LEARNing Landscapes

Education and the Arts: Blurring Boundaries and Creating Spaces

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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.

Review Board

Dedication

This issue of LEARNing Landscapes, "Education and the Arts: Blurring Boundaries and Creating Spaces," is dedicated to Fani Lobel Caspin, wife, mother, friend, colleague, student, and artist. Fani began her career as a teacher and was sought out by students and peers because of her supportive approach and compelling pedagogy. She earned an M.A. in counseling psychology, and for many years had her own practice and helped a wide-reaching and very appreciative clientele. More recently, she was a doctoral student in the Faculty of Education at McGill University. Her focus was on student engagement and how to make a difference for diverse learners in secondary schools. Her creativity and love of art was a constant in her life that she nourished in her painting. Fani lit up every room with her energy and engaging smile, and ignited interactions and many friendships with her caring, honest, open and warm outreach to others. She fought a courageous and valiant battle while never losing her optimism and good humour. She has left behind a huge gap in many lives, and is remembered fondly and affectionately by all those she touched.

Editorial

For at least two thirds of the 20th century, art was considered a separate discipline in education, and what constitutes art, who should produce art, and what art means were predicated on formalist conceptualizations (Broudy, 1972). According to Broudy, and others who endorse a modernist perspective, the aesthetic experience is derived from exposure to exemplary works of art. This limits access to art, experience with art, and the potential of using art forms in everyday life for mediating understanding in different ways (Eisner, 1991). This perspective has had a longstanding impact on how art and education intersect. The advent of postmodernism, or belief in multiple realities, inclusionary practices, and relational ways of being and knowing, has changed and continues to change the concept of art and its relation to education. Dewey's (1934) notions, that art is connected to everyday life, and that aesthetic experience is derived in the doing of art and what it reveals in the process, have been dusted off the shelf and gained an increasing foothold in schools, preservice teacher education, and research. These ideas have been bolstered by the realization that learners have multiple intelligences and ways of communicating (Gardner, 2000), some of which are better suited to certain learners than others, and by the increasingly visual and digital world in which we live. We have come to an exciting moment where in many places art is functioning as a way of reflecting on, understanding and representing thinking and values, and as a way of opening up spaces for social action and change. The very interesting and compelling articles in this issue illustrate the immense potential that exists when art and education meet in stimulating, varied, accessible and embodied forms and practices.

We are honoured and privileged to have commentaries from Maxine Greene and Elliot Eisner, two visionary and eminent scholars who have made an astounding impact on education and the arts in both schools and research. Greene touches the reader with a plea and poignant excerpts from artists, urging us to open

our imaginations to the possibilities of an aesthetic education that unites, engages, and awakens the senses to the "wonders of appreciation." Eisner posits eight maxims for how education can improve by learning from the arts. He argues eloquently and persuasively about the inextricable fusion of form and content. He highlights the importance of nuance and surprise, and the need for savouring through the senses and argues that the arts push the limits of language, value intuition and embodiment, and above all, open up the imagination.

Leggo, a poet and education professor at the University of British Columbia, Prendergast, a faculty member in the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences at Lesley University, and Boyle, a musician and Ph.D. candidate in education at McGill University, show the power and magic of poetry and music. From very different vantage points, we glean as both readers and listeners, the special nuances of experience that their messages reveal.

Grugel and Thomas each show how art can create sites for community outreach and new understanding. Grugel, who is a doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin, shares the work she did with elementary students as coresearchers in documenting the creation and sustenance of a community garden. She and the individual children each collected photographs of their experience of developing and maintaining their gardens, and then used the pictures in discussions together to elicit their thoughts and ideas. The equality they experienced being coresearchers, the proximity they felt with nature as a result of their work, and the new understandings they gained by using photography empowered them and made them more reflective about themselves and attuned to their natural surroundings. Thomas, a professor at the University of Prince Edward Island, discusses an integrated arts inquiry approach she uses with preservice teachers in conjunction with local community artists. Her work shows the transformative nature of art, and how this form of inquiry opens up space for critical thinking, and creates powerful avenues for social change.

Hafeli and Bourassa both work with adolescents. Grenier is an honour student in the International Baccalaureate program at Heritage Regional High School in St. Hubert, Quebec. Hafeli describes the visual arts course she teaches during the summer at SUNY in Brockport, New York. She makes a compelling case for relinquishing a primary focus on the technical, formal, and perceptual functions of art, and concentrating on the narrative aspects of students' lives and the meaning this holds for them in their art forms. She argues that engagement, critical reflection, and increasingly sophisticated works of art develop when the personal, social and cultural worlds of the students are welcomed and embraced in art. Bourassa is at Heritage

Regional High School where she teaches English and dance. She reminisces vividly about her own school experiences and how these, coupled with 30 years of teaching, have helped her to make her "classroom a studio" and her "studio a classroom." She describes, with compelling visuals, the way she embraces multiple ways of doing and knowing in her high school English classes, and promotes inclusive and collaborative approaches so that all students take risks, enjoy and learn in her dance courses. Grenier discusses her experiences at Centauri Summer Arts Camp where she has been involved in theatre, dance, photography and film with other adolescents from around the world. She discusses how the aesthetic experiences at camp not only teach the campers new skills, but also "release the imagination" (Greene, 1995) and create a special connection among the group in what is an atmosphere of safety, honesty and creativity.

McKay, a Ph.D. student and part-time instructor at the University of Alberta, describes how she uses performance, in this case readers theatre, to bridge the boundaries between reading and drama, engage her preservice teachers, and show how literacy learning can extend beyond the goals of fluency. She examines the pedagogical underpinnings of readers theatre and provides some helpful guidelines for introducing it into the classroom, illustrating how it enhances learning, deepens reading response, and motivates students.

Leitch, Troussas and Uhrmacher, Dillon, Myer, and Norris all use various art forms with preservice teachers and teachers to tease out values and assumptions that form teacher identities and raise critical awareness and understanding, or narratives of the self. Leitch, a senior lecturer at Queen's University, Belfast, uses "self-boxes," any form of box-like container, that are decorated and filled with each teacher's visual artwork, poetry, artifacts and other memorabilia and represent important facets of their lives. The engaging act of making the self-box and the subsequent dialogue and sharing with others can "stimulate re-conceptualizations" that have an impact on both individual and collective teacher understanding and development. Troussas, a doctoral student, and Uhrmacher, a professor, both at the Morgridge College of Education at the University of Denver, use what they call reflective art inquiry—a three-part process that involves imaging, reframing and enacting. The teacher participants form an image in their minds then translate it into some material medium such as collage or Play-Doh, then discuss their art form with each other, and finally react to both their products and processes. These authors show with individual cases how the unconscious is brought to consciousness through the art medium, and in some instances change is initiated as a result. Dillon, a professor of education at McGill University, describes how he uses Forum Theatre with his students. Forum Theatre is

an art form created by Boal (1979), which is used as a vehicle for community social action. The process includes dramatizing a controversial event and then improvising possible interventions, thereby bringing social action possibilities to the fore. They build the dramas around personal, everyday experiences in which they have felt oppressed. These reenactments have revealed an increased level of consciousness, albeit largely at an individual level, and a high level of engagement. Dillon suggests that to build on this to develop critical pedagogy and group-oriented approaches for social action, students also need to be immersed in community projects and service learning initiatives that are strongly committed to social justice. These are important considerations for planning or revising teacher education programs. Myer, a recent Ph.D. graduate from McGill University, describes how in a qualitative study on bullying and other forms of harassment in schools, she used found poetry, the process of taking participant words from transcripts and transforming them into poetry, to distill and portray succinctly and poignantly the narratives she had constructed from her interviews with a number of teachers. She suggests that the personal and professional identities of teachers play an important role in how they perceive and react to harassment incidents and patterns in schools. Found poems help to preserve and nuance concisely the complex aspects of identity, while retaining the "signature" of the particular participant. Finally, Norris, a professor of education at St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia, shows how by building on the notion of multiple intelligences, he has encouraged his graduate students to choose from a variety of art forms accompanied by a "metacognitive log" to use as a vehicle for developing their topics of inquiry for his courses. He argues that involvement in art making enhances their understanding of the course. The learners amalgamate course content, media, previous knowledge, and skills coupled with creativity as they translate their ideas and course material into new forms. He uses their process and products as an authentic form of assessment that is powerful, insightful and student-owned. The added value of these manuscripts is how all authors have made their processes transparent, so that their approaches are readily adaptable to other educational contexts.

Gannon is a senior lecturer in education at the University of Western Sydney in Australia, and Davis is a collage artist from Montreal with an M.A. in education from McGill University. Both use art in self-study. Framed by the Prime Minister Rudd's formal apology speech to Aboriginal Australians in 2008, Gannon articulates her "sorry story" by revisiting her first teaching experience as a white and "unqualified" teacher at an Aboriginal school in remote Australia. Using biography and visual art she is able to both reconstruct her memories and then deconstruct them to show the silencing that occurs among invisible "Others" when "whiteness" reigns. Davis explores the history of collage and suggests the powerful way the juxtaposed

fragments and reconfigured whole change perception and bring tacit understandings to the surface. Through five poignant and compelling collages, she pulls the viewer through the agony, ecstasy, and irony of our media-driven society and its exertion on bodies, self-image, women, and in particular anorexics, suggesting how arts-informed methodologies open possible spaces for "learning and healing."

It is appropriate to end this issue with the work of Bresler. She is a musician and professor at the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, who has pioneered much work in merging education and the arts in schools and research. She suggests how the process of producing art, in this particular case music, mirrors the inquiry process in many important ways. Thinking metaphorically about inquiry as music, she eloquently describes ways for ascertaining how researchers shape, and are shaped by their research. An "aesthetic inquiry" changes the nature of the work, the relationships formed in the process, and what is revealed. Her lens for inquiry provides an interesting avenue for looking back on this issue of LEARNing Landscapes, and looking forward to imagine new possibilities.

L.B.K.

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Lynn Butler-Kisber (B. Ed., M. Ed., McGill University; Ed.D. Harvard University), a former elementary school teacher, is an Associate 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. Just recently she was appointed to the Board of Directors of St. George's Schools. Winner of the 1997 YWCA Women of Distinction award (Education) and 2008 Canada Post award (Educator), 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 Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) Efficacy Study, as well as projects with Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, England and Indonesia, and teachers and school leaders in Quebec. The focus of this work is on literacy learning, student engagement, leadership, professional development, and qualitative methodologies and she has published and presented extensively in these areas.

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www.mcgill.ca/edu-integrated/cel/profdev/seminars

Commentary:

Education and the Arts: The Windows of Imagination

Maxine Greene, Columbia University

ABSTRACT

This article focuses upon the significance of art experiences at moments of pervasive unease and uncertainty in the society surrounding the schools. Concerned more with a loss of expectation and a sense of futility than actual fear of catastrophe, I turn towards encounters with the several arts to activate imagination which, as Emily Dickinson wrote, may "light the slow fuse of possibility." The sense of possibility, of what might be, what ought to be, what is not yet--seems to be essential in moving the young to learn to learn. It may be nurtured, not only through art education as ordinarily understood, but also through aesthetic education, moving people by means of participation, to awaken to the wonders of authentic appreciation.

I begin with a poem, *In Those Years* by Adrienne Rich (1995), because it suggests, as prose cannot, the climate that has given rise to an argument for the arts in education. Moreover, the reader who can activate her/his imagination may be able to participate in the reality the poem creates--the isolation, the separateness, the unexpected descent of catastrophe--and experience the poem from within…

In these
years, people will say, we lost track
of the meaning of *we*, of *you*
we found ourselves
reduced to *I*
and the whole thing became
silly, ironic, terrible;
we were trying to lead a personal life
and, yes, that was the only life
we could bear witness to

But the great dark birds of history screamed and plunged
into our personal weather
They were headed somewhere else but their beaks and pinions drove
along the shore, through the rags of fog
where we stood, saying *I*

How can we commit ourselves to learning in times like these? How, in good faith, can we enable others to learn in the shadow of those dark birds? To open spaces for learning is to give learners a sense of absence, of open questions lacking answers, of darkness unexplained. If people respond to all of this with a blank disinterest, they are, often without realizing it, acquiescing in the "given," the fixed, the unchangeable. They may have given up their "personal weather" and simply bowed to what is "natural," to what is given.

Beginning to take for granted the existing state of things--the wars, the inequities, the depth of abandoned people's suffering--they may accept the idea of there being an objective reality impervious to subjective interpretations and to alternative possibilities. Caught in a chill autonomy, they are excluded from the kind of dialogue that brings human beings in touch with one another and opens the way to the making of meanings.

It is as if they were enclosed in a silent and windowless room, unable to look at things as if they could be otherwise than they seem inescapably to be. Imagination is required to disclose a different state of things, to open the windows of consciousness to what might be, what ought to be. Imagination allows for empathy, for a tuning in to another's feelings, for new beginnings in transactions with the world.

Crafting a poem, Dickinson (1924) wrote, "Imagination lights the slow fuse of possibility." The philosopher Ricoeur (1973) saw it as "a passion for possibility." In a way, imagination makes visible what is just out of sight. The painter Cezanne (1994) said that, although we can see the front of a painting with our eyes, imagination curves to the other side. We know that imagination makes metaphors, effecting often unexpected connections in experience. When Stevens' (1997) *Man with the Blue Guitar* is told, "You do not play things as they are," and he replies, "Things are changed upon the blue guitar," we know well that the guitar does not have the power to make a physical difference or actually to change things. But to bring together the color blue, a guitarist, a guitar, and images of change is to increase the resonance of particulars. Creating new patterns in experience, it somehow expands the field of meanings; it may be received as a work of art.

To think of art and education is, as I view things, to render palpable an atmosphere that offers diverse works of art for participation by students of a range of ages. I speak of participatory experiences because I hope teachers can learn what it means to attend, truly to attend to Manet's *Luncheon on the Grass*, in all its detail, the changing contours and hues of Monet's *Rouen Cathedral* at different times of day, Cezanne's *House of the Hanged* Man, Picasso's *Guernica* with its searing images of pain. I hope more teachers can share with their students glimpses of reality long obscured by familiarity, melodies long muffled by conventional tunes, cinematic scenes identified as photographic representations of the commonsense world lacking fictionality, avoiding the transformations that might change the ordinary into art. The arts, wrote Dewey (1934), "touch the deeper levels of life" (p. 46). Again, they transform; they renew. Sartre (2000), providing one of his own metaphors for imagination, wrote of pathways out of the ordinary, pathways to what might be. And he said that all human beings, for all their differences in perspective, perceive things against the background of a shared, common world. And then:

> If a painter presents us with a field or a vase of flowers, his paintings are windows which are open to the whole world. We follow the red path which is buried among the wheat much farther than Van Gogh painted it among other wheat fields, under other clouds, to the river which empties into the sea, and we extend to infinity, to the other end of the world, the deep finality which supports the existence of the field and the earth. So that, through the various objects which it produces…the creative act aims at a total renewal of the world. (p. 272)

Again, speaking of engagement, I think of the way we are in the world, acting upon it and being acted upon, always open to possibilities, to pathways seen and unseen. We are entangled with one another and, in our doing and undergoing with the world around. To grasp that, to realize that standing—unengaged—bleakly on a beach saying "I" is a denial of our humanity and of the mysterious potential in the arts.

The poet, Mary Oliver, wrote a brief essay in her book, *Blue Iris*, which certainly does not deal directly with art and education. Indirect as it may be, metaphorical as it may be, offering no final answers to our questions, I choose to end my foray into new landscapes with some of Oliver's words:

> Teach the children. We don't matter so much, but children do. Show them daisies and the pale hepatica. Teach them the taste of sassafras and wintergreen. The lives of the blue quarters, blueberries. And the aromatic ones— rosemary, oregano. Give them peppermints to put in their pockets when they go to school. Give them the fields and the woods and the possibility of the world salvaged from the lords of profit. Stand them in the stream, head them upstream, rejoice as they learn to love this green space they live in, its sticks and leaves and then the silent beautiful blossoms…. Attention is the beginning of devotion. (pp. 55–56)

Urban young people, suburban young people---attention may be modeled and even taught; but devotion goes beyond words. It may be where the arts in education find their culmination—among "the silent beautiful blossoms," where the young ones can stand together, arms linked under the dark birds, imagining what might be, acting upon their vision as they begin working to renew.

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Maxine Greene received her doctorate in education from New York University in 1955. She taught at New York University, Montclair State College, and Brooklyn College. In 1965, she joined the faculty at Teachers College, Columbia University, and is currently the William F. Russell Professor in the Foundations of Education (emerita) of that institution. In 2003, she founded the Maxine Greene Foundation for Social Imagination, the Arts, and Education. A year later, the Teachers College Trustees created the Maxine Greene Chair for Distinguished Contributions to Education. Maxine has been the recipient of Honorary Degrees in the Humanities from ten universities including McGill University and has been awarded numerous honours including the American Educational Research Association's Lifetime Achievement Award and a Fulbright fellowship.

For several decades, Maxine has hosted a weekly series of literary Salons in her own home. The Salon concept has recently expanded to include music and theatrical performances. She continues to appear as a featured speaker and panelist at academic and cultural institutions throughout the United States and Europe, and has also appeared in the multimedia dance piece, *The Hershey Man*, produced by La Manga Video and Dance Company.

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Commentary:
What Education Can Learn From the Arts

Elliot Eisner, Stanford University

ABSTRACT

The arts have typically been regarded as non-cognitive activities that are often thought to be more ornamental than useful. This paper examines prevalent assumptions about the arts and identifies forms of thinking that the arts promote. It is argued that far from being merely decorative, the arts stimulate, refine, and convey meanings that cannot be expressed in any other form of representation. The recognition of the demands and the contributions that the arts make is of fundamental importance in justifying the place of the arts in our schools, that is, as being central, rather than peripheral educational accomplishments. This paper identifies a number of the forms of thinking that the arts promote as a basis for building a case for their presence in our schools by regarding them as being substantially more than of marginal importance.

> Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
> Like a Colossus; and we petty men
> Walk under his huge legs and peep about
> To find ourselves dishonorable graves.
> Men at some time are masters of their fates:
> The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
> But in ourselves, that we are underlings.
>
> (Shakespeare, 1, ii, 135-141)

Elliot Eisner

*S*ince the turn of the century--the 20th century--American schools have been impacted by a pedagogical and organizational paradigm built upon methodologies of the physical sciences. Schools were regarded as arenas within which the ideas of scientific technology could find wide application. In this model, the specification of ends and the search for ideal means relevant to the achievement of those ends was a dominant aspiration. Just reflect on the work of Franklin Bobbitt in the 1920s, the growth of the behavioral objectives movement in the 1950s, and most recently, the preoccupation with standards as a way to achieve the ends that were formulated. The tacit aspiration of researchers and some practitioners, particularly school administrators, was to find a set of methods that would efficiently and effectively help us to achieve our most important goals.

This paradigm, a scientistic paradigm, was much more interested in certainty in methods than in the surprises that some methods would yield. It was more concerned with measurement than with meaning, and, at times, its metaphors likened education to a business.

In this orientation, the arts were often marginalized. They are difficult to measure, and they harbor values that some believed to be problematic. At their best, the arts were nice to have in schools but not necessary. Even though the arts are considered a core subject in recent legislation pertaining to the *No Child Left Behind* initiative currently adopted in many American schools, in the reality of the school day, they are often hard to find.

But what if we looked to the arts as being not merely recipients of policies made in light of a technological paradigm, but rather, as a source of both insight and practice that had something special to offer those interested in school improvement. Maybe it is the case that the arts have something to teach those whose paradigm is closer to educational engineering than it is to aesthetics. Maybe there is a story to be told that would capture the imagination of a public eager to find genuinely satisfying educational experiences for their children.

This paper was written to describe what it is that education can learn from the arts that is relevant to the improvement of our schools. Just what do the arts have to teach education? And why is what they have to teach educationally important? My hope is that what I have to say will enable those who seek extrinsic reasons for justifying the arts in the schools will find a rationale for the arts that they might regard as being self-justifying.

1.   Education can learn from the arts that form and content cannot be sepa-rated. How something is said or done shapes the content of experience.

       It has long been held that form and content are distinct phenomena and that one can modify the form of an object or event without changing its content. I argue that content and form coexist and must, of necessity, define each other. To change the form of a form is to change the quality of the experience that it makes possible. The quality of experience that a form makes possible is what the content of the form is.

       What does this mean for education? It means this. It serves as a reminder that how something is taught, how curricula are organized, and how schools are designed impact upon what students will learn. These "side effects" may be the real main effects of practice.

2.   Education can learn from the arts that everything interacts; there is no con-tent without form and no form without content.

       The point of this idea pedagogically is to acknowledge that when the form is changed into an object or an event, so too, is the quality of life it engen-ders. When the content of a form is changed, so too, is the form altered. Form and content are like two sides of a coin. One cannot have one without the other.

       There are no separate parts in a whole. What, for example, a color looks like depends upon the colors around it. The same is true in teaching. We call this interaction.

       The concept of interaction is as fundamental in education as it is in all human states of affairs. What is large and what is small depends upon what one is comparing it to. What is hard and what is soft depends on the hard-ness of the hard and the softness of the soft. Soft can be hard in some con-texts and can be soft in others. This is because interaction is a condition of experience.

       In teaching, whether a teacher is considered to move swiftly or to move slowly depends not only upon the teacher's rate of speech but also on what

the student brings to the occasion. For some students, swift is slow, and for others, slow is swift. It is the character of the interaction that defines our experience.

3.   Education can learn from the arts that nuance matters. To the extent to which teaching is an art, attention to nuance is critical.

It has been said that the devil lives in the details. It can also be said that the aesthetic lives in the nuances that the maker can shape in the course of creation. How a word is spoken, how a gesture is made, how a line is written, and how a melody is played, all affect the character of the whole. All depend upon the modulation of the nuances that constitute the act.

Musicians "live in their nuances." There are dozens of ways to play a pizzicato on a violin, but what any particular violinist does with the pizzicato depends upon what he or she does with the nuances that constitute that particular rendition of the music.

4.   Education can learn from the arts that surprise is not to be seen as an intruder in the process of inquiry, but as a part of the rewards one reaps when working artistically.

In our technically oriented, control-focused society, we tend to regard surprise as an inability to predict. It is. But surprise in the course of work is also the result of securing a new insight--one that was hitherto unexpected. No surprise, no discovery, no discovery, no progress. Educators should not resist surprise, but create the conditions to make it happen. It is one of the most powerful sources of intrinsic satisfaction.

5.   Education can learn from the arts that slowing down perception is the most promising way to see what is actually there.

It is true that we have certain words to designate high levels of intelligence. We describe somebody as being swift, or bright, or sharp, or fast on the

pickup. Speed in its swift state is a descriptor for those we call smart. Such folks are a quick read. Yet, I would argue that one of the qualities we ought to be promoting in our schools is a slowing down of perception: the ability to take one's time, to smell the flowers, to really perceive in the Deweyan sense, and not merely to recognize what one looks at.

Recognition by contrast, Dewey (1934) pointed out, is about attaching a label to an object or event: this is an automobile; that is a wagon; this is an elm tree; that's a pine. The task of recognition has to do with a classification and assignment of a label that stands for the event. Much of early reading instruction is of this type.

What *perception* entails is not so much classification or categorization, but a savoring, a qualitative exploration of a variety of qualities--qualities that constitute the qualitative wholeness of the object or event being perceived. Dewey argued, and I endorse his argument, that learning how to slow down perception is one of the primary ways in which one can enrich one's own experience. For slowed-down perception to become a habitual attitude, it will require a cultural change in America. I do not know whether or not we are ready for such a change. I do know that much of human experience is dissipated or weakened because of the absence of time that needs to be taken to see, to really see.

6.   Education can learn from the arts that the limits of language are not the limits of cognition. We know more than we can tell.

In common parlance, literacy refers essentially to the ability to read and to write. But literacy can be re-conceptualized, and I propose to do so, as the creation and use of a form of representation that will enable one to create meaning--meaning that will not take the impress of language in its conventional form. In addition, literacy is associated with high-level forms of cognition. We tend to think that in order to know you have to be able to say. I would argue that the limits of language in no way define the limits of cognition. As Polanyi (1969) reminds us, we know more than we can tell. The implications of that idea are profound for education. If taken seriously, it would expand our conception of what knowing entails. It would recognize the diverse ways in which people can be literate, or, should I say, be *multi*-literate. Language used in the service of the poetic is quite different

from language used in the service of the literal. One can be literate in one form and illiterate in the other. What schools need to attend to is the cultivation of literacy in its many forms. Each form of literacy provides another way to be in the world, another way to form experience, another way to recover and express meaning.

7.   Education can learn from the arts that somatic experience is one of the most important indicators that someone has gotten it right.

Related to the multiple ways in which we represent the world through our multiple forms of literacy, is the way in which we come to know the world through the entailments of our body. Sometimes one knows a process or an event through one's skin. As Langer (1979) once commented, the senses are our first avenues to consciousness. There is nothing in the head that was not first in the hand. Somatic experience is body knowledge: a sense of rightness of fit, an ability to discriminate without being able to articulate the conditions that make it possible. The body knows and forms the basis for intuition. To require the logical description or the logical argument for a claim about a state of affairs is to expel the poetic from what can be known. The evidence for what we know almost always supersedes and expands to more than what one can say about it.

8.   Education can learn from the arts that open-ended tasks permit the exercise of imagination, and an exercise of the imagination is one of the most important of human aptitudes. It is imagination, not necessity, that is the mother of invention.

Imagination is the source of new possibilities. In the arts, imagination is a primary virtue. So it should be in the teaching of mathematics, in all of the sciences, in history, and, indeed, in virtually all that humans create. This achievement would require for its realization a culture of schooling in which the imaginative aspects of the human condition were made possible. We ought to be helping our students discover new seas upon which to sail rather than old ports at which to dock. We need schools where tasks are sufficiently open-ended allowing students to place their thumbprint upon their work without a sense of redundancy. It's an ambitious aim I am after, but one, I think, that is critical in the long run for the well-being of the planet.

My aim in these brief comments is to open up and explore the implications the arts have for the aims and conduct of education. Clearly the list of features I have identified does not exhaust the dimensions of schooling and educational practice that can be identified. It is an effort to provide a set of leads that can be pursued and explored. In a sense, this effort represents the beginning of a kind of paradigm supplement rather than a paradigm shift. By that, I mean, I am not interested in substituting one paradigmatic model for another, but rather, am interested in adding to the pantry of possibilities of new methods and views that may have important pedagogical consequences. To the extent to which our practices reflect our beliefs, changes in beliefs ought to manifest themselves at least, to some degree to changes in practice. That is my hope.

The arts are not typically seen as a valued resource for re-conceptualizing educational work. Tradition has assigned the arts to a marginal position in the armamentarium we use to negotiate the educational world. This need not be the case. My hope is that the options I have identified are sufficiently attractive to draw scholars together to explore their practical implications in real-life situations. The practical utility of these "lessons" from the arts remain to be tested. When the going gets tough we should remember that there are few higher compliments that one can assign to an individual for his or her work than to say that it is a "work of art." Indeed, a work of art may represent the highest form of human achievement, again, whether in the fine arts themselves or in the sciences.

To help students treat their work as a work of art is no small achievement. In the process people become artists. Given this conception we can ask, how much time should be devoted to the arts in school? The answer is clear: all of it.

Notes

An earlier version of this commentary was presented at the National Art Education Association Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, 2008. Reprinted with permission.

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Elliot W. Eisner is the Lee Jacks Professor of Education and Professor of Art at Stanford University. Professor Eisner was trained as a painter at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and studied design and art education at the Institute of Design at the Illinois Institute of Technology. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

Professor Eisner's contributions to education are many. He works in three fields: arts education, curriculum studies, and qualitative research methods. He has been especially interested in advancing the role of the arts in American education and in using the arts as models for improving educational practice in other fields. He is the author or editor of sixteen books addressing these topics, among them, *Educating Artistic Vision, The Educational Imagination, The Enlightened Eye, Cognition and Curriculum, The Kind of Schools We Need*, and, most recently, *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*. He has lectured on issues critical to education throughout the world.

Professor Eisner has received many prestigious awards for his work, among them a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, a Senior Fulbright Fellowship, the Jose Vasconcelos Award from the World Cultural Council, the Harold McGraw Prize in Education, the Brock International prize in Education, and the Grawemeyer Award in Education from the University of Louisville. In addition, he has received six honorary doctorates from institutions around the world.

Imagination's Hope: Four Poems

Carl Leggo, University of British Columbia

Mr. Burns Teaches Ecology

My boots are muddy
from hikes on the dike
with Mr. Burns

who reminds me
that everything
is worth studying:

the blackberry brambles
that horde their purple hearts
with sensible jealousy

the wet brown grass curled
around the sign posts like
malnourished garter snakes

the ducks in the slough
laughing to one another
with their funniest stories.

Mr. Burns keeps his nose
close to the ground as though
he is myopic, but really

he just wants to be near
the earth, catching the story's
scent with his big ears.

Night's Patience
(Press Here for Sound)

Forgotten words
rise like turnips
in a moon-tugged field.

Each morning I wake
with a trace of soil
around my lips.

Perhaps in the long
night when I assume
I am lost in sleep

I am really pulling
carrots with my teeth,
calling forgotten words,

knowing always how
nothing is ever lost,
only buried, waiting.

Chant
(Press Here for Sound)

I listen to light
but I hear shadows,

not lurking like
disreputable cousins

I hope will not visit,
but haunted breaths,

a Gregorian chant
in muffled mouths filled

with homemade bread spread
in dark molasses,

one more language
I don't know like

Latin or Sanskrit,
a language of confession,

or contemplation,
for calling cirrus clouds

into the lungs,
whispered breaths

I am always trying to hear,
to learn: no light without

shadows, no shadows
without light, always one.

Gravity
(Press Here for Sound)

After another English teachers' conference,
I was tucked inside the Honda for the long

drive home, while my skin ached like
tracing paper to hold October's images.

