers were “acting up” while they were present in their classroom: they were talking louder, moving themselves and pupils around the room more and appearing to be more “creative” in their presence and delivery of lesson content. One pupil described this as being “camera posey,” aligning it to his experience of seeing how the school presents itself for maximum effect through its publications, displays, and videos which are a constant presence in the school’s public spaces.

In response to this difficulty the pupils decided to linger outside classrooms and assess the creativity within it before and/or after officially entering/leaving the classroom to gauge a more objective sense of what went on in particular lessons with individual teachers. We negotiated our research practice and roles. This research practice developed as the reciprocal relationship between the creative team members flourished and practitioners and researchers had diverged from the “teacher” role more successfully. However, such episodes looked suspicious to teaching staff and in some instances made them even wearier of our presence within the school. This raises questions of ethical practice, but given that the school had agreed that this project would be pupil-led, and used to inform staff, the ethical dilemma concerning informed consent was somewhat appeased.

3) Dissemination.

Like researchers and practitioners using arts-informed approaches before us (Thomson et al., 2006; Bagley, 2008), we experienced contentions about how best to disseminate our findings and how best to express what the pupils felt without upsetting staff members. Issues around “censorship” and what could and could not be researched, and what should and should not be disseminated, arose.

On the very first day the practitioners and researchers were concerned that pupils would simply record the negative in their classroom visits.

Composer: I was slightly concerned that some of them are thinking about negative things immediately, but then if it's only positive then that's not research.

Artist: Seeing the negative is that they want to change something into more positive, and so if we're constructive with it, it can be a very useful tool for them.

(13/07/09)

It was agreed that we wanted to remain as true to the pupil voice as possible.

We presented our findings to the Senior Management Team and had some lengthy discussions about how best to do this. Discussions revolved around how many words versus images should be used. At one point we entertained the idea of using no written text, but decided against this in light of our audience members and their needs. Their desire was to have set ideas about how to implement change; thus we needed to present some concrete findings that the school take forward, whilst also retaining the pupils' voice.

Our presentation was finally given to the principal, head of mathematics and two other staff who had participated in the project. Pupils identified the importance of atmosphere and space as important factors influential in a creative learning environment. They described creative lessons as ones in which furniture could be rearranged. Some discussed altering the atmosphere by changing the light: *"Lighter rooms help your brain work better."* Others considered playing music helped produce a relaxing atmosphere. Pupils agreed that relaxed did not necessarily mean comatose: *"Sometimes when more creativity is going on, you move move move,"* one pupil noted. They also observed the counterproductive use of the interactive whiteboard: *"When the lights are turned off (for interactive whiteboard) your brain shuts down and it's easier to daydream and get distracted."* Pupils noted that creative lessons involved conversation and dissent. Whilst they noted that pupils were able to talk and work, and so enjoy themselves more, they recognized too that peer group pressure could be inhibitory and prevent pupils from getting more out of their lessons. They found that pupils tended to be friendlier in creative classrooms, and if given different tasks to do from the norm, this provided opportunities for independent problem solving. They also noted that pupil pairs worked well, that humour played a vital role in classroom relationships, and that they felt more creative *"when you like the teacher."*

Pupils found that all teachers could be creative in different lessons. Creativity was not located solely in the more traditional subjects of the arts and humanities, but could appear anywhere. They saw creative teachers as ones who were energetic, fun, and also exerted “*good control*” with some degree of structure; those who asked good questions to make pupils think about things were also deemed creative.

Resources were important too. Pupils noted that colourful classrooms were attractive to work in. The value of variety was also stressed as it provided moments of difference and unpredictability.

One of the chief delights of working in this way was to see the pupils understand the complexities of creative teaching and learning, to be able to observe it in their school, and to be able to construct interesting and insightful findings that they and the staff could take forward and use in their program of school change.

Conclusions

Working in this unusual creative, arts-informed way facilitated a flexible creative research process that acted as fertile ground that enhanced pupils’ expertise in understandings about creative teaching and learning and research skills. During this process a reciprocal relationship between pupils and creative practitioners and researchers developed. The delights of working in this way included the ability for the creative research team to facilitate pupil voice. Pupils made adept researchers with astute understandings about the languages and analytical concepts concerning creativity. They were able to choose from an array of mediums to record data, analyze their findings, and disseminate their conclusions. Moreover, the professional practitioners and researchers adapted their means of understanding creativity and on how to conduct research during this process; this project enshrined partnership whereby the pupils and staff learned from each other, in addition to the pupils and practitioners/researchers engaging critically with one another and changing their own practice as a result. Thus there is a real opportunity for arts-informed research to have meaningful consequences for the school and the professionals brought in to work with them.

However, there were a few difficulties that developed, namely around issues of role definition and what it meant as an outside professional coming in to a school to work in a collegiate, professional manner with young people. Other issues included

how to disseminate findings to Senior Management Team members while retaining the pupils' voice and sense of rawness.

Whatever the delights and dilemmas experienced, the overall outcome of the research project was positive with both the school (pupils and staff) and the professionals (practitioners and researchers) benefitting from the creative research process. Working in such a flexible way via using arts-informed methods of data collection, inquiry, and workshop stimulation can certainly promote pupil understanding and school change while simultaneously challenging the professionals working practice.

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Sound Stories Cultivate Historic Empathy in Teachers and Students

Sumer Seiki

ABSTRACT

With the increased demand for culturally and linguistically relevant teaching, this paper explores the use of sound stories to cultivate empathetic understanding in undergraduate preservice teachers. I inquiry into the process of creating, writing, and performing a sound story about my family's American Japanese imprisonment experience to better understand this teaching method and adapt it for teacher education. The inquiry reveals counter stories of agency and resistance, as well as a powerful and creative teaching tool for increasing empathy in both the teacher and students.

Justification: Personal, Practical, Social

Last year I taught a new course and though I am not new to classroom teaching, I learned reflexively through the process of preparing and redesigning my teaching methods for a new student body and content. The course was the first of two required educational foundation classes for all education majors and minors, at our Midwestern United States liberal arts undergraduate teacher training program. Predominately freshman and sophomore students interested in becoming K-12 teachers enroll in this course, Social Justice and Education. In the course, we critically analyze the political, sociocultural, and economic forces that impact school policies and practices while also introducing them to the demands of teaching for social justice.

In preparation for the course, I reexamined the current and projected student demographics, which indicate ethnic minority populations within the United

States steadily increased since the 1980s, and currently comprise over half of the total U.S. school age population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Teacher demographics showed the predominance of non-minority teachers, a consistent trend for over thirty years (Torres, Santos, Peck, & Cortes, 2004). Morell's (2010) research supports the previous findings indicating the majority of United States pre-service teachers do not share the same cultural or linguistic heritages as those of their students; they are predominately white and middle class. In fact, research revealed these pre-service teachers, demographically similar to my students, have shown a "shallow historical consciousness about race, racism, and conceptions of culture and White identity but also report discomfort discussing these things" (Sleeter, 2008 p. 121). It became clear through research and classroom discussions that a number of my students too felt uncomfortable discussing issues of race and would disengage through silence. I needed to prepare these preservice teachers to be conscious of the growing differences between home and school as well as teach students with cultural and linguistic practices different than their own, both important elements in teaching for social justice (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009; McAllister & Irvine, 2002). This research preparation also uncovered an important step in cross-cultural teaching; teachers must learn to understand their own worlds and the worlds of their students (Gay, 2010). Once teachers understand their own cultural worlds, they are better able to empathetically enter into the worlds of their students (Sleeter, 2008; Lugones, 1987).

Grounded in demographical and background research, my emerging research puzzle began to form with the initial question of, "how can I improve my teaching methods to foster preservice teachers' understanding of their cultural worlds and empathetically conceptualize their students' worlds?" In this early stage of my investigation I turn to Sleeter (2010), an influential teacher educator, who also engaged in the process of deepening her predominately white pre-service and in-service students' critical understanding of history and personal culture. Sleeter knew the importance of building empathic understanding. She critically investigated five generations of her family life history. Tracking individual family members' lives she uncovered unknown roots in slavery and Appalachia revealing the economic, political, and social experiences of each member. She found unexpected ethnic origins "recover[ing] lost memories of blurred racial boundaries and reinvented origins, lost narratives of having both perpetrated and also having been victimized by racism" (Sleeter, 2008, p. 121). She discovered that her own personal critical life history exploration can "serve as an entrée" for pre-service teachers' understanding of "historical memory about race, ethnicity, and identity—revealing the ways in which power and privilege have been constructed, the prices people have paid for that, and the ways in which ordinary people have challenged inequities" (p. 115). In the same vein, she

asks her pre-service teachers to inquire critically into their own family histories to personally contextualize their family members' "worlds." This critical life history research reveals the various subject positions within our family line/lives that have been covered over, and these lost stories serve to reveal institutionalized power relationships (Sleeter, 2008, 2010).

This lived inquiry and critical analysis cultivated, in both herself and her students, an understanding of their personal and generational "worlds." Through this process of critical analysis, Sleeter's family history research methods offered me the possibility of cultivating empathy in myself and in my preservice teachers, an essential skill in cross-cultural teaching (McAllister & Irvine, 2002) and a structural component of understanding history (Cunningham, 2009). Nurturing empathetic and historic understandings were key components of my teaching goals and helped me to reform my research puzzle. I was intrigued by Sleeter's methods and suggestion to have teacher educators and preservice teachers "examine their own backgrounds and experiences to identify assumptions, beliefs, and values, as well as cultural contexts in which they grew up, which impact their understanding of schooling and students" (p. 114). I decided to incorporate Sleeter's methods in my evolving research puzzle. With this addition, I sought to more clearly define and refine concepts involved in historic empathy.

Empathy

My teacher education empathy research revealed McAllister and Irvine's (2002) description of empathy as a learned skill that is both "affective and cognitive" in nature. Empathy is commonly referred to as the ability to identify the circumstances, values, thoughts, and emotions of another in order to understand the complexities of the other's life. Lugones (1987) describes this empathic attribute as the ability to world travel in loving perception or the ability to understand the feelings and perspective of another from the inside as well as understand the complex macro political and social forces impacting those perspectives. Noddings (1984) describes empathy as being one with the person in a non-judgmental posture. Examining and embodying the full form of empathy is a necessity for transforming traditional teaching practices into culturally responsive teaching, though not the sole requirement (Gay, 2010).

In her research, Cunningham (2007, 2009) described a group of history teachers cultivating students' empathy with their lessons, content, and interactions.

Through her case study research, she shares a variety of strategies to motivate and build student empathy and identifies four parts to cultivating empathy. She argues that teaching empathy utilizes the abilities to “1) think/reason/puzzle out; 2) experiment/feel/sense/recreate/get into; 3) understand/grasp/see/know; and 4) imagine” (Cunningham, 2009, p. 689).

Using these process terms, Cunningham’s teacher participants engaged in identifying and diagnosing the types of empathy skills students needed to learn. Then, based on the students’ learning needs, these teachers drafted optimal lessons that also accounted for the student, structural, and teacher limitations. Cunningham’s (2007) iterative teaching cycle of “observing, diagnosing, reflecting, refining, practicing, and experimenting anew” (p. 612) bolstered empathy through creating well-tailored lessons suited for the specific needs of students.

Wrestling with these definitions of empathy and intrigued by Cunningham’s teaching cycle to cultivate student empathy, caused me to engage with Sleeter’s (2008, 2010) critical family history teacher-education research in new ways. I thought about my prior undergraduate teaching experiences of cultivating empathy through using sound stories of my families experience with race-based imprisonment of American Japanese during World War II. I consider the possibilities of using those stories in the same bent as Sleeter and investigating the effectiveness of my method through Cunningham’s cycle. I decide to reshape my research puzzle one last time; I focused on my teaching experiences using sound stories, a narrative art-based teaching method employing sound. I inquired into my teacher narratives through the lens of Sleeter’s critical family history method as well as explore the potential of this method for increasing preservice teachers empathetic understanding of historic racism through Cunningham’s cycle.

Inquiry

As I investigate my teaching and family history, I borrow from some narrative inquiry methods (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Inspired by Cardinal (2011), in her autobiographical narrative inquiry, I too found this method offered me space to explore my narratives. Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) description of narrative inquiry as “strongly autobiographic” provides a vehicle to inquire into my previous method of teaching my critical family history through sound stories to cultivate empathy.

Narrative inquiry helps me to begin to understand and unravel the complexities of my experiences. Since experience is both personal and social, and inherently connected to education, it is the study of life (Dewey, 1938). Narratives are the mechanism through which humans share their experiences because “humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). Hence, understanding the narrative experience of my previous teaching is a way for me to understand and explore education as a complex human experience or phenomenon. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) describe looking through the lens of studying experience:

People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Viewed this way, narrative is the phenomenon studied in inquiry. (p. 477)

Dewey (1938) explains that empirically investigating personal experiences can hold the possibilities of enhancing educational practices, since education begets experience. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) characterize individual narratives as existing within a dynamic three-dimensional space: temporal, social, and place-based. The interplay occurs among the personal and social storied lives of educators, students, communities, institutions, policies, and researchers, a network of life threads and worlds intersecting and interweaving in a particular space and time. Thus, narratives of life experiences teach us about education. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) explore teacher narratives and reveal how teachers’ conscious and unconscious knowledge was learned by experience and are expressed in their professional landscapes. I explore my own teacher narratives through my understandings of narrative inquiry to “articulate my emerging understandings” (Cardinal, 2011, p. 83) about using sound stories to tell my own family history.

Hence, I begin my examination of my own teacher narratives of cultivating empathy through the use of sound stories. I first learned this method through our informal drama group practice exercises; collectively we created and told a variety of humorous stories through sound. Becoming familiar with this drama technique, I knew I could translate it from drama class into history class as well as into K-12 classrooms.

A sound story, for this paper, is much like a traditional theater performance without visual senses; the audiences’ eyes are closed. A sound story is explained

through narration as the actors emote the personal experiences of their main characters. The setting of the scene is created by sound effects made by the performers through their bodies. Since sound transmits wave vibrations through the air impacting the listener, the sound story creates story images in the audience members' minds as they also physically experience the emotions.

Neuroscience research reveals that closing the eyes enhances listeners' emotional experience especially with regard to negative music sounds (Lerner, Papo, Zhdanov, Belozersky, & Hendler, 2009). Similarly this performance produces many negative sounds and emotions due to the racial oppression content; therefore it stands to reason that as the audience closes their eyes during the performance they will experience an enhanced emotional effect as documented in the research of Lerner et al.

Engaging in this process of creating a sound story of my personal and family history, I relive these experiences through the retelling of these narratives. Paying attention to "the complexity of lives and experiences help[s] us understand them in deeper and more complex ways" (Clandinin et al., 2006). I find the "telling, retelling, and reliving" storied lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) is active reflection, leading me, the storyteller, and participants to "imagine" new possibilities (Huber & Whelan, 1999).

To begin this inquiry, I explore my research texts, which were collected in an introductory undergraduate Asian American history course at a large research-based California University. This course covered the historical experience of Asian Americans from 1840 to the present, which included American Japanese imprisonment as required content. While I was a teaching assistant for this course, I noticed a significant number of my students did not understand American Japanese imprisonment beyond the facts they memorized; they lacked empathetic understanding. For two years I worked with different professors teaching the course to cultivate student empathy around the required course topic of American Japanese imprisonment. My research data collection for this work includes field texts before and/or after the performances, drafts and finalized scripts, audiotaped in-class performances, and family annals. This research project is also part of a larger body of research on relational counter-hegemonic pedagogy with the informal performance group, which I participated in for five-years, 2006-2011 (Torres, 2010; Seiki, Torres, Ramirez, & Carreon, 2010; Wilson et al., 2011).

The term American Japanese is used in this paper instead of Japanese American to acknowledge that the majority of those interned were United States citizens,

including my family members (Chan, 1991). I also use American Japanese to challenge the dominant narrative notions of American Japanese as suspicious perpetual foreigners and to rightfully place their nationality first. I also use the term imprisonment in place of internment because I find it to be a more accurate depiction of my family's experience.

Below is the description of the final performance of my family's sound story in Asian American History class. I begin inquiring into the end of the story and work my way through the other research texts in order to fully investigate the research puzzle.

A Moment

The sound story ended. Scattered sniffles and heavy sadness filled the Asian American History class auditorium. Then silence. Two hundred students, a professor, four teaching assistants, the sound story performers, everyone, was still. As the audience kept their eyes closed, I breathed deeply, stepped forward, and requested that everyone open their eyes. As they looked up, I saw many had tears.

As one of their teaching assistants, I was a familiar face to them. I explained that the sound story I performed, with an informal performance troupe, was a story mostly based on my family's experience of American Japanese imprisonment during World War II. During the performance, the students' vague understanding of the personal nature of imprisonment suddenly transformed into living, breathing flesh before them. Our collective emotions were palpable, theirs and mine; I felt the barriers between all of us shatter. In that shared experience of sound storytelling, they were with me; they lived it themselves through waves of sound that transported them back into that historical time alongside my family.

No longer was imprisonment an abstract fact on a page. It became a reality as they experienced the real emotions and sounds of that time and moment, a powerful event across time and generations, touching them right now, through me. The empathy they initially lacked in their reading reflections and discussions transformed as they began to engage in heartfelt, emotional ways, gently asking questions about my family and their experiences. As I spoke to them about the people in the story—my father, uncle, grandmother, and grandfather—I saw them make deeper connections to the reality of imprisonment. No longer were the American Japanese imprisoned

just distant analytical facts and figures. They were identifiable people—they were my family.

Unpacking

I use narrative inquiry to unpack this moment of student empathetic breakthrough in class as described above. With this method, I travel into the three-dimensional space of the moment to examine the temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Analyzing this moment leads me to time travel backward and forward into the experiences of creating, rehearsing, and performing this particular sound story described below. I am led back into my set of field texts, scripts, audio-taped performances, and family annals. Each of these data pieces and description of my process leading up to the performance, help explain how this moment of transformation was created in each performance.

In each class performance, the student reaction was similar. However, the moment described above was my final performance in Asian American History class since I completed my graduation requirements and was transitioning out of graduate school. When I inquire into this moment I solely reference the data pertaining to this final performance. In the unpacking of the process leading up to the lesson, the analysis reveals the cultivation of empathy through sound story making and telling.

Lesson Development

As I inquire into this breakthrough moment, I am struck by the temporal shifting I take between the present moment in class, moving to the lives of my family during World War II in the performance, and back again to the present. These temporal shifts in time are analogous to my temporal process of understanding. As I analyze this temporal understanding process, I first travel back in time exploring my motivation for creating this lesson. My motivation for developing this sound story and engaging in the process of developing the lesson expanded my process of thinking, reasoning, imagining, and puzzling out my family's story. I gained insights as I wrote the script and thought about the learning needs of my students. I was in the initial stages of Cunningham's (2007) empathic teaching cycle, observing my students and diagnosing their empathetic learning needs. In focusing on my students' needs, I discovered new empathetic understandings.

My interest with creating this lesson began after reading early assignments, listening to the discussion sections, and answering lecture questions. As I listened to students, I realized that American Japanese imprisonment was being treated like a fact to be memorized. But the human understanding of the experience and its brutality was missing; this disturbed me since the past often repeats without understanding. Cunningham's (2009) history teacher participants also gauged their students' inability to empathize through classroom interactions and assignments. Like me, these teachers creatively tailored and designed lessons to build the skill of empathy.

When designing the lesson, I first identified gaps in students' understanding. I was familiar with these gaps since I taught two discussion sections, read course papers, met regularly with fellow course facilitators, and attended every lecture. By using their course content knowledge, I chose specific elements for the sound story script. I was able to focus on bridging these gaps between the facts they knew and the empathetic understanding many were able to grasp. Noting various limiting factors, I chose the sound story as the best strategy for lesson delivery. The sound story technique was ideal for the two hundred-student lecture because it felt very personal. Yet it allowed each audience member emotional privacy. Additionally, the informal performance troupe was not anxious about performing in front of a large group since the audiences' eyes would be closed.

I began to draft the script, retelling and interweaving the stories and facts I heard while growing up. These included personal facts, like my grandmother being pregnant with my father and caring for my toddler uncle when she was forcibly removed from her home in San Francisco's Japantown. My grandparents owned an apartment building in this enclave and were forced to leave and move to a dirt-floor shack in Arizona. Their property would be lost forever. With these details, I constructed the framework of the story and started the script while they were home in San Francisco preparing to leave. Piecing these details together allowed me to imagine what each of my family members must have felt like and I, knowing each of their personalities, created suitable dialogue.

Once the base of the story was filled, I included the historical context of open hostility toward Japanese who were derogatorily referred to as "Japs." Signs of hostility were not only permissible in actions and words but also in storefront windows stating, "no Japs." With this historical context, I also included facts students learned in class, such as what happened on the warfront on the day my family members were removed from their home. Then I added the personal touches and family memories.

I included one important memory of my grandmother. As a small child, I asked her if I could wear her kimono when I got married. She agreed but, after she went to look for it, she realized she no longer had it: she was forced to leave it behind with her many other possessions since she was only allowed an allotted number of bags to carry. The moment she realized it was gone, a brief moment of sadness took over her face, which she quickly replaced with a smile. She didn't want me to relive her pain and I never spoke of it again. Reverberations of pain from the past moved forward into that present moment; she wanted to protect me from the pain and I never wanted to cause her any more grief over the losses she experienced.

Once the script was completed, I presented the script to my fellow performers to achieve historical authenticity. Though they were not American Japanese a couple of troupe members were familiar with the facts surrounding imprisonment. Together they read through the script and we entered the three-dimensional lived landscape of my family. We thought about their experience in that day and created background noises appropriate for that time and space. We added walking sounds and details to the radio announcement of Executive Order 9066, and we discussed the emotional experiences of each of my family members. Connecting all of these sounds and setting an emotional tone, we together built the soundscape for my family's story. Through this process we engaged in the next steps of Cunningham's (2007) empathetic teaching cycle of reflecting on the draft script and refining it.

As I look back at the weaving of macro-level facts about wartime California impacting my own family memories, I know I as a teacher purposefully shared these personal facts to help students empathetically connect with this historic event. Similarly, Cunningham (2007) found her teachers designing lessons with the right proportion of content, emotion, and accessibility. Her research also showed that students enjoyed and learned from teachers who shared their own historically based marginalization stories. As I consider this moment, I realize that students' emotional reaction in my class was based in part on risking to share my personal family story.

I am reminded of the emotional journey I had to enter into in order to understand the part of empathy that requires us to affectively understand another's perspective. It was during performance rehearsals that I moved into the next steps of the empathy teaching cycle (Cunningham, 2007) of practicing the lesson and experimenting anew. It was in these parts of the process, described below, that I felt, re-created, and embodied the emotions within the sound story script. It was in these phases that I learned to empathetically connect at deeper and physical levels, which enabled me to share that new understanding with my students.

Rehearsing & Performing

During the performance rehearsals, I took on the role of my grandmother. As I read the lines, I could hear the intellectual understanding in my delivery but I couldn't convey the depth of emotion required. I wasn't fully entering the emotional world of my grandmother. I was reluctant. Yet I had an inner commitment to my grandmother pushing me to engage more authentically. Since I was not a professional actress and I needed help moving from just reading my lines to embodiment. I asked the drama teacher of the informal performance troupe, whom I had worked and become friends with for five years, to help me embody the words. She replied that to do so we must enter my grandmother's emotion through my body.

In our small practice room, she wrapped her arms around my torso and pulled me west. Another fellow performer put her hands on my shoulders, look down at me, and then also forcibly pushed me west. My feet began slipping. She pulled harder. The teacher directed me to push east, moving toward the door, while reciting my lines.

At first the words came only from my head, but then as I grew frustrated my voice dropped deep into my belly. They pushed and pulled my body harder and harder, and I tried to withstand the pressure and push more and more. I could feel the physical strain on my body, my muscles resisting and pushing back; I ached. Finally, I began to move beyond the barriers of hesitation and feel what my grandmother must have felt as I was finally able to embody her emotions. It was in that moment I realized how, with all her might, she struggled to protect her family, her toddler son, and unborn child, my father. I felt her physical and emotional strength, and I know she resisted. She was always strong. In that moment of both intellectually understanding the context and physically experiencing oppression, I began to embody my grandmother's strength as a powerful "agent of history" (Chan, 1991).

I could see the untold story of my grandmother's agency and her courageous choices to be a present and loving figure to her family. She sacrificed her own beloved possessions, her kimono and family photos, to prepare and pack the limited bags for the baby on the way, my father. I caught a mere glimpse of her beauty and the embodiment of frustration at the injustice of it all. It was during this exercise a new story was born: a story of *Gaman*, the cultural practice of a deep commitment to hope beyond seemingly unbearable circumstances and to embody patience and dignity despite current struggles (Hirasuna, 2005). My grandmother's story of *Gaman* was sacred because it remained a mostly unnoticed part of American history, yet it "lived, so to speak, in the arms and legs and bellies [of my family]... This story lay deep

in the consciousness of the people" (Crites, 1971, p. 294). My grandmother's perseverance, a story of a strong *Nisei*, meaning second-generation American Japanese, protecting and sacrificing for her family, lived in my body and voice. During this place of embodiment, of historical empathy, I could see the stories of agency and learned to tell them from a new empathic understanding to my students.

It was this deeper understanding of my grandmother and the physical feeling of oppression in my body that I performed that day in Asian American History class. The empathetic emotions and perspectives that I gained in the rehearsals allowed me to fully engage with the students. I as a teacher had to learn alongside my students to cultivate my own empathy so they could learn anew. The risk I had to take as a teacher to fully embody my grandmother reminded me of Sleeter's (2008, 2010) discovery of her family's agency countering the racial hostility of the time. Both Sleeter and I find that modeling for students and preservice teachers our own critical personal investigation is a key component of teaching. We as teachers must first embark on our own journeys to model for our students the willingness to engage in their own teaching practice.

Discussion

Deconstructing the planning, rehearsal, and performance through narrative inquiry provided me the space to understand the process of using this sound story teaching method in a history class. Now, as I consider adapting this method to my new course, Social Justice and Education, I identify the essential elements I need to prepare as a teacher as well as how to prepare my students to engage with this method. Finally, I discuss the possible implications of using this method for teacher education and K-12 classrooms.

I found the many preparations that I as a teacher had to go through to create the sound story lesson were essential to create the moment of deep empathetic understanding in class. My preparations followed the similar process that Cunningham (2007) described in her empathetic teaching cycle. I engaged in the process of observing my students, diagnosing their learning needs, and creating a lesson. As I created the lesson, which involved writing the script, I immersed myself in context details fully understanding with my intellect the historic situation. Additionally, digging into the storied lives of my family also unearthed lost stories of agency and strength similar to Sleeter's (2008) own discovery of agency in the complex lives of

her family. Writing the script allowed me to understand the affective experience of my family members more fully. As I articulated and gave words to each of my family members' experiences, I learned to give voice to their strength, which cultivated empathy in myself through sound story making. My colleagues served as powerful witnesses and helped me to further polish the script with rich details while I also considered my students' learning needs.

During the rehearsal practice is when I as a teacher had to risk emotionally for empathetic embodiment. Though my students never knew of our rehearsal preparations, the time we spent together was crucial. We practiced telling and retelling the sound story. I grew. I learned as a granddaughter about my grandmother's "world" (Lugones, 1987). In the rehearsals I world traveled into the personal life of my grandmother, investigating her values and emotions, within the context of a hostile socio-cultural, economic, political climate. Through risk taking, I more fully understood the strength she embodied. My understanding as a granddaughter impacted my understanding as a teacher. These "worlds" I inhabited through the roles of granddaughter and teacher began to inform one another and deepen my knowing (Lugones, 1987). Throughout the rehearsal we as a performance troupe were also cultivating trust in our practice. The relational trust we built helped us to rely on one another through the in-class performance.

Through the sound-storied performance, the last stage of the cycle, we shared our "world" knowledge. I offered to my students during the sound performance my new understanding. The sound waves I, and my fellow performers, emitted that day crossed many worlds, my worlds, the performers' worlds, and the students' worlds. We collectively came to understand my grandmother's story, my family's story, and the bigger story of American Japanese imprisonment. Our collective understanding was evident in the moment of transformation. "...Our stories do indeed vibrate across the web and impact in ways that I will never be able to comprehend" (Cardinal, 2011 p. 87).

Each of these steps I took as a teacher align with Cunningham's teaching cycle and help articulate the process I took in order to create the lesson. Cunningham (2007) describes the cycle as a method that develops students' empathy. However, I find this cycle helped me articulate the back-and-forth steps I took in order to develop my own empathy. Understanding this process allows me to better teach my students, as I develop a new sound story lesson for my new Social Justice and Education course.

Understanding more of the teacher preparation process, I turn and focus on student preparation for sound story telling. First I consider my new course students, I think about their predominantly suburban and rural Midwestern cultural backgrounds, experiences, and values. I seek to understand their generational experiences different than my own. I also examine their ability as a group to handle emotion, and what they need to draw them into an empathetic understanding despite their resistance to exploring racial issues.

As I think about their resistance, I also consider my own struggle to experience the depth of oppression my grandmother lived during imprisonment. Perhaps in some ways my students' resistance is not unlike my own reluctance to fully experience the pain of racial oppression. My resistance however, was countered by my own commitment to represent my grandmother accurately. I also had strong relational bonds of trust with my informal performance troupe members, which we had built over five years. Both of these factors allowed me to explore on a deep emotional level. Unpacking this moment further and applying it to my new course, I realize I need to find ways to bridge the experiential gap for my students and make their engagement in this work personal. Additionally, I must cultivate trust with them so that they can engage on new levels of empathetic understanding. These empathetic learnings will better able to help them as they work with diverse students.

Through engaging in this cycle and sharing these critically researched stories creatively through sound, teacher educators, pre-service teachers, and K-12 classroom teachers can develop multiple forms of empathetic understanding in telling their or their students' critical family histories through the sound story medium. "Experiencing the multiple subject positions that each of us inhabits and the multiple subject positions open to us" (Sleeter, 2008, p. 122), we can explore alongside one another, together capturing the humanity and complexity of our worlds. Maxine Greene (1993) writes: "...to keep speaking, to keep articulating, to devise metaphors and images, as they feel their bodies moving, their feet making imprints as they move toward others, as they try to see through others' eyes" (p. 213).

This quote calls for more stories to be unearthed, stories of our students' and teachers' "worlds" (Lugones, 1987). Speaking these unknown and untold stories into existence in our preservice teacher and K-12 classrooms will create new understanding of their humanity, their bodies, their voices, their emotions, their family cultures and those that lived in another historical time and place. Together we can strive to see and be understood. Maxine Greene is inviting us into new possibilities where family history sound stories are a "world traveling" pedagogical strategy, which cultivates multiple forms of empathy in both teachers and students (Lugones).

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The Promise of Creativity

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the authors discuss creativity and the impact it might have on teaching and learning. The authors believe that imaginative play, at all ages, helps all people (children especially) create healthy environments and spaces that expand their learning. The authors contend that teaching for imagination—which asks little more than creating and trusting an ecological space that engenders it—seldom is considered a priority. Given the emphasis on creativity in the real world and the virtual digital world, the authors believe it is important to add to the body of knowledge through continued research in this field.

The Promise of Creativity

“But the quality of the imagination is to flow, and not to freeze.”

(Emerson, Ferguson, & Carr, 1987, p. 238)

In the summer of my sixth year a great expectation arose within me; something overwhelming was pending. I was up each morning at dawn, rushed to the top of Dorchester Hill, a treeless knoll of grass and boulders, to await the sun, my heart pounding. A kind of numinous expectancy loomed everywhere about and within me. A precise shift of brain function was afoot; my biological system was preparing to shift my awareness from the pre-logical operations of the child to the operational logic of later childhood, and an awesome new dimension of life was ready to unfold. Instead, I was put in school that fall. All year I sat at that desk, stunned, wondering at such a fate, thinking over and over: something was supposed to happen, and it wasn't this. (Pearce, 1985, p. xiii)

A Need for Creativity

As a child, Pearce was eager to learn. Sadly, school didn't match his burning desire. Implicit in Pearce's writing is the critical point: if we want children to sustain an interest in learning, the desire to learn must come from within each learner.

In *The Human Odyssey: Navigating the Twelve Stages of Life*, Thomas Armstrong (2007) recounts the story of the Bronte family. In 1826, Reverend Patrick Bronte brought a gift of 12 wounded toy soldiers to his 9-year old son. The gift expanded beyond the father's imagination. With Tolkien-like fervor, the four children—Charlotte, Branwell, Emily, and Anne—created imaginary worlds, even writing and editing a magazine that outlined the languages and social structures of these worlds and developing systems of government for their imagined realm. The vitality of these worlds came alive in novels; Charlotte's *Jane Eyre*, Emily's *Wuthering Heights*, and Anne's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. From a gift of twelve wounded soldiers, the children's imagination created a world that expanded as they aged.

Our paper is about creativity's impact on teaching and learning. We believe children have an innate desire to learn. We believe imaginative play, at all ages, helps children create healthy environments. As teachers, we are fundamentally interested in schools and learning. Regrettably, we see school structures that crush children's imagination. Schools, our primary institution for shaping individual and community values, are also the site for shaping a younger generation towards the citizens we wish they might become. Children are taught by the formal and informal content and pedagogy of school.

Certainly some have envisioned investing schools with creativity. As reminded by an anonymous reviewer of this article, John Dewey's early 20th century child-centered learning included creative curricula, which Waldorf and Montessori schools used to build experiential learning models. Creative curricula has knocked on the door of North America's mainstream educational system—the Open Classrooms of the 1960s and 1970s—promoted by those who value alternative educational approaches. As well, integration models that teach subjects through and with the arts can improve student engagement, help students see themselves as creative, and positively impact standardized test scores (Walker, Tabone, & Weltsek, 2011). This said, today's schools (Leyva, 2009) seem closer to Social Darwinism, where essentialist ideals of meritocracy, selfishness, and competition ground curriculum policy such as George Bush's neoliberal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

Not all curriculum policy is as blatant as NCLB. Longstreet and Shane (1993) note a *hidden curriculum*, which includes the learning children derive from the “nature and organizational design of the public school, as well as from the behaviors and attitudes of teachers and administrators” (p. 46). Eisner’s (1994) *null curriculum* includes what we *do not teach* in schools and, by not teaching it, tell students what is important. Eisner argues that ignoring something is far from neutral. Implicit student and teacher consequences exist for what is not taught and what processes are not used. This *no-place*, we believe, is where creativity lives in today’s schools—part of a null curriculum.

Judged by our schools’ actions, we prize literacy. In essence, every school subject is a vocabulary lesson; students learn the lexicon of a subject but little about the life processes that ground these subjects. School knowledge is narrower than it need be, failing to encompass imagination and play—the two horsemen of creativity. We contend that teaching for imagination—which asks little more than creating a space that engenders it—seldom is a priority. Instead, classrooms become artificial contexts that pull children away from the “real world”—a dynamic, diverse, and disorderly space.

The real world is *dynamic*. Schools, in comparison, are often decontextualized from engaged, practical, real-world living actions. The gulf between decontextualized school cultures and problems that confound society has expanded to the point where few children believe school is relevant. Armstrong (2007), ironically, believes school helps children whose jobs will be to sit inertly at desks, expending minute amounts of mental imaginative energy—a dystopian work depiction found in movies like *Office Space*.

The real world is *diverse*. School curriculum, in comparison, seems to knead diversity from children. Standardized exams, at their soulless heart, are founded on compliance to standards that, by their nature, limit, fear, and work to remove diversity from children in almost xenophobic ways. In short, school doesn’t prize creativity: it seeks similarity and compliance to standards.

For Armstrong (2007), school children learn NOT to question too much, NOT to think too differently from their peers, and NOT to be too creative. Instead, they learn to submit to authority, follow bureaucratic conventions, compete against their neighbors, see the world as *dog-eat-dog*, sit still, and keep their minds from wandering *off topic*. Educational anthropologist Jules Henry (1964) sees schools as our most conservative cultural institution, a place where we surrender our babies to the

demands of competitive consumer society, where they learn to sit bored for hours as they are pigeonholed into winners and losers without violently rebelling. Henry believes the hidden curriculum is to face absurdity with patience—a skill needed in work.

The real world is *disorderly*. Schools, in comparison, are structured, organized, and predictable. Children enter and leave on predetermined schedules based on birthdates. They move through semesters, grades, and outcomes in scaffold-like sequence, driven by timelines. School is arbitrarily divided into distinct subjects with minutes punctuated by bells. Weeks and months become reporting periods, where *final* grades are allotted. Creativity seldom blossoms in rigid and contained frameworks—unless it is creative revolution, which carries consequences. Scientific creativity expert Sawyer (2006) notes, lived creativity requires space and time, flexibility, work, and collaboration.

Considering Creativity

Creativity's potential has not always been ignored. Joy P. Guilford's 1950 American Psychological Association presidential address called on colleagues to increase creativity research. At the same time, others recognized that creativity differed from intelligence (Cropley & Cropley, 2009; Kaufman, 2009; Sawyer, 2006). Creativity research expanded from psychology to sociology, anthropology, history (Sawyer, 2006), and neuroscience (Kaufman, 2009). To date, a body of research (Kaufman, 2009; Plucker, Beghetto, & Dow, 2004; Runco, 2007; Sawyer, 2006) indicates that creativity is complex and diverse.

We are responding to Guilford's call to consider creativity in schools. In this article, we discuss creativity with respect to individuals, the environment, and schooling. Our work briefly overviews creativity literature to better understand research findings within school contexts, and to invite educators to consider how creativity might be wisely interjected into classrooms.

Guilford (1967) believed creativity was a natural and valuable societal resource (Runco, 2007) and proposed two kinds of thinking—convergent (single solutions, closed-ended tasks) and divergent (multiple solutions, open-ended tasks). He links divergent thinking to creativity; but suggests, "creative potential is very complex" (p. 169) and cannot be attributed solely to divergent thinking.

The first 20-30 years of creativity research followed individualist approaches consistent with prevailing psychological theories and a cultural bias toward European high art genres (Sawyer, 2006). Sawyer (2010) supports a contextual approach more accepted during the last 30-40 years, which calls for socio-cultural and constructivist perspectives of creativity. We suggest a third alternative—an ecological model discussed later in this paper—that more effectively infuses creativity into children’s lives.

A major challenge for creativity researchers is agreeing on a definition. Plucker et al. (2004) reviewed 90 articles on creativity, noting that only 38 percent explicitly defined creativity. Definitions generally fall into two categories referred to as Big-C creativity (socially valued products) and *little-c creativity* (everyday activities) (Kaufman, 2009; Sawyer, 2006). Little-c creativity suggests that anyone can create ideas or products; Big-C creativity is defined by two characteristics: (a) the product or idea is *unique* and (b) *appropriate* to the situation—however appropriate is defined.

There is general agreement that creativity, regardless of age of entry into a particular field, requires ten years’ experience in that domain (Kaufman, 2009; Sawyer, 2006). Time and experiences are needed to develop expertise through learning domain-specific tools, conventions, techniques, languages, and instruments. Creativity might also follow the 10,000-Hour rule (Swedish psychologist Anders Ericsson’s theory) that success arrives when someone spends 10,000 hours practicing (Gladwell, 2008).

Plucker et al. (2004) suggest that “creativity mythologies” abound: only certain individuals, commonly portrayed as loners, are born creative; creativity intertwines with negative social and psychological thinking; creativity is a “soft” concept; and groups are more creatively productive than individuals. Believing a definition would benefit researchers and educators, Plucker and colleagues propose: “Creativity is the interaction among *aptitude, process, and environment* by which an individual or group produces a *perceptible product* that is both *novel and useful* as defined within a *social context*” (p. 90).

Although debate surrounding creativity mythologies persist, many researchers do not equate creativity with *oddy*. Kaufman (2009) notes that creativity involves ideas, products, and processes found within individuals, groups, or even society. Sawyer (2006) adds that creativity can be culturally, socially, and historically situated. Egan (2005) suggests that creativity can be defined on a continuum “from a creative adaptation to a dynamic alteration” (p. 162). In short, creativity can be discovered in everyone.

Exploring the Assessment of Creativity

Connecting creativity to curriculum can be difficult, because learning is usually assessed corporately; everyone writes the same exam or does the same assignment, and individuals are graded against each other. Such assessment homogenizes *production*. Combining this tradition with the lack of an agreed-upon creativity definition presents assessment challenges for educators. In keeping with our Western educational tradition, if one believes creativity is crucial to a student's curricular experience, it must be assessed. However, there is irony in assessing creativity—if it is an individual attribute—using corporate testing models. As a result, assessing creativity becomes complex.

E. Paul Torrance, perhaps the educator most connected to creativity, separated himself from the 1950s view that creativity was fixed at birth by developing creativity tests and exploring how creativity might be taught (Kaufman, 2009; Sawyer, 2006). The *Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT)* are based on Guilford's *FFOE* model of divergent thinking, *fluency* (number of responses), *flexibility* (differing responses), *originality* (unusual ideas), and *elaboration* (developing ideas). Shively (2011) embraces Guilford's *FFOE* model, believing that *shared vocabulary* gives children the language needed to become meta-cognitive about creativity and communicate creative ideas. Although widely used as a creativity test and reported to predict adult creative achievement (Millar, Dahl, & Kauffman, 2011), the TTCT are limited by a focus on divergent thinking, a lack of content area assessment (Sawyer, 2010), and the extensive administration and scoring training required (Baldwin, 2010).

Other creativity assessments and programs have been developed; however, no single test or program has demonstrated increased creative ability or predicted, with certainty, real-life creative production. Creative achievement includes complex interactions using convergent and divergent thinking throughout creative processes (Sawyer, 2006). A review of creativity literature reveals that relationships between IQ (intelligence quotient), which may account for less than 10 percent of career success (Millar & Dahl, 2011), and CQ (creativity quotient) have not been fully explicated, partly because creativity is shaped within context and partly because obvious challenges exist measuring such divergent concepts (Batey & Furnham, 2006). Research contends that creativity is multi-faceted and requires multi-method research designs.

Reflecting on the Creativity Literature

Our review of the literature suggests that current thinking about creativity is rooted within individual constructs. Clearly, a Western/European bias toward

individual, loner, eminent, genius, fine art creativity permeates creativity research and influences what creativity is perceived to be, especially in the mirror Henry (1964) holds up to Western schooling.

Perhaps our critique of creativity research might help others understand it better. For example, if we treat creative people like odd, disruptive individuals whose *creative actions* differ from curriculum goals, our hopes of working with children to celebrate diversity in hospitable ways might never be realized. As idealistic as it may sound, we believe educational communities can embrace and celebrate human differences. We believe teachers should aspire to idealistic, even utopian, standards that inspire children to celebrate diversity.

It interests us that creativity is often described as *complex* and *divergent*—a construct that educators simply have difficulty comprehending. Any haphazard, serendipitous poking around on YouTube suggests that creative displays are far from odd, rare, or complex. The range of creative endeavors humans engage in and share is rich and varied, living alongside schooling but seeming not to influence schooling in powerful ways.

Is it possible that creativity is less complex and more pervasive than we envision? Do we envision it as rare and complex because we see it through a tradition that carries norms of homogenization and compliance? Do we turn an unconsciously blind eye to rich creative experiences all around us because of the hegemony of a dominant liberal culture? Are we like aviators who crash in the desert and starve, unable to see plentiful—but uncommon to their experience—food around them?

Unraveling the Individualistic View of Creativity

Our thinking about creativity aligns with Howard Gardner's (1983) work; he believes creativity is a kind of intelligence people use naturally. Gardner lists eight "intelligences" in his seminal book, *Frames of Mind*. Two are highly privileged in schools—linguistic intelligence (reading, writing, and speaking) and logical-mathematical intelligence (reasoning, calculating, and experimenting). Gardner's less-known intelligences include spatial (imagining, drawing, designing), bodily-kinesesthetic (crafting, acting, displaying physical abilities), musical (listening, composing, playing instruments), interpersonal (empathizing, negotiating, cooperating), intrapersonal (self-understanding, reflecting, feeling), and naturalist intelligences (discriminating, classifying, nurturing living things).

All these intelligences are creative; however, students who speak, write, or reason well are rewarded in schools. Perhaps even more creative children—who see things as pictures, not words, experience things physically—are disadvantaged. Teachers believe they value creativity but have limited ideas about creativity (Skiba, Tan, Sternberg, & Grigorenko, 2010) and seldom appreciate behaviors associated with creativity—disruptiveness, nonconformity, and impulsivity (Cropley & Cropley, 2009; Kaufman 2009). Teachers, often cultured not to prize creative but off-curricular activities, seldom move past standardized curriculum. Who can blame them? The curriculum is sanctioned powerfully and legally into their work. Unfortunately, exceedingly creative children may be labeled *learning disabled*, ADD (attention deficit disorder), or even *autistic*. As Henry (1964) implies, school seldom makes life easy for non-traditional students.

Exploring *Compliant Acquiescent Disorder (CAD)*, Westheimer (2010) highlights the acceptance of increased medicalization of youth based on authoritarian relationships. He defines CAD as people failing to be outraged when outrage is needed and notes that student compliance is so expected that anything else represents ODD (Operational Defiance Disorder) and is treated by medication. Kaufman (2009) discusses “mad” genius mythologies, noting that hearsay, inconclusive research, and reliance on anecdotal evidence fuels erroneous connections between mental illness and creativity. Such mythologies prevail as we diagnose illnesses to explain why some children don’t fit school. Rather than spreading anxiety, fear, shame, or superiority among children and parents by testing to discover *what’s wrong with or unusual about kids*, we should be asking: *What is right with kids? What would schools that fit all children look like?*

As seemingly divergent as creativity is thought to be and despite research findings dispelling creativity mythologies, the image of society’s solitary eccentrics—the “mad genius” or “tormented artist” (Kaufman, 2009) who lives on the margins of society’s accepted behaviors—prevails. These definitions seem to share an uncritically individualistic view of creativity. Thus, schools remain institutions where creativity is limited to lone pursuits acceptable only in certain subjects, and creative behaviors are seen as blocking education’s smooth workings, which we critique as centered upon all children doing similar things at similar times.

Exploring the Ecology of Creativity

As mentioned, we believe an ecological perspective holds promise for infusing creativity into children’s lives. Renowned psychologist Bronfenbrenner (1981)

pioneered the field of human ecology—“the social fabric that nurtures and sustains our capacity to live and work together effectively and to raise our children to become competent and compassionate members of society” (p. 38). Bronfenbrenner’s (2005) bioecological model illustrates his theory that humans live within a set of systems similar to nested Russian dolls. Individuals influence, and are influenced by, an ever-widening circle of systems. Bronfenbrenner proposes that family, peers, neighborhood, and school (micro-system) and the reciprocal relationships (mesosystem) that develop between them profoundly affect children’s social, psychological, and behavioral development. A child’s ever-expanding world—the community (exosystem) and cultural forces (macrosystem), bounded by multiple dimensions of time (chronosystem)—creates further opportunities for reciprocal influences between the systems.

Bronfenbrenner believes, “Every child needs at least one adult who is irrationally crazy about him or her” (Brendtro, 2006, p. 165). To flourish and develop as creative individuals, children must be surrounded by adults who unconditionally accept them, believe in their creative potential, and—with wild abandon—capably model creativity. Creativity is nurtured through harmonious, multi-directional relationships—the social fabric of our lives. Opportunities to nurture creativity begin before birth and continue throughout childhood, adulthood, and the twilight years.

Contrary to the belief that creative people are loners, children from larger families are generally accepted to be more creative, possibly because of less parental supervision and more opportunity for group interaction and imaginative play. Like the Brontes, children who develop imaginary friends or invent imaginary worlds (paracosms) are often more creative. Creative children also tend to be contrarian, which might explain why teachers find them challenging to work with in classroom settings designed for compliance. Conformity does not encourage the kind of creativity we advocate.

We believe creativity is enhanced through sharing dialogic spaces. Russian philosopher Bakhtin (1981), a pioneer of dialogic theory, posited that written and spoken languages carry history and the values of the speaker. Reflective and collective meaning making in Bakhtin’s conception of dialogic occur through interactions with others and with self; past dialogues merge with the present to shape the future. Such is the creative path.

Education is essentially a dialogic experience; teachers and students infuse personal histories into a space already permeated with others’ historical views. Through dialogical interactions, thoughts and ideas are explored and evaluated in

the present and extended into the future. Bakhtin encouraged us to live dialogically, “as one who is evolving and developing, a person who learns from life” (p. 10). In his book, *Mind Expanding: Teaching for Thinking and Creativity in Primary Education*, Wegerif (2010) advises: “Teaching for thinking, creativity and learning is hard because it requires that the teacher also has to think seriously about things, respond creatively to events and love to learn” (p. 131). “Successful teaching for thinking . . . is more centrally about the quality of relationships and about drawing children into dialogue” (p. 141).

By thoughtfully designing school environments and working in a spirit of collaboration and acceptance, schools can become creative learning spaces.

Creativity and Digital Technologies

The strong call for creativity in 21st century literacy, along with a push to utilize technology more fully in schools, is challenging because it seems market driven, aimed at economic prosperity perhaps more than doing what’s best for children in schools. Questions arise about technology: Does technology actually help or hinder creativity? Is the push to use more technology driven by sound educational research or corporate consumerism? Do the demands of technology on teachers (searching for information, designing and preparing print and digital materials, completing forms, communicating with stakeholders) steal time from meaningful interactions with children and the deep pondering critical to understanding each student’s learning needs?

In a 2011 public lecture in Edmonton, MIT Professor Sherry Turkle (*Alone Together: Why We expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*), notes that in the 1970s she and other MIT researchers explored tasks that might keep computers busy such as preparing taxes, academic writing, and games. However, suggests Turkle, the tables have turned and computers now keep us busy: “It is as though we are their killer app” (Gariépy, 2011, p. 6).

When technology supports curriculum, and is not curriculum itself, many dynamic, diverse, and delightfully disorderly ways creatively engage children in learning. However, we worry that technology has become so elegant and accessible that it steals time from other tools of creativity—drawing, painting, sculpting, constructing, playing, dialoguing, daydreaming, and exploring. We are concerned about questionable educational practices: students cutting and pasting others’ work, infringing on copyrights; slideshow presentation software used to write essays, confusing *flashy* for

insightful; interactive white boards (IWB) used as lecture tools; and the proliferation of fancy, time-consuming applications that do not support meaningful learning.

Technology changes how children play. Advanced technology toys make the sounds, play the tunes, do the talking—all different from children who create their own universes—as we noted about the Brontes’ toy soldiers and the imagination involved in playing with them. Do built-in *bells and whistles* cannibalize *mindful* activities—creating actions, feelings, responses, and imaginary worlds—that emerge because older toys don’t *do things*? Are imaginary worlds becoming less common or simply changing based on available tools?

We are also concerned about the effects of communication technologies and virtual worlds on interpersonal relationships. A June 2011 Angus Reid poll indicated: “More than one third (38%) of our members find people talking on a cell phone loudly very annoying.” Our own observations suggest that individuals commonly participate in digital and virtual interactions at the expense of face-to-face relations. Is the promise of *minimized* communication with multiple users in digital spaces satisfying? An analysis of over 19 million Twitter accounts revealed, “only 21 percent of Twitter users are actual True Twitter Users,” defined as a user who has tweeted at least 10 times, follows at least 10 people, and has at least 10 followers (Barracuda Labs, 2010). Because technological formats shape language, do abbreviated tweets, text messages, suspended face-to-face conversations, and enticing virtual worlds diminish the *art of conversation* and inhibit the *growth of personal relationships* vital to creative development.

It would also seem a loss to us if emerging *personalized education* results in computers assuming the teacher’s role. The Internet abounds with applications—often *intuitive* software, adapting to skill levels and providing mini-tutorials—to teach and practice skills aimed at standardized test achievement. Although the Alberta Teachers Association (ATA) does not support the use of private, for-profit sites, schools worldwide subscribe, driven by high-stakes exam practice. We believe technology carries potential to support a balance between skill practice and inquiry experiences. We see unexplored creative potential for sharing technology spaces, working in groups. Technology integration requires thoughtful partnering with children as active participants in rich learning experiences.