Another gray day finally seeped into twilight
like a poem's last line, a poet's weary sigh

when at least three dozen sparrows
swept sheer light like an autumn sari

out of the alder hanging over the Honda.
I almost cried a Mary Oliver gasp of delight

when the sparrows, all, or most of them,
shat bullets at my car like B-52 Bombers,

faster than gravity. Always be wary
of the near-sighted view that can't tell

a cloud of sparrows from imagination's hope
for God concealed in the coming night.

Carl Leggo is a poet and professor in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia. His poetry, fiction and essays have been published in many journals. He is the author of several books including: *Growing Up Perpendicular on the Side of a Hill, View From My Mother's House, Come-By-Chance,* and *Teaching to Wonder: Responding to Poetry in the Secondary Classroom*. Also, he is a coeditor of *Being with A/r/tography* (with Stephanie Springgay, Rita L. Irwin, and Peter Gouzouasis), and of *Creative Expression, Creative Education* (with Robert Kelly).

UNESCO World Conference on Arts Education: A Poetic Review

Monica Prendergast, Lesley University

INTRODUCTION

In March of 2006 I was invited to present a paper on my dissertation research at the first world gathering on arts education sponsored by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] in Lisbon, Portugal. The conference was attended by delegates from over 100 nations and was intended to encourage countries that offer little or no arts education to see the value of the arts in schools, and to change their policies and practices.

What follows are my poetic impressions and representations of that experience. Two poems contained in this suite—*for Amanda Lichtenstein (a mostly-found poem)* and *for Eric Booth (a mostly-found poem)*—fall into the long literary tradition of *found poetry*; that is, they are crafted from preexisting source texts, in this case my notes taken as I listened to these two speakers at the UNESCO conference (see also Butler-Kisber, 2002; Prendergast, 2004, 2006; Sullivan, 2000).

day one — preaching to the converted

i lie
on a warm carpet floor
inside a huge marble jewel-box theatre
inside a huger cultural riverside complex
in Lisbon

(day one)

and i hide
inside this private box seat
behind a closed door
from twenty expert speakers
(17 men & 3 women)

banging their own drums
(some soft / some loud)
about art and education
in the twenty-first century world

speaking empathy
  imagination
  creativity

showing self-centredness
  power-pointedness
  political correctness

i am
  jet-lagged
  alienated (so few women)
  & bored

so
i curl up with my head
on a jacket-made pillow
& dream

of a global conference
on arts education

that
looks
  somewhat other than this

that
lives
        somewhere other than here

to become an artist

you must give
a part of
your life

(it is not enough)

to take a course
spend 5 or even 50
minutes a day

you must rather
   take apart
the classroom
                dread-embedded in
                the prison discipline
                    of school

(it is not enough)

you must create
a critical pedagogy
transmitted
                & transformed
through the arts

as omnipresent
                as necessary
                                as air

(to do otherwise
it is not enough)

Monica Prendergast

day two — hyphens

today i forgo
listening
            for seeing

go
to 3 galleries

on my feet
(& my toes)
for hours

share these marvel-
                            filled yet
                            almost-
empty spaces
with school-
            children

watch them

meet Rembrandt
        Bosch
            Degas
            Manet
for the 1st time

huddle in close-
quarter groups
before a master-
            piece (meal
            for the soul)

almost shout
their answers
as if
enthusiasm alone
might wake

these long-
  dead faces
  might enter
these long-
  gone land-
  scapes

caught in suspended beauty
     and immortal surprise

taking us some-
  where other

somewhere
these children
     (& i)
          so very need
               to go

day three — questions

art for art's sake
or
for the sake of others?

advocacy burnout
     burns brightly
          here

why must we always
fight for
          what we do?

inside the curriculum
is safer
          (more conservative?)

outside the curriculum
is braver
> (tilting at quixotic
> windmills?)

complacent
or
resistant?

on the margins
or
at the centre?

art may
> consume
> through
> creation
>> (like fire)

how can
this truth
> hard as
> coal or
> diamond
ever be
taught?

for Amanda Lichtenstein (a mostly-found poem)[1]

smashed up
in these moments
lie poetic under-
pinnings
> of our work

umbilical awareness

each
        bound up
                in the other

autobiographical revolutions

ultimate gestures
                of inquiry

resisting the
corporatization
                of the mind

i walk
inside myself
        to be
        comforted
        by art

day four — closing session

all education
is an art
(the art
        of discovery)

a space
        for peace
                joy
                pleasure

a place
        for change

Monica Prendergast

for Eric Booth (a mostly-found poem)[2]

art is:

the power
to transform
the most
degrading
of settings

to say "wow"
in poignancy
in bravado

tsunamis of
wordsthoughtsideas
wash over
    we frail vessels
        engaged in complexity

remember:
        tolerate paradox
        experience the body
        embrace chaos

    be
the strange attractor
who cannot measure
           a lightening
           of the heart
           or
           a decrease
           in boredom

remember: art is

    oxygen
        & anti-
        biotic
        for education

Notes

1. Lichtenstein is a teaching artist in Chicago and a published poet. This poem was created from notes taken at her presentation.

2. Booth is an American arts educator and advocate who has worked for the Kennedy and Lincoln Centers, teaches at Juilliard and was founding editor of *Teaching Artist Journal*. This poem is created from notes taken at his closing address.

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Monica Prendergast's work has been published in a number of education journals (*Youth Theatre Journal, Alberta Journal of Educational Research, Journal of Aesthetic Education*). Her research poetry has been published in the *International Journal of Education and the Arts, Research in Drama Education, Language and Literacy* and *Qualitative Inquiry*. Monica's books include *Teaching Spectatorship: Essays and Poems on Audience in Performance* (Cambria Press, 2008) and a coedited collection, *Poetic Inquiry: Vibrant Voices in the Social Sciences* (in press). She is a faculty member in the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences, Division of Creative Arts in Learning, at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Free Yourself From the Role

Dale Boyle, McGill University

ABSTRACT

The author shares a song he wrote to represent his views about the movement among educators to redefine for themselves their roles and practices. He also reflects on his song-writing process. The song and accompanying reflection serve to question stereotypical views of knowledge and suggest the need for educators to embrace a more artful approach to teaching and learning.

Free Yourself From the Role

(Press here to see and hear Dale perform.)

Free yourself from the role;
The one they set for you before you were born
That dictates every move you should make and the ideals you should hold
Within a play, a poem, or song,
Or a painting some would hang on a wall;
There's a voice that will call
Free yourself from the role

So come on in;
There ain't no need to check your past at the door;
No one is going to make you sit at a desk nailed to the floor;
There's an old man in a white coat
Setting sail in a sinking boat;
The old ways no longer float
Free yourself from the role

The one they set for you before you were born
That dictates every move you should make and the ideals you should hold
Within a play, a poem, or song,
Or a painting some would hang on a wall;
There's a voice that will call
Free yourself from the role
Free yourself from the role
Free yourself from the role

I wrote *Free Yourself From the Role* to portray my understanding of how teachers and researchers are currently redefining themselves and their practices. The song shares how they are incorporating a more artful approach to their work, one that breaks away from a scientific tradition that historically silenced individual voices in the interests of a narrow, stereotypical view of knowledge.

I began the song-writing process by exploring various chord structures on the guitar while simultaneously searching for melodic ideas. Once I settled on an idea I wrote rough lyrics for the first verse, and this enabled me to explore different tempos, phrasings, and chord structures. It helped to clarify a mood and provided further direction. A lyric that had emerged earlier on resonated with me as I reflected upon how researchers and teachers are redefining themselves and their practice on their own terms. I chose to open and close the first verse with "Free yourself from the role."

I also used the following lines, "The one they set for you before you were born, That dictates every move you should make and the ideals you should hold" to further qualify the concept of "role." Redefining oneself as a researcher and/or teacher can require breaking away from a long-imposed tradition. These lines became the overriding statement of the entire piece.

I wanted to make some reference to a nontraditional way of seeing and understanding the world—an artful way of seeing. This inspired the line "Within a play, a poem, or song, Or a painting some would hang on a wall." It is quite literal, and I later contrasted this with a more metaphorical second verse. "There's a voice that will call," alludes to those who have been silenced in research. The verse ends by emphasizing "Free yourself from the role."

As I reflected upon my experiences as a student in a rigid system where my interests were divorced from the classroom, I wrote the optimistic lines that open the second verse, "So come on in; There ain't no need to check your past at the door. No one is going to make you sit at a desk nailed to the floor." The following lines, "There's an old man in a white coat, Setting sail in a sinking boat, The old ways no longer float," were inspired by the stereotypical notion of what constitutes knowledge and good science. The "old man" reflects a past that valued male-dominated research. The "white coat" is likewise inspired by the stereotype of what a scientist was thought to look like—someone, usually a male, in a lab coat. The "sinking boat" is the rigid view of knowledge, and the "old ways," the narrow ways of seeing the world, no longer stand, or "float." The second verse also ends with "Free yourself from the role" and from this last line I flow directly back to repeating the opening verse, which served to bookend the piece. By repeating the opening verse I reinforce the point that one should feel empowered to break from tradition and give voice to those who would otherwise be silenced.

The interplay of words, music, and melody allowed me to deliver a message, and to evoke the feeling of that message. Like others who best express themselves in artful ways, it felt liberating to do so. That is the message of my song, *Free Yourself From the Role*.

Dale Boyle is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University. He is also a Gaspé-born, Montreal-based roots music recording artist and songwriter. He has been called "one of the best to emerge from north of the border" (Americana Homeplace) and "an accomplished musician, a fine singer, and an exceptionally thoughtful, meticulous songwriter" (Canadianblues.ca). He is the winner of the Lys Blues "Folk/Blues Artist of the Year" award (2005 and 2006), International Narrative Song Competition award (2007), and Lys Blues "Songwriter of the Year" award (2008). Dale's latest recording, Small Town van Gogh, has received rave reviews internationally, and has appeared on the Euro Americana Chart. Dale has performed his music at home and abroad, from the Montreal International Jazz Festival to the Mississippi Sunflower Gospel and Blues Festival.

Focusing on the Earth: Using Photography and Photo Elicitation as Instruments to Engage Children as Coresearchers in a Community Garden

Ann Grugel, University of Wisconsin Madison

ABSTRACT

In this article, the use of photographs and photo elicitation are used as models for engaging elementary children in collaborative research. Based on ethnographic research conducted in a community garden, the author illustrates how digital cameras act as a symbolic device that allow children to "pivot" (Vygotsky, 1978) into the world of researcher within the boundaries of a natured setting. Using photo-narratives constructed by three children which document their outside, social experiences in the garden, the author suggests that their still images and accompanying narratives expose complex interrelationships between empathy, exploration and the natural environment.

Fig. 1: Pictures from a children's community garden

"*I* *like this picture,"* *Tamika declared, as she pointed to one of the many digital pho-tographs strewn across the black carpeting (note: individual and place names in this article are pseudonyms). She had taken several hundred pictures while working in a children's community garden during the summer of 2007. Now, sitting on the office floor in the community center, amidst papers and old computer parts, I watched as Tamika, a nine-year-old girl, separated these photographs into two piles: those which illustrated her role as a gardener and those which did not. To casual observers it might appear as if she and I, as friends, were creating a scrapbook—a representation of time spent in the children's garden. When in fact, we, as research partners, were using these still images to discuss her natured experiences. During the second of three photo-elicitation interview sessions, I asked her to tell me about one of the pictures that illustrated part of her story as a gardener. She picked up this photo and explained:*

> *This is a picture of flowers, orange and yellow flowers and it has lettuce in the background and some is all the way yellow and all the rest are yellow and orange together. Some of them are still growing but some of them sprouted. And on the ground is weeds around it, but we pulled 'em already after I took the picture. We got a lot of weeds in the middle of the flowers. I like the lettuce. I really love the flowers and I like to see the lettuce. I wanted to take a picture of the weeds before we picked them. Weeds are green and look pretty.*

> *There are flowers, but they is white and they are kinda up and some is together. You can see a little green in them. Some on the top are going to sprout and some have not sprouted yet. And they look so pretty with all the green around it. These flowers are red and have weeds around them too. They have a stick in them. I really like the red flowers. They are so, so pretty. And I just love them.*

> *In my story, the plants go first. The people are important to me, but the plants should go first. I really love the plants. People mean stuff to me, but plants mean more to me because we are plants ourselves. We are plants too!* (Photo elicita-tion interview, September 8, 2007)

Over the course of four summers, Tamika and I have become friends. From May through September, we labor together to care for a small area within a community children's garden. She, along with other elementary-aged children from the neigh-borhood community center's summer camp program, join a group of adult volun-teers twice a week to grow vegetables and nurture relationships with each other and the earth. Over time, I have learned that Tamika enjoys coming to this place to plant seedlings, pull weeds, water and care for the living creatures, especially the flowers.

However, it was not until after a series of photo elicitation interviews that I realized the deep connection between her *self* and the natural environment. Through her photographs and our conversations, Tamika was exploring her personal self as linked within the broader context of the natural world. She in fact was constructing an eco-logical identity.

I begin with Tamika's story as it illustrates the benefits and insights that I was hoping to discover in my photo-elicitation study. First, by providing Tamika and three other gardeners with access to a digital camera they were able to visually document their experiences in a community garden. During the photo elicitation interviews, these young children were able to articulate aspects of their ecological selves that might have been eclipsed if I had only used field notes and structured interview questions. Second, photo elicitation helped me unearth and explore the dominant social and environmental practices that support the development of a child's ecological identity within the social context of a community garden. Furthermore, I would not have been able to examine a child's relationship with the natural world by just observing children engaged in outdoor activities. I will briefly explain this here, as it will illuminate the purpose of the study.

For the last twenty years, I have watched children retreat from neighbor-hood landscapes. City parks, once used by children as terrains for exploration and adventure, are often "signed out" for organized activities rather than free, imaginative play. Fewer and fewer swing-sets and sandboxes dot the backyards of suburbia, and more and more children return home from school to sit inside, engaged with one or more electronic devices. Even at school, children race in from recess to check the status of their friends on Facebook and MySpace. As a casual observer of this childhood migration, I have begun to fear that in just a short time we will witness what Louv (2005) refers to as, *The Last Child in the Wilderness*. After reading his book, I began to wonder if Louv's premise supported my own concerns regarding identity develop-ment; in that, if natured experiences are critical to the development of self, how are our natured experiences and related narratives critical to our identity development? How can we understand and experience the intersecting relationships between human and ecological systems without prior experience being in nature? Finally, how might educators engage elementary-aged children in an educational design process that encourages the exploration of self in nature?

I have volunteered in a children's community garden for several summers and decided to explore these thoughts within the context of this space. During the summer of 2007, I asked three elementary-aged children, participating in the

community children's garden, to document their experiences within this garden space using digital cameras. These digital images, utilized during multiple photo-elicitation sessions, aided each participant in the construction of a photo narrative that illustrated his or her garden experiences. Children in this study used their photographs to visually document relationships that connected them with the subculture of the garden. Pictured through their camera lens, they documented their natured experiences, their understanding of what it means to act as a member of a garden community, and the multiple systems that operate within it. Through this visual framing, it becomes possible for me as a researcher and educator to "see" how these particular children understand themselves as knowers of natural events, and as actors who shape an ecological system. This article focuses on the use of still photography (Collier, 2001; Harper, 1994; Tucker & Dempsey, 1991) as a method of collecting visual data and eliciting verbal information from two of these elementary-aged children regarding their experiences in nature, as they *become* community gardeners.

Situating My Study

The Garden as an "Ecological Carnival"

Fig. 2: Community gardeners in action

It is a sweltering day in mid-August. The sun is high and unrelenting as it bears down on the land and the twenty-three community gardeners who have gathered to harvest ripened vegetables. Sweat drips from their bodies as they pick tomatoes, tomatillos, cilantro, patty pan, Thai chilies, Trail of Tear beans, green zucchini and much more. These gardeners work in teams of two—one adult, over the age of fifty and one child, under the age of ten. Working side by side, these "garden buddies" pick for the last time this season. Today, they do what they have done twice a week all summer: water, explore, play, weed, harvest and cook fresh produce together. When they planted the seeds and starters in May, many of them didn't know each other, at least not very well. As they went into the garden those first few times it was quiet, except for the rhythmic sounds of shovels and children's trowels pecking at the earth. While they planted seeds in rows, children didn't talk. Instead, their focus was on carefully measuring the distance between the seeds using the lengths of their fingers or feet.

Now, in mid-August, it's different. Voices ring out over the overgrown vegetables. Gardeners call out to one another to come and see oversized tomatoes or to witness the number of potatoes being released from the ground. As these garden buddies tend, they engage each other in summer remembrances. As I walk from section to section, I overhear stories of gigantic bugs, green pumpkins, prickly straw, hobbit adventures, killing weeds and bare feet. I leave the garden to sit with Sarah, a ten-year-old girl, who is writing the last entry in her garden journal:

Fig. 3: Garden journal entry

I'm going to miss being here because I like to water and plant seeds. When I look into the garden I see yellow, green and red Swiss Chard, kale, hay, potatoes, flowers, squash and mulch. My group watered flowers and all kinds of things this summer. I like to water and plant seeds. I also like to pick pumpkins and pick tomatoes. I'm going to miss cooking because we cooked vegetables. We use what we planted to make salads, stir fry, zucchini bread and pizza. We have all worked hard in the garden. I will miss my buddy who been helping in the garden to. The garden is a place that teaches about peace and respect. (Journal entry, August 16, 2007)

She put down her pen. I asked if she had anything to add. After a few thought filled seconds, she looked up at me and said, "I will miss me in the garden." Then, she closed her journal, got up from the picnic table and walked down into the garden. As I watched her return to the garden for the last time, I wondered: Who is this "me" that Sarah will miss? (Field notes, August 16, 2007)

After all the gardeners left that day, I wandered alone among the vegetables to think about Sarah's words. Is she going to miss physically being in the garden, or will she miss some inner self that exists in this social environment? I wondered how Sarah defines her garden self. How does she consider her garden self different from her other selves? And, why does she feel she needs to leave this "me" in the garden? As I pick my way through the various beans, I imagined Bakhtin, sitting beneath the shade tree filling pages of a notebook with his observations and analysis of Sarah's way of "authoring" her self. I wondered how Bakhtin might write about Sarah's statement of identity. How would he consider gardener stories, like Sarah's, as texts that reveal the social relationships that exist within a community garden? Would he write about her garden "self" as "outsideness" or as her ecological authorial stance? Finally, how would he posit the existence of the human-nature relationship as dialogic? Or would he?

During this imagined Bakhtinian exchange, I contemplated the existence of a human-nature dialogic relationship within the context of the garden. To do so, I started by associating the garden with Bakhtin's (1981) concept of collectivity within *carnival*. At carnival time, or in this case garden time, a unique sense of time and place allows us to feel part of a collective, part of an ecosystem. Like Sarah and Tamika, we cease to be ourselves and become part of a community. Like carnival, in the garden we can "try on" on ways of acting with others (i.e., both human and nonhuman entities) in the environment. Therefore, I wondered, in what ways are our outdoor experiences with the natural world and the stories we author about being in nature critical to our identity development? And, how does Sarah's ecological worldview, reflected in her journal and her photographs, play a role in developing an aspect of her "self" that Thomashow (1996) refers to as an ecological identity?

This study of connections between self and the natural environment emerged from my involvement in this community children's garden. When I began to ask children who would like to volunteer to be part of a research project, I had already developed relationships with them. I took photographs of them and spent time observing their actions and listening to their conversations that hovered over the landscape. Through my ethnographic fieldwork, I realized that many of the children

participating in the community garden had relationships with nonhuman beings: plants, rabbits, tomato worms, and so forth. I wanted to understand how these non-human-human relationships developed and impacted these children's personal experiences in the garden. I quickly realized that my observations and structured interview questions alone were not enough. I needed to engage them as collaborative partners in this project. With parental permission, I asked three children to use a digital camera to document their experiences as a gardener in this place. I also turned to the literature on ecological identity development to help me understand how people develop an ecological understanding and a sense that the self is an element within a much larger system. Very quickly, I discovered a gap in the literature. To date, little environmental scholarship has been conducted with regard to eco-identity development in adults, and even less attention has been paid to children.

Conceptual Framework

Ecological identity, or eco-identity, refers to different ways people construe themselves in relation to the natural world—a nonhuman element—as manifested in their personalities, values, actions, and senses of self. "It includes a person's connection to the earth, perception of the ecosystem, and direct experience with nature" (Thomashow, 1996, p. 3). Environmental educators agree that our ecological identities, rooted in early childhood, develop over time through our natured experiences (Gruenewald, 2003, 2005; Haas & Nachtigal, 1998; Orr, 1992; Sobel, 1996, 2008; Theobald, 1997; Thomashow, 1996). Walking through the woods or a park, observing the life cycles of squirrels or the growing season of a birch tree provides children with an opportunity to explore and develop a foundation and an understanding of their personal relationship with multiple ecosystems. Unfortunately, more and more children today spend time inside and less time in natural surroundings. In fact, only 6% of all children play outside on their own, and there has been a 31% decrease in bike riding since 1995 (Louv, 2005). This migration indoors is the beginning of a "denatured" childhood (Louv, 2005). Like Thomashow and Orr, who believe that ecological identity work is paramount to our planet's sustainability, Louv asserts that natured experiences are necessary for the development of the ecological self, which is critical for the recovery of the planet.

Sobel (1996), in his ground breaking essay, "Beyond Ecophobia: Reclaiming the Heart in Nature Education," supports Louv's assertion and argues that educators need to provide opportunities for children "to bond with the natural world, to learn

to love it and feel comfortable in it, before being asked to heal its wounds" (p. 10). Children need to see themselves as actors and participants working within their local ecosystem, not as individuals attempting to control the planet. In this essay, Sobel suggests a taxonomy of eco-identity development that should be of concern to parents and educators. He argues that a person's ecological identity develops during three life stages: early childhood (ages 4-7), characterized by empathy toward animals; elementary (ages 8-11), described as a time when children look for opportunities to explore beyond their own personal space into the neighborhood or into the natural world; and early adolescence (ages 12-15) when children develop concerns for ecological issues.

DAVID SOBEL'S TAXONOMY OF ECOLOGICAL IDENTITY

4-7 YEARS

8-11 YEARS

12-15 YEARS

EARLY CHILDHOOD
Empathy toward Animals

ELEMENTARY YEARS
Exploring Neighborhood, Natural World

EARLY ADOLESCENCE
Characterized by Ecological Concerns
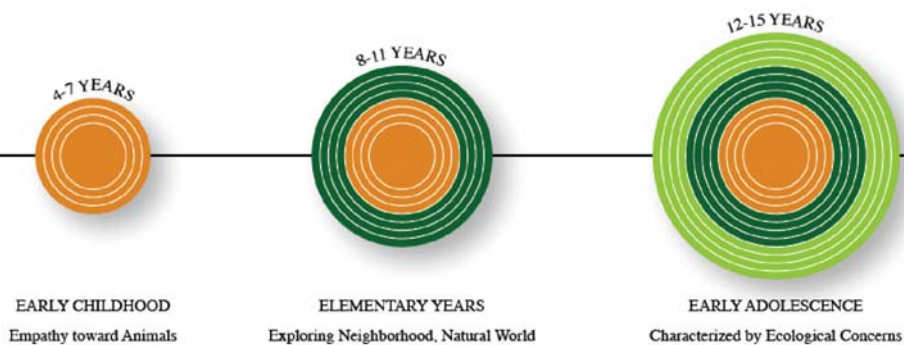
Fig. 4: Sobel's taxonomy of ecological identity

Although he states that these stages are linear, they should be considered flexible, and that environmental education should differ during each period.

Cobb, author of *The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood*, believes that the horizons of mind and nature should be united in what Hutchinson calls "the ecological theater" (Shepard, 1986). Like Sobel, Cobb considers the years of middle childhood, from six to eleven, to be the time when children are expanding their surroundings and moving from self to the natural environment. A child's play in the landscape, albeit a garden, backyard or alley, is the experience she says, that "is the prelude to loving the universe." These outdoor, exploratory activities of childhood are, she concludes, "the universal link between mind and nature" (Cobb, 1977, p. 39). Cobb points out that "the power of standing, moving, playing, molding, or just being in the world around him is part of the child's universal aesthetic logic in nature's formative process" (p. 39). It is during this time of exploration that children learn that paying attention involves our capacity for self-compassion.

For an educator, the starting point is the child. A child's need for joy, safety, play, and the opportunity to explore his or her world concerns all educators, not just those involved with environmental education. The child's "ecological sense of continuity with nature" is not mystical but is "basically aesthetic and infused with the joy in the power to know and to be" (Cobb, 1977, p. 23). Childhood is the "point of intersection between biology and cosmology, where the structuring of our worldviews and our philosophies of human purpose takes place. In other words, our minds are rooted as much in the ecology in which our childhood is lived as in our ("over emphasized") animal instincts" (Cobb, 1977, p. 101). For Cobb, exploration and empathy are interconnected and dependent on each other rather than separate stages of ecological development.

Autodriven Photo Elicitation

Methodology

Before beginning this study, I had a number of questions and concerns. How could I generate questions about the human-nonhuman dialogic that young children would understand? How well would children remember and articulate what happened to them in the garden over the course of the summer? And, how could I limit the power dynamic of an adult gardener interviewing a child gardener? As I read through literature, searching for a method that would capture the natured experiences of these three children, and alleviate some of my concerns, I began to examine the possibility of using photo elicitation as a methodology.

Photo elicitation is an interview technique that involves using still photographs with research participants to assist them in reflecting upon past experiences (Harper, 1994; Tucker & Dempsey, 1991). One of the challenges, as an ethnographer, working with children is developing a series of interview questions that reflects a child's experience in the field. Interview questions, initially generated from my own interests and queries, may or may not elicit responses from the interviewees as they are so young. My concern was that the children may not understand the question. Therefore, the responses given using a structured interview protocol may not reflect the actual, real world experience of the individual child. Rather, their reactions might mirror my own personal attitudes and experiences. For those of us investigating the world and lives of elementary-aged children, crafting relevant questions is especially difficult, and in many situations requires us to consider alternative interview meth-

ods. Photo elicitation, as an interview protocol, worked well with these children. They decided what they wanted to say about the image rather than answering a series of structured interview questions about the photograph. During the interview, the photographs and the child's narrative guided our conversation rather than my predetermined questions.

This photo elicitation interview (PEI) technique operates with the "express aim of exploring participants' values, beliefs, attitudes and meanings in order to trigger memories, or to explore group dynamics or systems" (Prosser, 1998, p. 124). Using photographs stimulated the children's memory by providing them with tangible images they had taken only weeks before. Using their own photographs lessened feelings of angst as we focused on their photographs rather than a series of questions about their experiences. These photographs offered the children the opportunity to "soak in a place" and to "return to that place to ponder the visible substrate of his (her) own personality" (Shepard, 1996, p. 106). These photographs, socially constructed representations captured by the photographer, offered rich descriptive images that helped us, together, make sense of their subjective experiences (Ziller, 1990). Images, like those presented here, are representations that have visual meaning and offer a way of understanding how these children make meaning of their experience, and illustrate what influenced their actions and behaviors within the context of the garden.

According to Taylor (2002), using photographs "offers more than just the historical rendering of the setting and its participants. They often reveal unconscious beliefs behind the picture-taking process itself" (p. 123). In other words, the photograph can reveal the reasons behind the image: why the photographer chose that particular scene or subject; how the image affirms or challenges the thinking process and worldview of the photographer. For the purposes of this study, these photographs and their corresponding narratives reveal the intersections between exploration, empathy and ecological awareness.

Image as a form of text can be read. Photography and language are interdependent mediums for expression that have the potential to assist each other in making meaning of an experience (Taylor, 2002). "When descriptions and interpretations are generated for what is seen, language provides a 'frame' for the visual experience. Language then provides ways of assigning meaning to what we encounter visually, and it enables us to extend and enhance our interpretations of what we see" (Weade & Ernst, 1990, p. 133). Similarly, photographs provide a frame for language, a place in which to focus the meaning-making process, and a catalyst that can extend and

enhance the interpretation of what the participants believe about the subject under study (p. 127). The photographs in this study are not merely being interpreted by participants, but have the potential to promote a deeper understanding of the underlying values and assumptions about the environment, and contribute to the development of new understandings of the self. In this case, the eco-self.

Photo elicitation is not only a collaborative method between language and image, but it is also a model for collaborative research in that, as the researcher, I become the listener as the participant tells the story behind the image. There are a variety of different approaches to setting up and conducting PEIs. Even before the interview, the researcher must decide who will take the photographs to be used during the interview process, who will organize and arrange the images, and how they will use the still photographs to elicit participant discussion throughout the unstructured interview process (Clark, 1999; Clark-IbaNez, 2004; Harper, 1994; Tucker & Dempsey, 1991).

As these children are active agents in this garden space, I wanted to use this approach as an attempt to balance out the power dynamics between the researcher and the participants. Participant-produced photographs, what Clark (1999) refers to as autodriven photo elicitation, is a step toward that balance. Over the course of the summer, these children captured images of people, plants, animals, or anything that they felt contributed to their garden narrative. Then, as illustrated in Tamika's interview, I asked open-ended questions such as: can you tell me about your picture? Why is that picture important to you?

Throughout the summer, I also took pictures (researcher produced) that documented my role as a gardener, researcher and participant observer in this space. These pictures now serve as a record that reveals the established procedures, values and relationships that these gardeners have with others. Although some researchers take and use their own photographs exclusively during data collection, and others ask participants to take their own photographs, for the purposes of this research, I elected to do both.

Throughout this sixteen-week research project, I spent the first eight weeks directly observing the social interactions of these three elementary-aged gardeners working in the community garden. Their ages range from 7 to 10 years of age, falling within Sobel and Cobb's description of middle childhood. During the second eight weeks, I conducted multiple photo-elicitation interviews (PEIs) with each child. During each of the eight-week periods, these three participants digitally recorded

their garden experiences on a weekly basis. These digital images became the center of our conversations during the photo-elicitation sessions. As PEIs are by nature unstructured, they can last from 30 minutes to several hours. During the first interview, I asked participants to group or organize their photographs in a way that was meaningful to them. In doing so, participants create what Schwartz (1992) calls a "descriptive record" of their experience. Their descriptive record became the structure for the second interview. During the second and subsequent interviews, photographs were used as prompts for children to describe their story, feelings or ideas about the image.