Research suggests that technology is better used to support curriculum than be the curriculum (Parsons, McRae, & Taylor, 2006). What hidden (Longstreet & Shane, 1993) or null (Eisner, 1994) curriculum surrounds technology integration?

Where will our relationships with and through technology lead? How is our creative potential affected by technology? Does technology control us or do we control it?

Designing Spaces Where Creativity Flourishes

For many reasons, some intentional and others accidental, education has been structured around a system of individualism—standardized testing, teacher accountability, grades, rewards, surveillance, competition, evaluation, and hierarchies of power that destroy intrinsic motivation and creativity (Hennessey, 2010). The current emphasis on standardized tests and acquisition of 21st century skills, to *get ahead*, have created angst for teachers ensnared in a dichotomy between their professional insights about how best to support children's learning and the constraints of historical educational *trappings*.

Although our notion of what it means to be educated and how we educate children requires serious consideration beyond this paper, this discussion is crucial to deciding how we build creativity into curriculum. Here, we use a human ecological perspective to consider spaces that create fertile conditions for nurturing creativity. Our intent is not to provide a creativity recipe or formula, but to inspire change. We are interested in finding new ways for teachers and students to *live* together in the world by creating educational spaces based on dialogic relationships and respect for ourselves, others, and nature.

We need a new vision of learning places as creativity enabling spaces. In these spaces, children form positive connections and relationships with other learners; opportunities abound for play and imagination; critical, evaluative, and creative thinking are practiced; problem finding is as essential as problem solving; multiple perspectives trump *right* answers; content is integrated across subject areas; questions are encouraged and honored; passion, curiosity, wonder, awe, and serendipity abound; and learning is negotiated through respectful, free-flowing dialogue. Teachers are not gatekeepers or knowledge purveyors, but can learn alongside students as they provide expertise, guidance, and opportunities—ever mindful of the seriousness of their responsibilities and need to be continually guided by wisdom (Craft, 2010).

This optimistic vision leaves us with a question: *How do teachers design for creativity in practical ways?* Undoubtedly, the first step is to consider our attitudes and beliefs about creativity. Children sense *real*. They know if diversity and creativity are appreciated and if they, as individuals, are valued and respected. Teachers must

value and model creativity (Dollinger, Burke, & Gump, 2007), be open to experiences (Kaufman, 2009), and committed to doing what is best for children. They must be flexible, energetic, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, passionate about learning, and adept at research-based pedagogical methodologies (Renzulli & De Wet, 2010). In other words, teachers must demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attributes expected of them as professionals.

However, knowing and acquiring skills does not ensure that teachers will use these abilities to enhance creativity in their classrooms. Another layer must be addressed; teachers need to model and encourage qualities of *humanness*—acceptance, kindness, empathy, tolerance, inclusivity, diversity, connection, self-expression, humility, and respectfulness—within themselves and their students. The learning space must feel safe to all students; it should invite experimentation, risk-taking, mistakes, multiple perspectives, and conflict resolution. Richards (2010) reminds us that children should feel free to “be themselves, get involved, take a chance, be wrong, act a little strange without censure . . . and display their all-too-eager enthusiasm” and teachers must learn to “cherish diversity . . . to value the unique and shiny pieces of the mosaic they represent while also developing the overall picture” (pp. 217–219, 224).

As the Pearce writing suggests at the beginning of this paper, strong evidence exists that creativity flourishes through intrinsic motivation across all age groups (Hennessey, 2010; Kasof, Chen, Himsel, & Greenberger, 2007). Why are external reward systems (prizes, competition, and high-stakes testing) commonly used to motivate students to perform, produce, and behave? Appearing to work in the short term and effective when expecting *right* answers (Hennessey, 2010), external rewards seldom have lasting effects. They inhibit people from experiencing *flow state* described by renowned creativity researcher Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (2008), in his seminal *Flow: the Psychology of Optimal Experience* as peak performance; individuals become so absorbed in creative pursuits that time stands still and personal cares and distractions fade away.

Although highly desirable for enabling creativity, intrinsic motivation can be elusive—especially for children shaped by external rewards. Intrinsic motivation finds enjoyment learning through self-direction, independence, collegial interactions, active engagement, individual choice (Hennessey, 2010), and group negotiations. Intrinsic motivation requires attention and hard work; it is a growth process encouraged by enabling children to self-monitor, regulate their attitudes and behaviors, and evaluate the ideas and products they generate. Intrinsic motivation and personal growth flourish when children feel learning is being done with them, not to

them. Schools should be spaces where creativity is intrinsically motivated and peak performance follows authentic engagement in collaborative pursuits driven by the learners' interests and passions.

How do we help children develop intrinsic motivation? Children develop intrinsic motivation as they come to *know themselves*. Through dialogic interactions with self and others, children learn to engage in the inner dialogue and creative self-discovery that resulted in the Bronte children's imaginary worlds. Children need many opportunities to explore ideas with others; dialogue around quality literature; journal about wonderings, curiosities, insights, and questions; and practice respectful communication. Exploring innovative ways to share ideas and understandings reduces the monotony of projects, presentations, and displays that all *turn out the same*. Lines that delineate subjects must be smudged to help children see connections across subject areas. When children are offered ideas, encouragement, and open-ended inquiries, endless possibilities invite engagement and enrich learning.

How do we design creative physical spaces? Learning spaces, resource-rich artifacts, print materials, digital media, playthings, tools, and materials invite exploration and engagement. Group and individual workspaces that support collaboration and enable reflection (Fairweather & Cramond, 2010) are designed and rearranged by student needs. Here, multiple layers abound; the physical environment extends beyond classrooms into community, nature, and world. Abundant opportunities for interactions with others—field and subject experts, artistic and cultural experiences, and real-world engagements—expose children to what is and what can be. Outdoor experiences allow space for children to slow down, observe, and be inspired by nature's intricacies. These experiences rouse *possibility thinking* (Craft, 2010) and nurture creativity by revealing dynamic, diverse, and disorderly landscapes inherent in our physical, social, cultural, and ecological world.

Summary and Final Thoughts

Creativity research has historically been divided into two distinct approaches, cognitive and social; and four categories commonly known as P's—Person, Process, Product, and Press (Gangadharbatla, 2010), with two additional P's—Phase and Problem—added by Cropley and Cropley (2009). Alternatively, Csikszentmihalyi's (1999) systems theory, a convergence model of multiple components (*systems*), focuses on interactions among individuals (persons), domain (culture) and field (society/gatekeepers). For Csikszentmihalyi, creativity is the process of altering *memes*, the tiny components of domain handed down from former generations. Gangadharbatla

(2010) believes technology should be an additional separate component of Csikszentmihalyi's systems as "technology is a defining feature of the human condition" (p. 225). Pepler and Solomou (2011) note that the expert panel (field) that gatekeeps the domain in the systems model is not as relevant in social media where members monitor contributions and creative ideas spread via dialogue.

We agree with the community-based foundation of Csikszentmihalyi's (1999) work. We believe, as he, that dialogue can powerfully blend creativity into schools. The role of dialogue in opening spaces informed by the historical beliefs and values inherent in written and spoken languages is a central theme of Bakhtin's (1981) dialogic theory. If we accept history influences our creativity dialogue, we no longer need to emphasize the *novel* or *complex*; we can free ourselves to see the bits, pieces, and sparks of creativity contained within the whole. Perhaps then we will be more open to seeing and celebrating creativity and determined to design creative, ecological, learning spaces, in the spirit of Bronfenbrenner (2005), where all individuals feel accepted and valued.

Because education addresses the whole child; nurtures future citizens; and is concerned with developing inclusive, engaging, and technologically supported learning environments, making good sense of research findings should be important to educators. Education can facilitate change and renew creative dimensions within our educative experiences; or, possibly erode emphases that already exist. How can we creatively work within education to edify society? Our research review raises many questions and confirms that more research is needed to inform and facilitate creativity-based educative experiences.

Implications for Further Research

Cropley and Cropley (2009) see "widespread agreement that the world needs novelty, change, and innovation" (p. 2). Given movement towards agreement on a definition and the advent of multidisciplinary approaches, an exciting era for creativity research unfolds. Notably, we need a definition of creativity hospitable to a maximum number of creative expressions; that definition might work best if it has a hard shell outside with a soft, goey inside.

More research is needed into individual characteristics that influence creative performance; influences of gender, age, family, culture, society, and socio-economic status; correlations/fluctuations of IQ and CQ (Kaufman, 2009); bidirectional relationships between health and creativity (Runco, 2007); creativity assessments;

and technologies. As educators, we urgently need research into innovative educational practices that nurture creativity in children to *prepare them for adulthood in a fast-paced, competitive, global community*.

This phrase is italicized because, while commonly trotted out as a rationale for bridging creativity into our curricula, we have issues accepting the philosophy embedded within it. We must be careful not to accept unconsidered mythologies that drive us toward particular aims—as we suggested with a belief that creativity resides within *odd* individuals. We must generously and humbly—and dare we say creatively—challenge educational models that already exist within the goals we seek. We believe we can see and use creativity to revivify the imaginative creation of worlds, ideas, and possibilities that offer a balm to what we see as stultifying aspects of education that render the curriculum inhospitable to many children—those that Howard Gardner suggests do not measure up to the two most oft-used indicators of school success—written literacy and logical/rational thinking.

Educators must build broader curricula that encourage all children to *think outside the box*. As cliché as it sounds, thinking outside the box holds the possibility of creating new boxes with all the walls that make boxes both useful and limiting. How do we, as educators, eradicate our own narrowness and push ourselves towards a new way of exploring possibilities? How can we challenge the pedagogy and content of the curriculum and use our challenges to call for more rather than less creativity? We don't want kids to fit into the educational bog—we want them to lead us out of it.

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Creativity in the Person: Contemporary Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

All individuals, working alone or in collaboration with others, have creative characteristics, but activate and apply them in varied ways, at different times, and in response to differing tasks and conditions. A shift from asking, “How creative are you?” to the challenging question, “How are you creative?” moves us beyond looking at *level* of creativity (“high, average, or low”) and to consider *style* of creativity (varied ways of expressing and applying creativity). Understanding each student’s unique creative strengths enables educators to differentiate learning and instruction effectively for creativity and innovation as well as for other important educational outcomes.

Many people view creativity as a rare and elusive kind of “genius,” found only in the life and work of a small number of exceptional people—renowned artists, writers, or inventors, for example, excluding both the majority of adults and (other than a few exceptional prodigies) children or youth. Theorists and researchers believed that creativity was primarily, or even exclusively, determined by internal traits or characteristics evident in those few “creatively gifted” individuals.

More recently, however, advances in theory and research have led to a new understanding, in which we view all people as demonstrating a variety of creative characteristics and preferences, varying in degree and expression. Individuals, working alone and in collaboration with others, activate and draw on those characteristics in different ways, at different times, and in response to differing tasks and conditions (Treffinger, Schoonover, & Selby, 2013; Treffinger, Young, Selby, & Shepardson, 2002).

Experienced teachers certainly know students who are creative, but who differ in many other ways. Some are quiet and reflective. Others are outgoing and love interaction, sometimes to the distraction of others. Some express their creativity spontaneously in writing, art, theater, music or a combination of those. Yet others apply their imagination carefully in science and the exploration of ideas (e.g., Gardner, 1993). They may even give up other interests to pursue their passion.

Meet Lucy and Michael, two students in a twelve-member playwriting group working on an original script. The students were selected for their writing skills, interest in theater, and observed creativity; nonetheless, each approached the project and working in a group differently. Their differences were clear, for example, in their responses to one assignment. The group had been working for several weeks, first generating hundreds of ideas for a story, and then focusing, regrouping, refocusing, and finally reaching consensus on a story idea. They were assigned to take a week to develop their ideas for a completed story outline, describe who the main characters might be, and write a brief description of those characters.

At the next meeting, group members shared their plot outlines and character descriptions. When Lucy's turn came, she pulled out a large bundle of printed pages, and announced proudly that she had spent the week writing a completed script. She summarized her plot and character ideas, and noted that there was no need to do any more work. The rest of the group was taken aback by this announcement, and were concerned that Lucy's script would be adopted without consideration of any of their input. In her usual vocal way, Lucy announced that their input wasn't really needed since the script was finished, and that it made no sense to continue working and wasting time. The group could just move on to writing the music and lyrics to go with her script. Seeking to avert conflict, the teacher pointed out that not all the group members had been heard, so a decision was not yet appropriate. Somewhat reluctantly, Lucy agreed, and the reports continued. When it came time for his report, Michael pulled from his jeans a crumpled piece of paper filled with scrawled notes. He proceeded to outline a completely new story, with entirely different characters from those selected at the previous session. At once, the group exploded, with Lucy leading the charge. How could he even think of changing the story after so much work had gone into what had already been decided? Michael, replied: "Easy, this is a better idea, people will really like it."

When the teacher finally regained control of the meeting, discussion continued, with the group breaking into camps around Lucy and Michael. The teacher pointed out that some of Michael's original ideas could be worked into the story,

while using the structure of Lucy's script would save work and help focus their ideas; the composite, with input from several others, would result in a stronger story. After some discussion the group adopted that plan, and while neither Lucy nor Michael was entirely happy, they were brought on board.

Both of these students were able to make positive contributions to the overall effort of the group. Each was beginning to explore his or her abilities as writers and as potential problem solvers. Each had demonstrated skill in writing to at least one nominating teacher, and had demonstrated real interest and commitment to the school's theater program. Yet their approaches to the assignment, and the ways they interacted with each other, were all different; each brought unique personal characteristics to the creative efforts of the group.

Because of the infinite ways creativity can be expressed, our approach to creativity focuses on understanding the complex contributions of personality, interests, and style to creative expression and productivity. Understanding each student's strengths, interests, and experiences, enables educators to differentiate learning and instruction effectively for creativity and innovation as well as for other important educational outcomes. Our approach involves a simple but powerful shift in thinking, from asking the question, "*How creative are you?*" to the challenging question, "*How are you creative?*" Such a shift challenges us to move beyond looking at *level* of creativity ("high, average, or low" creativity) in order to consider *style* of creativity (varied ways of expressing and applying creativity; e.g., Isaksen, 2004; Isaksen, Dorval, & Treffinger, 2011; Treffinger, Selby, & Isaksen, 2008).

Reexamining Level of Creativity

Many efforts have been made to develop and use assessment tools to sort, classify, or label people in relation to their level of creativity. Tests, checklists, and rating scales encompassing literally hundreds of characteristics abound in the literature (e.g., Davis, 2005; Plucker & Makel, 2010; Plucker & Renzulli, 1999; Treffinger et al., 2002). Davis (2005) catalogued more than 200 characteristics often reported as indicative of creativity, and a database on our website (www.creativelearning.com) includes annotations of more than 70 different instruments. Viewing creativity as natural and positive has enabled closer and more constructive study of the characteristics or traits associated with creativity in the person (e.g., Selby, Shaw, & Houtz, 2005). Treffinger and colleagues (2002) reviewed more than 300 characteristics cited in the literature,

and proposed that: "Characteristics vary within and among people and across disciplines. No one person possesses all the characteristics nor does anyone display them all the time. ... Many of these characteristics can be taught and nurtured" (p. 7.).

Considering how these characteristics might inform classroom practice, we regrouped the list into four categories, depicted in Figure 1. We concluded that creativity can result when individuals and groups generate many ideas, are able to dig deeper into those ideas, are willing and able to listen to their own inner voice, and have the motivation, openness, and courage to explore new and unusual ideas.

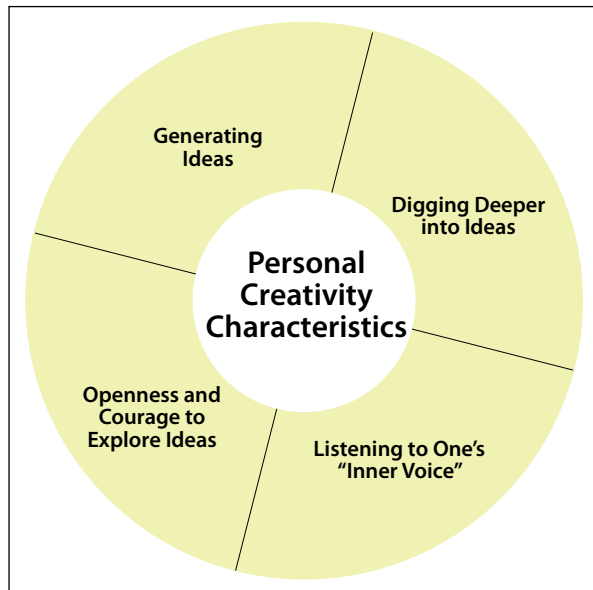


Fig. 1: Four categories of personal creativity characteristics (Treffinger et al., 2002)

The first category, *Generating Ideas*, includes those characteristics most often associated with divergent or creative thinking. They include characteristics associated with fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration, and metaphorical thinking. Michael brought the group the ability to generate many original ideas; he stretched their thinking, moving away from the familiar to new and unusual possibilities, looking at the challenge in unexpected ways and from unexpected viewpoints. As the group began to look more closely at the work each of the twelve members had submitted, they chose the best ideas and combined them with the initial story idea, making the product richer, more detailed, and more interesting.

Digging Deeper Into Ideas involves what is usually called convergent or critical thinking. Creative behaviors in this category include: analyzing, synthesizing, reorganizing, redefining, evaluating, and finding relationships. This was Lucy's strength, and as she "dug deeper," she demonstrated a desire to resolve ambiguity, make the complex simple, and to bring order from disorder.

Openness and Courage to Explore Ideas relates to problem and aesthetic sensitivity, curiosity, sense of humor, playfulness, imagination, the ability to fantasize, openness to experience, tolerance for ambiguity, risk-taking, tenacity, sensitivity, intuition, adaptability, and willingness to grow. Various members of the writing group demonstrated many of these traits. Their curiosity and sense of humor seemed endless, as was Michael's tolerance for ambiguity and risk-taking.

Finally, *Listening to One's "Inner Voice"* involves a person's level of motivation, self-confidence, and persistence. Again, this is a trait displayed by many of the young writers while working in the group. They believed that they were creative and showed a strong desire to create. Their self-confidence, self-efficacy, sense of purpose, and passion drove them forward. They understood their own strengths, and worked hard towards worthwhile goals. They focused on key tasks to the exclusion of most distractions, sometimes even losing sight of time, place, personal discomfort, and the social expectations of others.

Problem-Solving Style: Discovering Your Creative Self

The shift in thinking toward the question, "*How are you creative?*" redirects our efforts to understand creativity beyond sorting, ranking, or labeling individuals based on their (presumed) level of creative ability. This approach enables us to consider unique and varied ways in which individuals express and use their creativity. It has opened new directions for research and practice that challenge us to consider *style* of creativity and personal preferences that promote creative productivity (Treffinger et al., 2008).

Selby, Treffinger, and Isaksen (2007a, 2007b) drew on research and theory in the areas of psychological type, cognitive style, and creativity to develop a model of problem-solving style. They described the construct of problem-solving styles as a unique set of preferences and behaviors an individual brings to situations in which

he or she must deal with problems or manage change. They defined problem-solving styles as “consistent individual differences in the ways people prefer to plan and carry out generating and focusing activities, in order to gain clarity, produce ideas, and prepare for action” (2007a, pp. 1–2).

This model (distinct from, and more focused than generic or omnibus learning style models) involves three independent dimensions (Orientation to Change, Manner of Processing, and Ways of Deciding) that influence how individuals behave when solving problems or managing change. Each dimension involves two styles that describe differences in the ways people define problems, gather and select data, generate ideas, focus their thinking, and select and implement solutions (Treffinger, Selby, Isaksen, & Crumel, 2007). Each style emphasizes strengths that may contribute to effective problem solving, and identifies potential limitations or “blind spots” that may hinder effectiveness.

The Orientation to Change dimension is a continuum anchored by two styles: the Explorer and the Developer. Explorers seek novelty, search widely for information regarding any task, prefer flexible structures (especially when they can design and manage those structures themselves), and prefer to keep authority at arm’s length. They are often seen as unconventional and may appear to be unconcerned with rules and external regulations. Developers prefer to generate a few workable, detailed options, approach change in a gradual, efficient, or methodical manner, focus their search strategies based on relevance to the task as given, and are comfortable working within existing structures and with the guidance of authority.

The Manner of Processing dimension involves the External and Internal processing styles. Individuals who prefer the External style are engaged by social interaction. They gain energy from discussion and sharing ideas, enjoy building on the ideas of others, and are action-oriented (perhaps before giving careful consideration to those actions). On the other hand, individuals who prefer the Internal style draw their energy from reflection and weighing options carefully and thoroughly. They prefer processing tasks privately before sharing or engaging in discussion, and may become engrossed with inner events and ideas.

Ways of Deciding, the third dimension of problem-solving style, involves the Person and Task styles. Person-oriented decision makers look first at harmony and personal relations, considering the human impact of problems and challenges. They are sensitive and caring when responding to individuals about their ideas, working to avoid or ease group conflicts and considering the personal impact of decisions.

Task-oriented decision makers look first to the quality of outcomes or results, emphasizing rigor and objective analysis. They keep people and their ideas separate, and respond to ideas not individuals. They tend to look first at what is lacking or needs improvement and may not attend to others' feelings in tense situations.

Think about the students and their writing group. Michael always sought novelty, and could be counted on to generate many original ideas, sometimes to the annoyance of others, or in disregard of decisions that had already been agreed to. The deadline for the script mattered less to him than the fun he had with his new idea. He was eager to share this idea with others, and couldn't understand why they did not see the logic of his new approach to the challenge. To Michael, structure was an annoyance to ignore when possible. When compelled to follow a set structure, he would give it the least attention possible. Lucy, on the other hand, found that structure was important in guiding her efforts. She expected that each challenge would include some structure, when that was not the case, she would develop her own structure before proceeding. Lucy was also willing to share her thoughts, and was considered the most social of the group. She had methodically and efficiently brought the whole project to a conclusion. Like Michael, she couldn't understand why others didn't see the logic of her structure and her solution to the challenge.

Theory and research on problem-solving style helps educators to recognize that creativity can be expressed and applied in many ways, or that there are many ways to be creative. The more aware individuals are of their own style characteristics, the more effective they can be in solving problems or managing change, whether working alone or in a group (e.g., Treffinger, 2007). In addition, awareness of style characteristics of students enhances educators' ability to respond effectively and in varied ways to students' needs.

Implications for Practice

Teachers or trainers who seek to nurture creativity in their students can differentiate instruction based on both the level and style characteristics of their students. Training in the tools and processes associated with the creative and analytical skills needed for creativity, innovation, and problem solving can result in increased creative productivity, both with children and adults, and for individuals and teams (Isaksen et al., 2011; Sternberg, Jarvin, & Grigorenko, 2009; Torrance 1987, 1995; Treffinger et al., 2012).

With students whose creative characteristics may not yet be evident, instruction can focus on building basic understanding of creative tools and processes, as well as content knowledge in areas of interest. We identify two basic sets of tools: one for generating options and another for focusing our thinking. Individuals or groups use the generating tools to produce many, varied, or unusual possibilities, to develop new and interesting combinations of possibilities, or to add richness and detail to new possibilities. Brainstorming is an example of a widely known and commonly used idea-generating tool, but there are also numerous other tools for that purpose. For focusing ideas, many people are familiar with an evaluation matrix (or “grid”), but again, there are several tools for analyzing, organizing, refining, developing, prioritizing, evaluating, or selecting options. For more information about a variety of generating and focusing tools with educational applications, see Treffinger and Nassab (2011) or Treffinger et al. (2006).

Learners whose potential is starting to emerge need opportunities to practice applying the basic tools and problem-solving methods, to build competence and confidence in their use and application. Some students need more advanced opportunities, as they are more able to express and apply their creative strengths in addressing challenges that are closer to real life. As students’ creative characteristics emerge and mature, appropriate and challenging instruction extends from teaching and practicing basic tools to learning and applying a structured Creative Problem Solving (CPS) process (e.g., Isaksen et al., 2011; Treffinger, Isaksen, & Dorval, 2006). In addition to practice problems relating directly to curriculum areas and sample “practice problems” based on realistic everyday situations and challenges, engaging applications of CPS are available in such non-profit educational programs as the Future Problem Solving Program International (FPSPI; see: www.fpspi.org).

Students who demonstrate significant strengths in all four categories of personal characteristics are likely already to be actively engaged in creative projects and building a portfolio of creative accomplishments, exhibiting the self-direction and self-regulation typical of professionals in any field. New opportunities for creative activity will be diverse and varied, but also strongly personalized for each student, and the challenge for educators, parents, or mentors may be to help find and make new connections and resources. At this level, students (working individually or as part of a highly motivated, focused team) can apply the tools and process skills they have learned to optimize their creative productivity in ways that draw on their unique personal strengths and style preferences.

Clarity about definitions, characteristics, styles, and their implications for practice helps professionals and the public to “navigate” the breadth, depth, complexity, and elusiveness of “creativity,” and to communicate more effectively. Many people have their own ideas about what makes someone or something creative, and may not often realize that they may not be in agreement even though they may be using the same words. Confusion about creativity, without the benefit of a clear, explicit understanding of its nature and characteristics, can also be challenging in the classroom dialogue between teachers and students. When a teacher tells students “to be creative,” or to do an assignment “creatively,” there may be no shared understanding of what “creativity” actually involves. When we better understand and value each person’s style preference for creativity, and provide support for people and their products, our communication about creativity will be enhanced, and classrooms may become richer, more interesting, exciting and productive places in which to learn.

Summary

When working with students who are engaged in a complex, open-ended problem-solving project, think about the characteristics that set each student apart from others. As a result of your study of personal creativity characteristics and styles, we invite you to consider several important follow-up questions:

- What characteristics do your students display that are associated with level of creativity? What problem-solving style preferences do they display?
- How might educators, parents, or community leaders facilitate the recognition and nurture of creativity in children and youth (and, for that matter, in themselves)? What might you suggest to them that will help them recognize the strengths of each group member?
- How might individuals work together to recognize and use their diverse creative strengths to enhance or maximize their productivity?

Searching for and recognizing the personal characteristics and style preferences of students is an extensive, but engaging and worthwhile challenge. It is also not an end point, but a starting point for deliberate instruction in process tools that will lead to making the goal of “nurturing creativity and innovation” more than a matter of lip service in education.

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LINK TO:

<http://www.creativelearning.com>

<http://www.viewstyle.net>



The Journey From Trepidation to Theory: P-12 Teacher Researchers and Creativity

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ABSTRACT

There is typically no expectation of creativity in the context of teacher professional development programs. Yet, the Common Core Curriculum and other constructs demand that teachers exhibit considerable creativity in curriculum and instruction. The challenge then for teacher educators is to support each learner's individual growth toward greater cognitive complexity. This research examined the experience of a group of P-12 classroom teachers who explored the use of the arts to nurture their own creative processes, classroom research, understanding of difference, particularly race and culture, and instructional practices in the context of a graduate teacher professional development program.

Art hurts. Art urges voyages--and it is easier to stay at home.

(Brooks, 1967, p. 1)

This paper describes a research study that examined the experience of a group of P-12 classroom teachers who explored the use of the arts to nurture their own creative processes, their classroom research, their understanding of difference, particularly race and culture, and their instructional practices in the context of a graduate teacher professional development program. Four faculty colleagues in the same graduate program conducted the research in two parts. Two interviewed people of diverse races about their schooling experiences; wrote poetry

using the data; and created a video of a reading of the poetry. Two colleagues subsequently showed the video to their graduate students who are in-service teachers. The students discussed the form and content and wrote poetry after they had interviewed parents and teachers from cultural backgrounds other than their own. This article primarily describes the process after the video was produced.

Theoretical Frameworks

Six important frameworks helped us to situate and understand our work: creativity theories (e.g., Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007; Doyle, 2011; Egan, 1992; Runco, 1966); counternarrative as described in critical race theory (e.g., Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lynn et al., 2002); arts-based educational research (e.g., Barone, 2008; Barone & Eisner, 1997; Cahnmann, 2003; Eisner, 1980, 1995, 2008; Leggo, 2008); dialogical instruction and learning (e.g., Shor, 1992, Wink, 2005); Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl in Krathwohl, 2002; Bümen, 2007); and constructive-developmental adult development theory (e.g., Kegan, 1982; Mezirow, 1990, 1991).

Creativity Theories

Egan (1992) contends that imagination calls for flexibility in thought and an integration of emotionality, rationality, and meaning. Egan describes meaning-making as a dynamic process which uses multiple components stating,

[facts] mix in with the complex of shifting emotions, memories, intentions, and so on that constitute our mental lives...All kinds of associations curl around each new fact, there is endless blending and coalescing, and this activity involves the imagination. The more energetic and lively the imagination, the more are facts constantly finding themselves in new combinations and taking on new emotional colouring as we use them to think of possibilities, of possible worlds. (p. 50)

Doyle (2011) describes a creative episode as having an initial problem, progressing through a process that ends in success, which can then be judged by others. Runco (1966) defines creativity as manifested in the intentions and motivation to "transform the objective world into original interpretations, coupled with the ability to decide when this is useful and when it is not" (p. 4). Creativity need not be judged

by others; judgment is based on personal criteria. Beghetto and Kaufman (2007) build on Runco's work by theorizing a continuum of creativity that begins with mini-c, that may advance to little-c (everyday creativity) and big-C (eminent or field changing) processes of creativity. They define mini-c creativity as:

...the novel and personally meaningful interpretation of experiences, actions, and events [which] need not be original or (even meaningful) to others. Indeed, the judgment of novelty and meaningfulness that constitutes mini-c creativity is an intrapersonal judgment. (p. 73)

The authors further state that mini-c creativity is central to meaning-making: Little-c creativity is the sort inherent in everyday activities, that manifests on a smaller scale than big-C creativity, and Beghetto and Kaufman give the difference between Charlie Parker (big-C), who changed jazz with his innovations and a local jazz band (little-c) that creates music, but has not significantly changed the field of music; nevertheless, little-c and big-C creativity are formed initially by the important intrapersonal work in mini-c creativity.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Created in 1956 by Benjamin Bloom, the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives has long been a popular tool for designing and classifying educational goals, objectives, and standards. The original Taxonomy consisted of six categories and subcategories, organized in a hierarchical framework of ability and skill development (Kratwohl, 2002).

A 2000 revision changed Bloom's nouns (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation) to verbs (remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, creating) to state more clearly the process for achieving more advanced learning outcomes (Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, n.d.). Most important to this study, however, is the assignment of "creating"—or the process of putting elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganizing elements into a new pattern or structure through generating, planning, or producing—as the highest order outcome in learning.

Counter-Narrative

Educational theorists engaged in critical race theory (Decuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lynn et al., 2002) propose the use of counter-narrative

to reveal the lived experience of race in education. In so doing, educators may gain a view of being and meaning that the experience of race provokes. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) assert that counter-narrative “aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority” (p. 144). Hence, counter-narratives in the educational context may be a means to portray the multiple layers and intersections of race (and other forms of difference) in the culture of education.

For the purposes of this study, researchers were interested both in the ways of using counter-narrative to uplift the stories of people previously unknown to the listener, and in the possibilities of creating counter-narratives through a process of arts-based educational research.

Arts-Based Educational Research (ABER)

Arts-based educational research, the use of the elements and practices of the arts to inform our understanding of education, is a perfect complementary framework to produce CRT counter-narratives: Through ABER researchers might touch subjectivities. Eisner (2008) asserts that ABER works to “apply the arts in some productive way to help us understand more imaginatively and more emotionally problems and practices that warrant attention in our schools” (p. 18). Barone and Eisner (1997) describe attributes of ABER that connect directly to counter-narratives by constructing a virtual space that “possesses a capacity to pull the person who experiences it into an alternative reality,” which is the goal of critical race theorists and arts-based researchers alike (p. 73). In addition, historically the arts have often represented social justice. Barone (2008) asserts that ABER can be used to contest worldviews and “influence the public consciousness by critiquing the politically conventional and the socially orthodox” (p. 36). Thus, ABER may provoke percipients to imagine an experience of race in education outside of their own frame of reference, or to some degree unsettle emotional and cognitive barriers that limit their ability to empathize.

A subset of ABER theory is poetic inquiry. Cahnmann (2003) posits that the use of poetry in qualitative research provides opportunities to express meaning in innovative and insightful ways that are not accessible in other forms. Poets use metaphor, rhythm, alliteration, and other means to represent ideas and emotions that are multi-layered. In effect, a poetic representation provides a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the poet/researcher’s interpretation of events.

Dialogical Instruction and Learning and Constructive-Developmental Adult Development Theory

Dialogical instruction and learning is an ancient form of schooling in which all people are free to ask questions, offer claims, and to share power in an argument (such as Socratic dialogues). The goal of dialogic instruction and learning is social transformation. From among more recent theorists and practitioners (e.g., Vygotsky, Bakhtin, and Freire as referenced in Renshaw, 2004), the authors drew on the work of Joan Wink (2005), a White expert classroom teacher using dialogical instruction and learning with diverse student populations whose lived experience is similar to the setting of this research.

Constructive-developmental theorists (e.g., Kegan, 1982; Mezirow, 1991) suggest that transformative learning and development occur for individuals in contexts that support meaning-making through critical reflection. Embedded in these theories is the assumption that development moves hierarchically from simple to more complex and elastic cognitions as a result of this meaning-making. Through critical reflection that includes perspective taking and dialogue with others, individuals often arrive at “a more inclusive, differentiated, permeable and integrated perspective” (Mezirow, 1990, p. 14).

As four faculty colleagues, we wondered how an iterative process of arts-based educational research could help P-12 classroom teachers develop understanding of “difference” in order to offer more effective classroom instruction to diverse student populations. Two of us, Hanley and View (2010), used poetry to describe our research on race in education; Stribling and DeMulder then considered “difference” by incorporating Hanley and View’s poetic counter-narratives of critical race theory and through dialogic instruction and learning explored how the experience of poetry-writing-as-data-analysis might affect graduate students in their roles as artists and researchers.

We focused on the goals of transformative adult education (Mezirow, 1990) and how teachers can improve their creativity as a part of their own growth as teachers in the service of their students’ development. Our thesis was that to change teacher practice, teachers must experience what a creative practice looks like; therefore by engaging teachers in an explicitly creative process, they might develop awareness of how to change their practice in ways that would offer enriched learning opportunities through creative exploration in their own classrooms. Teacher educators need to consider the kinds of curricular experiences that effectively support teachers to engage in this work.

Methods

The site was a two-year teacher professional master's degree program for 60 in-service classroom teachers at a large, mid-Atlantic public university with a large and diverse undergraduate population, but a predominately White graduate school of education. The P-12 teachers enter the cross-disciplinary program as part of a school-based team and the curricular emphasis over the two-year cohort is to explicitly address issues of social justice in educational policy, critical pedagogy in classroom curriculum and teacher practice, collaboration, teacher reflective practice, and teacher leadership outside the P-12 classroom. The faculty intends for the teachers to develop as critical educators in their own classroom settings. The entire cohort is team-taught by as many as four faculty members.

This study involved two levels of investigation. As earlier stated, in Phase I, there were two faculty researchers (who are also poets) who interviewed respondents about their experience with schooling and then wrote poetry based on the data that was later videoed. The last part of Phase I included showing the video to their graduate students who were in-service classroom teachers who were asked to write about their responses to the video. In Phase II, two other faculty researchers in the same graduate program introduced the video and a poetic form to a different set of graduate students who were in-service classroom teachers. This article is primarily about Phase II and describes Phase I as context.

Qualitative methods were used in all stages of the research. Phase I used methods including autoethnography (Leggo, 2008), oral history (Grele, 2007), and hybrid ABER research (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008). Phase II used media analysis, experiential learning, interviews, and teacher self-reflection essays.

Phase 1 Methods

In the first phase of the research, the two poet-teacher educators-researchers (View and Hanley) asked a broad spectrum of students, colleagues, and acquaintances:

Tell me your memories and stories about your experiences in schools, first as a child, then as an adult, then as a parent (if applicable). What were/are the best of times? What were/are the worst? Describe the place and people.

The questions were not about race; nevertheless, while none of the White interviewees spoke about race, all of the people of color mentioned race as a significant element of their schooling experience. Finding this to be provocative, the researchers used convenient sampling to conduct, record, and transcribe oral history interviews (ranging from 90 minutes to four hours) with one American Indian woman, two Latino/as, and two African Americans. The choice of collecting oral histories, which Grele (2007) defines as “a conversational narrative created by the interaction of the interviewer and the interviewee,” provided the first level of storytelling, a relationship in which the interviewer and interviewee reconstructed history together (p. 12). Grele posits that the interviewer shapes the story by providing a contemporary context of scholarship and study, and the interviewee reconstructs lived experience in relationship to the interviewer’s queries. A complex network of meaning, identities, and purposes forms a reconceptualization of the past that is negotiated in the oral history conversation. Figure 1 provides a description of the people interviewed.

NAME*	GENDER	AGE	ETHNICITY	OCCUPATION
Keisha	Female	13	African American	Middle school student
Lela	Female	30	Latina	Doctoral student in education, Community activist
Melvin	Male	38	African American	Principal of middle school
Miguel	Male	60	Chicano	Social worker
Laurel	Female	30	Native American	Publications specialist

Fig. 1: Phase I interview subjects (*All names are pseudonyms)

Using a descriptive and interpretive analysis of the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994) we highlighted, made notes, and coded each interview transcript.

In addition, one researcher produced an autoethnography of her son’s educational experiences (e.g., Leggo, 2008). To do the auto-ethnographical work, the researcher/poet used memories, journals, notes, photographs, and poems she wrote to reexamine experience through the lens of an African American educator who lives as an outsider and insider in academia. The data were analyzed by reading and examining the artifacts several times alone and with others and writing memos that included memories of experiences and present-day feelings and perceptions.

Salient themes emerging from both analyses included race, racism, supremacy, class, gender, marginalization, resistance, learning, segregation, achievement, failure, family, teachers, fear, anger, pride, and community and were repeated across the transcripts. From these themes, we constructed poems on the individual experiences and developed findings on the collective experience of race in education. Some of the language in the poetry comes verbatim from the data and the poems were read by most of the respondents to validate the meaning represented. This phase of the project is a demonstration of the form of ABER that Cahnmann-Taylor (2008) describes as hybrid research which she states “combines tools used by the literary, visual, and/or performing arts with tools used by educators and other social scientists to explore the human condition” (p. 9). The following poem, Fencewalker, by View is an example of the poetry. To offer context, the interview subject Laurel Blackstone is a 30-year-old Native American woman who grew up in a large city in the Southwest near the reservation where her mother was born.

Fencewalker

Maybe in the Pima or Creek traditional languages

My name would be

Fencewalker,

Feet-Impaled-By-Expectations

Or

Maybe my punk name would be

Trans-Viva:

Messenger-For-This-Other-Life

I did not ask for the honor

Or honors,

Or smart-people classes

Did not ask to

feel ashamed

be assumed Latina

not recognize my own rez cousins in the tracked hallways of our school

If asked,

I would choose, instead,

To flee,

Naked

With half-Black, half-Indonesian Tony
And my same Gila River cousins saddled with GEDs and multiple kids
And my mom
And anyone else invested
In friction

To shoot sparks –
No, rockets!! –
in the dark sky
We'd mediate our zany, rebellious designs and
Grow a responsible round community
Of dark, smart people
Snatch back our stories from wealthy white curators
Share them among ourselves
And anyone who honored us
And our courses
Our voices
Our new traditions

Advanced placement
In a vibrant meadow of justice

View and Hanley read the poems for various audiences of colleagues, students, and community members. Subsequently, they created a video of a reading of the poetry to be shared with a variety of audiences (<http://www.myspace.com/video/stoney1/lemniscating-counter-narrative/49123329>).

At one of the professional conferences where the video was shown by the poet-researchers, two colleagues participated in a poetry meaning-making exercise, which they subsequently transformed for use with their cohort of graduate students, creating Phase II of the inquiry.

Phase II Methods

Here, a second pair of researchers (Stribling and DeMulder) used the video as part of the culminating assignment for their Language and Culture course in 2009. In a semester-long "Knowing project: An epistemological exploration of community life and meaning-making," sixty P-12 in-service teachers explored the language and culture of someone whose view of the world and of themselves was vastly different

from their own. They were challenged to move beyond stereotypes to complicate their understanding about an unfamiliar culture with the help of a person who identified him/herself with that culture.

Once they identified a person who would “host” their exploration of culture, teachers critically examined how this person’s “culture” was represented in the media, reflected on their own assumptions about this person and his/her culture, engaged in at least two exchanges with their “host” and his/her culture, and reflected on what they learned about their host’s culture and about themselves through the exchanges and what the experiences might mean for them as teachers. Teachers brought their narrative reflections to class where they had the opportunity to deepen their experience through the use of poetry.

Teachers first viewed the aforementioned video of the poetry performance. Then they were tasked with using the data they collected during their Knowing Project to present their counter-narrative through poetry to introduce their host to their teacher peers. They could construct the poem from scratch or by using a form provided. A list of literary techniques was also provided for them to consider (e.g., simile, metaphor, alliteration, etc.).

After composing their poems, teachers shared them in three small groups of about 20 teachers each. They prepared up to three sentences to explain their reasons for choosing this person and then read their poem in a Reader’s Theatre style. A discussion followed where the teachers shared how the poetry enhanced their understanding of their own and other cultures.

One example follows of a teacher’s poem and statements:

You are caring and dedicated

You wonder how to overcome prejudice

You hear angels from Heaven

You want to help everyone

You are caring and dedicated

1. She was from a culture I’d seen in movies and was curious about (Greek)
2. She was a positive person who felt underrespected due to her culture
3. I respected her for her dedication to teaching and her caring for her friends and family

All 60 teachers created poems of varying quality. The written reflections about this process, collected electronically from the teachers after the class day, were most revealing of the transformative process. We read through these reflections to look for recurrent themes (Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 2006) related to their experiences with this creative endeavor.

Results

The following themes and subthemes emerged from the data analysis process:

Insights About the Process of Writing a Poem

Most of the teachers described insights they gained about the process of writing a poem as a result of engaging in the activity themselves. The following subthemes were evident:

Writing poems (and the power of words) provided a different and/or additional opportunity to reflect on the person and the experience, allowing for deeper reflection and understanding. Teachers wrote: "There is something about poetry that seems to make words become more powerful"; "It was interesting to share my poetry because I was able to really give a sense of what I learned"; "Wow, at the end of the day, this was exponentially more powerful than I ever imagined." Writing poems required a careful/thoughtful choice of words to get to the essence of the person. For example, teachers wrote: we had to "put our writing on a diet"; "we were able to summarize our most intense, influential, and important things we learned about the person we interviewed."

Writing poems revealed talents and multiple ways to express ourselves. For example, a teacher reflected that these kinds of activities "bring out talents that all of us have but don't know we have."

Writing poems involved an emotional response. For example, teachers responded: "I learned that my subject's story still breaks my heart as I was not able to read the poem aloud without tearing up"; "...the emotional underpinnings of the arts helps further cognition"; "This specific activity deeply reached into my affective domains. I'd like to do more of these in the future. I felt so much closer to the people

of different cultures and backgrounds through listening to the poems, as my fellow teacher friends wrote them with their hearts.”

Writing poems helped to foster greater empathy. Teachers responded: “... to write a poem it really forced me to take on that person’s identity to think about their wants and needs”; “It made me look at their perspective—I think during this project I was looking at it through my perspective—I thought I was very interesting...”

Writing poems encouraged creativity. Teachers wrote: “I learned that I had some creativity in my brain”; “I loved the opportunity to create this way. It allowed for my creativity to come through and to hear intimate thoughts from others as well”; “Not only was I surprised at my own abilities of creating a poem, I was impressed with others’ poems and the creativity and care they took to describe their project and the significance of their knowing project.”

Writing poems reinforced the importance of stories. Teachers reflected: “I learned that everyone has a story. Every person you pass on the street, the person driving too slow in front of you, the mom frustrated with her kid at the mall—we all have stories, and judgment really means nothing until you have taken the time to truly listen and understand someone else”; “I was impressed with the beauty of the way the stories were told. It makes you realize that every child has a story. Using poetry to tell these stories makes them into an art form and helps bring meaning to what they want to convey in a simple, concise but very powerful way.”

Writing a poem was a challenging experience and the scaffolding process (providing a format) for writing the poems made it less formidable a challenge. Teachers wrote: “I enjoyed forcing myself to try to write a poem that truly reflected the person I had learned more about”; “The creative aspect of developing the poetry for the Knowing Project was lost upon me. While I understand the aspect of taking an in-depth project and reducing it to a few important words, I typically write in a condensed manner that often leaves out the additional fluff. Attempting to write it in poetry form then sharing my (horribly-written) poetry was a very stress-inducing experience for me”; “I was really worried all day about writing poetry until we were given the outline. That really helped. Then it was hard to put all the things I wanted to say into a few statements. But having to do this helped bring out the important things you wanted others to know. It was a good way for everyone to contemplate their experiences with their knowing projects participants and be able to briefly share the most meaningful parts with the whole group”; “It was helpful that you gave us an outline to use when creating our poem. Since I am not much of a creative writer, this

helped guide me in the right direction and made the activity seem less overwhelming to me. This is something that I feel I need to keep in mind with my students.”

Insights from Sharing Poems Aloud

Several teachers specifically commented on the experience of sharing the poems aloud as a group [in a reader’s theatre format]. For example, teachers wrote: “Listening to everyone read theirs, without interruptions or discussion was amazing”; “I learned that I felt very vulnerable when reading my poetry aloud. It was like my true thoughts were put out for everyone to hear and criticize.” “I enjoyed the poems....they were very powerful! I think you should have everyone type theirs up and submit it, write an introduction, publish them. As I sat there listening to everyone’s poems, they were very similar. I think we all experienced a new level of acceptance.”

Implications for and Insights About PK-12 Classrooms and Student Learning

Many teachers expressed interest and enthusiasm in using a poetry format/ activity in their own classrooms. More importantly, teachers responded with insights about the profound impact this or similar experiences can have on learning and significant insights about their own practice as a result of the experience. For example teachers said, “It was an interesting experience but I’ve always been open to multiple ways of sharing learning, even if I don’t do as good a job allowing it in my classroom as I’d like”; “I’m interested to share the poem with my person, and see if they feel as though it encapsulates them in some way. It’s quite possible that my view of him is different from his own view. This is another lesson learned from the Knowing Project and it has direct implications in the classroom. Even when I think I know a student, I need to keep in mind that it is from my perspective, and allowing them to present their thoughts and ideas from their perspective is a critical piece to the conversation”; “I didn’t expect to feel vulnerable when sharing my poem. I did. It was very personal and close to my heart. I wonder if and when my students may feel this vulnerability? And I am totally unaware of it...”; “What I did take away, though, was the profound impact that that kind of medium can have on the learner. Poetry in particular is often an intensely personal way of dealing with material, and you can’t help but become engaged as a result. I do question its effectiveness in a forum setting simply because of its personal nature though. The beauty of poetry is that it speaks differently to each listener, but at the same time is embodying the voice of its creator...which may have had a completely different intent. As a means of instruction, then, I have issues with its utility. As a means of getting students to grapple with issues/content within the

confines of their minds, however, I think that it's an invaluable tool that is probably underutilized in the classroom."

Concern About the Practice of Discouraging Creativity in Schools

One teacher reflected: "I think it is very sad that the rule is that children are enthusiastic about learning up until they start going to school where their creativity and natural curiosity are smashed to smithereens because of the curriculum and the fear of many of us teachers to think outside the box and create that multicultural and pedagogic revolution Nieto and Freire describe in their books. I wonder if many of us are afraid of taking those steps for the very reason our students lose their enthusiasm. Could it be that we do not have enough faith in ourselves and the power we have to change the world around us? Could it be too late? Could it be that nobody cares about us or they stopped caring so we stopped believing?"

These data suggest that the Phase II research took the intentions of Phase I to more profound levels of insight, producing a continuously looping interplay of arts-based educational research and dialogue, which produced counter-narrative, which provoked cognitive dissonance (e.g., Festinger, 1957; Gorski, 2009) leading to a resolution that disabused the creators and percipients of stereotypes, driven by a process of creativity.

Discussion

The following themes and subthemes emerged from the analysis process of Phases I and II:

ABER

The Phase I researchers referred explicitly to Prendergast's (2007) notion that "Poetic inquiry is sometimes a socio-political and critical act of resistance to dominant forms and an effective way to talk back to power" (p. 1) They were interested in expressing the socio-political concerns of their oral history interviewees, as an act of witness, and as a way to express the affective experiences of people who are often ignored or unheard in educational settings. Their creative process also served the goals of critical race theory by generating counter-narratives. Similarly, the P-12 teacher researchers in Phase II used the data gathered over the course of a semester

to enter into a creative process to understand the data gleaned from their host in the Knowing Project and their own experiences of another culture.

Dialogue

The creative processes in both phases of the research involved dialogue at many levels: intrapersonal (through reflection and mini-c creativity); dialogue with the materials of poetry-making (words, verbatim quotations, and poetic concepts such as rhyme, alliteration, metaphor); dialogue with the data sources (be they interviewees, Knowing Project hosts, the sights and smells of the Knowing Project communities, etc.); dialogue with percipients; and interpretation, a type of dialogue in which a “story” is told, retold, observed, and told again moving the art-maker from the lower to higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy.

Counter-narrative by Way of Cognitive Dissonance

In addition to the art makers in Phase I offering percipients a counter-narrative to the stereotypes and master narratives that are told about people and communities perceived as “different,” the data suggest that Phase II art makers *arrived* at counter-narratives through their engagement with the creative process. As the art makers encountered information that failed to conform to their previously held views, they struggled to understand the meaning of the information and the extent to which it would threaten or transform their reality. In their efforts to restore cognitive balance (Festinger, 1957), all of the art makers eventually shifted their reality to accommodate the new information received from their data sources and created a new story as a result. They made connections with people and places they had never made before, as well as making connections with how the insights could inform and transform their own learning, their classroom, and their teaching practice. The data suggest that to act and think differently about various oppressions means moving *beyond* cognitive dissonance *through* a creative process.

The Process of Creating

The art-making process provided Phase II graduate students a way to “know” difference, to step outside of their own skin to gain perspective of another person toward achieving empathy. Their creativity, as manifested in reflections on the poem-making process and the sparks evoked in terms of their own classroom instruction, eventually brought them joy. However, creativity required effort. The task of creating poetry was daunting for many students even though they were supported through

the process. They were surprised at the level of learning and depth of the insight they developed through the process, despite the way that the creative process provoked discomfort and vulnerability.

Coming full circle, the data suggest that the personal risk-taking that is required in a creative process evokes subjectivity and vulnerability, produces cognitive dissonance and resistance, and eventually moves the art-maker through discomfort to a satisfying learning as manifested by a work of art. Even the students who expressed the greatest resistance to art-making or identifying themselves as artists, eventually found value in the process:

The poem was a challenge for me; one that I had never really been asked to do before, but I enjoyed forcing myself to try to write a poem that truly reflected the person I had learned more about.

I really didn't connect to this part of the day. I'm not an artist, so it was great to hear the stories but it was not something I could turn around and use. It was a good way to synthesize the project. I am not a poet so the stems were such a great idea.

I was dreading this part of the day. Poetry. We had to write a poem? Once I actually got into the activity, I found it incredibly meaningful. I loved hearing everyone's poem and getting to know their person through the poem.

Much like theories that argue that deep learning can only come through risk taking, stress, disequilibrium, and accommodation (e.g., Csikszentmihályi, 1997; Piaget, 1985), the P-12 classroom teachers, in spite of reluctance and fear, survived an arts-based educational research process, gained insights about themselves and others, and seemed to be the better for it.

Conclusion

The poem-making process had the impact of de-centering the participants. This somewhat unsettling experience led to important insights regarding the person they came to "know" as part of the Knowing Project and led to significant insights regarding the teachers' own practice and the dearth of opportunities for creative and artistic expression in schools.