Within the context of the PEI, these children visually and verbally documented relationships that connected them to the subculture of the garden. Pictures, constructed through their camera lens, documented their experiences, their understanding of what it means to be a member of a garden community and a part of the multiple ecological systems that operate within it. Through this visual framing, it is possible to "see" how these children understand themselves as knowers of natural events and as actors within an ecological system. These images and narratives constructed by these children suggest a space for representation similar to that of journal entries, field notes and artifacts, better thought of as "field texts." The visual field texts constructed by the students represent explorations of self and an empathy toward "others" in the garden.

Study Findings

To initially understand the visual data, I employed Harper's (2002) three categories for photographs used in photo elicitation: Photographs are used as visual inventories; Photographs depict events that reveal institutional forces or organization; Photographs illuminate the social being through their illustrations which connect society, culture and history. Generally, the children's photographs and interviews revealed their day-to-day experiences in the garden. Their personal discourse related to their photographs reflects that of collaborative social practices, experiences and community goals. Their photographs and narratives also reveal their visual paths of exploration and roots of empathy. It is within the intersection of exploration and empathy, rather than the completed stages of ecological identity development as suggested by Sobel or Cobb, that we are able to locate an environmental consciousness or an eco-self.

Connections Between Place, Exploration, and Empathy

Fig. 5: Peas in the bag

Today we did the vegetable hunt. We had to look for peas and beans that were yellow, black [purple], and green. We had to look for onions and tomatoes and lettuce and yellow squash. And lots of stuff. It was really fun. There was lots of food in the garden store. We put it in bags just like at the food pantry. I got tired of picking though. It was hot.

This picture is about peas. There are three colors of green, light green, a little light green and just green. Some of them have a lot of seeds in them. And some of them are eaten by rabbits. We can look and see how the rabbits teeth are. They only take small bites, but leave marks. Do you see how much the peas were sweating? Just like me during the hunt.

I took this picture because it shows how many of us worked to get all these peas. Everybody was there to help. Like when we planted them, grew them, trained them. Then we had stir-fry. Everybody was eating. You know how we start in the big group, everybody in the garden, like the people from our center and people from the garden we all come up and we all greet each other and get to know each other and stuff. We are all friends now and that's pretty cool. So, I guess I took this cause I really liked it. (Photo elicitation interview, September 8, 2007)

Tamika's photo of peas in a grocery store bag and her explanation of the vegetable hunt define her exploration of objects found in a garden. However, through her description of the photograph, Tamika describes not only the images of the garden, but also defines these images as representations that have visual meaning and offer a way of understanding how she has recognized her experience and what has influenced her actions and behaviors in this particular place. Within the sociocultural world of the garden, Tamika is safe to explore her role as a member of this group of gardeners. Here, she is able to examine the teeth marks left by a rabbit, an inhabitant of this natural space. Her awareness that she and the rabbit can coexist illustrates her personal beliefs about her role within this local ecosystem. As she relates stories of the life systems surviving within the garden fences, she develops awareness for "other" and empathizes with their condition of being too hot, or in the case of the following narrative, of being unprotected.

Fig. 6: Tomato worm

This picture is about a cute caterpillar called a tomato worm. I guess it was just walking along on the branch when the boys found it. I was over in the squash when I saw them. They were poking sticks at it. I told them to stop because the caterpillar's teeth were coming out. I could tell it was afraid and mad. I told them to stop before the caterpillar bites you. They said, "ok, I won't do that, I'll leave it alone." And before it ran off I wanted to take a picture of it because they are cute and will turn into a butterfly. Right? I was protecting the caterpillar from the boys so it could grow up. I wanted to take a picture of it when it was a butterfly, but it didn't. I like this picture, cause right now it's just me and the caterpillar looking at each other. It's not showing his teeth, do you see? (Photo elicitation interview, September 17, 2007)

As the protector of the tomato worm, Tamika's sense that she and the caterpillar belong to this place is revealed both through her photo and her narrative. She frames this experience, not simply in the present, but she also visualizes the future by thinking about taking a picture once this caterpillar has become a butterfly. Again, through exploration into the life of the caterpillar, Tamika is relating to, empathizing with life systems living in the garden. Verbally, she envisions herself almost entering into a familial relationship with this nonhuman creature, while visually depicting an awareness of the social and natural systems supported by this ecosystem.

Like Tamika, Gee also defines his role in the garden. He is a pepper gardener.

Fig. 7: Photo of the pepper harvest

In the little rectangle garden, we planted some hot green, red and yellowish chili peppers. After a while we put hay on them. That was hard work. Everybody worked together. I liked working with the garden buddies. I liked working with Ruth because she is funny and makes me feel responsible.

What I learned as a pepper gardener is if you touch a pepper with your bare hands and touch your face it feels like a sunburn. And, I did touch them! Me and Tony worked out in the garden. We worked together. When the peppers were ready we were picking them. It is so exciting to see and explore how the peppers looked and how they grew. When they were ready, we picked them. And it was beautiful. (Photo elicitation interview, September 16, 2007)

In this garden environment, Gee is free to explore this world as a pepper gardener. From planting to harvesting, he explores, through numerous images, the history and natural system of the various pepper plants. His exploration of self is eco-centric and community oriented. In fact, both Gee and Tamika express the collective goals of the garden community through their language. They each emphasize the importance of everyone working together, and frequently reference the word "we," indicating their willingness to enter into and maintain their commitment to the group.

Fig. 8: Habanero pepper plant

"You can't lie to the earth," stated Gee emphatically one day as he and I looked at a photo of hot peppers he had taken. I looked at him quizzically, not knowing quite how to respond, as the photo was of a habanero pepper plant. "The earth knows when you are lying," he continued, "I might tell you I watered, but the plants know I didn't. And they will tell that I didn't." (Field notes, July 19, 2007)

Gee is a nine-year-old working in the community garden and has entered into a dialogic relationship with the earth and the plants living in the garden. By expressing that the plants and the earth know he has told a fib by not watering them, he is empathizing with their thirsty condition. Through empathy, he becomes the earth and the plant, which now have the ability to "tell on" him. Through his photo of a habanero pepper plant, I am able to "see" how Gee understands his relationship with the earth and how he is beginning to develop an eco-identity.

Epilogue

Shepard contends that mind and body are imprinted by the "pattern of place" experienced in childhood (Shepard, 1996, pp. 93–108). Through the photographs taken by three children within this community garden and through their corresponding narratives, it becomes possible to "see" patterns of experience that reveal: a relationship between human and nonhuman elements of the natural world; empathy and compassion toward the natural world; and that disclose a personal attitude toward the natural environment. Based on their photographs and narratives, I have found changes over time in these three children's assumptions and familiarity with the garden setting. Their early pictures reveal first impressions—landscapes, large or impersonal groups of people, or singular plants. Later pictures reveal greater personal contact with people, an understanding of community garden culture and tradition, intimate portraits of individuals and group events.

Epistemologically, these photo narratives reveal how these three elementary children have come to know, work and live in their local places. While a community garden appears to outsiders to be a leisurely expression of an individual's time and commitment, a community garden project is the social construction of place and community. Thus, rather than romanticizing this landscape, I argue that we need to critically analyze natured places where we encounter children. I think of playgrounds, parks and gardens, not just as places where children play, but as "spaces that are personally and politically embodied and locally embedded, and are harbingers for new ways of understanding development" (Aitken, 2001, p. 1), particularly the development of the self. These places from which identities can develop are "historically contingent, socially enacted, culturally constructed 'worlds'" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 7). Thus, the world of the community garden illuminates the ideas of sociocultural theory in that "each community garden is rooted in its own unique, complex set of historical, cultural, and structural conditions. Which means it holds its own collectively constructed and shared meanings, interpretations, rituals, and identities for participants—embedded with its own unique narrative" (Glover, 2003, p. 194).

Fig. 9: Sharing ideas under the "welcome tree"

I like it when we are all together. I like it when we sit together and read letters from Africa and do experiments and talk about stuff. (Photo elicitation interview, September 17, 2007)

These two sentences, written in Gee's garden journal, allude to daily rituals that occur within the garden community. Before gardeners pass through the garden gates, we gather under a tree now referred to as the Welcome Tree. Beneath it's shade, we sit in

a circle for about fifteen minutes telling stories, discussing garden news, and sharing ideas. Following this exchange, garden buddies go into the garden. When our time in the garden is over, we return to the Welcome Tree to eat something we have grown and harvested. We begin and end our morning sitting together in community. Through discourse and interaction, between humans and nature, these dialogic inter-connections, "bind garden participants together in a shared experience, which presumably serves to share collective identity" (Glover, 2003, p. 194).

Engaging children as photographers, as researchers, as observers of their natural environment affords them the opportunity to become reflective actors of events within their local communities. This research suggests that those engaged in the research process with children can develop an empowering relationship through the art of photography. The camera, the device that captures the image, fundamentally reveals at base an image. However, that image "is invaded by language when it is looked at: in memory, in association, snatches of words and images continually intermingle and exchange one for the other" (Burgin, 1982, p. 192). This shaping of text, this "intermingling" of words and image, transforms a static photograph into one that, through language, is both dynamic and reflective.

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Art as "Connective Aesthetic": Creating Sites for Community Collaboration

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses a community-based arts education project that develops partnerships between the university and cultural arts organizations. Collaboration is inspired between preservice teachers and multidisciplinary artists by engaging these two groups in the educational process. The author advocates the use of art as a heuristic tool for examining social worlds. She demonstrates how art as "connective aesthetic" creates sites for community collaboration and provides impetus for transformation and social change.

"Art offers life; it offers hope; it offers the prospect of discovery.... The arts offer opportunity for perspective, for perceiving alternative ways of transcending and of being in the world" (Greene, 1995, p. 133).

Focus and Purpose

This article arises out of my work with Bachelor of Education students in a course entitled: *Integrated Arts Inquiry* at the Faculty of Education, University of Prince Edward Island.[1] I facilitate opportunities for preservice teachers to explore creativity through a variety of artistic experiences and to expand their knowledge and expertise in critical inquiry. The framework of the course places emphasis on three primary areas of focus: exploration of the arts and issues of social advocacy, the transformative nature of the arts, and the use of art as a powerful tool for interrogating and disrupting social worlds. I encourage preservice teachers to experiment with a variety of art ideas, concepts, and approaches that may be

integrated into teaching methodologies; to engage in experiential art making; and to develop critical perspectives in pedagogical practice. Preservice teachers are challenged to probe deeply and to interrogate critically dominant ideologies, and to envision inclusive, democratic spaces within their classrooms and communities.

Education in the arts is concerned with artistic processes that foster creativity, critical thinking, communication, and aesthetic appreciation. This course takes an integrative approach involving the visual and performing arts (dance, drama, music, visual art, creative writing); supports arts interdisciplinary curricular integration; and, fosters integration within local, community-based arts and culture organizations. Preservice teachers are encouraged to design inquiry projects that promote perspectives of diversity and critical thinking while establishing thriving networks within the arts community. My primary goal is to provide emerging teachers with fundamental strategies and approaches for applying arts integration in educational contexts. Specific objectives include demonstrating awareness of common elements in artistic and aesthetic experience; developing pedagogical approaches and instructional strategies related to integration of the arts; creating meaningful teaching/learning experiences in the arts that connect authentically to students' lives; gaining knowledge of local cultural institutions and community arts resources for curriculum enhancement; and building principles of inclusion and democracy through community partnerships.

Conceptual Framework

Theoretical perspectives and methodological traditions of place-based arts that foster recognition of place, local history, and culture, provide a conceptual framework (Blandy & Hoffman, 1993; Bolin, 2000; Cohen-Cruz, 2002; deNobriga & Schwarzman, 1999; Lai & Ball, 2002). I embrace the notion of art as "connective aesthetic" (Gablik, 1995) as a perspective that affirms art as individual, social and cultural—inextricably linked with community and larger societal contexts. My course emphasizes art as a process of interrelatedness, interconnectedness, and social interaction as I enhance collaboration between emerging teachers and practicing artists by engaging these two groups in the educational process.

I consider the role of art as it relates to broad topics of education for diversity, equity, and social justice (Trifonas, 2005), and adopt "pedagogy of discomfort" as an educational approach to understanding the formation of norms and differences

(Boler & Zembylas, 2005, p. 111). I concur there is a need for both educators and students to move "outside comfort zones", to be willing to address contentious issues, and to examine ways we enact and embody dominant culture values and assumptions (Boler & Zembylas, 2005, p. 111). I actively promote thinking critically about social justice issues, to consider perspectives of the dominant and privileged, the subordinate and marginalized, and to focus on expanding our collective capacity for engagement in "democratic dialogue" (Houston, 2005, pp. 106–107). My course emphasizes striving towards self-knowledge through a deepening awareness of social injustice, with the aim of uncovering invisible ways in which each of us perpetuate dominant ideologies.

Fig. 1: In the artist-in-residence studio

The orientations of my course focus on concepts of art and social activism (Barndt, 2006; hooks, 1995) and "dialogue across difference" (Houston, 2005) as we examine the politics of place and the power dynamics of privileged positions. We collectively engage in critical discourse by interrogating "the normal" (Greene, 1995) to reconstruct visions of social worlds. Together, we examine our positions using a discursive approach to bring into consciousness place(s) and positions of self and other

(Dixon & Durrheim, 2000). We are guided by questions such as: How may art be used as a process for interrogating social justice issues and as a method for constructing and deconstructing meanings? How can the arts provide opportunities for the displacement of biases and stereotypes and create openings for re-constructing visions of social worlds? How might we envision arts integration in classroom practices to investigate dominant ideologies and to promote principles of inclusion and democracy? How might a focus on arts and social advocacy expand our ideas for critical pedagogical practice? What are our understandings of the potential for the arts to foster consciousness of multiple perspectives and to create impetus for social change?

Creating a Context

My primary objective is to develop partnerships between the university and local community-based arts organizations (Clark & Zimmerman, 2000; Congdon, Blandy & Bolin, 2001; Ulbricht, 2005). To this end, I situate learning within the context of community by establishing partnerships between Bachelor of Education students and members of the Charlottetown Festival Team, Dance Umbrella, and the Prince Edward Island Arts Council. I re-locate my *Integrated Arts Inquiry* course from a university classroom setting to the Confederation Centre for the Arts to promote community collaboration. The Confederation Centre for the Arts represents Canada's National Memorial to the Fathers of Confederation who gathered at Province House in 1864. The Centre stands on the site of the old Charlottetown marketplace and houses a Main Stage Theatre, Art Gallery, Artist-in-Residence Studio, Studio Theatre, and Dance Rehearsal Hall.

To broaden community networks, I introduce preservice teachers to local cultural arts institutions such as The Guild—a theatre and visual arts gallery highlighting regional island artist exhibitions and performances, and the Island Media Arts Co-operative—a media arts resource centre supporting work in video, film, and new media. These contexts provide alternate venues for artistic workshops and create opportunities to enhance community connectivity, to provide authentic art-making spaces, and to facilitate preservice teacher access and exposure to the vibrancy and richness of the arts world.

Fig. 2: Clay making with artist Sarah Saunders

Modes of Integrated Arts Inquiry

Through inquiry-based arts integration preservice teachers explore in-depth educational issues to promote student engagement in relevant, meaningful learning experiences. Preservice teachers collaboratively develop an integrated arts inquiry project comprised of three components. The first component involves identifying a key social issue; developing a conceptual framework by defining critical questions to be explored; providing a background rationale that identifies the relevance of the issue; and, outlining how the inquiry will promote critical perspectives. The second component includes designing a presentation format as performance or interactive exhibit; identifying at least three artistic modes to be applied in exploring the focus; listing materials and resources to be used to achieve interdisciplinary connections and enhance creative work; and, integrating theoretical perspectives to guide artistic elements, processes, and representational forms. As a culmination of the course, the final component focuses on synthesis and analysis of the inquiry process and includes audio/video documentation of preservice teachers' artistic productions.

Creative works are performed live and simultaneously videotaped. Presentation responses include peer feedback critiques and post-performance dialogue with audience members.

I develop a process of integrated arts inquiry that consists of four fluid and interlinking phases: *art making, art viewing, aesthetic interpretation*, and *critical discourse*. In the *art-making* phase, practicing visual/performing artists guide preservice teachers in art studios, dance rehearsal hall, and theatre spaces. Art-making processes are documented in both still photographs and video as a form of "visual note-taking" (Müller, 2005). Preservice teachers are informed by their engagement with, and responses to, multi-disciplinary artists and their work. For example: Julia Sauvé, a member of Dance Umbrella, works with our class in the Mawson Rehearsal Hall to focus on dance/kinaesthetic movement. In her workshop, preservice teachers explore proprioception, the body's awareness of itself in space, and the essence of movement as time/space/energy. As one workshop participant describes:

> The dance/movement class with Julia Sauvé was a wonderful experience. The class showed how movement gives kinaesthetic learners a way of expressing themselves, and was an excellent way to have people work collaboratively in groups to develop a creative performance piece on a particular topic. We also learned how to develop the concept of space, concentration, and coordination.

Local printmaker, Debra Percival, works with the class in the Confederation Centre Artist-in-Residence Studio. Her artwork "tells a story" as she creates inscriptions of imagery to render island place identity through photo intaglio printmaking. Debra guides preservice teachers in the techniques of printmaking "on and off" press. The following comments reflect a preservice teacher's response to the art-making session:

> The printmaking experience with Debra was educational and fun. Using simple everyday materials such as ferns, wheat, lace, beads, rolling pins, paint and paper, we pressed them into beautiful works of art. This was a new technique that I discovered is simple enough to do with children of any age. The joy of it was that it was experimental and experiential in nature.

Wade Lynch, member of the Charlottetown Festival Team works with our class in the Mackenzie Theatre. He engages preservice teachers in an acting workshop that focuses on stage presence, character development and improvisation. Costumes and props add to character realization as preservice teachers deliver

monologues following a series of role-playing exercises. The dramatic experience is illustrated in the words of a theatre participant:

> *Wade's workshop promoted our self-confidence and self-expression. He gave us many tips about auditioning, including some hilarious personal anecdotes, and showed us how to prepare for performance. It was risky for us to take a text, deconstruct it, and perform onstage "in character," in an attempt to make the role believable as a live encounter.*

Fig. 3: In Mawson Rehearsal Hall with Julia Sauvé

Art Viewing and Aesthetic Appreciation

Preservice teachers' work is inspired by *art viewing* and conversations with local and visiting national artists. Emerging teachers engage in *aesthetic interpretation* by "looking behind the canvas" [and curtain] to see into the world of an artist

(Winterson, 1995). Together we explore how aesthetic constructions of meaning reveal artists' beliefs, ideological assumptions, and social/cultural/political locations. To provide a few examples: the Prince Edward Island sculptor, Ahman Katz, creates a public forum to explore ways people select and identify symbols to represent place and memory. Working within a storefront studio, he uses archival photographs, cartography, and oral history to develop a series of clay models, *New Monuments for Old Towns*, as testimonies to people, place, and events that shape the community of Montague. The work of Ahman Katz inspires a visual art exhibit, *Looking out… Looking In*, consisting of sculptural forms created by preservice teachers to convey the complexity of inner and outer worlds and multiple perspectives of lived experience. Their sculptural installations depict representations of their unique identities, cultural heritage, and sense of place in community.

Saskatchewan artist, Ellen Moffat, works within a Charlottetown storefront studio to develop a mapping project entitled, *Recall*. Using satellite imagery of Prince Edward Island, colloquial expressions collected from local residents, and archival material, she explores the invisible residue that defines place. The artist illuminates hidden and forgotten elements of the island's local history by engaging community members such as marine biologists, fishermen, historians, artists, writers, and seniors in conversations to develop an inventory of significant, yet extinct items that define the island. Moffat's work represents place as a fleeting, illusory landscape in which specific historic events are remembered as reenactments. As a response to her artwork, preservice teachers present *The Acadian Experience*, a performance which explores origins of Acadian culture, identity, and language through conversational interviews with island residents. Teachers create onstage reenactments of Acadian cuisine, folklore, music and poetry, to represent invisible elements of the past stored in residual memory and oral culture. Their performance depicts an in-depth exploration of French language, identity, and history, pointing to issues of deportation, oppression of language, and culture.

In a photographic series, *Cyborg Hybrids*, Winnipeg artist, KC Adams, challenges mixed race classifications by using humorous text and imagery from two cultures. She refers to a "cyborg" as a creature in a technological, post-gender world free of traditional western stereotypes towards race and gender. In her *Cyborg Hybrid* series, KC Adams presents Euro-Aboriginal artists, wearing choker necklaces and T-shirts with beaded text such as "Authority on all Aboriginal Issues," "Indian Giver," and other slogans to illustrate common aboriginal racial stereotyping. She captures artists in stoic poses to mimic photos of aboriginal peoples from the 19th and early 20th centuries and alters imagery digitally to give them the appearance of models

from a glamorous magazine. Artists' defiant poses challenge viewers to classify their identity. *Living in the Shadows* represents dramatic monologues informed by KC Adams' work in which preservice teachers demonstrate power relations embedded in language. They create a Shadow Theatre performance to reveal how racial and gender differences are constructed and re-create scenarios of discrimination observed in classrooms, playgrounds, and schools.

Fig. 4: Artist talk and viewing at the Guild Gallery

Critical Discourse

"Art opens space for critical thinking" (Cohen-Cruz, 2002, p. 8). In the final phase, emerging teachers engage in *critical discourse* to examine ideological under-pinnings in their own work to uncover stereotypes and biases (Greene, 1995). Together we examine ways unequal experiences and differences are socially constructed and perpetuated by the educational system (Ng, 2003). "To engage in critical inquiry often means asking students [and teachers] to radically re-evaluate their worldviews" (Boler & Zembylas, 2005, p. 111). In striving to achieve this, we consider questions such as: How does place become imbued with meaning? How are the notions of place defined by boundaries of language, ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, and ablebodiness/disability? In the context of our classrooms: Whose place? Who

belongs? Who becomes marginalized? In facilitating critical discourse, we reveal ideological assumptions, values and beliefs, while considering the role of art in "releasing the imagination" (Greene, 1995; 2001) and in opening possibilities for transformation and social change (Albers, 1999; Becker, 1994; Holloway & Krensky, 2001).

Preservice teachers focus on issues related to gender, race, language, ethnicity, class, ablebodiness/disability, and sexual orientation. Integrated arts inquiries present a range of social issues such as HIV/Aids, local and global poverty, hunger, newcomers and immigration, emotional, physical and sexual abuse, bullying and the de-sensitization of youth, inclusion and ablebodiness, indigenous knowledges, homophobia, sexualization of young girls, the virtual environment, and social networking. We apply an approach to educational inquiry that addresses inequity and difference "to see difference as power relations that are produced in interactions" (Ng, 2003, p. 207). To provide a few examples: *Bullying Inside Out*, represents a performance in which teachers investigate emotional, physical, and psychological dimensions of bullying and explore the dynamics between the bully, bullied, and bystander. They create disturbing and provocative scenarios depicting racial, ethnic, religious and sexual discrimination through an interweaving of role-playing, song, and dance. Their presentation reveals multiple dimensions of bullying and its silent forms in cyber space. *Hunger for Learning* addresses issues of socioeconomic inequity through a moving and evocative performance of music, poetry, creative movement, and visual art. Preservice teachers illuminate the realities of hunger as a local and global phenomenon and reveal its often "hidden" and invisible dimensions. Their inquiry presents hunger as a complex social phenomenon and highlights its effects on the development of literacy and learning.

In *Facebook*, preservice teachers convey the impact of virtual reality on social relationships and networks. Their documentary film points out that as society continues its technological advancement relationships are more commonly established and maintained in a virtual format. Preservice teachers juxtapose historical concepts of social community based on diversity of values and beliefs, with a contemporary homogenization of community through development of networks based on similarities of interest. The film poses questions about changing notions of "friendship," social dynamics and social engagement, lack of face-to-face encounters, and the search for "multiple versions of self."

Fig. 5: Final performances at Mackenzie Theatre

Examining Social Constructions

Integrated arts inquiries depict interrogations of critical social issues and propel further questioning: How do prevailing social constructions influence discursive, pedagogical action? Collectively, as teachers and students, we confront our own embedded beliefs regarding gender, race, language, ethnicity, and underlying biases and stereotypes through our inter-subjective engagement with, and interpretation of, preservice teachers' work (Corbett, 2001; Yokley, 1999). The following text illustrates elements of the inquiry process as described by several members of one group:

> *Our integrated arts inquiry delved into issues pertaining to the evolution of identity among Aboriginal youth. We conducted interviews to explore Aboriginal identity from two distinct perspectives: the role within the Aboriginal community and the role within the dominant, Eurocentric society. We conducted interviews with a group of young Mi'kmaq adults and teachers by posing a*

leading question: "Do your feelings in the Aboriginal community differ from your feelings in the school context. If so, in what ways?" Interestingly, through our open-ended conversations, participants discussed distinctions between communities and their struggles between the two worlds.

We introduced the audience to several Mi'kmaq traditions and communicated issues that were raised throughout the interviews with a particular focus on the dual world phenomena, and the role of educators and schools in the development of positive Aboriginal identity in youth. Our performance created an opportunity for the audience to understand how racism and stereotyping can have a negative effect on minority groups such as Aboriginal youth. We feel our project will help diminish cultural biases in the classroom and hope it will encourage students and teachers to embrace difference. By raising awareness of the issues facing Aboriginal youth, we hope students and teachers will begin to take a critical look at how they might be promoting stereotypes and racism. Our documentary tells about real feelings and real situations that exist in school contexts with the hope of enlightening our class of future educators.

Coming Full Circle is a powerful, moving celebration of Aboriginal oral traditions and indigenous knowledge. It reveals how arts integration becomes a vehicle to give voice to marginalized cultures. The audience gains a glimpse into Mi'kmaq customs through a presentation of "smudging ceremony" prayers, singing, dancing, and traditional drumming, collaboratively presented by preservice teachers and Mi'kmaq members of the community. Their performance/presentation illuminates significant issues related to the formation of identity among Aboriginal youth, the presence of conflicting roles, and the inherent struggles and tensions existing between the duality of social worlds. Their work highlights multiple perspectives of identity development as seen through the lenses of Aboriginal youth workers, teachers, traditional drummers, and community workers. It points to the importance of curricular integration of Aboriginal perspectives and provokes deeper thinking about the educator's role and responsibility to interrogate issues of racism, to disrupt prevailing stereotypes, and to take action to "mend the circle" by fostering positive Aboriginal identity. The following comments reflect the group's synthesis of their inquiry experience:

As teachers we need to be reminded just how much power we have, and how that power is often abused because of ignorance. Teachers, who relate to their students, create equality in the classroom, and bring Aboriginal culture into the school, will help Aboriginal youth feel comfort with whom they are; who they are free to be in their communities. As educators, we need to allow our students

to express themselves positively without any fear and teach our students to celebrate difference. Creating this presentation has been an "eye opening" experience for us. It has allowed us to immerse ourselves in the Aboriginal culture to learn more about it on a personal level. Without experiencing this, we might be like so many other teachers in the educational system who are scared to discuss this issue, or because it is so complicated, just not teach it at all.

Preservice teachers consider the potential for art to inform curriculum practice and to transform personal and professional worlds. Together, we probe the nature of our existing pedagogical practices by focusing on authority of voice, relations of power, and social influences. Tensions, conflicts, and contradictions are revealed in analysis of critical discourse leading each of us to think more inclusively and democratically, moving towards transformation. This process expands awareness of collective/cultural thinking, while challenging both teacher and class participants to interrogate social locations, and to create inclusive spaces within classrooms and communities. The following excerpts reveal thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of two course members:

After my group's performance I thought, "Wow, that was incredibly powerful! By working through the process, the problems, and our insecurities, we indeed integrated many forms of art without realizing the impact they could make together. Each of those elements alone would not have expressed the meaning we were trying to convey to our audience. Our message made a social statement; it had an impact. It embodied an important part of our teaching philosophy about promoting transformation, inclusion, and social change. It also allowed us to tap into our creativity; to express our unique personalities.

I really enjoyed the inquiry process of researching a social issue, developing our thoughts, feelings, and views on that topic, and combining our ideas as a group. To create an art performance that captures different aspects of that issue and perform it before an audience was both challenging and pleasurable. I don't think I realized the power of using art in this way. Our group performances really brought to light many vital, controversial, and necessary aspects of social injustice, forcing the audience to question social phenomena that are often overlooked. The performances were powerful, moving, and also chilling. After each performance, I felt the need to reflect on what I had viewed, and all that I was feeling. Sometimes it was fear, yet fear creates awareness and a sense of urgency needed to initiate social change.

Disseminating Knowledge

Representations of integrated arts inquiries are disseminated through DVD documentation of creative productions for use as a future pedagogical tool. Creative works are also displayed in public places to provide a wider cultural sphere for further ideological debate and dialogue (Lund, 2005; Thomas & Knowles, 2002). For example, a video ethnography produced by preservice teachers, *Through Multiple Lenses: A Critical Inquiry into Best Practice*, was presented at a Research Forum to members of the educational community including students, teachers, administrators, Board Members, and post-secondary educators. In this work, preservice teachers probed notions of "best practice" through the lenses of faculty, experienced and emerging teachers, members of health organizations, and the business community. They focused on deconstructing the term "best practice" to uncover privileged positions by asking: Who defines "best practice"? Best for whom? By whom? Their documentary film represented multiple voices and perspectives, rupturing the notion of "best practice" by questioning whether it acts as a hegemonic tool or promotes critical inquiry and diversity. Preservice teachers problematized the concept of "best practice" within the educational field and examined how these notions related to wider teaching philosophies.