Our greatest hope is that teachers' engagement with creative and artistic processes will encourage them to then use these processes with their own students; if teachers can learn so much through these alternative mediums, then certainly their own students could as well. In fact, many researchers have found strong connections between the arts and learning. For example, sociodramatic play as a way to meaningfully engage young children with literacy tasks and skills helps facilitate their construction of literacy knowledge and understanding (e.g., Christie, 1998; Hall, 2000; Levy, Wolfgang, & Koorland, 1992; Roskos & Christie, 2001). Through interactions with materials, print, and others, children begin to understand the communicative power of reading and writing and learn how to comprehend and manipulate language. Vivian Gussin Paley's (2004) work is compelling evidence for the power of "play." She has the children dictate stories that they then dramatize with and for their peers; as she claims, "play [is] indeed work" (p. 2). Furthermore, Connery, John-Steiner, and Marjanovic-Shane (2010) argue that, "...the very nature of learning is creative" (p. 215). Infusing the arts into the curriculum at all levels—from Preschool through Higher Education—is essential for deep and meaningful learning to occur.

There is typically no expectation of creativity in the context of teacher professional development programs. This is particularly the case in a national education policy environment that defines and rewards teaching and learning in terms of high stakes test scores rather than in terms of creativity and play. Yet, the revised Bloom's Taxonomy, the Common Core Curriculum (National Governors' Association, 2010), Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), and other constructs demand that teachers exhibit considerable creativity in their curriculum design and instruction. The challenge then for teacher educators is to support each learner in their individual growth, to move toward greater cognitive complexity. When principles of constructive-developmental theories inform and shape the design of teacher professional development experiences, teachers engage in transformative meaning-making by critically reflecting on the world and on their practice, constructing professional knowledge with their peers, and developing more collaborative relationships with their fellow teachers (Gregson & Sturko, 2007). Equally important is the evidence that the arts are necessary for children's intellectual development (e.g., Connery, John-Steiner, & Marjonovic-Shane, 2010) and classroom teachers are important conveyors of this message.

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Comfortably Uncomfortable: A Study of Undergraduate Students' Responses to Working in a Creative Learning Environment

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ABSTRACT

This article, which draws on a study of undergraduate students' perceptions of working in a creative learning environment, is underpinned by the idea that everyone has the potential to be creative. Empirical data was obtained from semi-structured interviews with students in Year 3 BA in Education Studies, their reflective sketchbooks, and notes from observations undertaken in the campus-based Visual Arts Centre studio. The findings support the view that students benefit from having access to creative opportunities which involve self-examination and risk-taking in a supportive, collaborative space. The evidence suggests there is a need for lecturers to discuss and share creative pedagogical strategies designed to support student learning in different settings.

Introduction

The BA in Education Studies degree course aims to introduce students to learning and teaching practices in a wide range of educational settings, with reference to contemporary research and other relevant educational literature. Key skills learning has been integrated into the degree program to ensure that students gain not just subject knowledge but some of the translatable skills and attributes valued by employers; these include effective teamwork, communication and creative problem-solving skills, self-awareness and the ability to make independent judgment (Undergraduate prospectus, 2012). Although the majority of students

hope that achieving a degree in Education Studies will help them to secure a Primary Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) place, it is not marketed as a Teacher Education course. In line with the common structure for all undergraduate programs provided by the School of Education, core compulsory and optional self-contained modules are offered; this means that students are able to personalize their studies, to some extent, according to their particular interests, experiences, and aspirations. Whichever route they take, the expectation is that all students will have access to innovative, stimulating learning opportunities, which will encourage them to engage with “reflective, critical, creative and conceptual ways of thinking” (Course handbook, 2012). If this aim is to be achieved, much more attention needs to be given to the development of creative practice in Higher Education (HE) undergraduate courses; lecturers need time to explore and discuss what Hayward Rolling (2010) refers to as a “pedagogy of possibilities,” with reference to students’ perceptions of how they engage with their learning in different environments.

This paper focuses on the creative learning experiences of students who opted for the “Creativity and Learning” module delivered in the spring semester of their final undergraduate year; the 12 one-day weekly sessions took place in both the School of Education and the campus-based Centre for Visual Arts. A three-tier model has been developed to deliver the module content: traditional lectures, designed to introduce theoretical ideas and concepts of relevance to creativity in education, more interactive presentations from a range of local practitioners, and practical sessions led by an artist-in-residence. In addition to exploring and gaining insight into the theory and practice, philosophy and policy of creativity in education, students are expected to engage in practical, self-reflective creative learning activities and explore their own creative processes through the planning, creation, and presentation of an art piece. They are provided with a sketchbook to document the ongoing development of their ideas and are asked to produce a short reflective overview of the process to support the final product. The whole creative portfolio is assessed on the last day of the module, when the students present their work as a peer group exhibition in the Art Centre studio. They are also required to submit a written assignment to demonstrate their understanding of the role creativity plays in the current English education system. The central discussion of this article addresses students’ responses to working in the relatively informal, creative learning environment of the art studio.

Theoretical and Empirical Background

The Wider Context

The decision to introduce a new module focusing on creativity in education was underpinned by a strong belief that there is scope for the undergraduate experience to be enhanced and developed; as Dollinger, Dollinger, and Centeno (2005) maintain, aspects of pedagogy and practice in HE would benefit from being experiential, with more university lecturers applying findings from their research to students' learning (Ramsden, 2003). Kuh (1996) talks of the importance of creating conditions that inspire and motivate students, encouraging lecturers to spend time and energy on "educationally purposeful activities" that match with both learners' aspirations and the aims of the institution. As we cannot presume students are learning what we expect them to, it is important to take into account what they bring to the learning environment; Millard (2003) uses the term "flow" to refer to this blending of university requirements with students' ideas, interests and experiences. With reference to some of the studies centred on Year 1 students' levels of engagement, (Elton, 2001; Entwistle, 2000; Haggis, 2003; Pheiffer, Andrew, Green, & Holley, 2003), Holley and Dobson (2008) point out that there seems to be an elitist set of assumptions about student aims and motivation in HE; Haggis (2003) feels that academics share the belief that learning at this level is about questioning, discovering, and creating knowledge but that not all students are capable of, or have the desire to be, intellectually curious. If we, as HE practitioners, acknowledge the many different thoughts, feelings, ideas, and aspirations that students bring to the learning situation, we can discover a great deal about our practice from both formal and informal communications with them.

This small-scale study, which examines students' perceptions of the creative learning experiences offered by the Creativity in Education module, aims to investigate how engaging in creative exploration and thoughtful reflection, in the final year of their undergraduate studies, encourages students to challenge the habitual ways in which they approach their learning. It also seeks to develop our understanding of how working in a collaborative, creative learning environment impacts on students' self-knowledge, with reference to their future practice. It is beyond the scope of this article to enter into the long-standing debates about the importance of students developing the higher level skills and abilities more recently linked with employability, lifelong learning, and personal development, but these are well documented elsewhere (Dearing, 1997; Fallows & Steven, 2000; Gibbs, 1990; Knapper & Cropley, 1985). The long-awaited Higher Education White Paper, published by the British Coalition Government in 2011, advocates the ongoing improvement of course design and content, with reference to student feedback; it professes to put students at the heart

of the educational experience and highlights the need for them to play a more active part in the learning process. Building on the student-centred approach to learning in HE (Kember, 2009), this module provides students with opportunities to work in a dynamic educational setting, where they can make a collaborative contribution to the development of the module content. By incorporating alternative pedagogical approaches, which encourage thinking in different ways, into existing undergraduate programs, the expectation is that improvements to the student experience will be more rewarding and sustainable.

In order to put the research study into context, it is helpful to consider what is meant by creativity and why it is so important for undergraduate students to have access to creative learning experiences at this time.

Creativity

Despite the wealth of literature about creativity in education, there continues to be a lack of consensus about the meaning of this complex, slippery term (Watson, 2008). Wallace (2002) stated that there is no universal agreement on the definition of creativity and Parsons (1987) spoke of the “fertile untidiness in the language surrounding key developmental ideas [in education] such as creativity” (p. 38). Some scholars distinguish between “high” creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Gardner, 1990), which involves a significant innovation or achievement, and what Craft (1997, 2005) calls “little c” creativity; the latter is based on the idea that everyone has the potential to be creative if given appropriate opportunities and support. Wallace’s (2002) claim that “being able to generate and extend ideas, suggest hypotheses, apply imagination and look for innovative outcomes, lie at the root of creative thinking” (p. 96) highlights the importance of focusing on developing students’ creative abilities, attributes and behaviours.

In a fast-moving world of economic and technical change, there is an urgent need for a creative, collaborative workforce which will respond quickly and effectively to innovative developments (Cunningham, 2005; Hartley, 2004) and challenge conventional ideas (Barell, 2003). As Craft (2001) points out, the “imperative to foster creativity in business has helped to raise the profile and credentials of creativity in education more generally” (p. 11); the wider social, economic, political, and technological factors responsible for this are explored at length elsewhere (Craft, 2005; Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Seltzer & Bentley, 1999). Despite being included in the “burgeoning list of graduate outcomes for which we [as university lecturers] take pedagogical responsibility” (McWilliam, 2007, p. 2), there is a dearth of literature focusing

on creative pedagogies and practice in HE. In addition to the misunderstandings about creativity, working within a paradigm of league tables (rankings used to inform potential applicants of the comparative academic achievements of different institutions) makes it difficult for HE institutions to take risks; in fact, some educators feel that educational institutions actively suppress creativity (Cole, Sugioka, & Yamagata-Lynch, 1999). Kawenski (1991) points out that the students themselves find it difficult to be creative in traditional learning environments as they are worried that exploring novel ideas and experimenting with different approaches to learning may lead to academic failure.

Working on the premise that the fostering of creativity in HE is worthwhile and desirable, my work supports the view that certain aspects of creativity can be taught and developed (Amabile, 1996; Craft, 2005; Cropley, 2001; Fryer, 1996) and that HE educators have an important part to play in enhancing the creative potential of all students. Discrete creative thinking training programs are appropriate in some learning situations, but integrated approaches, which promote the development of higher order thinking skills (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) through alternative pedagogies and stimulating, creative learning environments, are more relevant to this study. The practical art-based sessions, which encourage students to engage and experiment with a range of ideas and materials, are underpinned by what Smith (2005) refers to as “process-oriented creativity”; the focus being on the development of “mental processes” such as identifying and solving problems, looking at existing ideas in original ways, and becoming more self-aware (Fryer, 1996). As they are tasked with presenting a final piece of art, which is assessed against specific criteria and exhibited in the gallery space at the end of the module, “product-oriented” creativity is also involved. Far from offering a free-for-all approach, which was the expectation of some students (and colleagues), the “experimental modes of pedagogical engagement” (McWilliam, 2007, p. 9) introduced by the artist were incorporated into carefully planned, structured sessions.

Pioneers of creativity in the United States (Guilford, 1950; Renzulli, 1977; Torrance, 1974) viewed creativity as an individual attribute to be identified and nurtured, but more recent studies (Jeffrey & Woods, 2003) have focused on collaborative approaches to creative work in education. The open-ended nature of the practical task encouraged self-directed activity, flexibility, and choice but the content and direction of the sessions were, to some extent, determined by the group as a whole. This study is underpinned by the view that it is the students themselves who determine the social contexts in which their learning takes place (Kuh, 1996); the role of the student within the socio-cultural context of this creative learning experience is central to the discussion.

Research Methodology and Data Collection Methods

This qualitative study, which is part of an ongoing action research project centred on creative pedagogy and practice in education, was carried out within an interpretive-social constructivist theoretical framework. The reflective methodology employed enabled the participants to document and share their “lived experiences” (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) of working in a creative learning environment over the 12-week period. As McNiff (2002) states, reflection on action only makes sense “when practice is seen as in relation with others, a process of dialogue and encounter” (p. 18); recounting and reflecting on their experiences collaboratively (Leavy, 2009) helped them to develop their artwork with new insights. I hoped that sharing the findings with colleagues in an engaging way would stimulate discussions focusing on improving the quality of the undergraduate learning experience.

The 40 participants were drawn from two groups of Year 3 BA in Education students, the first of which had opted for the “Creativity and Learning” module in 2011 and the second in 2012; with nearly three years of HE experience behind them, they were at the point of considering the next stage of their careers in education. Some students made it clear that they had opted for the module in the hope of becoming more creative practitioners and others said that, having just completed their final extended essays, they were keen to experience a completely different approach to learning and assessment. Although they readily agreed to participate in the study, it was important to reassure them that the interviews would be confidential and that the data would have no bearing on their grades.

As I attended the 11 two-hour practical sessions in the role of both supportive module convenor/lecturer and participant observer, it was necessary to acknowledge that the notes I made would be “subjective, biased, impressionistic and idiosyncratic” (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 110). The observations were carried out in the context of what I already know and value about creativity and art-based education, so it was inevitable that I would bring my own implicit theories to the situation. The notes I made when observing and interacting with the students, as they worked in the studio, enabled me to be aware of the changes in my own thought processes and consider the impact these might have on the participants—what Warwick and Board (2012) refer to as “immersed reflexivity.” When selecting students’ comments for this paper and attempting to draw meanings from these, I was aware that I was constructing yet another narrative which reflected my knowledge, beliefs, values, and experience. As the focus of the study was the students’ perceptions of their learning

experiences, the most interesting and useful data was obtained from the 45-minute recorded interviews; these were conducted during the practical sessions in a quiet room next to the art studio. Ten of the 30 students interviewed in week five agreed to be interviewed for a second time at the end of the 12-week module; this enabled me to get some idea of the development of their thoughts and feelings throughout the process. A conversational approach to the semi-structured interviews (Clough, 2002) was adopted, so students could tell their "stories" with reference to their reflective sketchbooks and elaborate on the initial ideas, thoughts and feelings expressed informally in the studio, where appropriate (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2003). This method of data collection, referred to as "qualitative interviewing" by Mason (1998), acknowledges that each account is "grounded in the complexities of [the individual's] experience" (cited in Henkel, 2000, p. 250); although it was useful to draw out key issues from the transcripts, it was important not to lose sight of the rich, unique learning journeys of individuals.

Findings and Discussion

This section provides an overview of the findings with reference to students' experiences of working in the art studio. The discussion focuses on how students responded favourably to working in a collaborative learning environment; it highlights how the whole experience helped them to explore their identities, develop their understanding of the links between theory and practice, and rethink their ideas about assessment.

Initial thoughts, feelings and expectations.

Although comments about the art-based work were overwhelmingly positive, evidence from the interview transcripts indicated that the majority of participants felt apprehensive and anxious in the first session. One student said, "*I found it a daunting, even intimidating, experience; I was sceptical of the process and what it would entail*" and another (a visiting student from the US) said, "*As I am used to being given instructions and having things planned for me, I found it difficult being told to experiment with ideas.*" One of the students interviewed at the end of the module exclaimed, "*I couldn't see the point at first; I just wanted someone to tell me the facts to write down and learn; I was worried about not knowing what was expected of me.*" A mature student, who had worked as a Teaching Assistant before starting the BA course, enhanced on this comment by saying: "*I found [the experience] a bit alien at first because, as we*

have been so used to didactic teaching—being told things to learn for exams—this is a new experience for most of us.” Another student said, “I have not had the opportunity to be creative on this course until now; we have become disciplined and passive over the years ... some lectures are interactive but in a limited way; most downplay the idea of self-discovery.” Students who chose the module in the hope of discovering their “inner creativity” were excited by the “real challenge” offered by the practical sessions but nervous about presenting their work to others in the group. As a student who had secured a place on the primary post-graduate teacher education course remarked, “I used to think creativity was only for those with artistic ability; having the confidence to recognise my own creative potential has made me realise that the children I teach will be creative in many different ways.”

Although no two stories were identical, it was interesting to consider some of the factors that underpinned these comments; the interview transcripts revealed that past experience and personalities played an important part in determining initial feelings about the sessions. One student said, *“My negative experience of art in school has made me reluctant to participate in art-based work again—the teacher didn’t like us having original ideas.”* In contrast to this, several students were enthusiastic about the creative experiences offered by their schools but disappointed with the lack of creative opportunities in HE. One student said: *“I chose this module so I could get back in touch with my creative side—I felt I had lost the creative spark which was an important part of me at college.”* Comments like these support the idea that people lose their creative potential, including their sense of playfulness and spontaneity, if they are not given opportunities to experience creative approaches to learning and teaching throughout their time in formal education (Erikson, 1982; Esquivel, 1995). The point made by Robinson (2001) that traditional education systems have allowed students (and possibly teachers) to feel more comfortable by not being creative is reflected in the findings; he was referring to schools when he talked about the “stifling” of creative ideas but evidence from this study indicates that this spills over into HE. Many students were surprised that the module was so *“academically rigorous”*; *“my friends and family thought I was just playing when I told them about the practical sessions,”* remarked one student, *“those who did not choose it either felt they lacked the necessary creative skills or dismissed it as a soft option with no academic rigour.”* These comments chime with the idea that even if creative opportunities are made available in schools, they are not always given high status (Lin, 2011; McWilliam, 2005).

Experimentation and risk-taking.

Students were required to experiment with the wide range of materials in the studio, spend time in the gallery exhibitions, and discuss emerging themes and ideas with each other. The artist facilitated the process by providing ongoing guidance and support, but she encouraged students to be open-minded and flexible when conducting the personal lines of inquiry leading to the development of their final piece. In some cases, the introductory, exploratory tasks made students more self-aware; *"when we were presented with the sketchbook with all those blank spaces,"* one student said, *"I felt inclined to fill the pages at once; it made me realise that emptiness and simplicity makes me feel nervous and vulnerable."* In contrast to this, another student said she was worried about *"spoiling the clean pages with poor work"* but *"felt more inclined to take risks once it became clear that everything didn't have to be all neat and tidy";* she remarked that seeing unfinished work displayed in the galleries made her realize that *"everything in art does not have to be perfect"* and that it was *"acceptable to pursue ideas that led to unexpected outcomes."* This concurs with the idea of "possibility thinking" (Craft, 2005) and Haywood Rolling's (2010) inference that it is the "labyrinthian" nature of art-based learning which makes it so interesting and challenging.

Reflective entries in the sketchbooks, which were regarded as *"effective vehicles for recording ideas and expressing emotions,"* indicated that most students approached the work with increased confidence once they became familiar with the learning environment and knew what was expected of them. The comment that *"Creative thoughts flowed more freely when I abandoned my preconceived ideas and found simple, unexpected things fascinating"* was echoed by others. The few students who had a fixed vision of their final piece early on recognized that they needed to be open to other ideas and influences if they were to fulfil their creative potential; as one student said, *"I made a conscious decision to allow my creativity to be constructed by my interactions with the whole learning environment."* Despite the lack of control associated with working outside their comfort zones, the comment that *"There was a marked transformation from feeling deflated and despondent to being excited and motivated once the initial ideas had been thought through,"* summarized a general feeling. One student said she *"played safe at first"* but became *"more creative both in [her] thoughts and with the materials [she] was using"* when the focus shifted from the outcome to the experimental process; this concurs with the idea that having the confidence to experiment and take risks in educational settings is a "vital part of creativity" (Biech, 1996, p. 53).

The learning environment and identity building.

Most students enjoyed working in the art studio and having immediate access to the galleries; *"as soon as I entered the big light canvas of the studio, the lack of distractions made me feel uncluttered and focused,"* commented one student. It was generally agreed that working outside their familiar learning environment encouraged them to be more creative; as one student said, *"it's good to be out of that space which is so associated with the whole didactic thing."* *"There's so much space, both physically and mentally, where you can come up with ideas for yourself and in discussion with others rather than be told what to think,"* another student remarked; this resonates with a point made by Heath, Brooks, Cleaver, and Ireland (2009) about the importance of both internal and external space in building social identities.

The data showed that the majority of students felt working in a creative environment had impacted on their self-knowledge and personal development; with reference to their own particular areas of interest or significant events in their lives, they found producing artwork to be a way of displaying their identity. Several students made comments about discovering abilities they did not know they had, enjoying the independence, choice and control over their own learning and *"coming to terms with being comfortable about feeling uncomfortable."* One student, who produced a very thought-provoking final piece said, *"I have found the whole experience stimulating and challenging; it has enabled me to rediscover my expressive self which had been lost amongst the academic work of university life"* and another said, *"Actually experiencing what I've been learning about in theory has had a transformative effect on me—I feel this should be one of the main aims of education."* According to Ramsden (2003), "learning in educational institutions should be about changing the ways in which learners understand, or experience, or conceptualise the world around them" (p. 6); this study suggests that it should also be about introducing pedagogical practices which encourage the development of students' self-knowledge. One student said, *"As students of education, we need to use every opportunity to think outside the box";* he went on to say that, *"lecturers tell you about different teaching methods but often don't practise these themselves."* Another student thought it was ironic that in *"education we are constantly talking about encouraging children to be more creative but are not given much chance to be creative ourselves."*

Collaborative approaches to learning.

The findings of this small-scale study support Kuh's (1996) idea that, when they interact purposefully with others, student learning is enhanced; *"I enjoy working in the more informal, creative learning environment of the studio as I am free to talk*

to different people and explore my thoughts—listening to each other and talking things through has helped us to be more open to new ideas." The following comment, made by a student who had been reluctant to engage in group discussions at the beginning of the module, enhanced on this view: "This experience has given me the confidence to converse with a wider range of my peers—it's been useful to know that you can ask them for help and advice when necessary." The findings support the idea that creativity is a social process and that collaborative approaches aid the creative development of groups and individuals (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Jeffrey & Craft, 2004); Lin (2011) talks of a "collaborative emergence" which can occur if everyone involved in the learning and teaching process works together to support self-directed activity and choice. One student, who agreed to be interviewed for a second time at the end of the module, was very enthusiastic about how working in a collaborative learning environment had helped her to develop her artwork: "I would not have taken so many risks with my piece if I had been working alone," she said, "we were constantly bouncing ideas off each other and considering different possibilities—it made us more creative individually by being in a bigger group as everyone's enthusiasm was contagious." She elaborated on this point by saying, "it didn't feel we were competing against each other to produce the best piece, as the artwork was not viewed as a reflection of our academic ability—we have not had the opportunity to see each other's work before." This student spoke at length about how strange it was that a relatively small group of people could spend three years together but only start to build friendships in the final semester of the course.

Making the links between theory and practice.

As the written element of the assessment required students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of creativity in education, with reference to current policy and practice, it was interesting to find out what they thought about the links between the practical and theoretical aspects of the module. One of the students interviewed at the end of the 12-week period said, "The lectures in the morning got you in the right mind-set for the practical sessions—thinking about some of the ideas introduced helped to prepare me for the creative flow needed in the art work; it all ties in but it's done very subtly." One student said that having a definite idea from virtually the first day prevented him from experimenting with resources and using ideas from the theoretical sessions: "I felt uneasy until I made the link between my feelings and the different stages of creativity introduced in one of the lectures—I realised that I needed an incubation period" (reference to the second of the four stages of creative thought, proposed by Wallace in 1926, in which the problem or issue is thought about unconsciously; cited in Vernon, 1970). Engaging with some of the theoretical models

of creative development inspired some students to consider the reasons behind their thinking; with reference to an entry in her sketchbook, one student said:

This module has changed the way I think about things; I've recorded my weekly reflections on the sessions but have started to leave a space after each entry so I can go back and critically reflect on the thoughts and feelings I had at that time. I feel I'm in a better position to look back at the whole process and examine my thoughts in more depth.

This metacognitive approach to learning supports the idea that creativity is not developed at the expense of intellectual engagement; evidence from the data shows that, as students reached the final stages of their creative journeys, they were able to reflect on the whole process and draw everything together. This chimes with Warwick and Board's remark that "the plethora of those mixed feelings and pathways that are present in the moment" may be difficult to understand at the time but, when we look back on these, they often "appear linear and logical" (2012, p. 152).

Assessing creativity: process and product.

All students interviewed thought there should be opportunities for creative experiences throughout the course but they were mindful of how the all-important summative assessment process would impact on their degree classification. Some students felt that formal written assignments contradicted the spirit of creativity but they were pleased the essay accounted for half of the final mark. As one student remarked, "*the written account gave us the opportunity to express our creative experience in words as well as through art ... it made a pleasant change be challenged and assessed in different ways.*" Another student, who admitted to being "*obsessed with grades*" said, "*I think you should be able to learn for learning's sake but, unfortunately, our society has created a situation where exam results count for everything.*" He went on to talk about how he had wanted to be more experimental with his practical work but was constantly worrying about there being "*a right and a wrong response*" to the tasks set.



Fig. 1: A celebration of creativity in the art studio: the final exhibition (Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Photograph: Bryony Graham)

Planning for the final exhibition of individual pieces in a shared, negotiated space made students realize that *"creativity involves dealing with practicalities as well as using the imagination."* One student said, *"It's about connecting the new ways of thinking developed throughout the module and then transforming the thinking patterns into visual representations for others to interpret in their own way."* Although the transcripts indicated that students were more interested in the creative process during the course of the module, they were pleased that there would be a product to physically represent all their hard work. One student said, *"I believe that having an end result will give me closure on this creative journey as well as a sense of achievement"* and another remarked, *"I am so proud of my final piece but see it as a culmination of my thoughts and ideas rather than as an exhibit; I know that people will never truly understand the processes I have worked through to get to this stage."* An amalgamation of the "process/product orientated" approaches referred to earlier (Smith, 2005) is evidenced in the following comment:

The process was layered rather than linear—you get an idea from someone else's piece or from something you've read or experienced and then feed this it into the work in progress; as I kept adding bits right up to the day of the exhibition, I came to realise that creativity can never be finished—it was difficult trying to convince myself that this was acceptable.



Fig. 2: "Here I stand": a visual representation of creative identity building
(Photograph: Kimberley Sparkes)

For some students, the dynamic process of experimentation, risk-taking, and being open to different interpretations continued to be unsettling throughout the process. One student actually referred to it as *"mentally torturous"* although she agreed with her peers that *"pushing the boundaries"* of her thinking did lead to *"the generation of inspirational new ideas."* It was interesting to note that some of the students who found the process particularly challenging produced the most thought-provoking final pieces. One student, who said she had not felt comfortable expressing herself through visual art initially, presented a fascinating artwork entitled "Here I stand"; *"each of the elements in the cage, which were constructed at different times, represented my thoughts and feelings about my identity over the course of the module,"* she explained, *"viewers are invited to look in but they won't be able to find out everything about me."* Some students managed to distil a wide range of ideas into what appeared to be relatively uncomplicated final pieces; as the artist noted, this ability to deconstruct complex thoughts and re-present these in a simple way demonstrated

a deep level of intellectual engagement with abstract concepts. The following comment, taken from a student's reflective overview of her experiences, draws together some of the key issues discussed in this paper:

The different aspects of my final piece symbolise the development of my identity and ideas from the interactions with my peers, family, environment, reading, artistic influences and conscious reflection throughout the module; each one has been influenced by my existing knowledge, interests and experiences which I feel form the building platform to my creative development. I am pleased that my artwork will be seen and interpreted in different ways.

Implications for Practice

The extracts from the interview transcripts incorporated into the previous section represent only a fraction of the rich accounts of students' creative learning journeys; the unspoken experiences and implicit personal theories embedded in the data help to make each "story" unique. However, key ideas have been extrapolated from the findings, which have implications for both the BA in Education degree course and for wider undergraduate pedagogy and practice.

This study has highlighted the need for us, as educators, to acknowledge and discuss the wide range of interests, knowledge, and skills that students bring to the learning situation and the ways in which they engage with their learning in different types of educational settings (Woods & Jeffrey, 1996). Evidence from the data suggests that students benefit from being exposed to alternative learning and teaching approaches which put them under pressure and shake up their preconceived ideas about what it means to be an education undergraduate. They need to have access to dynamic course modules which genuinely promote open-mindedness and experimentation and recognize that creative practice involves rigorous, structured intellectual processes. The findings build on the idea that students are more likely to be interested in theoretical ideas if they can see how these may be applied to their own learning experiences (Starko, 1995). They tended to draw on theoretical models of creativity at significant moments, such as when they were unsure about how to proceed with their artwork; this observation, which indicates that the process of making creative connections is not straightforward and linear, has implications for course design.

The study shows that individuals benefit from working in a collaborative learning environment, where they can pursue their own lines of enquiry but explore and develop their ideas through discussions with others. Armstrong (2012) makes the point that traditional teaching methods often ignore or even suppress learner responsibility; this view is echoed in a recently published report of effective learning and teaching in the UK (HE, 2012) which promotes the idea of students co-designing innovative learning experiences with both their lecturers and their peers. This idea could be extended to the assessment process; as students welcomed the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in different ways, there may be scope for them to play a part in the formulation of assessment criteria in the future. As traditional methods of assessment tend to inhibit creativity (Craft, 2006; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), student involvement could lead to more meaningful, creative assessments being incorporated into existing processes.

Next steps.

The next stage of the research will focus on students' identity as they move on to teacher education courses or employment; the idea is to interview some of the former participants to find out to what extent the creative, art-based experiences have impacted on their personal development and professional practice. Creativity research has not paid much attention to identity in the past (Dollinger et al., 2005) so this should contribute to the knowledge base in this area. Subsequent studies will address the role of the teacher/artist in the creative learning environment and creative approaches to assessment. There are plans to publish some of the students' accounts of their individual creative journeys in the form of vignettes.

Conclusion

This study has drawn attention to some important issues at a time when learning, teaching, and assessment are high on the HE Reform agenda. Having acknowledged that performance-driven institutions, such as universities, are reluctant to take risks which may adversely affect their recruitment figures, major changes to undergraduate degree courses have not been suggested. Incorporating creative learning objectives and activities into existing course specifications and module outlines will still enable students to achieve high class degrees but they will have been able to draw on a wider range of opportunities in the process. This concurs with Kuh's suggestion that HE educators should be prepared to experiment with and share

creative pedagogical strategies but aim to incorporate these into the existing “culture, policies and practices [which] indirectly shape students’ expectation and performance” (1996, p. 135).

It is clear from the evidence presented in this paper that, if undergraduate students have access to alternative, creative learning experiences which involve self-examination and risk-taking, they will be more likely to develop the translatable skills required by employers. However, institutional efforts to enhance student learning and self-knowledge through the development of new pedagogies means placing greater value on teaching and more emphasis on professional development (Teaching and Learning Research Programme, 2012).

As the study focussed on student voice, the final word goes to one of the interviewees:

Being creative involves some seriously complex thought processes—this module has encouraged me to think about who I really am and what kind of practitioner I will be—creativity is so fundamental to learning that I find it difficult to understand why we have not been introduced to this kind of work before.

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Old Pathways, New Directions: Using Lived Experiences to Rethink Classroom Management

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ABSTRACT

Two stories lived and told become an entry point towards reflecting on issues of teacher practice related to classroom management. Using a narrative inquiry approach, personal experiences with Michael and Carlton—two kindergarten students—are pivotal in developing a deeper understanding of the difference between punitive and instructive discipline. Drawing on the philosophies of Vivian Paley, the reader is left with creative possibilities for new directions in attending to children's unmet needs and, at the same time, ideas for facilitating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment for all learners.

*M*y journey as an elementary teacher has been much like a road trip with a group of great friends. The anticipation that arises before a long-awaited get-away is similar to the feeling I have before a new school year begins, as I anxiously wait to meet the new group I will journey with that year. My friends, and my Kindergarten students, have provided me with valuable and insightful life lessons such as the value of patience and compassion. As the school year or a road trip comes to an end, I am comforted and humbled by the solidifying of friendships and bonds created. These life and professional lessons help me grow as a teacher so that I can better understand each child with whom I travel.

Much like the markings of a road map, my teaching career has taken many twists and turns and found a few rocky roads as I have stumbled in fully understanding and adapting to successfully meet the needs of each child. Most times I have arrived at my destination smoothly, without any major detours. This year, however,

a new student has challenged me to stray far from the familiar pathways to which I have grown accustomed. I have begun to revisit past teaching experiences and question certain conceptualizations that I assumed to be absolute. As I have traveled with Michael,¹ a young boy who has challenged every fibre in my body and belief in my mind, considerations about control, consequences, and unmet needs have started to cloud my thoughts, and the direction I was planning to take as a teacher has shifted.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) wrote that “learning is change” and in order for individual growth to happen, we must look back and study our past experiences, or as they say, our “personal practical knowledge” (p. 7). While these personal experiences are not only meaningful and relevant to us as individuals, they help us to “interpret the worlds in which [we] live” (Eisner, as cited in Olson, 1995, p. 120). As I struggle to interpret the actions of Michael, my new student, I am forced to examine the actions I choose to take and the ones I have chosen in the past, particularly as I think back to another boy named Carlton who helped me to see the role I played in the daily behaviour issues we encountered. Pausing to revisit these experiences and to consider the detours and pit-stops I have made along the way, I develop new insights into the directions I may travel in the future.



Michael

“In my opinion, he needs a consequence,” she calmly states, trying hard not to let the dissatisfaction she’s feeling erupt onto me, but the clenched fists and tight shoulders says it all. Her kind and caring manner is disguised momentarily by the increasing frustration we both are feeling towards one particular student.

Diane, our Educational Assistant, and I have been working together every afternoon for five months and one continuing topic of discussion is Michael, our most challenging student, with whom we sometimes struggle to agree on regarding appropriate methods of discipline. After reading *The Boy on the Beach* (2010), I found myself enamoured by Vivian Paley’s careful attention to the needs and feelings of her

students while also decoding the children's language and interactions in their play. This was what I hoped to achieve in my classroom using the storytelling and storyacting curriculum Paley modeled in her books (1981, 1984, 1990, 1992, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2004, 2010). This quality time that I devoted for the students to sit with me and tell their own story as I record it has proven to be a valuable method to build intimate relationships between the storyteller, myself, and the audience. It is a "shared process" (Paley, 1990) in that the children contribute and confirm ideas being created, and later take part in the dramatization of their original stories. As the actors proudly take on their designated role chosen by the storyteller, a sense of unification envelops the class as they make personal connections together through another child's story.

Storytelling is one area in which Michael excels, making it look effortless in how he presents a character with his detailed expressions and sound effects. These stories give Michael a "new script to follow" (Paley, 2010, p. 23) in that he explores other ways to react and handle certain situations. Unfortunately, as we repeatedly see in the stories he dictates, he often chooses the role of "the scary monster" and, like any good actor, he fully accepts that role in class as he growls at the other children when they don't understand his ways and roars when he feels his needs aren't being met.

*"There's a scary monster! Roarrrr!!! He's bad you know. He will eat you up!"
Michael has captured my curiosity. "Why is he bad?" I ask.
"Cuz he's a bad monster. Bad, bad, bad. People are bad to him. And his eyes are red. Scary eyes."*

Michael's first story paints a clear picture of the perceptions he has of himself. As we continue on our journey with storytelling, it has become apparent that the children see this time as a safe place to explore and experiment with different scenarios and try on new roles (Engel, as cited in Wright, Bacigalupa, Black, & Burton, 2008). Michael continues on with the scary monster role as playtime ensues...

Michael has just returned from a body break and his attention is instantly drawn to the intricate castle his classmates are building on the carpet.

"Rooooaaaarrrrrrrrr!" goes the loud and scary monster, charging at the elaborate castle. As each block comes tumbling down, Michael's eyes widen with pleasure until he hears the cries of his classmates as they watch their creation fall into rubble.

After learning a little about his history and talking with him about his actions, I've come to realize that when Michael knocked over the castle his friends just built, he wasn't doing it to be malicious or mean—he was acting out his own story. Though his classmates were not aware of this, he was a giant, fire-breathing dragon coming to knock down the castle and rescue the princess. In his mind he was being a helpful friend—but his good deed only seemed to get him in trouble again.

With heavy hearts and a feeling of defeat, Michael and I rejoin the children at the carpet. Recess proved to be a challenge for him again and the supervising teacher was not happy. "Would you like to act out old stories today?" I ask the class as I peruse our abundant collection. "Remember my scary monster story? Can we do that one?" Michael shouts. That suggestion could not have been more fitting as it was only mere moments ago that he had resembled someone very similar outside. He created this story a month ago and it detailed the naughty things scary monster did at recess—a perfect correlation to his behaviour today.

"Why is he the scary monster again?" I ask, hoping for an answer the second time around.

"'Cuz he's mean and yells at people and throws things at them!"

"Oh yes, I see. So, would you like to rewrite the ending this time Michael? Could the scary monster turn into a good monster?"

"Hmmm..." he thinks for a moment. "Yeah!" he excitedly shouts as do his classmates. It appears as though this idea has never presented itself before.

"Well how will he do that?" Michael thinks for a mere moment...

"He can help them outside and say nice things and open the door," he chimes in.

"You just have to say 'hocus pocus,' adds Jace.

"—and say 'nice monster!' shares Kelvin.

"And he magically turns into the nice monster?"

"Yup," replies Michael, "and he has friends."

With the help of the class, we often create a class story that targets a specific child or behaviour that I want to address. By role-playing and brainstorming other ways to react in certain situations and then creating a story about it, Michael has begun to see himself in a new role, sometimes the Superhero that saves the day and does kind things for others. His classmates have even taken it upon themselves to remind him, "Be the Superkid, Michael, like in the story," when he starts to act out.

Unfortunately, this new role isn't always familiar to him, and the desire to cooperate and follow directions is a pathway he does not feel compelled to follow.

As we sing our goodbye song to end the day my eyes are focused on Michael, as are Diane's. Transitions have become a significant challenge for him and we are both sensing trouble looming ahead.

I put my arm around Michael as we sing but as the song comes to a close he breaks away and shouts, "Again! Again! Again!!" He runs to the table and creates a fortress with the chairs around him to keep himself enclosed. Lately we have been letting him stay there until he is ready to come out and talk, which he usually does in his own time. But today he decides to yell and scream and kick at the table and chairs. By this time several parents have arrived and are patiently waiting for their children, while also witnessing this explosion. Our creative pleas to try and get him out cannot be heard through the shouting so Diane picks him up and carries him off to the bean bag, a cozy chair that's just across the hall in a quieter space in the library.

The frustration and despair we feel in taking Michael to the bean bag chair does not sit well with me. This is our "last resort," and though we make it a point to be more creative in our ways of discipline, it seems to be the only place where Michael can regroup and start again. It was this latest incident that caused Diane and me to discuss "consequences" and how to effectively respond to Michael. Through my experiences with Michael, I've found that there is a rhyme to his reason—we just have to figure out what his rhymes and reasons are. At the same time, Diane is right in that the consequence of going to the bean bag chair works wonders in getting him to comply to our demands. Why is it, that, though I respect her opinion, my heart tells me that isolating him from the group is detrimental to his own self-worth and that of the class?

As I head down the street to my home, my thoughts linger back to Michael and I feel anxious about the journey ahead. It does not provide me with the feeling of comfort like the road signs which lead me on my drive home. On this pathway the road signs are foggy and blurred, leaving me with feelings of uncertainty, a sense that I might get lost. But when I think of Michael's hazel-colored eyes filled with wonder, hurt and confusion, images of another little boy that was once very much like Michael drift into my mind, and I remember the profound lessons I learned from a unique little boy whom I met during my first year of teaching. He taught me to not only seek to understand the behaviours of the students, but also the importance of reflecting on my own.



Carlton

Our school was situated just at the top of the hill in Northern Saskatchewan, surrounded by many picturesque character homes, some beautiful red brick homes with white pillars holding their ground, others with detailed features and a story to be told. On my walks to school I always revelled in the smell of the fresh flowers, and the lush greenery that covered the streets like an umbrella. But as the streets sloped downward and I began to descend, so did the beauty of the houses, the greenery, and my sense of hope. It was this area of town that Carlton called home.

“Look-it teacher!” shouted Carlton from across the tiny Kindergarten classroom we occupied. A small rectangular box would be the best way to describe it, with one shelf to put books on. But I made that classroom our own and filled it with fuzzy character puppets strung across the ceiling on a clothesline, a story corner made cozy with a white bear-skinned rug and a kid’s-sized red, leather chair for me to sit on. That, along with 20 bustling, creative, Kindergarteners eager to learn something new made our classroom a fun, albeit sometimes cramped, place to be. Since space was limited in this room, you can imagine my dismay when I found that five-year-old Carlton, with his chocolate-pudding stained face and tousled brown hair had meticulously scattered marbles around the classroom. “Now when people step on ‘em they’ll slip and fall on their head! Hahaha,” he roared.

“No Carlton,” I said with a condescending tone. “Go pick up all those marbles right now – somebody will get hurt!” I was too irritated to sense the hurt and disappointment in his face but I felt it in my heart. With his head down and feet lagging, he sadly picked up his masterpiece and returned some of the marbles to their place. “There’s more over here,” I complained, cringing as I heard the annoyance in my voice. As I watched him clean up, I recalled the many other things he’d done that day to ‘disrupt’ our learning—or at least that’s the way I saw it at that time. Mixing all the paint colors I had just cleaned and set out, scribbling over the table and his paper when he was supposed to be writing his name, and leaving his snowy, wet winter boots in the middle of the floor where I had just slipped on the puddle they had created, were just some of the incidents that had caused me to lose my patience with Carlton that day.

I desperately wanted to help Carlton become successful in his endeavours at school, to have him be seen as an equal member of the class, and to have him accomplish the same tasks his classmates rejoiced in—but how? I had laid out my expectations for Carlton, I had been consistent with the consequences, but Carlton still seemed to beat to his own drum. At times he was defiant, other times he didn't understand what was being asked of him, but my desire for him to conform and follow all of our classroom rules was escalating. At that time, I believed that a "good" classroom teacher assumed the authoritarian position of the class and always had control over her students. Our classroom rules had been created together and in many ways these rules were non-negotiable. So, when our class would tiptoe down the hallway as quiet as little mice, that one little mouse who would run up to walk beside me, leaving his place in line and not following the directions I had given, would make me feel as though I had failed in some way. Especially so when I'd hear other more experienced teachers share their "tricks of the trade." Being extra strict for the first months of the school year was a common "tip" that I heard often and one teacher even shared with me that she didn't dare smile until at least November. Hence, I continued on, being extra strict with Carlton, never thinking how my stern attitude and quick ability to point out what he was doing wrong was affecting him or the other children in the class.

The crisp autumn air wafted into the classroom and mingled with the sweet smell of cinnamon as the children decorated their teddy bear cookies with Smarties, jujubes, and other yummy treats on this beautiful fall day. The children took great delight in adorning their teddies with cinnamon hearts for eyes, a raisin for a nose, and a rainbow colored smile. The class was buzzing with excitement until we heard it. An all-too-familiar tone of voice filled the air with gloom and our excitement quickly diminished. "Nooo Carlton!" whined sweet, little Aurora. Not knowing what he did to receive such a reaction, Carlton looked around searching the faces of his classmates for some clues. "Carlton took all the Smarties! Now there's none for us!" she wailed and the looks of judgement from his peers quickly scorned any sense of accomplishment Carlton had in his creation. He tried to make it better by returning the Smarties to the tray but it was too late. The smell of righteousness permeated the class and has resonated in my heart ever since. It wasn't so much what Aurora had said that bothered me, but the tone of her voice when she said it. It wasn't just that she was upset that he took all the Smarties, but that it was Carlton who had taken all the Smarties. That voice, that tone, that judgement, was my voice coming out of a little girl's mouth. It was in this moment that I realized I had passed my negative feelings, my need to control, my indifference to his behaviours, and my judgement of Carlton onto my students.

Control and Discipline



Where do these notions of control come from when managing a classroom? Paley (1984) mentioned that was a concern for her in that she didn't necessarily worry about control when working with the children, it was more "the appearance of control" (p. 77) for the outsiders looking in. This leads me to question who decides what "good" classroom management is? Can the rules be modified and changed to accommodate all children or is it a one-size-fits-all model? Always raising one's hand to talk, sitting criss-cross applesauce, marching quietly down the hall in a straight line, or organizing themselves in perfectly formed rows for story time have always held tensions for me as a teacher because they are rules created by the teacher which are mainly just teaching the children to conform. And then, for those students who disobey the teacher or classroom rules and expectations, how does a "good" teacher handle that? Do the children get a three-second countdown, a choice between two things—the favorable one being what the teacher wants, or the dreaded time out chair—where the disobeying child is isolated from the group and publicly embarrassed and labeled as "bad" in front of his peers? What happens when all of these common forms of discipline don't work? What special privileges must be taken away? Gym? Recess? Playtime? How much more can the teacher take away from a child before the child does what *the teacher* thinks *s/he* should be doing?

David Elkind (2001) wrote that his dictionary provided two main definitions for the word discipline: the first being "training that develops self control, character or orderliness, and efficiency" (p. 7), which he later labeled instructive discipline; the second being "treatment that corrects and punishes" (p. 7), which he called punitive discipline. The first approach teaches life skills and fosters an environment of teaching for children's understanding, encouraging students to intrinsically change behaviours. The second also teaches children to change behaviours but for extrinsic reasons, such as time away from the group or the loss of something of value to the child. One encourages a discussion and promotes awareness and reflection to the problem at hand, the other closes the door to new possibilities by narrowing the pool of problem solvers to that of just the teacher rather than the community. Instructive discipline is

an informative style of discipline in that it provides children with guidance in understanding why they are engaging in certain behaviours and how they can better interact with their peers in their environment. Unlike its counterpart, instructive discipline creates dialogue (Paley, 1990), and gives the teacher and child an opportunity to discuss the problem in a non-threatening manner. It acknowledges that “children are in the process of learning acceptable behaviour” (Hemmeter, 2007, p.14) and that we as adults need to find creative ways to better understand their behaviours so that we can teach to them as we create our classroom curricula. Providing children with the necessary strategies to solve their own problems and be reflective of their actions empowers them and helps them to positively connect with others. The children also learn that their thoughts and feelings matter to the group, thus creating a sense of belonging.

Punitive discipline suggests that certain behaviour is unacceptable, therefore it needs to be “stamped-out” (Elkind, 2001). This style of discipline does not see children as competent and capable learners (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2010), but rather imposes the philosophy that *teacher knows best*. Time-outs, the withdrawal of special activities, firm tones and words are often used to teach the child to stop the behaviour because s/he learns that if you do this, then you will *lose* this—whether it be your recess, time spent with friends, or even the respect of your classmates. The dreaded time-out chair, which I later re-named the “thinking” chair, was later changed again to the “ready” chair, is based on the premise of punitive discipline. Whether it was time “out” of the group, time to “think” away from the group, or time to wait until you’re “ready” to join the group, the concept was still the same; the child was excluded from the group in order to be taught a certain behavior. It occurred to me, as I immersed myself in Paley’s work (1990), that it seemed to be the same kids in that chair day after day. She argued that time away from the group, whether it be a time-out or removal from an activity, “seldom helped a child not to do something, though it did notify everyone that the child was bad” (p. 88). In this way students often feel powerless in their ability to make the choices for themselves; they are almost being bullied into making what teachers see to be the correct choices.

Let me return to the earlier experience I had with Carlton and the marbles to make sense of my current experience. As I look back now, I see that his idea to scatter the marbles around the room could very well have been a “mistaken behaviour” (Villareale, 2009) in that the end result did not play out the way he had planned. Maybe he’d just seen someone slip and fall on TV and was trying to re-enact it. Replaying that moment, through the lens of instructive discipline and Paley’s (2010) notion of giving children “a new script to follow” (p. 23), perhaps instead of admonishing him, I could

have worked with him to create a story about the situation, discussing safety issues at the same time, or comparing how things we see on TV can play out differently in real life. In this way, the mistaken behaviour is not seen as a “mistake” but more of a “mis-take” or a “missed-take” (D. Pushor, personal communication, July 30, 2012) in that the child might require a “take two” or a “take three” to get to where both he and his classmates are content with how his actions unfold. Utilizing my time to understand Carlton’s reasoning would have provided me with a productive way of addressing the situation, but it also would have taught him to think about how these “takes” will affect his classmates, in this case, their safety. By my “seeking first to understand” (Covey, 2008), Carlton is shown that his ideas have value, while also teaching his classmates to see the value in his contributions.

What I have come to understand is that I, as a teacher, have such responsibility to be conscious of how my responses and reactions can affect positive or negative change in the classroom. While I am constantly seeking to be a positive example for my students to follow, sometimes I am unconsciously led astray by a student’s challenging behaviour. What I learned from Carlton is that perhaps it’s not just the child’s defiant attitude that’s causing such a tumultuous eruption—but, as in my case, the teacher’s lack of understanding or effort to make sense of the issues the child is facing. I have learned that stopping to examine my own behaviours and reactions to the mounting frustrations I may be facing consistently proves to be beneficial for both myself and the child I wish to assist and support.

The Needs We Seek to Meet

Children are unique in the talents and skills they possess and, in the same way, their needs are just as diverse. Cooper (2009) believed that when children act out it is because they have unmet needs and Gersten (2011) added that these “behaviours are strategies [they] use to draw attention to [their] needs” (p. 71). Often times the children we work with are not developmentally mature enough to communicate their needs and feelings in a way that we see as appropriate. Their past experiences have helped to shape how they handle certain situations. By acting out, they are asking for help to learn ways to have their needs met. When Michael hit another child because she took the dinosaur he was playing with, he had a need to get his dinosaur back but no strategy to do so that wouldn’t hurt someone else. Rather than sending Michael off to the time out chair for being “hands-on,” what if I use this incident as a teaching opportunity? I want to work with Michael in such a way that I help him to

understand what he was feeling when he hit her, how else he could act on that feeling and why learning and practicing different ways to handle the situation next time would be far more valuable for Michael and his classmate.

Cindylee Villareale (2009) wrote that “mistakes do not need to be condemned or punished; they need to be used as teaching opportunities” (p. 77). By taking the time and patience to attend with Michael to the complexity of his actions, I am able to help him position himself to problem solve differently the next time a similar situation presents itself. By providing him with this opportunity to relive the experience and try again, he sees that his actions hurt someone, but he is not made to feel like an outcast for requiring another “take.” His classmates are eager to help re-create the script and begin to see the “mis-take” simply as “awkward stage business that need[s] reworking” (Paley, 1990, p. 90).

The experience with Carlton has stuck with me for years because I felt that although I had good intentions, I knew deep down in my heart that I was hurting him with my ignorance more than I was helping him. My desire for him to just “be good like the rest of the kids” was unrealistic when taking into consideration his life experiences and his five year old “personal practical knowledge” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Carlton truly didn’t have any other strategies to address his unmet needs and, more than anything, he just wanted to fit in and be loved. He wanted to feel a sense of belonging, that he too was a valued member of the class. Being constantly reprimanded by me for the majority of his actions was not helpful. I was too busy to notice any of the good things he did because I was so fixated on what he was doing wrong, or as I now see it, his “mis-takes.” If this was the example I was setting for my class, what was I teaching them in regards to dealing with children or people that we see as different from ourselves? I was preaching about kindness and compassion while at the same time acting another way when I was responding to Carlton.

After the Teddy Bear Picnic, I began to see both myself and Carlton in another light. It became clear to me the role I had played in how the children came to understand and interpret the actions of one another. My behaviour also had to be accounted for and had its ramifications. Wearing my instructive lens and determined to create a new script with Carlton, we celebrated that he colored on the paper (instead of the table), or that he brought his boots into the classroom (instead of leaving them in the front entrance). We also began to notice the kindness he had for his classmates and his eagerness to be accepted and welcomed into the group. The class became more at ease because I was more at ease, and though Carlton still had those moments, we used them as opportunities to educate both him and the class in a more

authentic way. By the end of the year, it became obvious that Carlton had proved to himself and the rest of the group that he was a valued member of the class. With our expression of our belief in him, he became necessary to the group and developed a sense of belonging (Paley, 2010).

Now it would be just too easy if I told you things were the same with Michael. Though he has made great strides in learning how to play with others cooperatively, showing kindness and compassion to his peers, and participating with the group, we still struggle in understanding how to meet his needs in some situations. I believe that one of Michael's unmet needs is that of control, and if he feels like he doesn't have any control in any one situation, he retaliates. To help meet this need, I am creating a classroom environment in which Michael has some freedom in what he chooses to do, whether it be leaving the group to do a puzzle or going for a body break, when he is feeling challenged or frustrated. Together with his help and ideas, we have created a book that we read daily which helps him to remember other options available to him when he is feeling stressed. Perhaps more importantly, I have had to relinquish some of the control I thought I needed as teacher.