Implications for Practice

Emergent understandings generated from my course highlight four key factors: (1) *the impact of engaging artists and teachers in the educational process*. Creating spaces for collaboration between artists and preservice teachers stimulates critical thinking, informs emergent pedagogical practices, and affirms a multiplicity of perspectives. (2) *Expansion of networks interconnecting links between teachers and cultural community organizations*. Preservice teachers gain significant understanding of aesthetic values embedded in place-based arts, local history, cultural heritage, and communities. (3) *The impact of place-based arts on teaching, curriculum, and pedagogy*. Through the arts, teachers enact curricular events fostering connections with traditions and culture and engage students in reflexive examination of place both locally and globally, in larger societal contexts. (4) *The impetus created for building principles of inclusion and democracy through community partnerships*. Emerging teachers are challenged to probe deeply and critically; to create inclusive, democratic spaces within their classrooms and communities. Integrated arts initiatives promote social

integration while advancing the potential role of the arts to awaken critical consciousness and to re-envision social/cultural worlds.

At the end of the course preservice teachers are asked to consider how their integrated arts inquiry has transformed pedagogical orientations, attitudes, beliefs, and has informed the evolution of their teaching philosophy. New insights are poignantly revealed in the voices of four individual course participants:

> I was not really sure what to expect when we started this class. I was excited because I am interested in the arts, but I was concerned that the final project was going to be a waste of time. When the instructor emphasized to us that the inquiry project was more about process than product, I was sceptical. We are a group that is strongly focused on product and I wasn't sure how easy it would be to completely switch our mind frame. However, I discovered that the process was really exciting. The night before our performance I realized just how important the process had been. We felt liberated; we felt powerful; we felt as if we had a moment in this program when we could break out of the mould that has confined us.

> I think art can be used to teach about issues that relate to social awareness and responsibility. Art education can help students become engaged citizens and empower them to take ownership of and become active participants in social change. Art can be a meaningful way to give voice to students, to help them explore their thoughts and feelings, the feelings of others, and to critique themselves and society. I think that integrating the arts can motivate students and help them recognize what is distinctive and unique about their own individuality, and that of others.

> I believe in designing highly participatory lessons that support experiential learning, promote community connections, and nurture social responsibility and global citizenship. I believe it is important to use strategies that engage students in inquiry, problem solving, and decision-making situations. These types of investigations help encourage critical thinking and give meaning and relevance to the content. I believe that the arts can be used as means to interpret the world by making meaningful applications and connections. Art can connect the school to communities and make connections across subjects. Community connections help nurture relationships, allow students to recognize diverse views, and encourage students to develop positive attitudes about themselves and others.

I am not going to say this course was easy, because it was not. Our inquiry showed me that I can succeed in areas outside my own personal comfort zone, and my success has fuelled a desire to continue this work. By taking me out of my comfort zone, the course has instilled within me a new sense of confidence. The emphasis placed on "process" over "product" allowed each of us to take risks. I see the value of presenting similar opportunities in my own classroom environment. I see great potential for my students to take ownership of a project to explore a social issue and to enhance the learning of their own peers. I think integrated arts inquiry fosters the ability in our students to become more actively involved citizens in today's society.

As an educator, I advocate the use of art as a powerful tool to open spaces for critical aesthetic perspectives and to provide impetus for continued personal/professional growth and transformation. I develop inquiry-based art education practices that foster tolerance, respect, diversity and empathy, to collectively build democratic community thereby making art more socially responsive (Rosler, 1994). I believe "it is the responsibility of the teacher or educator to show how dominant forms of knowledge and ways of knowing constrict human capacities" (Ng, 2005, p. 215). As Kinchloe (in Steinberg, 2006) suggests, knowledge is "created when teachers and students confront a contradiction," when teacher or student-presented information collides with experience (p. 147). I engage with my students to generate new meanings and shared interpretations as we move towards expanded consciousness of social problems of injustice. We are hopeful that in those spaces of "spaces of discomfort" we will discover new ways of perceiving and being in the world. Through retrospective and forward-gazing glances, our hope is to continue to collide and shift perspectives, to transform our worldviews to embrace values of social agency, efficacy, and affirmation of difference. Art as connective aesthetic breaks down social/cultural boundaries, enabling educational institutions working together with cultural arts organizations to become effective critical sites of community building and social cohesion.

Notes

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Angels, Wings, and Hester Prynne: The Place of Content in Teaching Adolescent Artists

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ABSTRACT

This case study uses adolescents' accounts of studio practice to trace the diverse themes, sources, and contexts that inspire aesthetic and narrative meaning in their artworks. Beyond self expression and formal and technical concerns, the study illustrates how eight young artists work to address cultural and aesthetic themes that borrow, build on, and ultimately reinvent conventional narratives and art forms. Narrative formation, and its relevance for learning and teaching art, is investigated as distinct but related practices in multiple worlds of art, cultures, and education.

"Have you ever seen Romeo and Juliet, with Claire Danes? I won this contest, I look like Claire Danes and stuff. And that's my favorite movie, I've seen it so many times. You know how she wore those beautiful wings? I wanted to make a pair for myself, and I figured out how to do it in my mixed media class."

So begins Jill, 16, talking about what prompted her "Juliet" wings, a self-initiated project carried out in an intensive, month-long summer art program for high school students. The ethereal, four-foot wide construction is made from six rows of cut, scored and fringed paper feathers, each with, according to the artist, "two coats of gesso so it's got texture and looks like a feather."

"They're so beautiful," she sighs. "I can't wait to wear them to the prom next year. Can't you just see me?"[1]

Mary Hafeli

*F*or artists, and for adolescents like Jill who take art classes in school, composing works in the studio invites the "making of aesthetic meaning" (Ross, Radnor, Mitchell, & Bierton, 1993, p. 167). Yet, while art programs may be settings in which young people develop and express meaning, art teachers do not always teach for or acknowledge such content. Case studies of studio art instruction have found that teachers use class time to focus on technical, formal, and perceptual considerations (Ross, et al.), and to communicate personal values about what counts as success in these areas (Elkins, 2001; Rosario & Collazo, 1981; Sevigny, 1977; Taunton, 1986). In some situations, teachers may not feel comfortable exploring interpretive issues and may avoid doing so, even when young people are willing to talk about the content and sources of their work (Hafeli, 2000). In other cases, students' source material may be viewed by their teachers as not representing "real" art content, when themes are spontaneously or repeatedly derived from media images, popular culture, or social practices found questionable by the teacher (Duncum, 1989; Wilson, 1997). For various reasons, students are often left on their own as they go about the authentic practice of working through ideas and developing narratives that figure into the content, the "aboutness" (Danto, 1981), of works done in art class.

Outside the art class context issues of content have taken center stage for a number of contemporary artists and critics, to the extent that for some, "aesthetic value" is "necessarily divorced from meaning: form and content may not coexist" (Benezra & Viso, 1999, p. 19). But for others in the art world, formal and aesthetic issues, like beauty, have re-emerged or have remained as central concerns. The distinction between form and content has surfaced repeatedly in the history of art, with more value placed on one or the other at various times, and within various times. For some artists, separating form and content has been impossible--Ben Shahn wrote, for example, that "form is the shape of content", no more or less important than the ideas that "went into it" (Shahn, 1957, p. 72).

Like the form versus content debate, the value or legitimacy of different sources for themes and ideas in art works has been an ongoing topic of discussion for the art classroom, the art world, and, of course, the larger community.[2] The history of art has shown that content can be anything and that themes and ideas thought to be "unworthy" in the past have "broken the canon" and "risen to the very heights" (Shahn, 1957, p. 72). In art education today, philosophies abound as to what constitutes appropriate content for student art work.[3] And, for art teachers, the resulting debate over approaches and orientations to teaching art raises questions about how to design relevant and authentic studio experiences for students. How should con-

tent be considered in studio teaching and in responding to students' art works? What sorts of ideas and themes do students themselves seek to address as inquirers and interpreters of the world around them,[4] and as responsive, independent artists in the studio? Where do these ideas come from? What do teachers need to know about students' development of content to teach the practice of making art works?

Tracing Content Origins in the Work of Adolescent Artists

I began to explore some of these questions by talking with high school students enrolled in a state-sponsored, summer art program in New York. The purpose of the study was to identify and describe origins of adolescent art content--the sources for formal, perceptual, aesthetic and narrative ideas, themes and concerns that adolescents address through their artwork.

The summer art program was used as a case site because it draws a culturally and socio-economically diverse group of young people from high schools throughout the state. Students are selected for admission through portfolio review, and the 130 participants represent a range of studio abilities and experience--from students who have taken several studio courses and plan to attend art school to those who have not taken art courses and do not plan to pursue the study of art in college. The program offers courses in drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, mixed media, and interdisciplinary arts as well as courses thematically focused on the figure and landscape. Participants choose two courses to take during the four-week session, and spend several hours in each studio daily.

Development and Interpretation of Field Texts

Qualitative methods used to develop "field texts" for the study include videotaped interviews with individual students, informal conversations with program staff, and examination of student artwork.[5] During the last week of the program I spoke with eight students, aged 15 to 17, in separate interviews that lasted from 45 minutes to an hour. Students were selected by the use of purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990, pp. 169–178) to achieve diversity according to gender, cultural background, socio-economic background, and art experience. Students who took part in the study live in rural, urban, and suburban areas and all attend public high schools. Two of the eight students speak English as a second language, and one recently immigrated to the United States from South America.

Prior to being interviewed, each student assembled a portfolio of works created during the session and was asked to choose two or three recently completed pieces to talk about. Our conversations focused on these works and on the representational, symbolic, aesthetic, formal and technical considerations that the artist identified as being important to their development. Specifically, we discussed the content of the works, or what they were "about," as this was determined by students' compositional choices, their selection and handling of materials and techniques, their use of representational and symbolic images and themes, and their purpose in creating the works. We also discussed the sources of students' ideas and concerns, and the context for those sources including the art classes and lessons in which the works were created.

The interview transcripts were coded using thematic categories that emerged while reading and interpreting the data. In the separate interview texts, each statement was analyzed and coded for aspects of the work that the artist identified as contributing to its meaning, like the effects from technique by applying paint in a particular way or from formal composition by using color to create a certain ambiance. The interview texts were also coded for the sources students drew or borrowed from in developing narrative and artistic dimensions of their work, like films and TV shows they watched, books they read, experiences they had or artists' works they admired. These sources were further coded according to the contexts in which the artist placed or experienced them, such as popular or traditional culture, the art world, the local community, the school culture or educational world, and the artist's family or personal world.

Content and Sources in Adolescent Artworks

In a pooled analysis of the interviews in which 29 artworks were discussed and analyzed, 11 characteristics emerged as influences on the students' development of content (Table 1). As they described what their works were about and identified specific characteristics that contributed to these meanings, the students referred to features such as the qualities and organization of *formal aspects* like line, color, and value contrast. To the students, the use of contrast could lead to an accurate representation of something observed, or it could suggest a particular mood, or it could cause areas of the work to pop out or "fade gradually in the light." The students also talked about content in terms of *materials and techniques*. Here, the artist's selection and application of materials, like "spilling" ink and using dirt in a collage meant to "look really old", produced distinctive looks, effects, and aesthetic responses, thereby suggesting other ideas in the work.

Within their accounts of how narrative meaning is developed, the students described some works as being about the direct *observation of people and objects*. In addition to visual acuity, getting a likeness through observation meant being able to portray interpreted characteristics of the model like an attitude or feeling suggested by a pose or facial expression. Working from life also involved noticing and bringing forward in the work special qualities of people, objects and materials, like the "beautiful, sheer drape" of an "elegant" woman's gown. In working from observation, the students made decisions about how far to develop different areas of the work and what to include and not include from the model and setting based, in part, on their aesthetic responses to and interpretations of observed qualities and features.

Three other modes of narrative representation came up in the students' descriptions of content. Works could be about a *real or imagined event or experience*, or they could be based on broader themes stemming from *ideas, feelings or beliefs* about issues and events that affected the artist in some way. The work could also have metaphoric content through the artist's use of *symbolism*, as in a painting with an "angel, who involves beauty" and a baby "who always represents innocence." Across all of these categories, in forming the narrative and artistic aspects of their work students drew from a wide range of sources and influences beyond their immediate experiences. Some incorporated ideas from stories and events and some were influenced by different aspects of artists' works--from style to subject matter to technique--that somehow related to or informed their own art work. Beyond their personal worlds students cited a variety of sources for artistic and narrative content, like books, films, news reports, television shows, magazines, comic books, and Internet sites.

For some students, aside from meanings derived from form, materials and narrative representation, artworks were also about the challenge and stimulation that came from the act or experience of doing the work. The students talked about certain drawings, paintings and constructions as documents of their *developing skills and insights* as artists. They described some works as revealing, for example, how the artist attempted a daunting representational challenge and succeeded, or improved technical skills by "getting the hang of" materials previously viewed as difficult or unwieldy. Content here was not just based in responses to form and technique and stories and messages; meaning was also to be gotten from viewing the work as a record of the artist's ability and knowledge.

Finally, the students identified different kinds of contexts and environments that influenced the development of artistic and narrative content in their work. Some

Table 1:
Origins of Content in 29 Adolescent Artworks

1. **Formal aspects and their effects:** Specific sensory or aesthetic qualities achieved by purposeful use and arrangement of color, line, shape, value, texture, etc.

    I like it because the way I did the contrast, it just sort of fades gradually in the light.

2. **Art materials/techniques and their effects:** Specific sensory or aesthetic qualities achieved by deliberate or experimental use of paint, ink, paper, clay, found materials, etc.

    I wanted to make it look really old, like it was just lying on the ground and people would pass by it and stuff. I got the idea from the newspaper. It was old already, I just wanted to make that more apparent. So I used dirt and spilled ink on it, then used the gum and the cigarette butt and Conte crayon in other areas.

3. **Representing objects/people/settings by observation:** Purpose in representing objects is to get a "likeness"--visual, sensory, aesthetic, attitudinal, etc. Objects or features of the "model" may themselves be appealing, causing the artist to want to represent them.

    I thought it was fun to draw because it's so cool, it has this beautiful, sheer drape sort of thing.

4. **Representing real, imagined, or documented event/experience/story:** Reference to or representation of narrative or happening--actual, invented, or combination of both. From personal experience, book, film, etc.

    So I put a little picture of me wearing the dress I wore to my school's talent show. And the talent show meant a lot to me because I got to sing in front of all these people and I got to wear this big, long gown, and I felt so great. So I put that in.

5. **Representing ideas, feelings, beliefs:** Messages or meanings in works, based on experience, imagination, observation.

    They give you a hint as to what I'm trying to say, like "nothing is left", and "degeneration" and everything. It's supposed to mean that people nowadays really don't care about the newspaper, like they don't care about the whole world's issues, and the news itself is not so happy. They're just confined to their own little lives.

6. **Representing ideas through symbolism:** Use of form, materials, images, etc. to signify ideas, feelings, states of being.

    All of these sections are different blues because of the angel, who involves beauty, and then there's the little baby who always represents innocence.

7. **Development of skill:** Getting better at doing something, learning a new technique or way of doing something, gaining new insight.

    I wanted to do it because I'd never drawn something like that--it was hard with all those layers, how it gets darker where there's more folds.

8. **Art lesson or teaching:** The student's interpretation of the assignment guidelines, influence of teacher feedback within the lesson, etc.

    We had to do a self portrait and put something of the past or future in it.

9. **Other lesson or teaching:** Learning or experiences in non-art classes.

    The teacher was talking about symbolism . . . and that reminded me of English class and The Scarlet Letter. That was about symbolism and secrets. So I thought I could do a movie poster that sums up the whole, entire book, and reveal the secret in a way.

10. **Art world**: Styles, media, content, etc. from artists and art world.

    There are some artists who influence my work, like Dali. I saw these paintings of his at the Metropolitan Museum and it really fascinated me because I have, like, the same concepts, the same ideas of having dreams collide into the painting.

11. **Culture--Family, Traditional, School, Local Community, Popular:** People, events, practices and stories from personal, family, community, school worlds and popular culture.

    Angels have been part of my whole life, since I was little. I used to hear these stories from my grandparents, which, they were just these awesome angels who helped people.

of these are educational contexts, such as the *art lesson* and characteristics of the class in which the work was created, including the teacher's comments and questions about the work as it developed. *Teaching or lessons outside the art class* is another educational context--some students got ideas for artworks from books they had read and discussed in English class, or from research on social and political issues they had carried out in social studies class. Other contexts that the students associated with content development are the *art world*, where through visits to museums and galleries they were inspired by artists' works they saw, and *family, traditional, school, local community, and popular cultures*, where specific beliefs, practices, people, activities or events were a constant source of ideas in artwork.

The multiple features, sources and contexts identified in these adolescents' descriptions of content are not particularly surprising. As artists and studio art teachers we know that within today's art world, with its divergent justifications and sources for ideas and motivations, making works involves thinking about and responding to many of the considerations identified by the students.[6] And for contemporary artists, meanings, intentions, and narratives are developed within a set of contexts or worlds that parallel those that the students describe. But how adept are we as teachers at furthering the development of all of these different facets of artistic thinking? Beyond teaching technique, beyond teaching about formal and aesthetic issues and visual culture, and beyond teaching for perceptual awareness and visual acuity, how do we teach for other essential aspects of student content? What do we know, for example, about the process through which students construct narrative and aesthetic meaning? What do we know about the stories, experiences, relationships and issues that motivate and inspire their works, and about the different worlds, beyond our lessons, that stimulate their ideas?

In the following profiles of works done by Eduardo, Jill, and Anna, these content influences are illustrated in separate processes of making a wood sculpture, a mixed-media construction, and a charcoal drawing. Eduardo's angel sculpture, Jill's wings construction, and Anna's drawing of Hester Prynne also provide a closer look at some artistically and educationally relevant sources for students' ideas that often are not addressed or go unnoticed in studio teaching.

Eduardo's Angel

Eduardo is 17 and recently immigrated to Brooklyn from his family's home in South America. He made his angel sculpture in a mixed-media class where the assignment was to "combine a toy that has moving parts" with "something that

means art, or means something to you." The following description of the work is taken from an analytic memo I wrote shortly after our conversation at the end of the summer session.

> Eduardo's favorite portfolio piece is a skeleton-like construction. It's a wood figure with head bowed down, arms cradling a small form, and an intricate, horizontal framework built onto the back. The piece is about 5 feet high, assembled from assorted lengths of scrap pine held together with nails and rubber bands. According to the artist, "it's an angel holding a baby."

> Eduardo tells me he wanted to give the viewer the "feeling that you're interacting with the angel or with this piece of art." I assume that this interaction comes from the "toy" aspect of the lesson. But the piece is not exactly toy-like, at least in the light-hearted, playful sense of the word. Eduardo choreographed the action so that the viewer sets the event in motion by lifting the baby from the angel's arms and trying to steal him away from the scene. At once, the angel's head raises and her face bends down threateningly, looking, as Eduardo says, "exactly to your face." The viewer is cast as child abductor. And the powerful angel, wings raised high for flight (and fight), is meant to prevent this abduction at all costs.

> Where does this story come from? I ask Eduardo if he's done other works about angels, and he tells me that many of his paintings and drawings feature this theme in one form or another. He pulls out a series of paintings, each with an angel figure. And he talks about how as a child he heard stories about "awesome" angels from his grandparents. It becomes clear as we talk that the angel is a significant figure in stories and beliefs that are infused in Eduardo's culture. But the angel is also an immediate presence in his personal life, for as we talk further I learn that Eduardo has been separated from, and has been trying to find, his own parents for quite a long time. The angel is not just a character from a story but an agent and personal guardian who, it is believed, might have prevented Eduardo's real-life separation from happening in the first place.

Eduardo's account of his sculpture (see Figure 1) illustrates several aspects of content development identified in the collective analysis; in particular, Eduardo's narrative ideas exemplify how adolescents, like many contemporary artists, chronicle and comment on both personal and cultural beliefs and identities. What is significant about the story of Eduardo's sculpture and about the ideas, sources and contexts it embodies?

Fig. 1: Ideas and sources in Eduardo's sculpture

The Artist: Eduardo
Recently immigrated from South America. Attends high school in Bushwick, Brooklyn. Works primarily in painting and drawing, and much of his work is published in the student literary magazine.

EDUARDO'S SCULPTURE:
So I decided to put, like, an angel holding a baby, made from pieces of wood.

Personal/Family
Like, we just grew up almost without parents.

Personal/Family
So we just had to go in through other people, in order to get to our parents. And it's really, you know, other people, not your parents, just help you. You're always trying to reach your mother, your father.

Culture/Symbolism
And they represent beauty. You know, the meaning of seeing an angel, you have an idea of beauty, a powerful thing.

Culture/Family
Angels have been part of my whole life, since I was little. I used to hear these stories from my grandparents, which, they were just these awesome angels who helped people. And they are good, and they are always helping the humans and stuff like that.

**The Lesson:
Toy With Moving Parts**

Materials
We could choose from all the materials available in studio. We had wood everywhere, pieces of wood. Everything is just like material that was around the room.

Action/ Movement
We were supposed to combine a toy that has moving parts and, like, something that means art, or means something to you.

Technique
I tried to make an image of the angel in which you can see through to her eyes inside. I didn't want to cover the whole thing because I thought people will be more interested in the moving parts. And I just wanted the screen to give some expression in the face.

**IDEAS +
MEANING SOURCES**

Action/Movement
So each time you want to carry the baby, then the baby will move the hands, the angel will lift her head and move her wings. When you lift the baby, the angel is going to raise her head and look exactly to your face.

Culture/Symbolism
Which means that the angel is like trying to protect the baby, which means that he has no sins. He is an innocent person.

Besides the technical, formal and aesthetic issues addressed in making the angel, Eduardo plotted the dramatic confrontation set in motion by the sculpture's action. Eduardo's angel sculpture demands its viewer to physically enact a story and event created by the artist. The piece doesn't just evoke a horrifying incident, it stages one.

The story of the abduction stems from Eduardo's family experiences, and beyond this context the angel's role as protector is like that of angels who are the "guardians of individuals, especially children, and are adept at bolstering flagging courage in the face of danger" (Lange, 1991, p. 56). Eduardo described these angels as "beautiful" and "awesome" beings "who help people", and he learned about them through stories told by his grandparents in South America. This situates the characters, plot, and action of the sculpture within not only the world of the artist and his family, but also the world and narratives of his culture.

The angel sculpture, in the world of the artist and its related cultural context, is a physical version and construction of Eduardo's identity. It recounts personal actions and experiences that have helped to shape Eduardo's ideas about who he is and how he represents himself. These actions and experiences exist at the same time in a culture that

> provide[s] specific types of plots for adoption by its members in their config-uration of self. These plot outlines are carried and transmitted in the culture by mythic stories and fairy tales, by tales of heroes, and by dramatic construc-tions. Although the content of each life is unique to a person, it can share the characteristics of a general plot outline. (Polkinghorne, 1988, pp. 153–154)

Eduardo's "general plot outline", protection from abduction, stems from sto-ries embedded in a traditional culture and the plot simultaneously recounts his own experience of being separated as a young child from his parents. While imagining the angel's form, choosing and working its materials, building its structure, and plotting its dramatic themes and ideas, Eduardo borrowed from and simultaneously recon-structed a mythical account that is well known in Hispanic cultures. Beyond simply retelling a conventional story, Eduardo both composed a new version and invented an entirely new form for it. The personal and cultural roots of the story, along with the sculpture's interactive nature, give the piece an instrumental purpose. The angel, as a sculpture and a process of making the work, is more than just self-expression from the artist's world. The work creates an artistic and culturally sanctioned forum in which Eduardo, like the Japanese children and their Manga drawings in Wilson's

(1997) analysis of children's art content, can "experiment with life's themes" and "symbolically rehearse ways to overcome difficulties" (p. 85).

The following descriptions of works done by Jill and Anna, both 16 years old, further illustrate how students form content that creates and contributes to the culture new versions of conventional narratives. Like Eduardo, Jill and Anna drew from a variety of sources to form content in their work. In contrast to Eduardo's sculpture, based in family experiences and representing a traditional cultural narrative, Jill's construction stems from dramatic literature and popular culture and Anna's drawing is based on a book she read in English class. In each of these three cases, though, narrative content can be traced to well-known plots encountered by the artist within multiple, layered contexts.

Jill's Wings

Jill is from a small, rural town in western New York. Her wings construction, described at the beginning of this paper, sprang not from a particular lesson but from the chance to "do something on my own."

> Jill says she based this piece on "those beautiful wings" worn by Claire Danes in the recent Romeo and Juliet film. Carefully cut and painted feathers are layered in six, curving rows and attached to two styrofoam pieces laced together at the back. Jill says she wanted to make the work "airy", "light", "magical", and "beautiful." The piece is beautiful in its pure whiteness, layered textures, careful detail. Here and there, real feathers have been added. These flutter and wisp in the air as she straps on the wings to show how they can be worn. Jill twirls around, and dreamily talks about wearing them to the prom next year. She looks something like Claire Danes, and was "so excited" to win a look-alike contest in her town. And she loves the story of Romeo and Juliet because the main characters are "so beautiful--just the idea of being so much in love with someone that you'd risk everything to be with them."

> Jill tells me that ever since she was little she's been daydreaming about "people with wings", and mermaids. The Little Mermaid was her favorite movie and her favorite book was about Gwynna, a girl who grew wings. "So I was always swinging between having wings or having, like, fins. You know, something that changes you, makes you different from everyone." She says she'd like to make "a whole series of wings--big, giant ones--natural, brown, speckled ones--all different kinds for different reasons."

Fig. 2: Ideas and sources in Jill's construction

The Artist: Jill
Attends high school in rural, western New York, has taken 2 drawing/painting courses. Likes singing and being on stage. Likes drawing figures, portraits and still life from observation.

JILL'S SCULPTURE
I wanted to do wings for the prom next year. I found them in the store and they were like $80. And I thought, 'Well, I could try making them.'

Identity--Popular Culture
I won this contest--I look like Claire Danes and stuff.

Film/Lit./Popular Culture
Have you ever seen Romeo and Juliet, with Claire Danes? That's my favorite movie. I don't even know how many times I've seen it.

Film/Lit./Popular Culture
I've always loved, ever since I was little--The Little Mermaid was my favorite movie, and my favorite book was this story where this girl had wings. So I was always either swinging between having wings or having, like, fins.

Independent Project

But then my mixed media teacher said, 'Well I've seen people make feathers out of paper. You could try making big feathers out of paper and see where that takes you.'

These are the kinds of things I do on my own, like when they don't just say 'This is the assignment.' I told the sculpture teacher here I wanted to try making wings. And he said I should go out and find big feathers. And so I went out and tried to find them and I couldn't.

Technique/Form
I took big pieces of paper and cut them into slices and I took an Exacto knife and cut all the little chunks out to make them look feathery. Then I gessoed them all. Each one has, like, two coats of gesso, so it's got texture and looks like a feather. And I took all the feathers and made this foam structure and stuck the feathers in. And I put real feathers in the middle so it would be airy and light.

IDEAS + MEANING SOURCES

Literature
The story is about this girl, Gwynna. And her parents, you know, they can't have a child and they go to the witch woman in the woods. And so a little while goes by and they end up having a baby, but she has these little bumps on her back. And they turn into these brown wings. It's such a beautiful book.

Technique
I didn't do a great job on attaching this part. I think I need to work it out a little better before I wear it to the prom.

Jill's construction is built around a 16-year-old girl's ideas about beauty and being beautiful, transformation, and forbidden love. Meant not just to look at but to wear, Jill's wings allow the artist to take on the admired qualities of two young women who also wore them--Claire Danes, an actress with whom she closely identifies and Juliet Capulet, one of the literary world's most enduring, love-struck, and doomed young heroines. Jill's wings, and those that inspired them, are associated with "beautiful" people--Claire Danes and Juliet Capulet and Jill, herself--in magical places--a masked ball, a senior prom.

Jill's account of her work (see Figure 2) shows how narrative and aesthetic content can be strung together from distinctly varied sources and contexts. The mixed-media construction merges ideas about personal experiences and qualities, a knowing of the ways in which materials can be worked into something "airy" and "magical" and "beautiful", and an affinity for particular people, characters and stories--from popular culture, dramatic literature, and film. Jill's construction can also be looked at in relation to tales and images about wings in numerous books written for young people; here, wings signify uniqueness and difference, beauty and transformation, angels and fairies, the natural world, transportation and escape, and special abilities.[7] Jill's interest in the suggestion of wings as "something that changes you" and "makes you different from everyone" comes in part from her responses to some of these books and from reflecting over time on their plots, images, metaphors, and themes.

Jill's wings construction grows out of her fascination with wings in remembered stories, her ideas about what it means to be beautiful, her identification with a well-known actress, and her captivation with a theme in *Romeo and Juliet*, "being so much in love with someone that you'd risk everything to be with them." Jill's wings borrow, build on and, like Eduardo's sculpture, ultimately reinvent both a form/image and its narrative meaning. They offer a new interpretation of not only what form a wing structure can take but also what the representation of wings can be about. As a response to the plot of a classic work from dramatic literature, Jill's wings also add a new voice to a culture's ongoing conversation about the meaning of the story, including the subject of forbidden love and the broader issues that surround it like family and peer loyalty, authority, prejudice, beauty, transformation, and the nature of love itself.