"What can we do to help solve this problem, Michael? We seem to have run into it several times today." He has decided not to clean up after playtime which followed into a refusal to go for recess and another rejection to participate in gym.

"I don't know," he stubbornly replies. He has buried his head in his arms and we are both feeling the fury of frustration as we are lacking the ability to understand each other.

"We all want you to be happy Michael, and it doesn't look to me like you are happy right now. What can we do to help you?"

"I DON'T KNOW!!" he honestly and angrily shouts. We replay a variety of strategies we have used in the past but not one will suffice. I finally pull out a piece of paper and have him draw me a picture and I am intrigued to see what he draws. To the untrained eye it might resemble nothing more than scribbles on a page, but I can see from his pursed lips and intent stare that he has created something that resembles a zigzags pattern. "I can do zigzags" he sweetly suggests.

Through a thoughtful and reciprocal conversation, we conclude that when he feels angry or needs a break he can walk in zigzags around the room. Though it seems like an odd strategy to employ, strangely, it worked itself in as one of his options

to choose from when he was feeling explosive. He took ownership and responsibility for his behaviour and, with some guidance, he found what worked for him. The zig-zags were posted on the wall for his classmates to share in support of his solution.

Michael and I continually reflect on the strategies we are using and we change or modify them when needed. By including him in the decision-making process, he feels empowered and confident in making choices that affect him and others in a way that is acceptable to everyone. By retelling and reliving (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) those moments daily, our energies are focused on the prevention of the “mis-takes” and not always on dealing with the after-effects of them. In this way Michael knows that his thoughts and feelings matter to the group and together we can work out the problem in a positive way.

As conscious as I try to be in seeking to find the creative answer to the problem at hand, other circumstances sometimes cloud my abilities to perform at the level I wish to. I still consider myself at the beginning of my journey as I travel from a punitive style of discipline towards an instructive method. I am confident there will be many more insightful practices I will encounter, however, it brings me comfort to see that on those days when I stumble onto those rocky roads, my class now steps up and takes the wheel.

It had been a challenging day for Michael and my patience had reached its limit. “I think you need to spend some time in the bean bag for a bit until you’re ready to calm down Michael. Come back when you’re ready,” I say, feeling defeated.

Sensing our mutual frustration, the children are quick to remind me of our class values and beliefs. Almost bouncing off the floor, Miranda shouts sympathetically, “I’ll go with him!”

“Me too!” the others chime in, standing up in his support.

“That’s so sweet of you. Why do you all want to join Michael?” I ask.

“So he won’t be lonely,” remarks Joey. A sheepish grin spread across Michael’s face from ear to ear as he looked around and felt the love and support from his classmates. He belonged.

Concluding Thoughts

That first year with Carlton and the shame I felt at that moment when I heard Aurora's voice echo my own has been a constant reminder to me throughout my teaching career—most especially when I work with those students who are more challenging than others, students such as Michael. I have come to understand that every student comes to my class with a different and unique background and upbringing—a story. Carlton was no exception. Though I can't change what has happened in the past, I can change how I react in the present, and those reactions can help me to mold and change my future pedagogy and practices in a positive way. My experiences with both Carlton and Michael are tough to relive, to write down, and share with others, because they are not all moments I am proud of. But they are experiences that I needed to have to help me understand why I believe so strongly in what I do. Without these reflections on those lived experiences, I most likely would have continued repeating those same mis-takes, traveling down that same path, always putting the blame on the children, believing it was their fault and choice for acting out in the way that they do, rarely looking at the role that I played in the situation. Carlton's story has helped me to see just how essential it is for me as a teacher to make that extra effort to really understand my own personal and practical experiences and that of my students. It is this particular experience that encourages me to continue on my journey, seeking to find caring and instructive ways to work with Michael. My hope is not to head down that same path again, but to create a new one.

Note

1. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of all individuals in the narratives.

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Leading Beautifully: The Creative Economy and Beyond

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*Only by investing in the artistry of our humanity
will we create a peaceful, prosperous planet*

ABSTRACT


"These times are riven with anxiety and uncertainty" asserts John O'Donohue.¹ "In the hearts of people some natural ease has been broken. . . . Our trust in the future has lost its innocence. We know now that anything can happen. . . . The traditional structures of shelter are shaking, their foundations revealed to be no longer stone but sand. We are suddenly thrown back on ourselves. At first, it sounds completely naïve to suggest that now might be the time to invoke beauty. Yet this is exactly what . . . [we claim]. Why? Because there is nowhere else to turn and we are desperate; furthermore, it is because we have so disastrously neglected the Beautiful that we now find ourselves in such a terrible crisis."²

Twenty-first century society yearns for a leadership of possibility, a leadership based more on hope, aspiration, innovation, and beauty than on the replication of historical patterns of constrained pragmatism. Luckily, such a leadership is possible today. For the first time in history, leaders can work backward from their aspirations and imagination rather than forward from the past.³ "The gap between what people can imagine and what they can accomplish has never been smaller."⁴

Responding to the challenges and yearnings of the twenty-first century demands anticipatory creativity. Designing options worthy of implementation calls for levels of inspiration, creativity, and a passionate commitment to beauty that, until recently, have been more the province of artists and artistic processes than the domain of most managers. The time is right for the artistic imagination of each of us to co-create the leadership that the world most needs and deserves.

In these ugly times, the only true protest is beauty.

Phil Ochs

e are all humbled by the enormity of the crises undermining twenty-first-century society. We are equally aware that the dehydrated language and approaches of the twentieth century are completely incapable of addressing such challenges successfully. Think for a moment about the state of the world and the events that now define our shared reality.

In just the past few years, financial crises brought the world's economic system to the brink of collapse, with many experts believing that the threat of collapse continues to be imminent.⁵ Extreme poverty remains daunting, with two-thirds of the world's population living on less than two dollars a day, and more than a billion people unable to gain access to clean water. The world faces a health crisis, with debilitating consequences disproportionately afflicting the poorest people on the planet. As only one example, malaria, a preventable disease, claims a child's life every 30 seconds.⁶ A hundred children will die unnecessarily of malaria just in just the time it takes to read and consider this article.

The world faces an education crisis, with nearly a billion people entering the twenty-first century illiterate. In an era in which education is of paramount importance for obtaining good jobs and financial security, the United States, long considered a leader in educational achievement, watches as the performance of its school children increasingly lags behind those in many other countries.⁷ The planet faces a peace crisis with 37 wars and conflagrations actively being fought around the globe.

We face a pervasive environmental crisis, with consequences from climate change to polluted oceans and ground water. China's environmental degradation is a match for Charles Dickens at his bleakest. China estimates that 650,000 people die prematurely each year due to airborne pollutants.⁸ China's leaders now recognize that

the severity of their environmental crisis is the only dynamic that can stop their country's spectacular economic juggernaut. China's pollution, however, is not just China's problem; it has become the world's crisis. Current assessments suggest that more than 25 percent of the air pollution over Los Angeles, a continent away, originates in China.⁹ We previously might have pretended that problems in other countries were "their problem", but global integration has rendered the very concept of "their problem" obsolete. Even with such glaring evidence, we rarely seem to pause long enough to recognize the extent to which global integration influences every aspect of what we individually and collectively define as life, community, and civilisation.

The bottom line is that we can neither ignore nor continue to live with the consequences of the current array of crises.¹⁰ Moreover, we know that neither prior approaches nor prior solutions are sufficient. China will not solve its environmental crisis without investing in a level of innovation well beyond what it took to launch the country's spectacular economic performance. Similarly, the world will not solve the crises it faces without employing completely different approaches from those that have been used in the past.

Expressing his prescient perspective, Irish philosopher John O'Donohue underscores our critical need for new forms of sense-making and leadership and boldly asserts that now is the time to invoke beauty:

Perhaps we are gaining a clear[er] view of how much ugliness we endure and allow. The media generate relentless images of mediocrity and ugliness . . . tapestries of smothered language and frenetic gratification. The media . . . [have become] the global mirror and [they] . . . tend to enshrine the ugly as the normal. . . . Beauty is mostly forgotten and made to seem naive and romantic. . . .¹¹ Our situation today shows that beauty demands for itself at least as much courage as do truth and goodness.¹²

Now Is the Time to Invoke Beauty

Let the beauty we love be what we do.
Rumi, 1207-1273¹³

Embracing creative solutions is no longer a luxury; it has become a necessity. What would a creative economy look like? It would require an economy in which

people combine an aspiration for ‘the beautiful’ and the use of extreme creativity, with huge market potential, to solve problems worth solving; solutions worthy of our humanity. The question we need to ask ourselves is what would it take for the world to operate as a creative economy. What would it take to embrace beauty and artistry, in addition to analysis, to sustainably solve the planet’s most challenging problems?

Repositioning Our Perspective: Taking the Planet as Our Client

Given the private sector’s dominance, it has become imperative for business to act more consistently as a partner in constructively shaping the twenty-first century’s economy and society. Unfortunately, at just the time in history when business’s impact has so dramatically increased, the private sector is less and less frequently viewed as a positive influence. Klaus Schwab, president of the Davos World Economic Forum, publicly observed that

In today’s trust-starved climate, our market-driven system is under attack ... large parts of the population feel that business has become detached from society, that business interests are no longer aligned with societal interests ... The only way to respond to this new wave of anti-business sentiment is for business to take the lead and to reposition itself clearly and convincingly as part of society.¹⁴

What would it mean for business to “reposition itself clearly and convincingly as a part of society”? What level of creativity would it take for more companies to achieve outstanding financial performance by focusing primarily on the well-being of civilization and the planet? How might society reposition public discourse, redirecting it away from its current obsession with denial and blame and toward designing the “beautiful outcomes” the world yearns for? What would it take for most companies to profitably embrace such a macro-level, “big picture” perspective? What would it take for more companies to appreciate that such a global perspective has become crucial to the success both of their own business and the economy, and not merely a discretionary nicety that can be relegated to marginality as after-tax charity?

Similar to Klaus Schwab, former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan also challenged the world’s business community to reposition itself by “*jumping levels*”. Instead of continuing to concentrate on the micro level (the success of individual executives and individual companies), he too challenged companies to focus on the macro level and to recognize that civilization and the planet are their ultimate clients:

Let us choose to unite the power of markets with the strengths of universal ideals ... let us choose to reconcile the creative forces of private enterprise with the needs of the disadvantaged and the requirements of future generations.¹⁵

Years ago, Albert Einstein explained how any such repositioning must take place: “You can never solve a problem on the level at which it was created. ... You must learn to see the world anew.” One of the fundamental roles of artists – whether classical musicians, painters or business artists - is to see the world anew. As companies increasingly incorporate artistic perspectives into their business practices, they too are reclaiming the ability to see the world anew.

Repositioning Business Leadership

A Croatian executive I spoke with revealed a prescient insight: “We won’t survive another generation with leaders like those we have had in the past.” How many management professors recognize that society won’t survive another generation of business leaders like those whom business schools have educated and graduated in the past? For how many business schools is the ultimate goal to serve society, not just so society and the economy can succeed, but as a precondition for each of our individual efforts to have the possibility of success?

One of the main roles of education, and in particular management education, is to help current and future leaders reposition themselves; that is, to assist them in being able to “jump levels” and thus expand from a micro (individual) focus to a macro (societal) perspective. Rubin Vardanian, one of Russia’s most prominent business leaders, recognized the need to jump levels, and to reposition business vis à vis society, long before most executives either noticed the trends or understood their implications. Vardanian and a small group of prominent Russian executives founded Skolkovo, the Moscow School of Management, as a public-private partnership, based on the sobering observation that the Russian economy could not flourish without a well-functioning society, and that society could not flourish given the inferior quality of current leadership. Rather than bemoaning the predictable consequences of poor leadership, Vardanian and his colleagues designed Skolkovo to develop the type of leaders the twenty-first century most needs; leaders who have the intention and the skills to create a flourishing society and economy, not at the expense of their personal success, but because of it. Skolkovo’s primary client is society; its definition of success is not limited to the success of individual managers or particular companies. Skolkovo offers an example of a school that is repositioning management education by accepting a much broader mandate than that of most management programs.¹⁶

Is Rising to the Challenge Possible?

Fundamentally, each of us must ask ourselves if we believe that rising to Kofi Annan's and Klaus Schwab's challenge is possible. And if so, what do we see as our role, individually and collectively, in fostering a creative economy?

To begin to engage with the power of artistic processes in fostering a creative economy, one that is capable of addressing twenty-first-century challenges, we need to look more carefully at the distinctive perspectives that great artists and great leaders share. Both exhibit the following:

- the courage to see reality as it is; recognizing both its beauty and its ugliness (even when others refuse to see such a reality);
- the courage to envision possibility, including the possibility of creating beauty (even when others pejoratively label such aspirations and thinking as naïve); and
- the courage to inspire people to move from current reality back to possibility.

To the surprise of many people, legendary investment guru Warren Buffett explicitly recognizes beauty and the power of artistic perspectives. In describing himself, Buffett asserts, "I am not a business man, I am an artist." Buffett, of course, is a famously astute businessman. His perspective, however, sets him apart from the crowd. His canvas is the economy. He routinely views economic realities through his own eyes, rather than filtering them through the majority's mainstream perspective. Buffett regularly exhibits the courage to pass up investment opportunities that most market pundits extol, and chooses to invest instead in companies that the majority overlooks. Why? Because, as a business artist, Buffett has refined his ability to see both the beauty (the long term growth potential) and the ugliness (the strategic and structural flaws) that most investors fail to notice, including the "beauty" of small start-ups with huge market potential but no track record, and the "ugliness" of tried-and-true blue-chip firms that have failed to keep up with the times.

Beauty, even as it is embraced by business pundits such as Buffett, remains strangely absent from most discussions of twenty-first-century leadership and condemned by most contemporary art critics and theorists.¹⁷ Why is beauty suspect?¹⁸ What would leading beautifully look like? Would most of us recognize it if we saw it? Positive psychologists, along with those introducing positive approaches into our organizational vocabulary, have focused their scholarship on a wide array of human virtues, including courage, compassion, generativity, happiness, and wisdom.¹⁹ And yet rarely do either management scholars or business executives engage with the

power and profound influence of beauty. Given the decades of cultural neglect, can we still see the beauty that exists in the world? Can we see the beauty in our organizations and our lives? Are we still capable of yearning for a world that is beautiful – rather than one that is simply less ugly? How do we reclaim our ability and responsibility to co-create a more beautiful world? How might we reclaim our profoundly human role as creators and leaders?

Leadership Artistry: The Courage to See Reality

When I am working on a problem, I never think about beauty. I think of only how to solve the problem. But when I have finished, if the solution is not beautiful, I know it is wrong.

Buckminster Fuller, 1895-1983²⁰

Great leaders and great artists display the courage to see reality as it is. Neither follows the herd of public opinion nor merely distorts reality into self-serving fantasies. Rather, both demonstrate the courage to discern with their own eyes reality's beauty as well as its ugliness.

Do most people exhibit the artist's ability to see reality accurately? The data is not encouraging.²¹ Most human beings appear to not notice much of what is going on, including when the consequences are potentially devastating. Ask yourself why most societal observers, including most management experts, praised Enron until the day the company collapsed.²² After Enron's demise, many of the world's most sophisticated financial experts once again blinded themselves, this time by not noticing that Bernie Madoff's \$50-billion financial empire was a Ponzi scheme.²³ Whereas greed explains the behaviour of some experts, it fails to explain the blindness of the majority, including that of most journalists, government regulators, SEC officials, financial sector executives, accounting and investment experts, and the general public, all of whom went along with the financial fantasies even though many of them had little to gain personally from either Enron or Madoff.

Why did the same overwhelming majority that failed to predict the collapse of Enron and Madoff also fail to notice the instability within the overall financial system? Did they conveniently choose to view Enron and Madoff as Black Swans – as unique events that they could safely assume would not reoccur?²⁴ Recent history teaches us that Enron and Madoff were definitely neither isolated nor unique events. Given the pattern, perhaps the most important question we need to ask ourselves is "What are we failing to notice today?"²⁵

Why do we collectively and repeatedly blind ourselves, even at the world's peril? Perhaps because, as human beings, we tend to see what we want to see, rather than what is directly in front of us. Observing patterns in contemporary politics that are similar to those in the economy, the seminal question we must ask ourselves is not why certain leaders perpetrate self-serving myths, but rather, why most people go along with those myths. Why do most people see presentday reality through the lens of political myths? Why do they see what they are told to see, rather than what is actually there? In the United States, for example, why did most Americans choose to believe that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction when the existing evidence indicated the contrary?²⁶ Selective perception – the inability to see reality as it is – often leads to devastating consequences, both locally and globally.

McGill University strategy professor Henry Mintzberg asked the people in his native Quebec to see the world as artists view it, rather than as normal consumers of the public media. Immediately prior to the last referendum that would decide whether the Province of Quebec would separate from the rest of Canada, Mintzberg challenged the electorate to turn off their radios and TVs, look out their windows, and ask themselves: Do our French- and English-speaking children play together? Do we invite each other into our homes? Do we work well together? Mintzberg was asking his neighbors to view Quebec society through their own eyes and to not let themselves be blinded by politicians who were insisting that people from different cultural and linguistic groups so dislike each other that they cannot live together. He encouraged his neighbors to vote based on their own data.²⁷ Mintzberg was particularly effective in getting the people of Quebec to see the beauty in their well-functioning, multicultural society, a beauty that had been obfuscated by a profusion of political myths that were broadly perpetrated and perpetuated by politicians and the media alike.

Among the array of convenient reality-avoiding assumptions that are rampant today, one of the most insidious is the myth that "It's too big to fail."²⁸ "It's too big to fail" has become the leitmotif of the financial services debacle. "It's too big to fail" has become the pervasive belief among many Americans when considering the fate of their country. Unfortunately, neither the United States nor its economy is too big to fail; no country is. Nor is our planet too big to fail. Nor is our species either too big or too important to fail. If we are to avoid getting trapped in myths that could lead to the planet's and civilization's demise, we need to cultivate the courage and the artist's skill of being able to see the world as it is and to make sense of it for ourselves.

Artistry, Not Depression

Beauty . . . exists in the mind which contemplates [it]

David Hume, 1711-1776

Scottish philosopher and economist

Not surprisingly, when having the courage to view reality as it is, including seeing the depth and the breadth of the crises the world faces, it is often easier to fall into depression than to remain optimistic. In her work on death and dying, noted psychologist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross mapped the five stages that individuals predictably go through when confronted with the crisis caused by receiving a diagnosis that they or a loved one has a terminal illness.²⁹ Given that the world currently faces a terminal diagnosis if global challenges are not successfully addressed (“No, it’s not too big or too important to fail.”), it may be helpful to review Kübler-Ross’s stages as they apply to the macro-level—to us as a civilization.

For individuals, the first stage is denial; most people simply refuse to believe that they have a disease that will kill them. The second stage is anger: “This isn’t fair! How could this be happening to me?” In the third stage, individuals attempt to bargain with both the diagnosis and the prognosis. Religious individuals, for example, might promise: “I’ll pray every day. I’ll give to the church. Just let me live.” Or they might plead: “Please just let me live until my children grow up and get married.” Depression, the fourth stage, hits when individuals realize that the prognosis is real; and that no amount of bargaining can commute their death sentence. According to Kübler-Ross, the fifth and final stage is acceptance.

Stage 1: Denial. Kübler-Ross’s framework is extremely helpful in understanding the public’s reaction to the current array of world crises. A large part of the public conversation appears to be stuck in stage one, denial.³⁰ Nobel Prize winning economist Paul Krugman, for example, labelled the public’s belief in an ever-increasing stock market as extraordinary delusion. Similarly fighting against public denial, Al Gore titled his Academy Award winning film, “An Inconvenient Truth”. As a former Vice President of the United States, Gore was extremely well known and therefore had a particularly good platform for warning the public about global warming. He gave over 1,000 speeches, and yet nothing much happened. Only when he partnered with a filmmaker, and transformed his speech into an art form, was he able to capture the attention and imagination of the world (along with winning a Nobel Peace Prize and an Academy Award). The power of the film rendered denial much more difficult. Although not everyone agrees with the position Gore presented in “An Inconvenient

Truth", few could continue to deny that there was an issue. Even with his prominence, neither Gore nor the broader environmental community could pierce the public's denial with facts alone. Only by using an art form were they able to move a substantial proportion of the community out of the anaesthesia of stage 1 denial.³¹

Stage 2: Anger. Collective anger at a global level is reflected in such statements as: "How the hell did we get ourselves into this mess?" "Why haven't governments taken these crises more seriously?" Anger reflects a sense that we had a choice but we blew it.³² Anger expresses itself with a particular poignancy in economically advantaged parts of the world as they know they are privileged with access to abundant resources: "How can we have such poverty? How can we let children in this country live without adequate food, housing, medical care and education? We have the resources and we still don't do the right thing! This is not predestination; it is stupidity and greed!" Similarly, collective anger expresses itself in economically developing countries with repressive regimes, as it did in 2011 throughout the Middle East when people took to the streets demanding freedom.

Stage 3: Bargaining. Perhaps one of the most visible recent examples of bargaining was that of world governments and environmentalists in negotiating the Kyoto Accords. Most of the world remained focused on which countries became signatories to the Kyoto Accords, and who signed earlier or later. Meanwhile, the underlying bargaining structure almost completely undermined the importance of signing. Similar to other recent environmental agreements in Copenhagen, Cancun and elsewhere, the Kyoto Accords were structured around agreements to reduce X pollutant by Y percent by Z date. The entire structure limited itself to agreements – bargains – aimed at being "less bad". Such agreements have little to do with attempts to do "good". The agreements did not aim to create a beautiful, flourishing sustainable environment. Rather, their only goal was to limit the amount of pollution put into the air, water, and ground. In the vocabulary of architect and leading environmentalist William McDonough: "Less bad is not good".³³ Less ugly is never beautiful.

Stage 4: Depression. In the fourth stage the public begins to suspect that even if they start doing everything right today, it is already too late. "We would have needed to wake up earlier." By 2011, hints of such depression had already begun to emerge in the Greeks' reaction to their collapsing economy, the Americans' seemingly jobless recovery from the recession, and the reactions of the Japanese following the earthquakes and tsunami.

Collective depression results when a substantial number of people, including respected leaders, realize that the situation is even worse than they thought, and that none of the current techniques or approaches will save the planet from the consequences of our prior actions. In the summer of 2010, many people watched the reaction to the British Petroleum (BP) oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and went from assuming that the spill was limited and manageable to recognizing that it was much bigger than was being reported. Depression enveloped them as they realized that the consequences were much more serious, complex, and long lasting than had been publically announced or predicted. Ask yourself if you remember hearing any public discussion about returning the Gulf to beauty – in this case, to a flourishing economy and ecology – or did you mostly hear discussions about how to make the situation less ugly? Did you personally participate in any conversations about recreating a flourishing and thriving ecology and economy in the Gulf? Or did you simply hear discussions focused on who was to blame, how long it would take to cap the well, how effective the dispersants might be, and who should receive reimbursement for lost income?³⁴ As depression takes root, discussion of the beautiful is either completely eliminated (as was the case in the Gulf) or disparaged as naïve and impractical.

Einstein was probably right: we cannot solve these kinds of problems at the level of consciousness that created them. Yet the yearning for something better remains. Perhaps that is part of the reason companies are beginning to experiment with artistic approaches. It is not because executives believe that artists can magically solve all their problems. Rather, it is because they know that prior approaches have not worked and will not work. They know they must try something new.

Stage 5: Acceptance. An individual with a terminal illness must ultimately accept that his or her days are numbered. Acceptance at a collective level carries quite different implications. Kübler-Ross' fifth stage does not imply that we need to accept that we are all doomed. Rather, acceptance at the collective level implies that each of us must accept responsibility for attempting to resolve the global crises. Collective acceptance is not egotistical; rather, it is rooted in profound humility. It signifies accepting that we each must do everything we can to support the possibility of the planet and civilization succeeding. Moreover, it requires that we recognize that we must start today, because the clock has almost run out.

How would we lead our lives if we truly believed that the planet's and society's viability depended on us? Who would we consult? Who would we listen to? Which conversations would we most want to have? Which actions would we take?

Do we have the courage and skills to defy Kübler-Ross's stages, and not get trapped in denial, anger, bargaining, depression, or fatalistic acceptance? When we are very honest with ourselves, we know that there is not a smarter, more committed group of people some place else in the world that will solve everything for us. If we do not make a difference, no one will do it for us. Let me offer several examples of how artistic processes are being used to support people to make a difference.

Artistic Diagnosis: Arts-based Prognosis

Yale Medical School tried an experiment to improve their medical students' ability to see reality the way it is, and thus to be able to more accurately and effectively diagnose and treat patients. As part of the experiment, they required that half of their medical students take an introductory art history seminar. To their surprise and delight, they discovered that after studying art history, the medical students' diagnostic skills improved significantly.³⁵ Why? Because learning to see art teaches people to see both the details and the patterns among details; it teaches them to see reality the way it is. It taught the future physicians to see the constellation of symptoms manifested by the patients they examined. Rather than simply making global assessments based on what they had expected to see, the art-trained medical students more accurately saw the actual condition of the patients. After only one year, the art-trained student-doctors' improvement in their diagnostic skills was more than 25 percent greater than that of their non-art trained colleagues. Based on the success of the experiment at Yale, more than 20 additional medical schools have added art history to their curriculum.

Going beyond art history to actually drawing, Dutch artist Frederick Franck, who worked with Albert Schweitzer in Africa and wrote such bestsellers as *The Zen of Seeing and What Does It Mean to Be Human?*³⁶, believes that not just artists, but all of us are all capable of sketching beautifully. We fail to learn to draw not due to a lack of artistic talent but rather because we have never learned how to see. Beyond impeding our artistic abilities, Franck believes that "Not seeing . . . may well be the root cause of the frightful suffering . . . we humans inflict on one another, on animals, and on Earth herself."³⁷ Franck's cure: teaching each of us how to draw, and thus how to see.

The first perspective that great leaders and artists share in common is the courage and the ability to see reality the way it is. Artists are brilliant at seeing, and art has the power to teach each of us how to reclaim our ability to see. The second way in which great artist and great leaders are similar is that both have the courage to envision possibility. The following section describes some of the ways in which

leaders rely less on decision making and more on their artistic skills to design innovative options.

Leadership Artistry: The Courage to See Possibility

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams

Eleanor Roosevelt, 1884-1962³⁸

It is no failure to fall short of realizing all that we might dream. The failure is to fall short of dreaming all that we might realize.

Dee Hock, Founder & CEO, Visa, 1929³⁹

The second perspective shared by great leaders and great artists is the courage to envision possibility, even at the risk of being labelled naïve (or viewed as preposterous). Envisioning possibility demands that we resist lowering our aspirations; it requires that we reject accepting “less ugly” as a worthy goal. In the vocabulary of artists, it dares us to envision the possibility of beauty.

Philosopher John O’Donohue describes the predicament faced by many people living in the advanced economies:

There is an unseemly coarseness to our times which robs the grace from our textures of language, feeling and presence. Such coarseness falsifies and anaesthetizes our desire. This is particularly evident in the spread of greed. ... Greed is unable to envisage any form of relationship other than absorption or possession. However, when we awaken to beauty, we keep desire alive in its freshness, passion and creativity.⁴⁰ We remember, once again, that “ownership of something beautiful does not make it more beautiful.”⁴¹

How can we reclaim our ability to aspire to a truly beautiful world? Especially when beauty may be what is

... most missing in this highly technological world of ours. ... We value efficiency instead We create trash. But beauty, right proportion in all things, harmony in the universe of our lives ... eludes us. We forgo the natural and the real for the gaudy and the pretentious. We are, as a people, awash in the banal. ... Beauty takes us beyond the visible to the height of

consciousness, past the ordinary to the mystical, away from the expedient to the endless true.⁴²

Are we still capable of envisioning a beautiful world? Aspiring to beauty challenges us to imagine a world in which no child dies of hunger; it rejects our temptation to settle for a world in which the number of such senseless deaths is merely reduced. Aspiring to beauty requires that we aspire to a flourishing environment, not one in which pollution is simply lessened. Aspiring to beauty exposes “less ugly” as blatantly not good enough. To lead in the twenty-first century, we need to re-ask ourselves how we can reclaim our ability to yearn for and to envision a world filled with beauty.

From Decision Making to Design

To create the beauty we aspire to entails more than the use of traditional management techniques; it requires design thinking and skills. It is therefore not surprising that a dramatic change is taking place in management education, with programs shifting from teaching primarily analysis and decision-making approaches to emphasizing design thinking. Given MBA programs’ traditional focus on decision-making, most twentieth-century managers have been particularly good at selecting from among available options. They knew how to select between candidates to fill new senior positions. They knew how to analyze the relative costs and benefits that companies incur in forming global strategic alliances. And likewise, they were practiced at calculating when to increase investment in a particular part of the world and when to delay.

What traditionally educated managers have not been particularly good at is designing new options; that is, designing options worthy of being chosen (rather than simply choosing among pre-existing options).⁴³ Design thinking does not assume that the options on the table are either the best or even worth choosing. Managing as designing – rather than as decision making – is now considered so important that a growing number of top business schools are partnering with designers and design schools to co-create their curriculum.⁴⁴ Similarly, for the first time since the advent of management education, a number of art and design schools have started to offer MBA programs.⁴⁵ *Harvard Business Review*, in recognizing the increasing importance of design thinking, predicted that the MFA (Masters in Fine Arts) might replace the MBA as the most sought after business degree.⁴⁶

How do managers learn to design options worthy of choosing? What might those options look like? Years ago in his famous book, *The Structure of Scientific*

Revolutions, Thomas Kuhn demonstrated that people would not shift to a new paradigm simply because the old ways of understanding and approaching a situation had been shown to be wrong.⁴⁷ To change beliefs and approaches, people need examples of how a new paradigm would work, along with evidence disconfirming the previously accepted approaches.

Below are three international examples of design thinking; one each from Rwanda, the Middle East, and Mozambique. All three take society, and not simply an individual organization, as the client. Each goes far beyond pre-existing options to create new possibilities.

Rwanda. Bobbie Sager, a very successful, Boston-based venture capitalist designed a program to help rebuild the economic and social structure in post-genocide Rwanda.⁴⁸ Building on the micro-enterprise model of economist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammed Yunus, Sager established an entrepreneurial network to provide start-up funding to economic partnerships between Rwandan Hutu women (whose husband, father, son, or brother had been accused or convicted of murdering a Tutsi) and Rwandan Tutsi women who had a relative who had been murdered by a Hutu. Sager successfully transformed an economic structure – microenterprise – into a generative social-stability structure. Although Sager still supports the project, it is now run almost exclusively by Rwandan women. Not only has the initiative been successful, but up until the recent global economic downturn, Rwanda's economy has been growing at over eleven percent per year. Of Rwanda, similar to other parts of the world, the media usually only tells stories of horror and ugliness. They much more rarely report on the beauty and success that is currently being created or that already exists.

The Middle East. Following his success in Rwanda, Sager turned his design skills to promoting economic stability in the Middle East. His initial goal was to foster good relationships between leading Israeli and Palestinian business people, and thus to begin to create an infrastructure for peace in the region. As the founder of the Young Presidents' Organization (YPO) Peace Action Network, Sager knew, as do most business people, that strife and the constant threat of war are neither good for society nor for the economy.⁴⁹ Similar to most people who care about the Middle East, he was convinced that the political options that had been tried in the past were not viable. He therefore chose to meet with a group of prominent Israeli business people, all of whom were members of the Tel Aviv chapter of YPO, and with an equally prominent group of Palestinian business leaders to form a YPO chapter in Ramallah. After nine months of discussion, the two groups of very senior business leaders agreed to

meet with each other. Sager's design for the historic meeting: a long dinner using YPO's traditional social technology (an approach involving in depth conversations that support relationship building), followed by joint attendance at a Sting concert. Why a Sting concert? Because Sager believed that to transform the relationship from that of adversarial strangers to one of cooperative colleagues, the executives not only needed to go beyond the dehydrated language of management, they needed to go beyond words. His design incorporated music and dance as a means for the Israelis and Palestinians to literally embody their new relationship. The evening was a success. The Palestinian and Israeli business leaders have continued to meet and have begun to support each other's initiatives.

Mozambique. A third example of design thinking that lives up to Kofi Annan's challenge involves BHP Billiton, an Australian-based multinational corporation and one of the world's largest aluminum producers. The company envisioned possibility and implemented a strategy in Africa that led to both financial and societal success.⁵⁰ In the 1990s, BHP Billiton became one of the first multinational companies to make a substantial investment (US \$1.3 billion) in Mozambique following the country's 20-year civil war.⁵¹ However, in just the first two years of operation, one-third of the 6,600 employees of Mozal, as the operation is known, fell ill from malaria and 13 died. Malaria alone was placing BHP Billiton's entire investment at risk. At any one time, 20 percent of Mozal's employees were absent due to malaria.

Malaria in Africa is estimated to reduce the continent's economic growth by 1.3 percent annually, at a cost of almost \$12 billion per year.⁵² Whereas malaria has been almost eradicated in other parts of the world, in Africa it still ravages the population.⁵³ From a strictly financial perspective, BHP Billiton could not afford the cost of malaria. The company quickly realized it could not protect its Mozambique investment by relying on others or by focusing just on its own employees. So, in 1999, the same year that Kofi Annan challenged the private sector to become co-creators of society's success, BHP Billiton chose to partner with the governments of Mozambique, Swaziland and South Africa to create a regional anti-malaria campaign covering four million residents. For the first time, a company led a large-scale malaria eradication effort in Africa. In just six years, the partnership between Mozal and the three national governments achieved a previously unimaginable level of success. In the entire region, new cases of malaria plummeted from 66 to fewer than five cases per 1,000 inhabitants. The percentage of infected children fell from more than 90 percent to less than 20 percent. Absenteeism at Mozal went down from more than 20 percent to less than one percent. At the same time, BHP Billiton's operations achieved financial success, leading the company to expand and more than double its production

in Mozambique. BHP Billiton not only rose to Kofi Annan's challenge, it far exceeded anything the company or the continent had previously thought was possible. Foreign investment in Mozambique is up, profits at Mozal are up, employment is up, the number of children able to attend school is up, and the number of people dying of malaria is down. Moreover, BHP Billiton's unique multi-sector strategy has made it much more difficult for companies and communities in Africa to continue to believe that malaria eradication is impossible.

Each of the three examples highlights design thinking and showcases the courage of "business artists" to envision possibilities that, for their predecessors, had remained unthinkable.⁵⁴

Leadership Artistry: The Courage to Inspire People to Move Back to Possibility

The third perspective that great leaders and artists hold in common is the courage and ability to inspire people to move from current reality back to possibility. Do we have the audacity to be hopeful, and the courage to express that hope within our professional domain? Do we have the audacity to act as if we believed that most people want to contribute and that one of the most crucial roles of leaders is to inspire them to do so?

Studies about women who have assumed the most senior leadership roles in the world have been particularly revealing in exposing the gaps between popular myth, reality, and the audacity of hope.⁵⁵ Research demonstrates how rarely we actually imagine positive change ("the beautiful"), let alone believe that organizations and countries are capable of achieving hoped-for outcomes. Ask yourself, for example, how many women have been elected as president or prime minister of a country during the last half century. Both men's and women's guesses tend to be much lower than the actual number – which is 89. This implies that most people fail to see women's contributions to leadership accurately. Reality – the actual number – reveals more equality and is more progressive than most people believe to be true. Optimism and progress exist, but tend to be camouflaged by the media and popular myth structures. Rather than recognizing the worldwide trend toward selecting women to lead countries, the press usually presents each woman as a unique case – a black swan – and not as part of the rapidly increasing number of women holding the most senior leadership positions. A similar emphasis on uniqueness likewise conceals the

increasing number of women leading global companies. The treatment of individual occurrences as unique masks global trends and renders elusive our ability to believe in the possibility of change.

Research has revealed that countries generally elect a woman to serve as their first president or prime minister because the population yearns for change and believes that someone new – a woman rather than a man – is more likely to bring about the desired change. Once the population successfully elects its first woman leader, it often begins to believe that other significant changes – other “firsts” – are possible. Whether the selected woman is particularly competent or not, and regardless of whether her political philosophy is liberal or conservative, the election itself inspires people to shift from an adherence to historic patterns toward a renewed belief in possibility.

From Motivation to Inspiration

In the past, management, both as studied and as practiced, focused primarily on motivation, whereas inspiration and the passion it engenders were viewed more as the province of artists than of executives. Whereas the management literature includes relatively few studies on inspiration, it contains thousands on motivation, with most based on the underlying premise that organizations can motivate people by offering them incentives.⁵⁶ The most common motivational schemes, of course, are based on financial incentives, primarily salary and benefits. Today, even professors are assumed by many universities to be motivated primarily by financial rewards, rather than by the satisfaction they derive from their intellectual pursuits. An increasing number of universities’ promotion- and-tenure and merit committees, for example, attempt to motivate professors by offering them financial rewards for publishing articles in A-listed journals, with cash bonuses for publication in the right journal reaching as high as \$10,000 to \$20,000.⁵⁷

When we review incentive schemes in the financial services sector, we find similar patterns of assumptions. Wall Street firms and their equivalents around the world repeatedly warn the public that they need to offer extremely high salaries and compensation packages to successfully recruit and retain top talent. Numerous academic and media experts have labelled such compensation schemes, and their underlying logic, as nothing more than greed masquerading as business as usual.⁵⁸

Offering a contrasting perspective, the late management guru Peter Drucker repeatedly warned that people are not really leaders unless others would be willing

to volunteer to work for them and their organizations; that is, unless they are so passionately committed to the goals of the organization that they would be willing to work for free. How many Wall Street executives believe so passionately in the contribution they are making to society that they would be willing to work for free? What are the consequences for society of disconnecting a whole sector from the inspiration inherent in passionate commitment to a higher (macro-level) purpose? What is the effect on the planet of human resource systems that reduce the behaviour of senior executives and top-level professionals to the dynamics inherent in (micro-level) individual greed? Perhaps we need look no further than the faltering housing market in the United States or the painful upheaval in the economies in Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain to answer the question.

As professional educators, are we expanding the culture of greed or attempting to reassert cultures of meaning?⁵⁹ Given the importance of education in the twenty-first century, many communities are searching for approaches that will produce outstanding educational achievement. Consider the following two options, each designed to improve educational achievement; the first based on classic motivation theory and the second on inspiration. In the first option, schools have followed the recommendation of Harvard economist Roland Fryer that the best way to motivate children (and by extension, adults) to learn is to pay them for good grades – the higher the grade, the higher the payment.⁶⁰ One has to question the message being sent to children about the inherent value of curiosity and joy in learning when such pay-for-performance systems are instituted.

For the second option, Canadian-based Nora Zylstra-Savage developed an approach for improving education and learning, based on inspiration.⁶¹ Zylstra-Savage uses story telling (an art form) to teach high school seniors how to use language effectively. She partners with the social welfare department and pairs each graduating senior with a stage one Alzheimer's patient. The teenagers are charged with writing and presenting the elder's life story to an assembly of his or her family and friends. When Zylstra-Savage first announced to the teens that they would be meeting each week with a senior citizen, the room predictably erupted into groans. However, after just one session, the teens and elders seemed to fall in love with each other. The teens recognized that their interviewing and listening skills were responsible for the elders coming alive. As soon as their life stories began to unfold, the elders could no longer be viewed as mere constellations of Alzheimer's symptoms.

The students returned to class and implored their teachers to let them visit "their elder" more frequently. They demanded that their school provide them with

better interviewing and listening skills, better information on Alzheimer's, and more instruction on the right grammar and vocabulary to capture their elder's story. They insisted that their teachers offer special sessions on how to structure a story and how best to frame a presentation. As was evident from the students' responses, this was one of the very few times that many of them had experienced a school project with real consequences (beyond receiving a good or bad grade at the end of the term). The process transformed the students back into inspired learners. It transformed the Alzheimer's patients back into wise elders. And it transformed the families, who once again had a cherished family member living with them, rather than someone whose humanity had been reduced to the skeleton of a disease.

Both Fryer and Zylstra-Savage have good intentions and extremely high aspirations, but each couples their goals with a different set of assumptions. Zylstra-Savage's approach to learning and education is clearly based on inspiration. Fryer's is equally clearly based on classic motivation theory. Ask yourself which system you would want for your own children. Which system do you see in most organizations? Which system do we assume to be the norm for the twenty-first century? Are we still capable of seeing the beauty that exists in people (in this case, their inherent desire to learn and to contribute⁶²) and inspiring them to bring that humanity into their education, work and life? Are we going to continue to use motivation schemes to reward self-centered greed, extreme risk-taking and short-term gain, or are we going to inspire people to contribute to the larger world?⁶³

Outing Our Humanity: Reinventing Our Legacy

To lead is to give yourself for things far greater than yourself.

Joan Chittister, 1936 –⁶⁴

Let me close with a glimpse at my professional life in Montreal. At McGill University, I teach "Global Leadership: Redefining Success", an intensive, three-day seminar that is the first course taken by all new incoming MBAs. The seminar introduces the MBAs to major world trends and pointedly asks them to consider what they most want to achieve with their management education. Much to my surprise, the single most frequent comment at the end of the three days is: "But I didn't know that other MBAs would care about the same things I care about."⁶⁵

What surprises me most about the comments is that even in the short time between applying to an MBA program and beginning the first semester, the students have accepted the mythology that most, if not all, MBAs are first and foremost individualist and greedy; that the only things managers care about is getting ahead and their own personal success. Many were shocked to discover that they were not the only ones entering the MBA program who cared about the broader world, including about poverty, the environment, peace, and the quality of life. I too was surprised that “shared caring” was their most important discovery. Based on their comments, I now understand that my most important role as a professor is to “out” MBAs’, managers’, and executives’ humanity; that is, to act as a mirror, so they can once again see their own humanity and not be blinded by the rampant myths of individualism and greed masquerading as professionalism.

Perhaps our most fundamental role as artists, and in this sense, each of us is an artist, whether we label ourselves as one or not, is to “out” our own humanity and that of the people we have the privilege to work with, and by doing so, to redefine our global legacy.

Author’s Note

This article is based on Adler’s Distinguished Speaker presentation at the Annual Academy of Management Meetings on August 9, 2010, in Montreal. An earlier version was presented as a keynote address at the “Creative Economy and Beyond” Conference in Helsinki, Finland, in 2009. The speech and article draw on Adler’s 2006 article “The Arts and Leadership.”

Notes

1. O’Donohue (2003: p. 2)
2. O’Donohue (2003: pp. 2-3)
3. Paragraph based on Adler (2006); also see Hamel (2000: p. 10).

4. Hamel (2000: p. 10).
5. Whereas this article focuses primarily on the ways in which the arts and artistic processes support leadership, the reverse is also true. For example Professor Julian Anderson is currently composing an Opera based on the financial collapse of 2007 and the ensuing years (Studemann, 2010)
6. As cited at the Understanding-Medical-Conditions.com website "Yes, malaria can kill! It is estimated that about 1.5 million people die from malaria every year. This means one person dies from malaria every 30 seconds and most of these deaths occur in children under 5 years and pregnant women." <http://www.understanding-medical-conditions.com/questionsaskedaboutmalaria.html>
7. The latest rankings from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) reveals that the United States ranked 17th, 23rd, and 31st, respectively in reading science, and math among the 70 countries surveyed, as reported by Proudfoot (2010).
8. As reported in 2007 World Health Organization by at the Greenpeace website: <http://www.greenpeace.org/eastasia/campaigns/air-pollution>
9. According to a report published in the *Los Angeles Times*, "As much as 25% of the air pollution in Los Angeles comes from China; at certain sites in California, as much as 40% of the air pollution comes from Asia." (The great smoke-out", *Los Angeles Times*, Oct 7, 2007 as found at: articles.latimes.com/2007/oct/07/opinion/op-garrett7)
10. Peter Senge, in his book of the same title (Senge et al., 2008), defines this as 'The Necessary Revolution'.
11. O'Donohue, op. cit., p. 3.
12. O'Donohue, op. cit., p. 4.
13. 13th-century Persian poet Jalal ad-Din Rumi from his poem "Spring Giddiness" as translated by Coleman Barks (1995: 33); as cited in Ryan (1994: 143)
14. Klaus Schwab's remarks as reported in Newsweek, February 24, 2003, p. 10.

15. Speech given by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in 1999.
16. For information on Skolkovo, see <http://www.skolkovo.ru/index.php?lang=en>
17. Notable exceptions to the absence of beauty in discussions of management and leadership include Adler (2002a), Ladkin (2008), Taylor (2010), Merrit (2010), and Stephens (2010). According to James Hillman, as cited in O'Donohue (2003: 7), "The arts, whose task once was considered to be that of manifesting the beautiful, will discuss the idea only to dismiss it, regarding beauty only as the pretty, the simple, the pleasing, the mindless and the easy. Because beauty is conceived so naïvely, it appears as merely naïve, and can be tolerated only if complicated by discord, shock, violence, and harsh terrestrial realities. I therefore feel justified in speaking of the repression of beauty." Hillman (1998) argues, as cited by Ladkin (2008:32) that "'beauty' is one of the most repressed and taboo concepts in our secularised and materialistic times." For a critique of how beauty is viewed in the contemporary art world, see, among others, James Hillman (1998) and Suzi Gablik (1998).
18. Pierre-August Renoir, prominent French artist, 1841-1919, first raised the question, "Why should beauty be suspect?"
19. For a discussion of positive psychology, see Seligman (2003) and Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000). For a similar discussion of positive organization studies, see Cameron, Dutton, and Quinn (2003) and Cameron and Caza (2004), among many others.
20. Architect, author, designer, inventor, and futurist
21. See Bird and Waters (1989) and Bird (1996) for a discussion of managers' moral blindness and muteness.
22. Among many others, see McLean and Elkind (2003).
23. See Henriques (2011), among many others.
24. The Black Swan Theory, which focuses on randomness and uncertainty, was introduced by Nassim Nicholas Taleb (2007).

25. See, for example Herbert's 2010 article "Hiding from reality" in which he states "We're in denial about the extent of the rot in the system, and the effort that would be required to turn things around. It will likely take many years, perhaps a decade or more, to get employment back to a level at which one could fairly say the economy is thriving." Focusing on the United States, Herbert (2010) concludes, "America will never get its act together until we recognize how much trouble we're really in, and how much effort and shared sacrifice is needed to stop the decline. Only then will we be able to begin resuscitating the dream."
26. According to the July 5-11, 2006 Harris Interactive Poll, 50% of Americans believed that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction (as reported by World Public Opinion Inc at <http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/brunitedstatescanadara/238.php?nid=&1>; see Risen (2006), among many others).
27. Quebec did not separate, but the outcome of the referendum was very close: 51% voted to stay together with the rest of Canada while 49% voted to separate.
28. See Protesch (2010).
29. Kubler-Ross (1969)
30. See "On Climate, Who Needs the Facts?" (2011) for documentation of denial on a major public issue
31. Unfortunately, observers today suggest that the public has moved back into denial about the environment. See, for example, the *New York Times* editorial "In Climate Denial, Again" (2010).
32. See Hoenig's 2010 editorial "Too big to succeed" for a glimpse at the current level of anger at the financial system and bailout.
33. See McDonough & Braungart (2002) and the film, "The Next Industrial Revolution: William McDonough, Michael Braungart & the Birth of the Sustainable Economy"
34. See, for example, "No Sign They Get It" (2011).
35. The art-trained medical students improved by 56% whereas the control group, which attended clinical tutorial sessions without the art sessions improved by

44%. (Dolev, Friedlaender, & Braverman, 2001). Also see articles on Yale Medical School website, including "Class helping future doctors learn the art of observation (Jones & Peart, 2009)

36. See Franck (1973, 1992, 1993) and Franck et al (1998),
37. Franck (1993, p. 4)
38. Former First Lady of the United States, author, speaker, politician, and activist
39. Hock (1998), founder & CEO emeritus, VISA
40. O'Donohue, op. cit., p. 4.
41. William Carmen Soyak III, painter
42. Chittister (2000: pp. 26-27).
43. Richard Boland and Fred Collopy (2004) have not only contributed an excellent book on *Managing as Designing*, they also founded, along with David Cooperider, the new Positive Organizational Design series of conferences.
44. Examples include the University of Toronto's Rotman School's partnership with Canadian designer Bruce Mau; Zollverein School of Management and Design, a German business school which teaches management and design within one program, and Stanford Business School.
45. Examples include the California College of the Arts' MBA program, Illinois Institute of Technology Institute of Design, Design London, Alanus Hochschule (Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences) in Germany, which is connected to the Rudolf-Steiner Waldorf schools, was originally an art college and has now expanded into other fields ([http://www .alanus.edu/studium-bwl.html](http://www.alanus.edu/studium-bwl.html)).
46. Pink (2004: 21)
47. Kuhn (1962)
48. The Sager Family Foundation describes the Rwanda project at: <http://www.teamsager.org/initiatives/rwanda-micro-enterprise.php>. This micro enterprise

initiative in Rwanda, Sager Ganza Microfinance, uses business as an agent of social change. Sager Ganza makes micro enterprise loans to groups of Rwandan women. Many of these women have husbands who were murdered during the Rwandan genocide, and many have husbands in prison for doing the murdering. We help lift these women out of poverty and provide the economic benefit of micro enterprise and the choices it creates. In the process of pursuing a payroll and their dreams, together these women start to understand one another as people, without the filters, and this is our way of helping the reconciliation process. We don't help the reconciliation by saying let's come together at the community center and talk about our differences and why we hate each other. We say: Come to a meeting, we want to talk to you about starting businesses together and eventually, who knows, maybe you guys will talk about your lives, hopes and dreams and understand each other not as Hutus and Tutsis, but as human beings. Also see Sager on Israeli – Palestinian initiative http://pannetwork.org/PANNewsletterOct2006_Files/Sager_Tel_Aviv_WPO_090206.pdf

49. As presented in 2006 by Sager at the Global Forum on Business as an Agent of World Benefit and as summarized on Sager Family Foundation website: <http://www.teamsager.org/initiatives/peace-action-network.php>
50. Story as reported by Lafraniere (2006) and as described by Adler (2008).
51. Lafraniere (2006)
52. World Health Organization, Malaria Fact Sheet 94, April 2010 as found at: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs094/en/>
53. Still much needs to be done to eradicate malaria ("Comeback against Malaria" (2010)
54. For an introduction to design thinking, see, among others, Design Thinking 101 at <http://www.slideshare.net/whatidis/cover/design-thinking-101>, and Dunne & Martin (2006). Also see Dean of the Rotman School of Management Roger Martin's (2009) discussion of "abductive reasoning", a type of logic in which designers search for what could possibly be true, and infer possible new worlds, while keeping in mind technological feasibility and business imperatives.
55. See Adler (1998; 2002b; 2007; 2009) among others.

56. Among others, see Pink (2009)
57. Adler and Harzing (2009)
58. See Craig and Dash (2011) among many others.
59. Stanford management professor Jeffrey Pfeffer (based on a presentation he made on August 5th 2003 at the Academy of Management meetings in Seattle, based on research reported in Ferraro et al, 2005 and Marwell and Ames (1981)) revealed that students entering management and economics faculties are the only students who do not become more compassionate toward others, including people from the rest of the world, during their time at university. In fact, on average they become narrower and more self-centered.
60. See Lisa Guernsey (2009) and Toppo (2008), among others.
61. Based on personal communication with the author. See Nora's website (<http://www.story-lines.ca>) and the video showing her students performing their elder's stories, at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gonLkb21AI> (Also see Brown, 2004).
62. This is what McGill professor and noted executive David Lank refers to as intellectual philanthropy.
63. See Barry Schwartz's TED talk "on our loss of wisdom" for a discussion on society's need for inspiration as a primarily form of motivation and organizational structure: http://www.ted.com/talks/barry_schwartz_on_our_loss_of_wisdom.html
64. Chittister, an American Benedictine nun and author, as paraphrased from her "To be human is to give oneself to things far greater than oneself" as cited in Franck, Roze, & Connolly (1998: 194)
65. For some, the issues they most care most about concern the environmental, for others income distribution and poverty, and for still others the array of ways in which companies can and do positively influence society and the planet.

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