Anna's Hester Prynne

Ideas about loyalty, prejudice, and the nature of love are also taken up by Anna in her favorite work from the session. Anna's piece came from a drawing lesson that explored the use of symbolism as a way to "convey a secret."
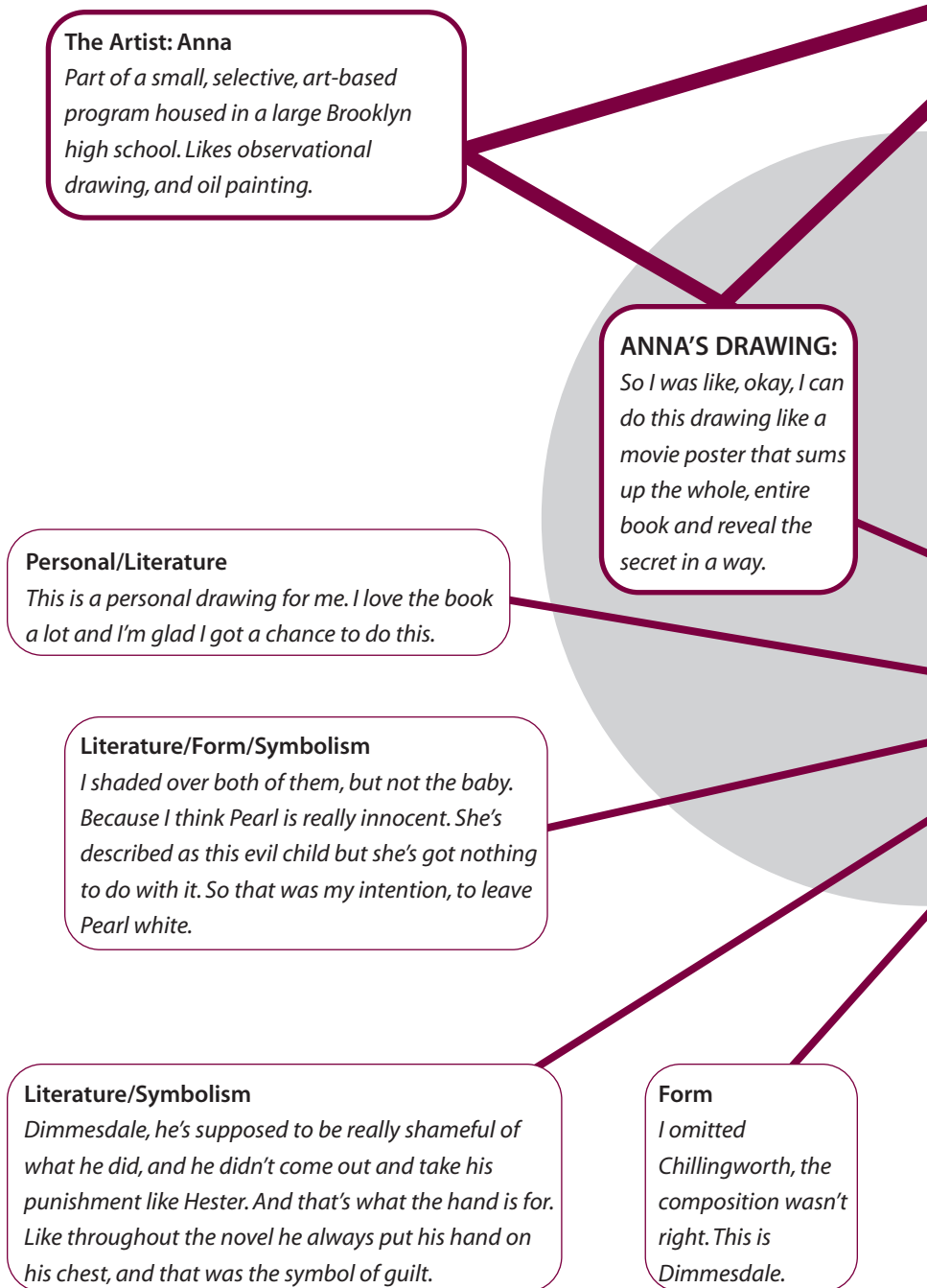
Anna's drawing is a large, arresting charcoal portrait of Hester Prynne and the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale, the lover she refused to expose, from The Scarlet Letter. Rendered in brilliant white and intense, pitch-black charcoal, Hester and Dimmesdale confront the viewer head on. Hester stands resolute, her gaze piercing, proud. Dimmesdale stands behind her with hand pressed to heart. At the bottom center between the two figures is a small, soft rendering of Hester holding her baby Pearl on the platform at the market place. The only color in the entire piece is the infamous, glaring red "A".

This is a "very personal" drawing for Anna. She "loves" Hester because of her moral resolve--"she knew what she did and came out to take her punishment." Anna tells me that Helen, her friend from school who was the model for Hester, also "loves the book and loves Hester." Helen provided the look and gaze Anna was after--"really young-looking and confident . . . and then looking across the crowd and seeing her husband for the first time." Symbolism is everywhere in the drawing--Dimmesdale "hides" behind Hester and the hand on his chest "is a symbol of guilt." Baby Pearl is left unshaded "because she's really innocent." And, of course, Hester's scarlet letter.

Anna's drawing exploits the graphic genre of the "movie poster" to, as the artist puts it, "sum up the entire book" and "reveal the secret in a way." The secret is borne by a strong, admired heroine and her "shameful" lover. With its in-your-face scale, symbolic details, and confrontational juxtaposition of dark and light, Anna's work presents an adolescent girl's ruling on vital issues of social justice and injustice, human conflict, and morality.

Anna's account of her work (see Figure 3) illustrates how adolescent artists form aesthetic content and narrative commentary from attitudes developed in educational contexts that are not necessarily related to art class. The ideas for Anna's drawing began with a discussion about secrets and symbolism in art class. As she considered ways she might present these concepts in a drawing, Anna was "reminded" of her English class and *The Scarlet Letter*, which is "all about secrets and symbolism." The related themes, the presence of multiple symbolic elements in the story, and Anna's strong admiration for Hester Prynne prompted her choice of the book as source material for the drawing. Anna's ideas, attitudes and beliefs about the themes and issues in the story were developed in English class, then revisited in a drawing done a year later in a summer art class.

Fig. 3: Ideas and Sources in Anna's Drawing

The Artist: Anna
Part of a small, selective, art-based program housed in a large Brooklyn high school. Likes observational drawing, and oil painting.

ANNA'S DRAWING:
So I was like, okay, I can do this drawing like a movie poster that sums up the whole, entire book and reveal the secret in a way.

Personal/Literature
This is a personal drawing for me. I love the book a lot and I'm glad I got a chance to do this.

Literature/Form/Symbolism
I shaded over both of them, but not the baby. Because I think Pearl is really innocent. She's described as this evil child but she's got nothing to do with it. So that was my intention, to leave Pearl white.

Literature/Symbolism
Dimmesdale, he's supposed to be really shameful of what he did, and he didn't come out and take his punishment like Hester. And that's what the hand is for. Like throughout the novel he always put his hand on his chest, and that was the symbol of guilt.

Form
I omitted Chillingworth, the composition wasn't right. This is Dimmesdale.

**The Lesson:
Drawing That Conveys
a Secret**

The teacher said the theme was 'secrets.' But we couldn't illustrate a secret, we had to convey a secret and the nature of secrets.

And she said 'Think about symbolism.' And so we talked about that. And she said that symbolism will get us to secrets, the theme for this picture.

Well, at first I was doing Hester from my imagination and she said it was between cartoon and realistic drawing. And she didn't like that. She said, 'You should get a model if you want to do it realistically, or you should loosen up and just do cartoon, you know?

**IDEAS +
MEANING SOURCES**

Style - Personal
And I really love realistic drawing, you know, I'm kind of tight.

Non-Art Teaching - Literature
And I said, okay, symbolism. And that reminded me of English class, and I just read this book in September from last school year--it's The Scarlet Letter, and that was about secrets and symbolism.

Literature/Symbolism
I was thinking about the first chapter when she saw her husband and she was thinking about stuff that happened in England. I kind of think that was the look. Like she's thinking, she's looking far away. That's the look I wanted her to have.

Literature/Symbolism
I had this image of her, the Hester I imagined when I was reading the book. I wanted Hester to be really young looking, confident-- because she knew what she did and she came out to take her punishment. So I got Helen, my friend from school, to model for me. And I never really noticed before that she looked like the Hester I was thinking about.

While Eduardo's sculpture came from a lesson that called for the artist to assign any kind of meaning to the work and Jill's construction did not come from a lesson at all, Anna's drawing had to incorporate symbolism in revealing a secret. As in Eduardo's work, Anna's development of narrative was a requirement in the lesson. And in all three cases this kind of narrative meaning--whether officially invited through teaching or not--was reported by the students to be critical to their conceptualization and construction of the art work. Along with the more frequently "taught for" aspects of formal, perceptual and technical effects, narrative ideas, with their divergent sources and contexts, actively defined the content and process of these students' art works. Again, that narrative meaning often figures prominently in students' development of content is not unknown to art educators. But what have remained largely unacknowledged by teachers and researchers are the implications of narrative development for student learning and artistry.

Recasting Narrative in Studio Teaching and Learning

If it's true that, as James Elkins (2001, p. 28) puts it, art teachers "still devalue the intensive investigation of meaning" in student artwork, perhaps a pedagogical rationale is needed to move us from avoiding it, addressing it only superficially, or discounting it as mere "self expression" to pursuing it as a fundamental component of art teaching. How might the investigation of students' meanings for their artworks be viewed as educationally relevant? How might teachers justify instructional time spent on examining what may seem to be the more nebulous and less discipline-specific "stuff" of students' stories?

Narrative as Art Practice

Regardless of the task structure or guidelines of the lessons that prompted them, the "favorite" works identified by the eight students in this study all featured a particular story--constructed from memories, observations and beliefs based in diverse sources and contexts. Narrative construction is an authentic practice of artists, and interpretation of meaning is a common practice among people who study artworks. While not all artists actively work to create narrative meaning and some eschew its presence in critical appraisals of their work,[8] the art world is, like the high school art class, a community of interpreters of artworks.

The ideas, sources and contexts that inspired these students' narratives are not confined to adolescent art making; they can also be found in the works of

historical and contemporary artists who explore similar interests and concerns. Jill's ideas about "beauty" can be located in current critical debate and artistic inquiry, and her fascination with wing forms and images can be linked to contemporary artworks that span a range of media and meanings.[9] Anna's exploration of literary themes and moral dilemmas and Eduardo's representation of the angel can both be located in the context of an art world.[10] Although these students did not explicitly draw from art world contexts, teachers who need this kind of justification to authenticate students' development of narrative content do not need to go far to find it.

Narrative as Cultural Practice

The meanings in students' works examined in this study stem from narratives based in both personal and cultural contexts. What might be learned from constructing such a narrative, and why should this practice take place in the world of schools and classrooms? Bruner (1996) writes that "a child should 'know,' have a 'feel' for, the myths, histories, folktales, conventional stories of his or her culture (or cultures)" because "they frame and nourish an identity" (p. 41). But beyond *knowing* the conventional stories, learning to construct narrative also allows young people to *contribute* to the stories of the culture as "sophisticated myth makers" themselves (Wanner, 1994, p. 30). Although art-based research substantiates the claim that adolescents can and do create sophisticated narratives (Barrett, 1997; James, 2000; Sullivan, 1989), this view of young people as authors of rich cultural texts and inventors of new art forms that embody them does not always make its way into high school studio teaching and curricula.

The three students profiled in this study each borrowed from a culture or cultures (traditional, popular, literary) in constructing narratives in their works. They adopted cultural plots (Polkinghorne, 1988) and rewrote "cultural scripts" (Finders, 1997, p. 128). But they also created new forms for these texts. Eduardo's angel, Jill's wings and Anna's Hester Prynne add and give back to the cultures that inspired them not only new versions of known stories but also new meanings for existing visual forms.

Narrative as Educational Practice

Wanner (1994), writing about adolescents' development and sharing of written narratives, has found that focusing on students' stories in teaching brings people together in knowledge and empathy. These shared experiences build classroom culture and sustain it, and the "stories in which everyone participates form a web that

helps bind a diverse group into a functioning unit" (p. 4). Connelly and Clandinin (1985, p. 191) support this focus on students' stories as part of teaching: "If in our lives we are constantly constructing, reporting, and revising various narrative unities, then education should somehow draw on, develop, remake, and introduce such narratives."[11] Making use of students' narratives in the studio art classroom leads to Albers and Murphy's conception of "optimum learning," where skills and techniques are taught for the purpose of students developing "self-inspired" forms and images (Albers & Murphy, 2000, p. x). In their study of art classes in a middle school, Albers and Murphy found that neither instruction in technique nor "immersion in visual culture" were by themselves enough for optimal learning and that students learned to elaborate on techniques and skills "only if they were given the opportunity to create self-inspired artistic representations" (p. 5). The students in their study, like Jill in this one, sought out the development of skills as they were needed to further self-generated narrative content and, for optimum learning to take place, teacher feedback and instruction was provided in the context of students' narrative concerns.

If art teachers are going to teach for the development of narrative meaning as part of students' artistic thinking and learning, we're going to have to do more than nod at it when it happens. "Obviously, if narrative is to be made an instrument of mind on behalf of meaning making, it requires work on our part--reading it, making it, analyzing it, understanding its craft, sensing its uses, discussing it" (Bruner 1996, p. 41). Teachers also need to understand the many cultures and worlds that inspire students' narratives. Like the diverse sources and contexts for art ideas described in this paper, Barton and Hamilton (1997) and Freedman (1994) argue that the wider popular culture of entertainment, media and advertising influences the content of young people's artwork, and that students may be unaware of the degree to which their ideas and responses are shaped by these forces. Studio art teaching, while developing students' technical and perceptual skills, can prompt adolescent artists to look more closely at the contexts that influence their meanings, and to explore more fully the themes and ideas and forms that are potential source material for increasingly sophisticated artworks. And, in a similar vein, studio teaching can be enriched through research on adolescents' meanings for artworks *other* than their own, as well as from studies of *how* young people encounter and interpret the kinds of source material that stem from traditional and popular culture. For if these experiences are part of the content and narratives of our students' artworks, as has been shown in this study, we teachers must get to know them, ask questions of them. As Parsons (1987) writes about our experience of artworks, "such questioning is important because the meanings of things change and cannot be taken for granted" (p. 150).

Those who influence the artistic thinking and learning of young people should also consider photographer Vik Muniz's thoughts about artworks--"the end result is just the beginning of a narrative that moves back in time" (Solomon, 2001, p. 16). How well did I do in inviting and helping this student to shape a compelling artistic narrative? How do I understand and teach the craft of fashioning ways and forms and materials to say things? How did I take notice of this student's stories and incorporate them into the fabric of our class?

Notes

This study was conducted at the New York State Summer School for the Arts, Visual Arts Program, at the State University of New York at Brockport. I thank Randy Williams, Artistic Director, and Kevin Klein, Assistant to the Artistic Director, for their help in facilitating my visit to the program.

1. Throughout this paper, data from students are excerpted from field notes, interview transcripts, and analytic memos based on these documents. All names given for students are fictitious.

2. As I was writing this paper, the then Mayor of New York, Rudy Giuliani, declared that the First Amendment is not absolute. Following a controversy over Renee Cox's photograph *Yo Mama's Last Supper* at the Brooklyn Museum, on April 3, 2001 Mayor Giuliani appointed a panel of 15 men and 5 women to formulate "decency standards" for art in the majority of New York City museums.

3. These publications highlight some of the voices within an ongoing philosophical debate about rationales for teaching art, approaches to teaching art, and content of student art work: Richard Siegesmund's tracing of historical justifications and their presence in current dialogue (Siegesmund, 1998); Brent Wilson's multiple interpretations of "child art" (Wilson, 1997); Anna Kindler's description of the value of sensory and aesthetic engagement with art works (Kindler, 2000) and David Pariser's response to this paper (Pariser, 2000); and papers presented in these edited journals and books--*Studies in Art Education* (Parsons, 2000), *Journal of Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Research in Art Education* (Stuhr, 2000), and *Real World Readings in Art Education* (Fehr, Fehr, & Keifer-Boyd, 2000).

4.   Although not the focus of this study, recent phenomenological inquiry into how people understand artists' works, and visual culture, provides a related context for tracing content ideas and sources within personal acts of art making. For examples of this work see Parsons (1987), Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson (1990), Staniszewski (1995), Bosch (1998), and Freedman & Wood (1999).

5.   Clandinin and Connelly (1998, pp. 161-162) distinguish between "data"--such as field notes and photographs--and "field texts". Field texts are "selectively chosen from field experience and thereby embody an interpretive process." The authors point out that "researcher relationships to ongoing participant stories shape the nature of field texts" by "embedding meaning and imposing form" on them. My relationships to the participant stories in this study are based on insights about my own ways of working in the studio, an understanding of research and theories regarding the studio processes of artists and young people, my experiences with students as an art teacher, and the synthesis of all of these roles in my status as interested visitor in the summer art program.

6.   Robert Aktins (1997, p. 79) describes content as "subject, form, material, technique, sources, socio-historical context, and the artist's intention (though the artist's interpretation of the work may be different from the viewer's)."

7.   Amazon.com currently lists 177 books for young readers with the word wings in the title, each features wings as a significant image, symbol, metaphor, and/or prop.

8.   John Currin, a painter: "Figuration has taken on the burden of always having to mean something, but what I think ruins a lot of painting is the urge to put meaning into it. With the nude, I managed to avoid doing that, and preserved a kind of mystery. I like that the painting ended and I never did find out what it was about." (Fineman, 2001, p. 32)

9.   For critical discussion of beauty in the contemporary art world, see *Uncontrollable Beauty: Toward a New Aesthetics* (Beckley, 1998); *Sticky Sublime* (Beckley, 2001); *Regarding Beauty: A View of the Late Twentieth Century* (Benezra & Viso, 1999); *Beauty and the Contemporary Sublime* (Gilbert-Rolfe, 2000); and The *Invisible Dragon: Four Essays on Beauty* (Hickey, 1994). For examples of wings in contemporary artists' works see Kiki Smith's *Trinity/Heaven and Earth, Butterfly*, and *Bat* (2000), and *Emma* and *Melancholia* (1999); Betye and Alison Saar's *House of Gris Gris* (1990); and Anselm Kiefer's *Buch mit Flugeln/Book with Wings* (1992).

10. In the past century, angels have been featured in the works of such artists as Marc Chagall, Max Ernst, Andy Warhol, and Anselm Kiefer, filmmakers like Frank Capra and Wim Wenders, and folk artists such as Howard Finster and Purvis Young. The angel as icon, or *santo*, is especially prevalent in religious art created in Hispanic cultures. In Puerto Rico, the term *santos* applies to wood carvings of Roman Catholic saints and angels. These works are meant for private contemplation. They are "signs of the holy," the "visible embodiment of an invisible supernatural presence" and as such they "evoke the divine or saintly being they represent." (Lange, 1991, p. 49) Santos do not need to be richly decorated to evoke the saints and angels they signify. They are usually, like Eduardo's angel, constructed and finished using what is at hand such as scraps of wood, tin, paper, and other cast-off materials.

11. Connelly and Clandinin examine the teacher's potential for helping students to reflect "on the aesthetics of their personal experience." "For us, the going back over an experience and heightening a dimension is a 'giving back' of the experience, aimed at the seeing of an experience in new lights" (1985, p. 192).

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The Classroom as Studio—The Studio as Classroom

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ABSTRACT

In this article a studio approach to teaching is examined. Based on her own pedagogical experience, the author shows how the "classroom as studio" and "studio as classroom" become a home for rich learning both within and beyond the classroom walls. She observes that through the skills, work ethic, processes, and discipline inherent to the arts, students develop the competencies that transfer easily across disciplines. Further, she demonstrates that the creative and natural language of movement and dance, in conjunction with a supportive studio atmosphere, can serve as a strong pedagogical equalizer that enables each student to flourish in an uninhibited way.

When I look back at my school days, one thing is abundantly clear: some of my most memorable experiences are those that nurtured my creativity and self-expression. For many of us, it is the moments spent participating in extracurricular activities that have left their most profound mark on us as individuals. The teachers we remember most are those who took the time and effort to get to know us. They encouraged us to strive for our full potential by acknowledging our talents and abilities and allowing us to incorporate them into our learning. Those are the lessons we remember most, and that is the legacy that great teachers leave with us.

Think of the young child, so curious, bubbling with a rich imagination and a sense of wonder and awe as she learns about the world around her. Somehow, though, once a child enters school we witness a steady decline in curiosity, imagination and

creativity. How sad it is to see the demise of creativity in favor of compliance to the rigid confines of school culture and curriculum. As Gardner (1982) surmises:

> The preschool years are often described as a golden age of creativity, a time when every child sparkles with artistry. As those years pass, however, it seems that a kind of corruption takes over, so that ultimately most of us mature into artistically stunted adults. When we try to understand the development of creativity--asking why some people finally emerge as artists, while the vast majority do not--the evidence for some corrupting force is persuasive, at least on the surface. Step into almost any nursery school and you enter a world graced with the imagination and inventiveness of children. Some youngsters are fashioning intricate structures out of blocks. Others are shaping people, animals, or household objects out of clay or Play-Doh. Listen to the singing: there are melodic fragments, familiar tunes, and other patterns composed of bits and snatches from many songs. As the children speak, you hear the narratives they weave and their charming figures of speech. (p. 86)

As I ponder about my thirty years as a teacher, I realize that I am extremely fortunate to have been in a career that has afforded me the opportunity to fulfill my intellectual as well as my creative and imaginative abilities. I always tell student teachers that teaching is a profession that must seek to foster creativity by awakening fundamental curiosity, imagination, and most of all, love of learning. We must recognize the innate talents and abilities of our students and provide them with multiple opportunities to explore those talents through various experiences such as those offered in the arts. Dewey (1938) regards the arts as "refined and intensified forms of experience" (p. 9). Such experiences encourage students to reflect and become more deeply engaged in their own learning, nurturing critical thinking skills and inspiring the creative process. If students are to create meaning from their lived experience and achieve long-term understanding, they must become active participants in their own learning. They need to feel that their interests and abilities are being addressed. They need to have their imaginations ignited. Eisner underlines the integral role of the arts in this process:

> The arts inform as well as stimulate; they challenge as well as satisfy. Their location is not limited to galleries, concert halls and theatres. Their home can be found wherever humans choose to have attentive and vital intercourse with life itself. This is, perhaps, the largest lesson that life itself can be led as a work of art. In so doing, the maker himself or herself is remade. The

remaking, this re-creation is at the heart of the process of education. (Eisner, 1998, p. 56)

Educational theorists, such as Vygotsky (1999), Piaget (1955), and Bruner (1966), emphasize the important role of social interaction in learning and the need to provide for many modes of learning and expression. Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence (1983) acknowledges that learners are all very different and that intelligence cannot be measured solely with traditional tools. Rather, he asserts, we should take into account innate affinities we all possess. Talents and abilities are as diverse as the students who possess them. Gardner suggests that five types of cognitive minds should be cultivated: the disciplined mind--what we gain from applying ourselves in a disciplined way in school; the synthesizing mind--what we gain from surveying a wide range of sources and deciding what is important and worth keeping; the creating mind--the part of us that looks for new ideas and practices, innovates, takes chances and discovers; the respectful mind--the mind that tries to understand and form relationships with other human beings; and the ethical mind--the mind that broadens the respect for others into something more abstract and asks "what kind of person, worker and citizen do I want to be?" (Gardner, 2006). He asserts that teachers have the responsibility to recognize those talents in our students and to nurture those "intelligences" within the classroom.

The Classroom as Studio

One of the key ways to solicit self-expression and creativity within the classroom is through the integration of the arts across the disciplines. It has occurred to me that I have always, whether I was teaching Moral and Religious Instruction or English Language Arts, incorporated a variety of different art forms in my classroom. Somehow, I instinctively recognized that all of my students, from the shy and introverted to the boisterous and extroverted, thrived on exploring their artistic leanings. Lessons and concepts came alive within the vehicle of artistic expression. In this way my classroom became a studio.

In my English classes I have always used a variety of art forms to interpret works of literature, especially Shakespeare, works that are often daunting for contemporary students. Once they are given the opportunity through the various art mediums, namely, music, drama, visual art, and dance, to make Shakespeare their own, student attitudes change completely. They discover a deep appreciation and

love for Shakespeare's works. In Moral and Religious Instruction the use of visual art, music, drama, and dance also strengthen their learning. The same can be said across the disciplines. Eisner (2004) suggests that the important interdisciplinary role of the arts in teaching and learning should lead us to new and different models of how we view education:

> It may be that by shifting the paradigm of education reform and teaching from one modeled after the clocklike character of the assembly line into one that is closer to the studio or innovative science laboratory might provide us with a vision that better suits the capacities and the futures of the students we teach. It is in this sense, I believe, that the field of education has much to learn from the arts about the practice of education. It is time to embrace a new model for improving our schools. (Eisner, 2004, p. 3)

I have found that when I use the studio approach to studying Shakespeare or other literary works, students are less prone to substitute reading of classic works of literature with other forms of media. That is, they are less prone to wanting to "see the movie" than "reading the book." Initially, I encounter a fair amount of resistance to Shakespeare's work. The only students who are excited about it are those who have been in my class before. The students who think that studying Shakespeare is boring are those who have read and answered questions on the plays rather than "experienced" them. These students are always rather puzzled by their more enthusiastic peers. At this point I should explain that my main goal in studying Shakespeare is for students to enjoy the play and to bring a part of who they are into the performance. I then ask the students to reveal their talents, especially talents they may have been reticent to express with their peers. Many of them are anxious to divulge a love for something that, previously, had no place in the classroom. I am always so impressed with the wide range of talents shared. Had I not solicited this information, I would have had no knowledge of the existence of this rich and diverse repertoire of talent by which students could participate, generate excitement, and foster critical thinking and meaning making. The students and I incorporate and build on these talents, creating a unique production, one that helps them to experience Shakespeare in a way that is meaningful to them. Through this experience I hope my students come to understand that Shakespeare's themes are relevant to contemporary lives; that literature is timeless and universal; and, that it is a form of communication that helps us understand ourselves and our humanity.

An important dimension in the studio classroom is to establish a safe and secure environment for risk taking. I want my students to feel comfortable about

opening themselves up to a multitude of opportunities and ways to express themselves. While teaching English over the years, I have discovered that some students experience a general disconnect with school because they perceive it to be outside the realm of their daily lives. In one instance, I was teaching a grade seven English class in which the students were struggling with the concepts of symbolism and imagery. I decided that I would have the students create their own symbolic representation of themselves. For homework, all students were required to search for a rock that appealed to them. They were to use the rock as a canvas on which to paint only symbols and images to represent who they were as individuals. They were directed to choose a color scheme which best evoked the feelings and mood they wished to impart. The rock had to profoundly embody who they were and what was at the heart of their beliefs about themselves.

The students embraced the project with tremendous enthusiasm and began the serious and complex process of brainstorming and experimenting with signs, symbols, and paint color to convey their message in a poignant way. It was fascinating to witness both the level of engagement and the thought processes that went into the creation of each piece. Upon completion, the students had an opportunity to analyze each other's rocks and to painstakingly take notes about each one. Then they shared what they interpreted from each work. It was amazing to see how the students began to understand the significance of each visual symbol represented on the rocks, the process behind each construction, and the choice of color enhancing the aesthetic qualities of each creation. As a final step, the students divulged the meaning of what they had inscribed on their rocks and why. Students reflected on the process and shared what the experience had revealed to them about who they were. From that point on the students were more aware of the use of symbols and images in literature and, indeed, in all works of art. Experiencing these concepts in a safe environment was a critical component of the learning process.

The Studio as Classroom

The dance course I teach is one of the four arts options offered within the Quebec Education Program (2007), the provincial curriculum. All students choose an art option each year in high school (drama, dance, music or art). To graduate they must pass their chosen art option in grade ten (Secondary Cycle Two, Year Two); however, they may experience a range of options throughout their school years. This means that each class is usually comprised of students at varying levels of experience

and ability. Some students, in fact, are not given their preferred option and so my role as a teacher is to encourage students to be open to new challenges.

I have always strongly believed that dance has the potential of being a great "educational equalizer." Love of dance is a shared experience since movement is a nonverbal language through which all students can express themselves regardless of their abilities in using more conventional languages. Dancing encourages risk taking, often creating a bond of trust and sharing within the classroom. Upon entering a dance studio all other thoughts can be left behind as students focus on the physical and creative demands of this art form. Within this dynamic, the class can, and often does, become one coherent "ensemble" group working together. The divisiveness of cliques, often found in the high school milieu, can be avoided. I believe that one of the most important roles for a teacher in the act of teaching is to model the behavior we seek to nurture within our classroom environment. For this reason, I find myself exhibiting on a daily basis acceptance, encouragement, discipline, perfection of my craft, articulation of constructive feedback, analysis and reflection, repetition and revision. I am often a learner as well as a teacher, and am anxious to learn from my students and to share my own learning experiences with them. From this, the students see that I am comfortable learning from my mistakes and that I am willing to learn and be taught, as well as teach.

As a result, there have been so many delightful surprises. Many of my students have never had any formal dance training. In an age where hip-hop has become all the rage, I have had the task of encouraging them to explore other dance forms such as ballet, lyrical, jazz, contemporary, interpretive, Latin and hip-hop. I have been delighted to see how excited students become as they begin to examine their own identity and experiment with raw movement to best articulate who they are. There have been many moving moments as I observe my students in their journey of self-discovery. I watch as the students begin to experiment with movement and share that with their peers and me. The shy, introverted students begin to take a more prominent role within the classroom dynamic, while the extroverted students begin to accept this shift by accepting the contributions of others. A delicate balance is achieved, which allows all of the students to respect what they can learn from others. Learning is tangible and overt as I witness the creation of choreography through the methodical execution of movement and through the use of imagination to impart a powerful message from each student in the class. There is a determination and tenacity in discovering an inner voice, that has often never had the opportunity to be heard, by embodying it into a carefully selected sequence of movements, to convey a meaningful story to the audience. Students in the class have an equal opportunity to

succeed and are given a great deal of encouragement and support by their peers to do so. This cooperation contributes to the classroom tone of acceptance and inclusion. This experience solidifies my belief that teacher modeling is one of the most powerful means of communication and learning.

Reciprocity of teaching and learning is another dimension that can serve as a powerful educational equalizer in the dance studio. I always encourage students to share their knowledge and talents with others. I model the behavior first by learning from students who are proficient in a dance style that is outside my own repertoire of knowledge. This practice helps students become open and receptive to being taught by peers. (The following video clips show students alternatively teaching and learning from each other: Swing 1, Swing 2, Hip-hop 1, Hip-hop 2.) In addition to my own suggestions, the feedback that is sought and given by their peers helps to fine-tune the choreography so that it evolves into a more powerful and significant form of expression and message making. The classroom becomes a level playing field as students take risks and learn to solve problems both individually and as a group. Despite academic or physical challenges, students are accepted with warmth, mutual respect, and consideration contributing profoundly to the building of self-esteem within and, ultimately, outside of, the classroom.
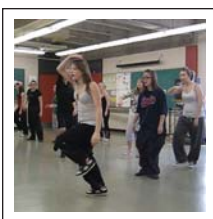
> Swing 1   > Swing 2   > Hip-hop 1   > Hip-hop 2

In addition to my own suggestions, the feedback that is sought and given by their peers helps to fine-tune the choreography so that it evolves into a more powerful and significant form of expression and message making. The classroom becomes a level playing field as students take risks and learn to solve problems both individually and as a group. Despite academic or physical challenges, students are accepted with warmth, mutual respect, and consideration contributing profoundly to the building of self-esteem within and, ultimately, outside of, the classroom.

Fig. 1: Developing posture, grace and poise

Fig. 2: Bar work: strength and concentration

Fig. 3: Classical ballet: diverse ability and skills

Fig. 4: Nurturing self-discipline

Fig. 5: Experienced Secondary 5 dance students modeling openness in learning each others' genres

The benefits of this collaborative and inclusive way of working perhaps have been best illustrated in one of the most powerful and moving moments in my career. As part of their dance course work, all students were asked to create and perform a solo choreography for our end-of-year dance recital. When one student, a girl with Down syndrome, performed her dance, the audience was brought to tears. The thunderous applause thrilled the girl and her parents, as well as all those who were present. The reward I felt from the student's joy, the ongoing support that her fellow dancers gave her, and the pride they showed in her achievement, are difficult to express.

Conclusion

The concepts of "classroom as studio" and "studio as classroom" imply that each student is an artist with unique abilities, and that these artistic abilities play a pivotal role in learning in our schools. Disciplines that have been traditionally thought of as "classroom subjects" take on more of a studio role as boundaries are blurred through the integration of arts in these classes. Likewise, disciplines that traditionally have been associated with the development of artistic abilities, such as dance, are assumed to have a broader function in educating students, that is, studios become classrooms in a sense as students develop a range of competencies that extend beyond the art of dance itself.

The juxtaposition of these two concepts in the title of this article encourages possibilities for students by allowing them to build on varying interests and abilities in settings that are inclusive and flexible. Done well, it opens up spaces for students to blossom, take risks, and ultimately experience success.

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Arts: Inspiration for Life

Anne-Sophie Grenier, Heritage Regional High School

ABSTRACT

In this article, the author recounts her experience at Centauri Summer Arts Camp, which has been instrumental in fostering her personal, artistic and spiritual growth. She emphasizes the particular importance of openness, communication, friendship, understanding and acceptance.

For the past three summers I have studied arts at what I, and many other teenagers, consider a home away from home. This place is Centauri Summer Arts Camp, located in the Niagara Valley in Ontario, Canada. Campers, aged nine to eighteen, specialize in one art form per session, and take workshops in others. I have specialized in Shakespeare theatre, digital photography, film, musical theatre dance and experimental theatre. This summer I studied dance and theatre.

In the three weeks I spend there, I grow as much as I do during the whole year, both as an artist and as a person. This growth is made possible by the way the camp is run. The environment is very nurturing, yet informal enough that we campers feel free to form our own opinions about the world and about art. This comes into the specialized programs, where professionals push us to develop our skills and break our boundaries. We learn to express ourselves in ways that can be easier or more effective through the medium of art than by simply saying what we think. The symbiotic relationship between the social aspect and the arts aspect of camp creates innumerable possibilities for creation, friendships and an all-around good time.

Emotions, activities, friendships and life in general tend to happen very quickly and on large scales at Centauri. This summer, studying under Toronto-based actor, Christopher Fowler, I learned to use this to my advantage. I learned to understand all the emotions I was feeling and to depict each one. Doing this enabled me to do the same for our script. The play we were working with was Chekhov's *The Bear*. Understanding the intent in every thought is the key to delivering a believable performance. A lot of the dialogue was related to the Russian culture or was out of date, so the theme of the play was understood through the subtext. For example, in one scene, the two main characters are having an argument over power. The direction in the script during one of the character's monologues was to pause. Because of the arrogance of both characters, we decided to turn it into somewhat of a staring contest. This mimed argument was not only comical, but also let the audience see the difference between both characters through the physical movement we had studied. The man who had been speaking was restless and kept shooting furtive glances at his opponent, while the latter, a woman, remained poised and focused. In the end, the man lost his temper and continued his enraged monologue.

With Mr. Fowler I also learned about the beauty of simplicity. What many actors tend to do in moments of silence is to overact and play the buffoon for the audience. This results in a break of character and is not believable. To stress this point we did an exercise where two campers had to sit in front of the rest of the group and wait. We were waiting for someone we did not want to see, and who was late. There was lots of fidgeting and exasperated sighs. The performances that were the truest were those that had less fidgeting and smaller actions. These worked better because the audience could focus on the actors' face, and imagine the thought behind their eyes.

Since the theatre program was experimental, we looked at directors such as Grotowski and Meyerhold. We studied the physicality of an actor and how "theatrical" a play can be. We also looked at their opposites and the realism of Stanislavsky. This was once again for the purpose of understanding. I learned that whether you are playing a Greek hero, a Shakespearean lover or are eating cucumber sandwiches in an Oscar Wilde play, you have to understand why you are saying the lines and the intent behind the words. Whether the director chooses to keep the play in the world of realism or break the fourth wall and create an "experimental" play, the emotions are still the same and just as important.

Centauri as a whole could not exist without the arts component but it could not exist without the social component either. There are many other art camps, but

the emphasis on friendship and understanding lifts us to a superior level to create and perform. Friends inspire each other, often without even realizing.

I have had the pleasure of meeting people from all around the world and all different walks of life. I have friends in Uganda, Switzerland, Japan, Mexico, Texas, New York, Halifax and elsewhere. In such a varied social context, one would expect many disagreements. But Centauri is perhaps the most accepting place I have ever been. Everyone I have asked agrees that a lot of the pressure they feel back home can be forgotten during their stay. We tend to focus more on the positive qualities of those around us and appreciate them for who they are.

There is a special bond formed between campers, counsellors and senior staff. I don't know how to describe this bond except with the word love. During the year, camp friends make the effort to take a train or a road trip to visit one another. I would hitchhike across Canada to see some of my summer friends if I had no other way. My best friend and I send each other birthday and Christmas presents, and thanks to Facebook, I am in regular contact with my fellow campers. A counsellor I had in 2006 once told me that she had lost contact with most of her high school friends, but is still close to her camp friends, and always will be.

What is special about this bond is truthful communication. We compliment each other throughout the day. This isn't to be hypocritical, but because we appreciate each other, and aren't afraid to show it. I stayed for two sessions this summer and thus had two bunkmates. On the last night of both sessions, we told each other why we appreciated the other, what made them special. I, like many my age, have a fear of showing my true emotions. This vulnerability seems to leave when I arrive at camp because I feel safe.

The counsellor I had this summer, who is currently studying English and Art History at McGill, is now like an older sister to me. It isn't that we have anything huge in common; it was all the little things she did that make her special. Every night, she would play her guitar and sing to the dorm. Coincidentally, she knew all of our favorite songs. Then she would tuck us in and talk to us one on one. Being a teenage girl, I was dealing with situations with boys and was worrying about my senior year and everything I had to do. She would always listen, and I knew she was genuinely interested in helping me. When we weren't having heart to heart moments, everything she said was hilarious. She inspires me to be a generally happier person, to be a better sister and friend, and to one day be a counsellor.

The most mature sixteen year old I have ever had the pleasure of knowing is one of my friends, Amelia (pseudonym). She has a deep understanding of social behavior. One day, one of our friends was very upset and we were all trying to console her. Amelia didn't say anything but just gave her a big hug and looked her in the eyes. This had a more uplifting effect than anything that was said, just because it was an act of love and understanding. Amelia still enjoys her youth and everything it brings, but has inspired me to look at the bigger picture. Her goal in life is to reach the Buddhist principle of enlightenment.

I think that because camp is so short compared to the rest of the year, we take advantage of every moment and live life to the fullest. All the organized activities become canvases on which to form friendships and somewhat "wild" memories; the people we live with make our creations deeper and more personal. All the campers, whether or not they were best friends or whether they never met, share a connection through what they learned in their art, what they learned about others and what they learned about themselves.

This is but a brief overview of the time I have spent at Centauri. Had I explained all the different aspects and shared my favorite memories, there would be no place left in the journal for anything else. I shall always cherish what I learned there and the friends I made. Saying a final good-bye this summer was extremely difficult, and I hope to one day find a place in the world as beautiful and genuine as my summer home.

Anne-Sophie Grenier is a sixteen-year-old honour student in the International Baccalaureate program at Heritage Regional High School in Quebec. Her favourite classes are world history and English. She loves reading, movies, museums, theatre, live music and traveling. Her favourite musical artists are The Beatles and M.I.A. She is a Heritage Huskies cheerleader and loves playing sports of all kinds and dancing.

LINK TO:

www.centauri.on.ca

Readers Theatre—Take Another Look—It's More Than Fluency Instruction

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ABSTRACT

This article argues that in spite of its benefits and value, there appears to be little attention given to the use of readers theatre or to its connection to theories of learning or reading. The author takes a "second look" at readers theatre and highlights its value in an attempt to reignite the excitement that it brings to reading. Social constructivism, Cambourne's (1988) conditions for learning, and reader response theory are examined as the theoretical underpinnings. Using readers theatre increases comprehension, literature appreciation, and student engagement. Evidence is provided to support the claim that readers theatre is not only enjoyable for students, but it is also a sound pedagogy that results in more than improved fluency as reflected in the sample of student thoughts prefacing the next section.

Readers Theatre—Reading, Drama, and Much More Than Fluency Instruction

"I was very excited to perform our group reading to show the class the ideas we came up with in our interpretation of the literature. I felt very connected to the story and the characters." I couldn't wait to come to class that day to watch the other groups to see what their stories were all about and how they would be performing them."

"I normally hate presenting in front of peers, but I was more focused on the book than on the audience and I could really feel the book come alive."

"I found myself totally engrossed in stories that I otherwise would not have been interested in."

*T*hese comments clearly indicate that for these students readers theatre blurs the boundaries between reading and drama, engages students in text, and provides opportunities for literacy learning that go beyond fluency instruction.

During my twenty years as a classroom teacher and twelve years as an English Language Arts consultant, I have introduced readers theatre into many classrooms with students of different ages, grades, and reading abilities. The response is always positive, not only because it is engaging, but also because with its use, reading comprehension, motivation, appreciation of literature, and confidence in reading performance improves.

With such a track record of success, imagine my surprise when I recently introduced readers theatre to a university undergraduate English language arts class that I was teaching and discovered that in a class of twenty-eight students only three had previous experience with readers theatre. In class, I briefly introduced the concept of readers theatre and then provided each group with multiple copies of a children's book. Each group planned and presented its book as a readers theatre to the rest of the class. Following the presentations, we engaged in reflection and discussion about the process. The students were surprised by the variety of reading strategies they had used, their engagement in the text, and the amount of discussion and negotiation that occurred in their group.

These preservice teachers were left excited, enthused, and confident about using readers theatre with students of any age, while I was left to ponder why they had never experienced it, either in their own schooling or in classrooms that they had visited as education students. Has readers theatre been forgotten or neglected in favour of other programs or initiatives that bombard our schools today?

In spite of the success of readers theatre, as evidenced through my own experience and as documented by other teachers and researchers, there appears to be little attention given to its use, its benefits to readers, or its connection to theories of learning and reading. Although definitions of fluency vary, it is agreed that fluency is an important aspect of the reading process. Readers theatre is often cited as enhancing reading fluency. In textbooks of language arts teaching, readers theatre seldom receives more than a few brief lines: sometimes in the category of drama or, as a way to practice oral reading. Readers theatre, a dramatic, hands-on reading activity, offers much more to young readers (Corcoran & Davies, 2005; Griffith & Rasinski, 2004; Peebles, 2007). Little has been written about readers theatre and its connection to other very relevant language and reading theories.

I have been motivated both by the reactions of the undergraduate students and my observations of the continued success of readers theatre in classrooms, to share my beliefs about what it has to offer. My purpose in this article is to reexamine readers theatre. What can it do for students other than increase their fluency? What theoretical underpinnings contribute to its success?

I hope this discussion of readers theatre resonates with all teachers and ignites the excitement for what it can bring to reading. For those who already use readers theatre and are confident in their knowledge of teaching reading and literacy, this article will confirm and strengthen their beliefs. For those who use readers theatre because the children enjoy it, this article will contribute to an increased theoretical understanding of why it works and is so enjoyable. For those teachers who have never tried readers theatre, I sincerely hope this article will provide authentic reasons that will entice them to try it in their classrooms.

In this article I will suggest some practical steps that have worked for me when introducing readers theatre in the classroom. I will summarize and briefly share the pedagogical underpinnings of readers theatre in relation to two theories that have helped to guide my practice as a teacher, consultant, and, most recently, as a university instructor. I will examine readers theatre from the underlying paradigm of most current language arts curriculum, that of social constructivism. Two theories, congruent with social constructivism, that connect to the success of readers theatre are Cambourne's (1995, 1988) eight conditions for learning and Rosenblatt's (1978) reader response theory. Through the lenses of these two theories, coupled with my personal experiences, I will examine the benefits of using readers theatre which include increased motivation and engagement, heightened appreciation for literature, and increased transaction and negotiation with text.

What Is Readers Theatre and How Is it Introduced in the Classroom?

Readers theatre is an inclusive, literature-based learning process involving readers of all abilities. It is a form of drama that emphasizes the dramatic portrayal of various roles and characters through reading. Readers theatre differs from other dramatic forms because it requires few, if any, props or costumes, and the performers are not required to memorize a script. Typically, readers sit on stools in front of the audience with a book or script in hand and present a dramatized reading. There are many different approaches to introducing and teaching readers theatre. Some include the

use of ready-made scripts, while others use literature or expository text and adapt the text to a script. However, most agree that readers theatre is a way of performing a text through reading.

Readers theatre in the classroom is usually not an end in and of itself. It is a means to engage learners in meaningful reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and representing. It involves cooperation and collaboration among students. Although the performance is important, active engagement in literacy learning occurs during the process leading up to the performance.

There is no "right way" to introduce readers theatre. However, as an example, I would like to present a brief description of how I introduce readers theatre in a class-room. This brief summary may provide a better understanding of how it can be implemented. This introduction is included for those educators who have little or no previous experience with this pedagogical approach.

Summary of steps for introducing readers theatre:

A. Modelling: (whole class or small group)
    1. Find a suitable script or text for readers theatre.
    2. Read the text aloud to the students so that they understand the story.

B. Planning for a Presentation:
    1. Discuss the characters in the script or story.
    2. Chart the characters.
    3. Decide on narration roles and characters.
    4. Assign roles to students or allow students to choose roles.
    5. Practice the role or character.
    6. Change roles and characters and practice (optional).

C. Presenting and Sharing:
    1. Decide on any minimal props or costumes that may be used in the presentation (optional).
    2. Practice, practice, practice.
    3. Provide feedback for improvement.
    4. Perform.
    5. Celebrate and reflect.

Following this introductory activity, students engage in a process of planning, preparing, and presenting in a wide variety of ways, with a myriad of student choice in the selection of materials, the portrayal of roles, and the group presentations. Children can read scripts, adapt literature or content area text, or write their own scripts. The degree of support and scaffolding depends on the task, the text, and the students. There are some wonderful resources available to teachers who wish to learn more about readers theatre. The possibilities for readers theatre as a pedagogical tool are endless.

Theoretical Underpinnings and Classroom Research

I have been privileged to work with many committed teachers who sincerely want to make reading a rich and meaningful experience for students that will lead to lifelong learning and engagement with a variety of texts. The undergraduate students I taught have asked the same kinds of questions that classroom teachers ask: "Why is this approach a useful strategy or idea? What benefit will this activity have for the students in my class?" Providing theoretical support for good teaching strategies helps the teachers who grapple with such questions to make thoughtful decisions.

Most contemporary discussions of literacy education are influenced by a social constructivist theory of learning. The social constructivist theory of learning, credited to Russian psychologist, Vygotsky (1978) posits that learners create or construct knowledge rather than simply receive it from others. A constructivist classroom is based on instruction and assessment in an environment that promotes the construction of student knowledge rather than one dominated by the transmission of teacher knowledge. Vygotsky has shown that by providing interactive activities for students, they have a structure for their own independent thinking. Cambourne's (1988) conditions for learning are congruent with the social constructivist theory. It provides a framework to compare the attributes of readers theatre with relevant learning theory.

Cambourne's Eight Conditions for Learning

Cambourne (1995, 1988) describes eight conditions necessary for learning: immersion, demonstration, expectations, responsibility, employment, approximations, response, and engagement. These conditions are based on years of research in

children's literacy learning in natural settings. Cambourne observed children learning and applying complex knowledge and skills in the everyday world. These observations lead to eight conditions of learning. Cambourne uses these eight conditions for literacy learning to develop a theory of learning.

The conditions affect and are affected by each other. Together, they support literacy learning. In Table 1, I briefly describe Cambourne's conditions for learning and align each with aspects of readers theatre to illustrate sound pedagogical reasons for using it.

Table 1:

Cambourne's (1988) Theory of Conditions for Learning Applied to Readers Theatre

CAMBOURNE'S CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING	APPLICATION TO READERS THEATRE
Immersion: It is important for students to be immersed in language and text of all kinds.	In the process of planning, preparing, and performing readers theatre, students are immersed in literacy rich language as well as in text.
Demonstration: Students need to see, hear, or experience what literacy learning looks like, sounds like, and feels like. Modelling is a key element of learning.	The teacher demonstrates the process of planning and preparing for readers theatre and models fluent and dramatic reading. This demonstration and modeling helps students to understand what both good reading and readers theatre looks and sounds like.
Expectations: Learners often achieve what they are expected to achieve. It is important for learners to receive messages that tell them they can be successful.	Because students are expected to prepare and present the readers theatre, they realize that there is an expectation of success. Learners are successful because they know that the expectation is that they will succeed.

Responsibility: Learners need opportunities to make decisions about their own learning. Increased student responsibility improves the likelihood of learning engagement.

When students are given the opportunity to plan and prepare a readers theatre presentation, they are accepting responsibility for that presentation and the learning that takes place during the process. They become responsible for the interpretations of the literature and for the organization of the reading.

Employment: Learners need to practise what they are learning. As students practise, they gain control over their learning. They also gain increased confidence.

Practice is an essential component of readers theatre. Students are required to practise various roles and characters. This practise results in students reading with better understanding of the text, as well as, increased confidence and competence.

Approximations: Learners need opportunities to try things out, to make mistakes in the process of learning, and to recognize that the mistakes help them to improve their approximations.

During the preparation and practising of readers theatre, students support each other in trying out various roles and characters.

Response: Feedback is important for learning, growth, and improvement. The feedback needs to be specific, timely, and nonthreatening.

Feedback is a part of the readers theatre preparation process. Teacher and student feedback supports the students' reading, group work, and interpretations.

Engagement: Engagement is the critical condition for learning. Engagement occurs when learners believe that they are capable and likely to engage in whatever is being demonstrated.

The conditions of engagement apply in the preparations and performances. Performing makes the planning and the practice authentic because it is for a real audience and purpose. Students feel

Learners are also more likely to be engaged if the demonstrations are given by those they trust and anxiety is minimized.

safe because they are supported by their group. They also feel safe because they do not have to rely on memorization, can read the text, and have practised with feedback. Students have a choice about what they read and how they will perform the text. Choice is a key component of engagement.

Cambourne's (1988) conditions for learning are one of the theoretical underpinnings that contribute to the success of readers theatre. These essential learning conditions are inherent in its planning, preparation, and presentation.

Reader Response Theory

Reader response theory provides the second theoretical underpinning for readers theatre. The reader is crucial to the construction of meaning and to the literacy experience. The connection between the reader and the text is the foundation of reader response theory. "The relation between reader and text is not linear. It is a situation, an event at a particular time and place in which each element conditions the other" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 16). Rosenblatt suggests that reading is a transactional, recursive process involving the reader and the text. The reader brings past knowledge and experiences to the text and uses these to support understanding. Personal feelings, ideas, and attitudes influence the meaning-making process involved in reading (Rosenblatt, 1978). In the process of planning, preparing, and presenting readers theatre, readers make meaning based on their personal experiences, prior knowledge, and their negotiations with others about the text.

The experience of readers theatre involves readers actively engaging in transaction of text as well as discussions about the text. This engagement in meaning making helps the readers enhance and deepen their understating of the text and of themselves as readers. I have observed this time and again as I watch readers plan and prepare for readers theatre. According to Goodman, Watson, and Burke (1987), "Reading changes readers, they know more when they finish reading than when they started, and they know more about the reading process when they come to the end

of what they are reading than they did at the beginning" (p. 20). Reading is both an active and a language process. Readers and authors have knowledge of language and both the reader and the author are active in constructing meaning. In preparing for readers theatre, readers are transacting with the text as well as interacting with others about the text. The text or the written material is the medium through which the reader and the author "transact." This transaction between reader and author can result in significant changes to the reader.

Reading is a language process that involves the communication of ideas through syntactic and semantic systems. As children read, respond, and discuss with others while preparing for readers theatre, they explore the language of the text as well as express their own ideas and feelings through language. As a result, their language becomes more complex and sophisticated.

Social Interaction and Engagement

The interaction of young readers with others while interacting with text, as experienced in preparing for readers theatre, provides the frames and supports for independent thinking. The concept of interaction in social environments is congruent with Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development that suggests that students need guided practice in social situations to increase independent learning.

I prefer to use authentic children's literature and to have students read, respond, and negotiate their way through the text to prepare it as a script. Calkins (2001) suggests that the teaching of comprehension through the use of children's literature should be started in the very early grades. She advocates the importance of reading and talking about literature in the context of the classroom community and claims that literature can help us to understand ourselves and others and to "escape the boundaries of ourselves" (p. 14). Utilizing student reading and discussion of literature when planning readers theatre is exactly the kind of reading and talking that Calkins advocates. Children need to read and talk about books within the social context of the classroom for intellectual, as well as, personal reasons. As children discuss, negotiate, and plan readers theatre they are engaged in listening, understanding, inferring, and responding, all hallmarks of comprehension.

Calkin's notion that enjoyment increases when reading is a social activity is confirmed by watching readers theatre in action. As I observed the undergraduate students socially and actively engaged in preparing for readers theatre, they enthusiastically reported an increased enjoyment of their chosen book as well as increased

enjoyment of the books that other groups had selected. When using literature in the readers theatre context, we can make reading matter for our students, and when reading matters, students are more likely to read.

Readers theatre is a solid way to promote student discussion about text in a meaningful, purposeful manner, regardless of the age or grade of the students. The engaged discussion in many classrooms, including the lively discussion that occurred in my undergraduate class as they negotiated their way to a presentation, is congruent with Allington and Stayter's (1991) observations of readers theatre in a heterogeneous grade seven class. The student discussions in this particular class, as in all the classes using readers theatre that I have observed, centered on interpreting and understanding various aspects of the text. Allington and Stayter note that students discuss their thoughts, ideas, and experiences, and critically examine the text to construct and reconstruct meaning over time.

The skills and positive attitudes developed by readers in preparing for readers theatre are important to transfer to independent reading, thereby increasing their proficiency. As Allington and Stayter (1991) suggest, the ultimate goal is for reading to be independent and for readers to actively engage in constructing meaning through critical thinking and analysis. We want readers to "lose themselves" in text and to find pleasure and gain information from their reading. Instructional techniques and methods, such as readers theatre, require a clear purpose based upon construction of meaning. Although readers theatre leads to an oral performance, instruction and preparation are based on making meaning of the text, thus enhancing student interaction with text and comprehension.

Classroom Research on Readers Theatre

Recent articles written by educators who have explored the merits of readers theatre for more than fluency development, report increased student enthusiasm for reading as well as increased comprehension. The following examples illustrate the success of readers theatre with respect to comprehension, engagement, and enjoyment for a range of readers in a variety of classrooms.

Griffith and Rasinski, (2004) observed substantial improvement in the reading ability of grade four students following an initial ten-week period, during which readers theatre was consistently used as a part of classroom reading instruction. Griffith was struggling to find a way to increase the reading comprehension of her grade four students. She understood, as do most teachers, that the goal for her fourth

graders was to think critically about the text being read silently. She felt, however, that students were missing something between the decoding of the text and thinking critically about it. After learning about readers theatre and its success for others, she decided to incorporate it into her reading instruction.

Griffith remarked, "I also saw deepened interest in reading. I began to see expressiveness emerge from the children's oral reading during the guided reading block. I was actually seeing reading redefined and reading interest renewed by the students in my class" (p. 130).

Martinez, Roser, and Strecker (1998/99) agree that, "readers theatre is a great way to develop children's meaningful and fluent reading" (p. 326). These researchers conducted an exploration of readers theatre in two second grade classrooms within inner city school districts. Children in these, as in many, classes, displayed a wide range of reading abilities. The process used in their teaching is similar to what was described in the introduction of this article, and used in the class with the undergraduate students.

Martinez, Roser, and Strecker conclude that improvement of comprehension occurred because the children had opportunities to become the characters and to understand the characters' feelings within scripted situations. Oral interpretation of the stories benefited students' insights into literature as readers and listeners.

These same conclusions were evident in the journal responses of the undergraduate students after their brief experience with readers theatre. The undergraduate students also agreed that part of the increase in enjoyment came from listening to others as they performed.

As part of an action research study that focuses on motivational materials and instruction, Worthy and Prater (2002) observed and recorded the conversations of intermediate grade students while they prepared for readers theatre. They describe readers theatre as "one instructional activity that not only combines several effective research-based practices, but also leads to increased engagement with literacy even in very resistant readers" (p. 294). As the students in this research project practised, they were engaged in talk about the text. Their conversations centered on aspects and elements of the story; they discussed characters, setting, plot, emotions, and reactions. Worthy and Prater note that, following the presentation, the enthusiasm generated by readers theatre was carried over into student reading habits at home and at school.

Following a review of teacher comments Prescott and Lewis (2003) report that, "Reader's Theatre can also boost listening and speaking skills, enhance confidence, and transform reluctant readers into book lovers." They advocate that drama increases motivation and engagement as well as understanding of text. Readers theatre is a hands-on approach that values different learning modalities. It blurs the boundaries between reading and drama.

Casey and Chamberlain (2006), two elementary teachers from different school districts, who were both interested in improving children's reading fluency, oral expression, and motivation, developed a research project to explore the impact of readers theatre over a twelve- week period. Once again, the process they used is very similar to the process summarized in the beginning of this article which I used in my university class.

Casey and Chamberlain conclude that readers theatre provides an opportunity for young readers to experiment with language, to hear fluent reading modelled by teachers and peers, and to reread for a meaningful purpose. "By giving students opportunities to reread scripts in anticipation of a performance, teachers provide practice in a meaningful and purposeful context, and student confidence levels increase as they are well prepared for each performance" (p. 18).

Conclusion

Readers theatre is so much more than fluency instruction. It is a form of drama that helps to increase confidence in performing while supporting the development of key literacy concepts. Readers theatre requires students to make meaning of the original text as they decide what parts will be in the voice of the various characters; what parts will be interpreted by a narrator; and, where shifts in mood, tone, character, feelings, and events will take place. In this process of meaning making and negotiation, students begin to understand how stories and text are constructed; they begin to attend more to the techniques and elements that authors use. Such textual analysis is one of the most valuable aspects of teaching and learning. The preparation and performance of a readers theatre script, created by themselves or by others, lengthens the time students are engaged in the text. There is no doubt that this enhances understanding and learning.

Working from a social constructivist framework, I have highlighted the connections with readers theatre and Cambourne's conditions for learning, as well as with reader response theory, social interaction, and engagement. As Cambourne (1995) observed children in a natural learning environment, he found that immersion, demonstration, expectations, responsibility, employment, approximations, response, and engagement are all important factors for learning. Teachers continually strive towards creating these conditions in their classrooms. Readers theatre easily promotes these conditions and actively engages students in reading, responding to, and performing texts.

The undergraduate students with whom I worked sincerely wished they had experienced readers theatre while they were in elementary school. They saw how it increased not only their enjoyment of literature, but also their transaction with text, their engagement in social negotiation of meaning, and their confidence in performing text in front of others. Many of these students, like many teachers, had not thought of readers theatre in terms of both reading and drama and had not considered its impact on literacy overall. I am confident that these undergraduate students will use readers theatre in their classrooms and am pleased that, even from a brief but exciting experience with it in the university class, they could see its benefits and advantages.

By providing a reexamination of readers theatre, I hope this article provides some theoretical underpinnings and authentic experiences for those who use it so that they can better understand its value. I also hope that the article creates a curiosity and desire to "give it a try" for those who have just encountered the concept for the first time. I hope the boundaries between reading and drama are blurred and that we continue to actively engage students in authentic, hands-on, engaging activities that enhance learning and confidence. The combination of reading and drama known as readers theatre supports the ideas presented in this article: that "Reading literature within a classroom community is powerful because literature can help us escape the boundaries of ourselves" (Calkins, 2001 p. 14).

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Reinvigorating Conceptions of Teacher Identity: Creating Self-Boxes as Arts-Based Self-Study

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a palimpsest of ways in which self-study draws upon arts-based methods not just as processes towards teacher development, but also as means to problematize and inquire into conceptualizations of the self. It focuses on the creation of individual self-boxes that mediate teachers' dynamic narratives of identity. Concepts of the unitary self, the decentred self and the relationship between inner and outer experience are challenged and illustrated through two interlapping stories made manifest through the creation of self-boxes.

> From time immemorial man has known that he is the subject most deserving of his own study, but he has also fought shy of treating this subject as a whole, that is, in accordance with its total character. (Buber, 1947, p. 140)

Beginning Fragment

I knew exactly what should be placed at the centre. The image was there before the naming, as I sat alone that late, autumnal Saturday morning, staring at the opaque inner space between my "work of art" and the view outside the university window. A water lily. Simple in its beauty, yet vibrant, dynamic, iridescent with sepals of flame curling inward. A feast of light and form. Rooted yet floating free. Timeless. Yes, this was to be the centerpiece of my self-box—a creative task that was coming near the end of my two-day concentration. I could just about hold the image's mystical, kinetic beauty in my mind's eye. A sharp exhalation of breath, my own, brought me back from the vision and out to the view of the Theological college beyond the window. Darn. Reality!

How to fashion this image, so that it might look as I held it in my imagination? If this could be achieved, I could then place this final piece in the centre of the self-box where it belonged. This would bring to fruition this construction of self. My Self. The trouble was I was no real artist. Rather, I had been working intuitively, all the weekend, using paint, artifacts, magazines, craft materials gradually to portray various aspects of myself inside and out on a cardboard shoebox that had once housed a pair of my size 38 trainers, long since worn out from road running.

Self-Boxes

Frings Keyes (1983, p. 14) describes the making of a self-box as forming "a visible graphic record of your perception of you" and where reality is integrated with fantasy. This has been used as an art technique, originally deployed in psychotherapy with troubled clients, but also, more recently, with nonartists as a means to deeper awareness about how we as individuals participate in creating life's conditions. According to the art therapeutic tradition, using art materials vivifies the process of self-exploration, reaching different levels of the personality more adequately than can words alone. Within a differing domain, Janesick (1998) suggests the use of a "YaYa Box" or "Self-box" as a research technique to develop and capacity-build qualitative researchers. Making a self-box, she feels can serve to "represent a person's innermost self on the inside of the box and the outward self on the outside of the box" (p. 50) and, using the metaphor of dance, she recommends that researchers themselves should engage in art-making as a form of "stretching exercise" in order to ensure that anyone who engages becomes a "stronger, more flexible and more fluid researcher" (p. 14). Honing intuition, developing receptivity and reciprocity as well as sensitivity to interpretation are essential attributes for undertaking delicate, in-depth qualitative and arts-based research and it was largely with these aspirations in mind that I undertook the task of making my own self-box, while engaging in a research project on teachers' identities. Three autoethnographic fragments of self-dialogue interweave throughout this script to tell a little of the creative process of self-box making and capture an epiphanic moment that changed the way I viewed myself.

I originally adapted the making of self-boxes in the 1990s as a teacher development activity, opening up creative pedagogical spaces in university teacher programs. Being concerned with the continuing professional development of teachers involved in pastoral dimensions of schooling and curricula, and from knowledge I had gained as a clinical psychologist, I based these programs on the belief that good teaching and good practice come from a teacher's identity, not technique. As Palmer

(1998, p. 63) says, teaching always takes place at the crossroads of the personal and public:

> Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one's inwardness, for better or worse. As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together. The entanglements I experience in the classroom are often no more or less than the convolutions of my inner life. Viewed from this angle, teaching holds a mirror to the soul.

Creative or arts-based activities, such as collage, mask work, painting, sculpting and the creation of self-boxes act as vehicles for teachers' various explorations and the self-knowledge that derives from the narratives reflected within and mediated through dialogue with such artifacts. I have sympathy with Gergen and Gergen (1988) who make a case that the teaching profession should, at both the individual and collective levels, acknowledge the importance of professional self-narratives in order to unpick the profound connection between identity and practice. Engaging with art materials, for those teachers who participate, seems to vivify these processes and the creation of an individual self-box, in particular, appears to stimulate significant and deep layers of meaning that might not be readily represented by using language (dialogue and reflective writing) alone. Experience with teachers over time taught me that the synergy between arts-based activities and forms of creative writing and dialogic encounter opened up imaginative spaces for teachers to develop their self-narratives, often provoking a renewed sense of their professionalism in the process (Sachs, 1999). Only later in my career, did I claim arts-based processes (including self-boxes) as legitimate means to inquire into specific questions that intrigued on teachers' self-identities through creative narratives (Leitch, 2003, 2006).

> "The art work opens up in its own way the Being of beings. This opening up, this de-concealing i.e. the truth of beings happens in the work." (Heidegger, 1971, p. 39)

Using self-boxes as inquiry is similar in some senses to collage as inquiry as at the most practical level it involves the "process of cutting and sticking found images fragments from popular/print magazines" (Butler-Kisber, 2008, p. 265), in this case, onto a cardboard box of selected dimensions. Beyond the technical side, at a symbolic level, there are conscious and unconscious choices associated with the artistic process of what is located where and in what form: shape, texture, color and with what relationship. In these ways, the creation of a self-box, as with collage, expresses "the said and the unsaid, and allows for multiple avenues of interpretation

and greater accessibility" (p. 268) but through a more complex, three-dimensional, embodied form. Slattery (2001) and McMahon (2000), independently, offer provocative examples of how intuitive, nonconscious knowing finds form in aesthetic representations, and these aesthetic representations are, in turn, probed with considerable reason to yield insights into self, other and arts-based educational research (Piantanida, McMahon, & Garman, 2003, p. 199).

Middle Fragment

There is something breathtaking about fashioning clay: rolling, cutting, molding, sculpting, building. Damp and intricate but oh so delicate. It was taking shape, my water lily; perhaps more sea anemone here and there with the frond-like sepals pointing heavenwards but its form was beginning to take on some semblance of my visual image. Handbuilding porcelain is no easy task. Porcelain clay, when mixed with water, forms a fine plastic paste which can be worked to a required shape that ought then to be hardened and made permanent by firing in a kiln at temperatures of between 1200 and 1400 degrees Celsius. Mine was a labor of love mixed with large dollops of painstaking determination. I didn't have access to such a kiln. So my lily would have to remain "green," airdry naturally, exist forever brittle, and be painted subsequently in the colors of fire to form the heart of my self-box.

Self and/or Memory Boxes

The concept of self-boxes is somewhat allied but still distinctive to the burgeoning interest in and role of memory work which incorporates the creation of memory books and memory boxes for particular, personal, social, historical and therapeutic purposes. Memory work, in this sense, is related to identity work often associated with displaced persons, such as orphans, adopted children and refugees. hooks (1989, p. 17) contends that the purpose of memory work is to make the past usable so that remembering "serves to illuminate and transform the present." Memory boxes are containers, though not necessarily boxes, in which adults and/or children can store versions of personal, family or community history likely to be of importance to themselves, surviving family members or future generations. They became popularized by charitable and aid organizations in the early 1990s, in response to the widespread HIV/AIDS crisis in places such as Africa, providing simple and tangible processes by which ill parents could record their family history as an aid to helping their children deal with loss. From their experiences in South Africa, Thomas and

Morgan (2002) report that memory books or boxes created by parents to help children build an identity and strengthen their emotional capacity, assist them to understand the past and to face the future in the circumstances of the ongoing and painful epidemic.

Based on the idea that childhood memories are important in helping to determine our identity and values as we grow older, memory boxes have also been used extensively in projects to support those with dementia where boxes filled with cards, photographs, crafts, war-time memorabilia, models, books, mementos and toys help to focus the attention of sufferers, securing a sense of connection to their personal histories and threatened identities. Through sensitive and ethical use, dialogue with others about these memorabilia opens up narrative elements of lives lived and, as such, memory boxes also create spaces for generating rich written, visual and taped accounts and legacies of people's lives. Harrison (2002), for example, argues that using family photographs can provide a powerful basis for narrative work, since they are preserved memories that illustrate the person's life or provide a way of communicating who they are and where they have come from and narration is an important means by which lived experiences are rescued from oblivion. As Kotre (1995, p. 17) says, such interaction allows us to "touch old objects, smell old aromas; hear old sounds…to recapture the experience of childhood…"

Self-Study

Self-study, or self-inquiry, is viewed as an important component in the desire for teachers to have increased understandings of their identities as practitioners and their pedagogical practices. In its broadest sense, self-study is conceptualized by Bodone, Guojónsdóttir and Dalmau (2004) as combining the social construction of knowledge, reflective practice and action for social change. It is also linked to ideas about developing better knowledge through increased self-awareness and/or understanding of personal experience and thereby to transformation and change in both professional self-identity and related practices.

> Teaching, like any truly human activity, emerges from one's inwardness, for better or worse. As I teach, I project the condition of my soul onto my students, my subject, and our way of being together. The entanglements I experience in the classroom are often no more or less than the convolutions of my inner life. Viewed from this angle, teaching holds a mirror to the soul. (Palmer, 1998, p. 2)

Recognizing the dissonance between beliefs and practices so that these may become better aligned is key to the process of self-study. While recognizing the positive professional development impact of self-study on teacher educators, and the importance of hearing practitioner voices, Zeichner (2007) calls for more closely connecting self-study to the mainstream of teacher education research.

Thus, despite being seen as occupying marginal boundaries in the academic of educational research, self-study is increasingly associated with methodologies that are considered different from other approaches to teacher development or, indeed, traditional research methods. Self-study that embraces visual and arts-based approaches to teachers' self-study and change, borrows methods from the arts and humanities including the visual arts, memory-work, literature, poetry and drama, arguing that these approaches allow teachers to follow their own "poetic (and visual) sixth sense" (Diamond & van Halen-Faber, 2005; p. 81, [mis]-quoting Seamus Heaney) in order to make public the wisdom of their personal practical knowledge and teacher-selves. These arts-based methods of inquiry still wrestle for mainstream acceptance in the world of educational research but are nevertheless rich in their capacity to create opportunities for teachers to reflect and self-direct, and there are many examples that attest to this.

Mitchell and Weber (1999), in wishing to understand both the "darker and lighter" aspects of teachers' work, explore the use of photography, written memoirs, movies and video in order to focus on specific aspects of the teaching self. They draw on the creative power of images, memories, everyday details, technology, and nostalgia in unexpected or unconventional ways. "Through stories about our own and other teachers' struggles for self-knowledge and identity," they suggest ways "to investigate and reinvent teacher identity and practice" (pp. 1–2). Later, Derry (2005) describes her use of drawing in self-study to uncover deeper embodied descriptions about her experiences of being bullied as a child, while Biddulph (2005), for instance, develops a visual methodology, by means of photography and mural-making, to represent and review layers of his experience of being both gay and a teacher.

In many definitions of teacher self-study and reflective practice, there is continuing appeal to the "self" of the practitioner. "Who is the self that teaches?" is a rhetorical question at the heart of this approach to self-study (Palmer, 1998, p. 7) and, of course, any response is not without challenges and complexities. While many of us still rely on notions of a "core" or coherent sense of self, other writers have begun to deconstruct what they term modernist fantasies about unified selves evolving in a world of technological progress (Lorenz & Watkins, 2001). The "self" is now

conceptualized as more fragmented and incomplete, composed of multiple selves or possible identities that we inhabit as we negotiate and traverse differing personal and social contexts (Atkinson, 2002). This "decentred self" has no enduring or "essential" identity; and if we appeal to such in our self constructions then, it is argued, this is simply part of our "narrative of the self" and, of course, narratives are themselves the product of social interaction. Given the various tensions alluded to, there are those who fear that self-study will be transformed into inquiry that ignores the self and looks only to the practices of the teacher (Cole, 1997); while other critics argue that self-study falls on the wrong side of narcissism and solipsism (Coffey, 1999). In the face of all this, self-study too often occupies an interstitial space in teacher development and educational research, but rather than succumbing to views of it as self-absorbed or redundant, arguments about the saturation and dislocation of the self should serve only as imperatives for us, as teachers and teacher educators, to listen in to our own paradoxes and ambivalence rather than to turn a deaf ear to the multiplicity of voices and inner dialogues. Despite the paradoxes experienced through handling contradictions, fragmentation and conflicts in their personal and professional lived experience, accounts of teachers' professional experiences and practice frequently make reference to a functional (professional) self as agent, and self-study in its various forms has a key role to play in this.

Thus, while not having started out as such in my own professional work, I now argue that taking on our own self-study frequently becomes a political project (as well as an individual, psychological one) whereby we can interrogate the present and the past conditions of our personal and professional lives, listen to our selves and others, deliberate, consider evidence and options and recast understandings in preparation for change and development. Self-boxes are but one example in a myriad of creative and arts-based processes that permit an entrée to the crucial and continuing self-study project for teachers.

Self-Box Process

Making self-boxes is designed as a major element of one of the university teacher development courses I offer at the masters level, the content of which focuses on teachers' facilitation skills for the personal development of students through the curriculum. Within the course program, the goal of this specific arts-based, creative task, is to facilitate self-study with teacher participants, in order to explore if, using this simple form, they consciously and/or unconsciously, create representations of their self that symbolize different "sides" to the(ir) self, (or identities) and what significance and significations, if any, they attribute to these constructions

both personally and professionally. Although not set out in a structured fashion, there are processes to this self-study activity that engage participants in (i) exploration — inspiration — creation, (ii) dialogic interanimation — sharing. What is crucial to the effective use of these processes however is to see them as simply descriptive and that they are never treated as linear or stage-like but rather overlapping and recursive. They must also be engendered within pedagogical spaces conducive to the development and maintenance of quality and trusting relationships.

Exploration — Inspiration — Creation

Kalff (1980), in a psychotherapeutic context, talks of the vital importance of a free and protected space outside everyday routine, in which to encounter and dialogue with whatever new images and events emerge spontaneously in our inner and outer worlds. A key element of this is to set a respectful, yet natural atmosphere for the task which is purposeful, ethical and carefully negotiated with all persons involved. Emphasis is therefore placed on creating a safe and contained space, in which teacher participants can engage playfully and meaningfully in their individual exploration of the artistic media leading to self-box creation. This dimension of the program is thus planned minimally for a full day, often as a weekend workshop, in which there is time, space and a sense of collective commitment and endeavor by the group of ten to twelve teachers who attend. Iterations of this element of the program over time, demonstrate that the self-box task leads to a creative act of absorbed concentration that endures for hours or longer for all participants involved, even those who originally protest or negate their artistic ability.

Dialogic Interanimation — Sharing

Once the creative process has come to a point of satisfaction, then begins an ongoing process of self-narration. Thereafter, the self-box acts as a discursive resource at both individual and collective levels, a resource which scaffolds the development of the teachers' self-narratives over time. Wertsch (2001) talks of the importance of dialogic interanimation which opens up spaces within and between people and, in this case, between the teacher and his/her self-box, where incommensurately differing or multiple perspectives and uncertainties may be held and explored simultaneously.

In this self-study experience, teachers are supported to deepen their critical reflections on aspects of their self and any dynamic relation of these to their personal and professional development through discussions with myself as mentor, the other teachers and through exploration and dialogic interanimation of the symbolic aspects of the self-box, by means of self-reflection, creative writing, poetic renderings,

memoing and journaling. Through this scaffolding, the participants gain differing perspectives from this creative work, which lead to various understandings of what they are and what they can become from multiple points of view. As these discourses about the self are fashioned, it becomes evident that this narrative work is not simply monologic, but polyphonic presenting a "syllabary of possible selves" (Gergen, 1994, p. 193). Through this process, teachers construct, among other things, potential relationships between representations of "internal" (personal) and "external" (professional) and whether or not they identify any sense of "core self" over time: "That is not to say that life copies art, but rather that art becomes the vehicle through which the reality of life is made manifest." (Gergen, 2001, p. 248)

What follows is a case illustration by one participant, Kathy, a senior and experienced teacher, who participated in the self-study program. In this, she shares excerpts from her narrative of identity and through the co-creation of the representation, we witness some of the ways dialogue with self, others, and her self-box, helped her to articulate and reconfigure aspects of her personal and professional identity through creative writing.

Kathy's Self-Box

From an early stage I would say I wanted to be a teacher. From [the time] I was ten or eleven years old. Before that, I wanted to be a detective, but after that, nothing would have deviated me from it. I wanted to be a primary school teacher.

With regard to her identity as a teacher, Kathy describes herself from the outset as being driven by a philosophy in teaching that has at its core such principles as "inclusion," "democracy in the classroom" and the importance of encouraging and listening to the "child's voice." Her capacity to "speak out" on behalf of others is and always has been a significant part of her professional identity.

Fig. 1: Self-box

Kathy's[1] Self-Box (Outer)

Kathy's self-box is an Aladdin's-cave experience, a veritable cross between memory-box and self-box. While the top of the box was orderly and mandala-like, leading her to reflect upon her considered relationship between spirituality and church-based religion, the inside is completely different. It "needs to be folded but not ordered," she reflects. It is chock-full of layers of significant and tangible symbols of Kathy's life story, like an autobiographical time line in embodied form. The intricacies of the box, unpacked from their orderly arrangement, take up considerable physical space and narrative time, where photographs play a significant role in re-creating past events and feelings, as she interacts with the materials through dialogue and journaling over a period of months.

Dialogic Reflections

The two aspects of me that I struggle with most strongly when I sit with my self-box are my need for things to be clear, ordered and straight (well, at least in my outer lived world) and my compunction to speak out on where things are wrong or where [individuals] can-not defend themselves and how this constantly gets me into trouble, bringing me into conflict, usually with men in authority—especially within my roles in schooling.

Suddenly everything seems symbolic although I had no idea at the time. Why did I put my mandala on the outside of the box? I like things natural so I retained the box as natural; it's natural green, the deep, deep green of the sea, near where I spent some significant time when I grew up. My symbols are the two straight sequined lines on each side because I do like things ordered. Then, in the centre, the blue circle, foil paper deliberately chosen because it was reflective and a colour, not dissimilar to the dress I recently wore on New Year's Eve, borrowed from my daughter, shiny blue and such a challenge to my partner who said it was inappropriate for my age. The stars, twelve in number, like the Apostles, not at the time but now I see these as representing the church, Christianity and my struggle with these. The yellow-golden ball at the centre—it is important that it was shiny and radiated like my sense of core, my energy. Round the outside of the blue circle I placed a hand-woven friendship bracelet which I took time to weave while making my box, thinking about the important role of friendship and community to me, given how fragmented my childhood was with the endless house moves associated with my father's job.

Exiled: a Found Poem

On the outside	But there
I wear my core	Always there.
Or so it seems	Too many rules
Displaced?	Too little love.
I wonder.	He was a man of God
Organized religion	He named and shamed.
Out of love	I spoke out
I fell with this.	In anger
Once a woman	And left.
Of the church.	One day
Not priest	I hope to return…
More lay.	Home.

Reflections of her tense relationship between her sense of spirituality and organized religion led Kathy to understand differently her passion for an ecumenical approach within schools and her current commitment to education which promoted mutual understanding and multi-faith religious education.

Fig. 2: Kathy's self-box (inner box and contents)

Through the use of the art-making, memoing and reflective process that ensue, some unexpected emotional episodes appear symbolized in Kathy's self-box. The relationship between external happenings and internal self-experience is made more lucid, not only in terms of her personal but also her professional life. Kathy describes this as not just a rational understanding but more a re-living, and therefore, re-evaluation of the previous memories. The insecurity deriving from early house moves as a child, for example, is seen as being counteracted by the security of the processes of schooling and teaching as a "secure job" to which she has committed herself.

Dialogue—stimulated by a variety of self-box images, symbols and memo-rabilia, including early biographic photographs—led Kathy to become aware of (sometimes for the first time) connections between early experiences and the passion that fuels her causes and sense of moral purposes as a teacher. Although emotionally painful to acknowledge, Kathy also links these early critical incidents to her commitment to speak out against mistreatment and to challenge, on behalf of children, anything she feels is wrong or unjust and to insist that children should be given opportunities to speak directly on behalf of themselves.

About the self-study process she says:

> Talking versus creating?….it would have been more general rather than specific. I wouldn't have taken the time to do it before….Definitely, you know how much I hate art. So the art business I have a thing about, but it wasn't threatening. It

wasn't going to be looked at for its artistic quality. It was what would be of significance to me. If I hadn't taken the time out to be looking at it (symbolic images and mementoes) and if I hadn't created it and looked at it afterwards… and wrote…then I wouldn't have known…I can truly say that it [self-box] raised issues which would not otherwise have been talked about in interview nor reflective writing alone. I could not deny what was clearly depicted in front of me and I was the only one who could explain what was there.

Finally then, Kathy attributes significant meaning to the creative research process of making her self-box and, in so doing, articulates a narrative of identity around axes of family and work and where she holds previously unspoken tension about her religious as opposed to spiritual sense of centre. Her explicit narrative emphasizes her common-sense, practical busy, pragmatic and determined approach to her personal and professional life but engaging in the creative narrative process explores new possibilities for change as she uncovers strong emotional seams of fear and anger, which appear to have been interwoven into her identity, although hitherto unappreciated by her.

"The self exists as a process in a constant state of transformation and flux: it is the dialogue between the facets." (Ronai, 1992, p. 107)

Reflections on Self-Box Inquiries

The creation of self-boxes, as visual three-dimensional representations of self and identity, is illustrative of one way in which teacher self-study can draw upon arts-based methods. The excerpts from two individual self-study processes are intended to illumine how engaging in the creative act of self-box making and the ensuing dialogue can stimulate re-conceptualizations that have impact on individual and collective teacher development. Kathy's story of herself in relation to her self-box leads to thick descriptions of various aspects of her experience both personal and professional over time. These are replete with many unintended discoveries including references to differing sides, differing facets, differing voices, fragmented aspects and sometimes oppositional selves in the conversations and writings about her self-box. In particular, her self-narratives follow themes concerning her relationship between her spirituality, her religious sense of decentredness and what this means in terms of her passions, directions and ambivalences in education. Deep emotional patterns and their influences were excoriated in terms of childhood experience and her positioning as a white, middle-class woman in education at this time and in this culture which, as these develop, allow her to reevaluate choices about how she acts in relation

to various challenges in her professional roles. For my own part, the final narrative fragment captures a poignant moment of collusion with an "inner imposter" deemed necessary at that time in order to protect my fragile sense of "core."

> "Neither should the present propensity for hailing multiple identities as the new order blind us to the importance of deep attachments for a coherent sense of one's own social and moral identity." (Conroy, 2007, p. 5)

Of course we (Kathy, myself and the multitude of other teachers who have engaged in such self-study activities) may simply be applying our saturated modernist views; having an "image" of ourselves as subject, as if the self was a "real object" and postulating a "deep centre of identity" (Whitmore, 2000, p. 8) from which preexistent knowledge is uncovered rather than constructed. By contrast, I would argue that by means of the creative act and the dialogic interanimation with the final object, in this case the self-box, we do not foreclose possibilities of self and identity. Rather, we engage in "I-Thou" or "I-It" dialogues which encourage accounts of different or multiple selves, and where there is more than one story to tell. Facets, it seem, carry different aspects of self, cover different stories and dimensions of stories that lead to rich and open-ended narrative possibilities. Thus, the glimpses of self-inquiry we offer here, though partial, raise possibilities on how the use of self-boxes problematize and allow for deeper contemplation into theoretical conceptualizations of self and identities as well as holding capacity to rupture the ordinary in creative ways.

What the artifice of a self-box provides uniquely as an arts-based method, it seems, is the faceted, multidimensional and symbolic nature of its form. This enables questions of the self to be examined in terms of "inner" and "outer" (including those bits of the self that are in/visible and un/knowable to the external world, self and other) and in terms of centre, sides or selves. These crystallized images of the imagination are in a sense externally embodied and, in Vygotskian (1978) terms, serve as approximations that mediate our felt sense and associated mental (and artistic) processes. It is the creation of this personal and unique "tool" from internal conceptions, sensations and viscera, which ultimately turns into narratives by embodying what is re-presented as meanings into cognitive (written or spoken) material—in this case, teachers' creative narratives of identity.

> "Forms of representation are posited as the devices through which … personal concepts are made communicable … the choice of a form of representation is a choice in the way the world will be conceived …" (Eisner, 1980, p. 50)

Nevertheless it must be recognized that the very starting point of a box as template for the self creates some practical and metaphorical strictures on "self" and self-exploration. Most particularly, there is the potentiality in using self-boxes for any self-study inquiry to confuse the artifice, the "thing" itself, with that which is ineffable—the abstract and dynamic (in)substance of self in imagination. The very characteristics (top, bottom, sides, inside, outside and centre) of the object itself reify and, therefore, while appropriating many possibilities, also inhibit particular self-conceptualizations or self-narratives that might otherwise be signified. And so, while there is demonstrable value in the use of this arts-based method for teacher self-study as an aid to individual and collective professional development and for its value in reinvigorating conceptions of the self, we must be alert to paradoxes that remain in the use of such a methodology for deepening and widening our theoretical conceptualizations of self and identity.

Ending Fragment

Behold! I survey the painted water lily, turning its fragile, fresh-painted, form, gently in my palm. The light of the evening sky enhances its fiery tints. The fluorescent, acrylics paint visual dance-like flames through the fronds. Fashioned from clay, suspended in water, living as fire, I muse. As near perfect as I can craft it, given my resources and artistic limitations but still woefully short of the ethereal perfection of the symbolic center conjured in my inner imaginings. I reflect on my own dissatisfaction and the impossible task of satisfactorily bringing a "sense" of something to literal expression. I must go easy on my disappointment, not run my well-worn, ancient pattern of self-depreciation which would lead to me binning the lot out of sheer frustration. "It's just a bit of amusement," I tell myself in defense; "it's only a task, self-induced." Ready to place the lily at the centre, I construct the means to suspend it above the floor of the inner world of my self-box, so that it appears to float mid-space. The clay, still soft and fragile, rests uneasily on its plinth. Any knock would destabilize it. The first topple to the floor would shatter the frond-like petals into fragmented pieces, and end like a heap of bloody ribs exposed after roadkill. With dawning realization, it occurs to me that my water-lily centerpiece is just too vulnerable to exist in its intended site. Not just because of its physical fragility, which is undoubted, as the first petal snaps into my awkward hand when I try to secure it in situ. Fighting for attention in my consciousness, an insight intrudes—that, as a female head of a school of education, in a senior management role, in a UK university, I cannot possibly proceed with this installation at the centre of my self-box. In so doing, I risk exposing my delicate creation, my sense of inner self to all the potential rough and tumble expectations and demands of life

at the political wheel of university teacher education. It wouldn't last ten minutes in this context. "Don't be silly," I protest to myself. "This is just a symbolic process; inward in direction, deeply private and with little to do with the outer world." Still, in some deeper place, doubts continue to pervade and the candor of their recognition will not be shaken off. Dazedly, I reach for white tissue paper and parcel my carefully wrought creation, my sense of center and soul and place it in another box for safekeeping. In the vacant interior of my self-box, I now place, numbly, an ersatz objet d'art as my foundation piece: a ceramic egg, polished, beautifully marbled and robust, impervious to destruction. Solid and reliable as I, too, must appear to the university world in my management power suit. I close the lid slowly, imperceptibly, on this interior world. There! No one will ever know.

> …there are dimensions of your being and a potential for realization and consciousness that are not included in your concept of yourself. Your life is much deeper and broader than you conceive it to be here. What you are living is but a fractional inkling of what is really within you… (Campbell, 1988, p. 58)

Notes

1. Pseudonym agreed as part of ethical process.

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Working the Image: Unearthing Aspects of Teachers' Lives Through Arts-Engagement

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a research method and some of the results thereof that asked teachers to engage in a reflective arts inquiry. This inquiry led teachers to plumb the depths of their own unconscious and bring what lies beneath into conscious aware-ness, leading to deeper reflection and ontological knowing. The researchers suggest that such awareness leads to improvement of classroom life for teachers and their students.

The Arts and Consciousness

*I*n recent years the aims of education have become narrowly defined in terms of the content being taught to children while teaching has become more restrictive in its methods. Indeed, too often in today's world, education is mired down in the details of high-stakes testing and the pressure to improve a constricted vision of student achievement (Fullan, 2007). Moreover, although there are notable exceptions (e.g., see Tyler, 1958; Grumet 1976, 1988; Connelly & Clandinin, 1994; Mayes, 2005), teachers are rarely offered the time and the space to ruminate on the deeper aspects of their thinking and feeling selves in schools. These realities result in a shallow approach to education.

The purpose of this paper is to present a research method that leads to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of classroom life for teachers. Our effort rallies around the idea that classroom communities are in need of a kind of communicative engagement that opens up a space for reflection (Shöen, 1983) and for what Donald

Oliver and Kathleen Gershman (1989) refer to as "ontological knowing"—feelings and sensory experiences that may be known and captured—though never fully—through poetic and narrative forms of statements.[1]

There are, we contend, elements of classroom life that have a strong influence on teaching and learning but that are often left unexamined and unspoken. They address that which is difficult to ascertain: the symbolic, the unconscious, and even the fantasy lives of teachers and students (McDonald, 1992), which together contribute to ontological knowing (Oliver & Gershman, 1989). Our attempt is to construct an approach that aids teachers and students in examining the undercurrents of classroom life and to bring ideas and feelings to conscious awareness for the purposes of achieving depth in learning and being. We believe that engagement with the arts is a rich space in which this can be done.

Our approach, which we currently call "reflective art inquiry," helps to un cover the unconscious, defined as that which is beneath the surface but can be brought to consciousness. While some scholars make a distinction between the unconscious, preconscious, and subconscious (Easthope, 1999), we do not enter this debate but look to all three as that which can be plumbed and brought into awareness for the benefit of teachers and students. This approach brings the unconscious into conscious awareness.

In addition, reflective art inquiry helps us explore the symbol systems that guide our knowing lives. We introduce a term, *seeing as* to explain the ways in which we cloak the world in symbol systems, and bring such *seeing as* experiences into consciousness. As humans, we engage with the world and immediately upon experiencing something label it. This system allows us to efficiently process much of what we come into contact with on a daily basis. Yet, *seeing as* does not allow us to truly see—we frequently mistake the label for the real thing. Reflective art inquiry attempts to break through symbol systems and to get beyond them to something new.

We follow James Hillman's (1975) ideas of the fantasy-image which can be defined as, "both the raw materials and finished products of the psyche" (p. xi). According to Hillman, "every notion in our minds, each perception of the world and sensation in ourselves must go through a psychic organization in order to 'happen' at all. Every single feeling or observation occurs as a psychic event by first forming a fantasy-image" (p. xi). For Hillman, the originating space for fantasy-image is the imagination which he contends, ". . ." is the most important function of the psyche . . ." (as cited in Davis, 2003, p. 101). Many psychologists refer to "fantasy" as the images of

psychotics and "phantasy" as the underlying images produced by average-waking people. We use the word *image* alone in an effort to reduce the connotations associated with either rendering of the word fantasy.

We believe Hillman's idea of the imagination-originating image has implications for classroom life in that, if viewed in this light, images are circulating in the minds of teachers and students at any given moment in the classroom and thus could be affecting student learning. Moreover, images created by and in the imagination can manifest as larger practical intentions and the realization of one's "calling" (Hillman, 1996). In our analysis images are the ground from which intentions, objectives, aims, and goals all arise. We see our reflective art inquiry as offering opportunities for teachers and students to examine their own images and move toward a realization of deeper knowing and individual potential.

The Reflective Art Inquiry Process

The ideas contained in this paper are a working revision of ideas by Uhrmacher (1993, 1995) and Uhrmacher and Trousas (2007) over the past fifteen years. Initially called Presentational Action Research and redefined as Arts-based Action Research and now Reflective Art Inquiry, our approach continues its trajectory focusing on how engagement with the arts can open up spaces for reflection, transformation, and understanding that can affect teaching and learning experiences in schools. We are content with any of these titles to describe our work. But the last designation represents our most current efforts and characterizes the ways in which arts-engagement stimulates a number of *inquiries* to uncover aspects of educational environments that lead us toward different types of action. We discuss this point in the Enactment section of this paper.

Why use the arts to unearth symbol systems, images, and the unconscious? Arts engagement offers human beings a limitless capacity for exploration and growth and is a natural conduit to the unconscious because it allows individuals an alternative space for inquiry into the self. In addition, working with art is a relatively safe place to try to understand the images and symbols alive in our unconscious selves. In this respect, working with art is an indirect approach to ontological knowing. In many ways the images created speak for themselves. This conversation between the individual and the images of the imagination (Hillman, 1989) can result in a deeper and freer experience of knowing.

Participants who engage in our reflective art inquiries are led through an artistic process of creating a paper collage or Play-Doh sculpture. While any medium could be used in these activities, we chose collage and Play-Doh because both offer easy entrance to ideas and images. Participants in our reflective art inquiries have been asked to create a work of expressive art that would aid them in engaging with their unconscious and fantasy-images. Once the work is completed to the satisfaction of the maker, participants and researchers examine the works with an eye towards the three goals of this approach: to allow what is beneath consciousness to be made conscious, to break through symbol systems in terms of *seeing as*, and to examine one's own images as the work of the imagination.

Participants involved in our reflective art inquiries are led through a series of steps. These include: "imaging," reframing," and "enacting."

Imaging refers to the specifically artistic component of this approach and begins with participants forming an image in their minds. They are then asked to translate that into some material medium to form a representation of their experiences, intuitions, and understandings, in this case a paper collage or Play-Doh (or both). During the construction process, through the participants' manipulation of words and images, which could include symbolic renderings of memories, insights and theoretical comprehensions emerge. Dewey, in his classic work on aesthetics, points out that, "When excitement about subject matter goes deep, it stirs up a store of attitudes and meanings derived from prior experience. As they are aroused into activity they become conscious thoughts and emotions, emotionalized images" (1934, p. 65). The teacher products are not appraised for their artistic merits, but rather are used as devices to delve into ideas and images.

Reframing refers to the reflective stage of the art inquiry in which participants discuss their art works with each other. This phase represents a metaphor-generating or archetype-generating process. In reframing, one discusses the myriad "seeing as" possibilities. In Hillman's (1989) view any image can be considered archetypal; "by attaching archetypal to an image, we ennoble or empower the image with the widest, richest, and deepest possible significance" (p. 26). Participants begin by observing their own artwork, examining its every nuance. Then, as a group, participants closely examine all aspects of one another's works and analyze them. They discuss the different images and words used in the collage and what kinds of archetypal stories or metaphors emerge. Together, participants have a conversation about the artwork to build the metaphors or archetypes that raise awareness of the unconscious aspects of the collage and/or Play-Doh creation. In addition, participants focus

on the symbol systems used in the collage and work to break through these images toward something new.

Enacting is defined as the participants' reactions to their art works (and to the process of making them). It refers to the possibility that participants will undergo change in their perceptions of the issue, problem, or question ruminated upon. Teachers engaged in education are continually faced with ambiguous, contradictory, and often unconscious feelings that affect their work lives. By helping teachers tap into their emotions and feelings, this arts-based approach provides the impetus for enlarged perspectives and a coming into awareness of their deeper unconscious selves in the classroom.

Data Sources and Results

The following describes the results of one project that took place in the fall of 2007 with thirteen teachers—some elementary and some secondary. Participants took part in the process mentioned above and the conversations were hand-recorded. Our goal was to uncover teachers' unconscious feelings, the "seeing-as" symbol systems being employed, and the images that may have provided the umbrella for all that takes place. This paper describes, interprets, and thematicizes the artistic products and conversations about them, much in the style of an educational connoisseur (Eisner, 1997).

Participants in the project had roughly two hours to create collages and/or Play-Doh sculptures (some participants combined both materials) and to have a discussion about them. Participants were told they could begin in one of two ways: they could play with the materials until an image formed or they could begin with a particular educationally-oriented problem, issue, or question that they would like to explore. There were eight females and five males who participated in the study; three students were students of color. In selecting cases to focus on for this paper, we observed that some students explored problems that remained diffuse through the creation and the discussion. Some participants focused very narrowly on a problem making it less salient for our purposes. But some participants were able to articulate a problem, create a telling image, and astutely come to a new realization as a result of the exercise. Admittedly, for those participants who had a less-than-satisfactory experience, the fault is ours not theirs. With more time, more processing, and more discussion, we believe that these participants too would have had an enhanced experience.

Several kinds of issues, problems, and questions emerged from this project. Some participants focused on their choice of education as a career. Some thought specifically about "kids" in their classrooms and how they as teachers could help these students. One teacher reflected on how he might help students to write better. Another teacher thought about ways to get students in touch with books. And another teacher wanted to reach a particular student who had issues about trust. Finally, some participants reflected upon themselves and the kinds of qualities they possessed or wished to possess as educators. For example, one participant wondered about her own sense of creativity.

While all of the above were attractive possibilities to explore, we noticed that three female teachers, in particular, engaged in an educational tension—one that was brought to light through the reflective art inquiry process. Thus, for this paper, we focus on these three participants and what their stories have to tell. Below we present the Imaging and the Reframing sections for these participants, Harper, Shay, and Martha. Afterwards we discuss the theme that resulted from each of these three and the implications for enactment.

Exploring Educational Issues and the Unconscious Through Art

Harper[2]: Imaging

Harper is a young Caucasian woman in her early twenties finishing her Masters degree in Educational Leadership while teaching art at a public school. Below is a description of her project from our notes:

> Harper used magazine paper and rolled the pages into a round base, about 6 inches in diameter. She then had 6 rolled magazine columns, about 11 inches long, leading up from the base leaning at a slant upward, creating a point and on top of the point she created a fluttery paper bird of various colored magazine pages. Since she was using magazine paper with both colorful and black and white advertisement images, as well as pages with black and white type print on them, the sculpture had a glossy sheen. The bird itself was an abstract image, of white-blue-brown and red colors co-mingled. The wings of the bird were the size of women's hands and draped over the columns covering the top quarter of the sculpture. The entire sculpture

was approximately 12 inches tall and about 6 inches wide. Interestingly, no glue was used in this creation. The various components of the sculpture were put together using scissors to cut slats and then fitting the pieces together.

Reframing

"Tell us about your project."

Harper says, "I was in a staff meeting with art and theater teachers. They talked about how they wanted to do amazing things but that they couldn't because of all kinds of different constraints like: Administration, Time, Schedules, Money, Politics, and even the Curriculum." Harper looks at her sculpture as she talks, "They wanted to do amazing things but they were tied to different places."

"These things tie the bird down," said the facilitator. She nodded. "So, your representation is "a bird that wants to fly and wants to be free but there are all these concerns tying the bird down." Harper agreed.

Harper asks the question: "Can it get free ever?" There is quiet in the room as everyone looks at the sculpture.

Then the facilitator says, "These same things could be seen as holding up the bird. Instead of thinking about the 'ties' as restraints tying down the bird, these things, like administration and schedules, can be seen as things that support the bird or 'hold it up'."

Harper agrees. She didn't think about it that way but she agrees that it is plausible to look at the base of the image holding the bird up as well as holding it down. In a follow-up conversation she commented, "I was thinking negatively about the institutions that make our jobs possible and it was good to be reminded that there is a flip side …"

Shay: Imaging

Shay is a woman of African-American descent in her early twenties working toward a Master's degree. We begin by introducing her project below from our notes:

A brilliant pink box, approximately 2 x 2 x 2 made up of a floor, four walls and open top made of Play-Doh. The box is a perfect square. Inside the box is a

figure fashioned out of Play-Doh that represents Shay, "I look sort of like an alien but that's okay," and the head of the figure is split representing "the two sides of her thinking." Extending to the right and the left from the center of the outer wall of each side of the box is a red pipe cleaner. The pipe cleaner extends from the center of the side of the box slanting down to the table. Both pipe cleaners are approximately 9 inches long. At the point at which the pipe cleaner meets the table, the student has placed a picture from a magazine as if the pipe cleaner is a connection from the box that contains her figure to the image in the magazine picture lying flat on the table. The left side of the sculpture looks the same as the right side except that the images underneath the end of each pipe cleaner are different. On the left side is an image of a shovel with the words "free all access pass." Next to the shovel is a jailbird, a figure in black and white stripes and handcuffs, seated. The word "NyQuil" is pasted over the figure's head. On the right side is a woman leaping with joy over water. The woman's arms are extended upward. Her left leg is bent forward at the knee. Her right leg is extended backward.

Reframing

About her image, Shay says, "The image represents my internal conflict and my goals and intentions as an educator." My questions were: "How do I find balance? What direction should I go in my teaching?" As we all look at her sculpture, Shay continues talking, "The pipe cleaners are a tight rope on either side. On the one side are the standards, expectations, and test preparation."

The room is quiet as Shay reflects on her sculpture, "I get a lot of people telling me I am doing a great job preparing students, but this leaves me unfulfilled." Then she looks at the right side of her sculpture, "On the other side, if I let [the students] be free and uninhibited they won't test well and they will be tagged as 'failures' and I will let them down. I feel that I am restricting them in their thinking although [I am] keeping their scores up, but I'm not allowing them the freedom they need. . . . My work is contradicting my ideas of teaching. . . . I am in a small space, the school districts want certain things and I am trying to rise above the water."

Someone in the room asks what would happen if the box was turned over with the figure standing on top. Commenting on the figure in the middle of the box in the middle of these tight ropes representing opposite intentions and aims of schooling, Heather says, "You look like a bridge."

"Yes," says the facilitator elaborating on Heather's comment, "You're a bridge builder. That is, you are the one that ties the whole project together." Shay nods.

As before, when discussing Harper's project, a reframing of the image was put forth and everyone in the room seems to have an "aha" moment when reflecting upon the new possibility presented for discussion. We do not mean that the "aha" moment provided a revelation allowing for immediate re-assessment of the educational enterprise or a new sense of how to get things done. Rather, the "aha" moment is a reflective observation. In a follow-up questionnaire, Shay elaborates on her thinking. She notes that the discussion provided "keen observations." Moreover,

> I guess the struggle I realized is that I need to find that middle ground but it continually feels like the act of tug-a-war, because there is always a force pulling from either direction, one usually stronger than the other, not enabling any equilibrium.

About the project, Shay says,

> It enabled me to really reflect on an internal conflict I've experienced for some time now and I was able to articulate it in a different way that was good for me because it helped me put how I see my future as an educator into perspective. The feedback given helped me see my conflict in a more optimistic way, maybe not so much as a problem but a cause.

Moreover, her sculpture reminds her:

> about how education is deemed as a molding profession, one in which you develop the minds of young people and prepare them to be critical self-motivated thinkers. However, it seems that districts are preparing teachers to be the exact opposite, to be functional (only in process) disseminators of a greater agenda with little room to be vocal in opposition of that agenda.

Martha: Imaging

Finally, Martha is a young Caucasian woman also in her early twenties. She is working on her Masters degree but she is not currently teaching. When the project ended Martha took her collage home with her and so our notes of her sculpture are limited. Nonetheless, our notes had recorded a fairly fleshed-out description:

Martha created a collage, an egg-shaped paper collage divided into four sections. In the upper left-hand quadrant is a blue butterfly cut from a magazine and on the right hand side, taking up the whole right side of the egg-shaped collage, is a picture of an outdoor scene with semi-transparent thick vertical lines over it. In the lower left-hand quadrant there is a picture of another outdoor scene with horizontal lines crossing it.

Reframing

"The question I am asking," says Martha, "is can I teach inside? Can I be the teacher I am outside, inside?" She said, "I need to make a decision; I have to make a decision soon." Outside Martha is a teacher who is open and free. She can spread her wings. Inside she feels trapped.

The student sitting next to Martha notices that the bars are "a symbol of what is holding you inside, holding you back from the external space."

But the facilitator adds, "It looks like you could move in and out. The bars are see-through so they might not actually be holding you in."

The student sitting next to Martha adds, the "butterfly symbolizes change."

"Yes, a position of change," says the facilitator.

Once again the issue of balancing freedom and constraint is brought into the scene involving Martha and her collage. Martha, faced with a dilemma related to her career, to her love of the outdoors, and to what she perceived as the confining nature of teaching in an indoor educational environment, directed all of her attention toward the limiting facet of this particular issue in her educational life. Through a discussion of one aspect of her image—the transparent "bars" laid over the chosen picture images—she was invited to notice how her unconscious might be providing her an alternative possibility: that movement in and out, between and through the confining aspect of her teaching life may provide its own answer to her dilemma. Therefore it is not an either/or proposition but a, "this too," idea which might propel her forward in her perceptions of her career.

Enacting: Implications of the Reflective Art Inquiry Process

Imaging and reframing are the artistic and analytic elements of the reflective art inquiry process; enacting refers to the active component. However, the action component of reflective art inquiry, born out of ideas of action research, can be explored in multiple ways. Once participants come to a resting place in the imaging and reframing aspects of the process, the next question to be asked is: "what next"? Within the framework of this project, we suggest that participants have at least four ways to respond to or *enact* what has been formed, uncovered, and reframed as a result of the reflective art inquiry process.

Reflective Enacting

As indicated earlier, the reflective art inquiry process is an outgrowth of earlier work called arts-based action research that combines arts-based educational research and action research for deeper understanding of educational phenomena (See Uhrmacher 1993, 1995; Uhrmacher & Trousas, 2007). While action researchers complete their investigations with an action phase, reflective art inquiry casts action in a different light. Teachers who have explored educational issues through the reflective art inquiry process may choose instead to change their thinking or their feelings about a situation rather than the situation itself which may prove to be unyielding to external force or change. In such cases, action may not be the most salient path to follow. Joseph Schwab (1972) points out:

> Practical problems can be settled by changing either the state of affairs or our desires. The latter kind of solution is as legitimate as the former. It follows, then, that practical problems intrinsically involve states of character and the possibility of character change. (p. 289)

This type of enacting refers to the possibility that arts-based action researchers or, in our case teachers engaged in reflective art inquiries, change their feelings or desires about their professional situation. Teachers and others engaged in education are continually faced with ambiguous, contradictory, and partly unconscious feelings that impact their work lives. By helping teachers look at their artistic images differently, in some cases seeing the negative aspects of the image in terms of their positive possibilities, they are able to enlarge their perspectives. In this way, teachers may respond to classroom practices by seeing it anew, rather than by taking on new actions.

Ontological Enacting

Teachers engaged with reflective art inquiries might also respond to the process by changing the way they think about the universe and their roles in it—an ontological form of enacting. Ontological enacting refers to the kinds of meanings ascertained through religious, cosmological, and holistic inquiries. Such meanings are characterized by a feeling of entering into something's essence or of relational knowing and seeking universality (Oliver & Gershman, 1989). By deliberately engaging with the unconscious and bringing to consciousness images and feelings otherwise neglected, teachers may engage with ideas larger than themselves that hold more universal meaning for them.

Ontological enacting could situate the reframing aspect of reflective art inquiry within what is universal and might then become an additional space in which to explore the depth of the soul, looking inside and out for "the imaginative possibility in our natures, the experiencing through reflective speculation, dream, image, and *fantasy*—that mode which recognizes realities as primarily symbolic and metaphorical" (Hillman, 1975, p. xvi). Through the reflective art inquiry process, teachers are invited to grapple with the larger overarching narratives brought into consciousness through their engagement with art which may add to their ontological knowing.

Living in the Tension

A third way teachers can respond or enact to what is brought to consciousness in the reflective art inquiry process is simply to live in the existing tension that has emerged from the reframed images. Caught between difficult realities and dichotomies in educational milieus, there may not be a self-evident solution to problems, as Parker Palmer (2004) points out:

> In particular, we must learn to hold the tension between the reality of the moment and the possibility that something better might emerge… I mean the tension between the fact that we are deadlocked about what to do and the possibility that we might find a solution superior to any of those on the table. (p. 175)

Teachers, who may have a better understanding of an educational issue, problem, or concern as a result of reflective art inquiries, may need to remain at this resting place, of living in the tension, until a solution emerges or different circumstances arise allowing change to take place.

The reflective art inquiry process creates a space for living in the tension and promotes a community of reflective teachers even if solutions are not apparent or tangible:

> When we listen to another person's problems, we do not leap to fix or save: we hold the tension to give that person space to hear his or her inner teacher. We learn to neither invade nor evade the reality of each other's lives but rather to find a third way of being present to each other. (Palmer 2004, p. 182)

Though the current educational climate may be fraught with difficulty, teachers need not back away from exploring their own educational concerns for fear of discovering problems with no solutions; rather, they can live in the tension and continue to teach with purpose and hope.

Changing the Environment

A fourth way teachers can enact what has been brought to consciousness is to critically act and change the educational setting in some personally meaningful way. This might require what Freire (1970) refers to as praxis, "that is . . . *reflection* and *action* directed at the structures to be transformed" (p. 107). More closely aligned to traditional forms of action research, instigating changes to the environment or engaging in "praxis" may occur in small or more radical ways but would be a response to the concerns that were brought to consciousness by the reflective art inquiry process.

Teachers, who have uncovered through their images some part of their unconscious workings, may have a renewed sense of where their energies need to be directed. For instance, we can imagine Shay making curriculum choices for her students that strive for balance between outside pressures and her internal ethic of how students should be taught; she could conceivably act *more* like the metaphoric bridge discussed during the reframing analysis of her sculpture. We can imagine Harper, who was able to reframe the constraints she perceived in the educational system as forms of support instead, participating more actively in the structure of her school as a result of her new position. And finally, we might imagine Martha internalizing the transparent "bars" of her teaching life and actively seeking a teaching position where she can physically move both inside and outside of the educational environment. All three might, through reflection and action, through *praxis*, change enough in their environment to make radical changes in their teaching life.

Of course, what we imagine here is only speculation on our part. We have not had the chance to discuss these ideas further with the participants but this discussion does open up the possibility that enacting can result in actual changes in the teachers' environments.

Conclusion

In the arts-based educational arena many authors ruminate on the opening of spaces for students in classroom (see e.g. Burnaford, Aprill & Weiss, 2001; Rabkin & Redmond, 2004; Stevenson & Deasy, 2005) through the use of arts-based approaches and integration orientations for illumination and self-knowledge. Fewer have turned the arts-based approaches toward opening such spaces for teachers. This venture into reflective arts inquiry attempts to do just that. Opening spaces within which teachers are encouraged to undergo their own transformations through the arts is a promising avenue for the aims of professional development.

We began this project with the idea of unearthing unconscious ideas by working an artistic image in a way that might aid teachers in plumbing the depths of their teaching lives. We proposed and carried out a three-phase process including, Imaging, Reframing, and Enacting. We used data to see how and in what ways such a process uncovered new ideas, helped teachers see educational phenomena differently, and brought ideas about teaching that might have been buried in the unconscious to conscious awareness. Inevitably the reflective art inquiry process intends to improve practice, either through affecting thinking and feeling on the part of teachers; through allowing teachers who have uncovered new ideas to "live in the tension" created by this new knowledge; or, through directing action in changing aspects of the educational environment.

Notes

1. For example, a person may know that a wheelbarrow is used to haul materials from one place to another or may, along with William Carlos Williams, know that:

    so much depends
    upon

a red wheel
barrow

glazed with rain
water

beside the white
chickens (Williams 1973, p. 97)

In short, ontological knowing consists of a "diffuse apprehension of reality" (Oliver and Gershman 1989, p. 3) that sets off an endless stream of associations, connotations, and images.

2.   All names in this article are pseudonyms.

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Theatre and Critical Consciousness in Teacher Education

David Dillon, McGill University

ABSTRACT

Education for social justice, or critical pedagogy, is designed to empower learners and often uses the arts as primary pedagogical means. It has gained increasing attention in teacher education in recent years. However, the author's use of critical approaches to theatre with teacher education students raised serious questions about their limited level of consciousness, or empowerment, but also alternate possibilities, including theatre, for empowering students during their teacher education programs.

Critical pedagogy is an approach to education designed to help learners name the oppressive blocks to happiness and freedom in their lives and to learn to struggle effectively against them, primarily by means of a transformed consciousness, thus becoming empowered. Critical pedagogy often uses the arts as a primary pedagogical means for achieving its goals.

Critical pedagogy has been a significant and growing alternative within mainstream teacher education, though referred to more often in recent years as education for social justice. When teacher education students receive orientation to critical pedagogy, they usually read about it, discuss it, perhaps even experience it in their courses, and then usually imagine and plan how they might do it themselves as teachers one day. However, very little attention has been directed to the issue of the kind of consciousness that teacher education students have developed for themselves. Such a question is important since it is uncertain how well teachers can foster an empowered consciousness in learners if they have not developed it for themselves, even if they have learned techniques and strategies of critical pedagogy.

Reports on attempts to assess and transform preservice teachers' consciousness within their teacher education programs are rare (Bartolomé, 2004; 2008; Gordon, 2000; Milner, 2003; Sleeter, Torres, & Laughlin, 2004). Such attempts tend to occur in separate university courses through the efforts of an individual teacher educator and are usually designed to help mainstream teacher education students better understand and appreciate the marginalized position of minority students in society and in public schools, as well as to foster greater awareness of their own perspectives on those issues of social justice.

This manuscript describes my experience in teaching a drama course on critical approaches to theatre for teacher education students over a five-year period, particularly the window it provided for me on not only the issues of oppression faced by the students in their lives, but especially the limited kinds of consciousness at which they were operating in addressing them. The manuscript concludes with a discussion of the issues for teacher education implied by this experience, particularly alternate possibilities for empowering teacher education students.

Conceptual Framework

Consciousness and Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy, or education for social justice, is an approach to teaching that is designed to foster a more empowered consciousness among participants. The notion of "consciousness" refers to individuals' perceptions and understandings about themselves and the world around them—perceptions and understandings that have been shaped during their entire lives by their upbringing, culture, social class, education, and so on. The rationale for the aim of transforming people's consciousness is that without a sufficiently empowered consciousness, participants will be unable to change the limiting or oppressive circumstances of their lives since they will still be limited (imprisoned?) by the way in which they see and understand their lives and circumstances. Bob Marley (1980) was speaking of transforming—and empowering—consciousness when he sang in *Redemption Song*, "Free yourselves from mental slavery; none but ourselves can free our minds."

Freire (1972) first popularized the notion of consciousness in his landmark book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, referring to the process of critical pedagogy as "conscientization." He remains one of the most insightful and influential thinkers in

this regard. He described a continuum of kinds of consciousness, from a powerless consciousness to a highly empowered sense of agency and perspective on acting in the world.

- At the powerless end of the continuum, he found that individuals saw themselves as objects in the world (grammatically, as the object of a verb), that is, individuals to whom things happen in life, things caused by more powerful others. The result is a fatalistic view of life, a view he frequently found among the Brazilian peasants with whom he worked in his literacy program. For example, people with this kind of consciousness may sigh fatalistically that their lot in life is to have only a little bit of bread.

- He then identified the beginnings or awakening of empowerment as the point when individuals realized that they had not only their own needs, desires and ideas, but also their own voice and could begin to name issues of injustice that they faced in their lives. Freire described this trans-formation as a shift from seeing oneself as an object to seeing oneself as a subject (of a verb), someone who can act. Yet, Freire pointed out that at this stage the individual spoke as an individual, as an "I," and still accepted the world as is. The result of this transformation was the birth of a voice, but often a voice of complaint about the way things are. For example, this kind of consciousness would accept the situation, but perhaps complain—in the beginning of a voice—that the bread could at least be fresher.

- The next major transformation that Freire identified was the awareness that a collective voice is usually more powerful than an individual voice, so that the subject shifts consciousness from "I" to "we." However, learners still think and act within the existing framework of society. For example, this kind of collective consciousness would realize that, together and with a stronger voice, people could demand the bread they need and deserve.

- Finally, Freire identified the most highly empowered consciousness as that which maintains a collective voice ("we"), but also creatively sees the possibility of transforming the existing framework of society to a more just and equitable approach. For example, this kind of empowered con-sciousness would realize, in a truly transformative way, that many needy people could together buy—and control—the bakery.

Freire highlighted the importance of achieving this creative, paradigm-shifting consciousness since it was the only means of changing the common notion of "power over," to which even the oppressed are susceptible, to relationships of "power with." Otherwise, society will not be transformed in a more just fashion.

In principle, all the efforts of critical pedagogy, or education for social justice, are aimed at transforming and empowering the consciousness of learners. Only through empowered consciousness, it is argued, can disempowered people transform their lives and help create more social justice in our society. Critical pedagogy itself is based on what is widely called a problem-posing approach to education. It first helps learners identify the externally imposed problems and issues that they face in their lives. However, the two key aspects of critical pedagogy aim, first, to critically analyze the causes behind those issues, particularly powerful and oppressive forces that block learners' legitimate desires for greater happiness and freedom, and then to explore strategic solutions to improving those situations, ideally as a prelude to learners actually putting those strategies into action in their daily lives. In this approach, the teacher does not provide answers for learners, but rather helps the group analyze and strategize together, in a questioning, Socratic way.

Theatre and Critical Pedagogy

Boal (1979, 2002) developed a range of dramatic approaches to critical pedagogy known collectively as Theatre of the Oppressed, with Forum Theatre being the most widely known and used technique around the world. It is designed to use drama as a means of showing the actual situations of oppression that a group is experiencing, but also to explore improvisationally various means of struggling against and transforming those situations for the better (i.e., "a rehearsal for the revolution" [A. Boal, personal communication, 1993]).

More specifically in using Forum Theatre, a group identifies an oppressive problem that it shares in common (e.g., exploitation of workers in a factory by management, discrimination faced by visible minorities, etc.) and creates a play to show how that problem actually occurs. The play is constructed around one main character, or protagonist, who encounters this problem in the persons of one or more antagonists (oppressors) who oppose or block that character's legitimate desires for greater empowerment in his or her life (e.g., better working conditions, freedom from discrimination, etc.). These blocks may be active resistance or mere indifference, yet the effect on the protagonist is the same. The tension in the play builds through several escalating conflicts between protagonist and antagonists and then deliberately ends with no improvement in the situation (a "tragedy" in Boal's words [A. Boal,

personal communication, 1993]). The play is performed by a small number of members of the group for the rest of the group.

The constructed play deliberately shows only the problem in order to allow the whole group together to explore means of improving it. Thus, the play is shown again, but this time members of the group can take the place of the protagonist at any point in the play and improvisationally try different strategies which they think will work better against the antagonists (e.g., different arguments, help from others, etc.). The antagonists themselves then respond improvisationally to these new strategies, finding and using new weapons in their arsenal as oppressors (e.g., different arguments, use of other powerful levers, etc.). While these interventions occur within the framework of the constructed play, participants can create or invent any props or additional characters that could believably be possible (e.g., a telephone, a friend, etc.). As the number of interventions in the play increase, with varying degrees of success, the group analyzes and assesses which strategies seem to offer more promise for improving the problem and why. While a group using Forum Theatre explores its problem and possible alternate responses to it only within the safety of a dramatic mode, the goal of the technique is to ensure that together learners' awareness will be transformed by the experience and that they will feel empowered to behave differently in facing this problem in their daily lives. Under ideal circumstances, a group that meets regularly over a period of time can try some of these new strategies between sessions and then report and discuss how effective they actually were in real life, honing and refining its awareness and empowered behaviour gradually over time.

Before offering several actual examples of Forum Theatre, it may be helpful to consider the notion of "oppressed," a term originating in South America that can sound "heavy" and extreme to North American ears. Indeed, many groups I have worked with reply at first that they are not oppressed at all. However, in explaining further that any blocks or opposition by others to our legitimate desires for greater happiness and freedom is oppressive to us, most groups readily see many examples of it in their lives and see that they share many similar experiences of it. Because of the problematic nature of the term "oppressed," some practitioners of Theatre of the Oppressed use other, more user-friendly terms, such as Diamond's (1994) use of the term "Power Plays" in his work with Forum Theatre. (Boal relates an anecdote of working in France with a group of adolescent boys institutionalized in a correctional facility who claimed at first that they did not experience oppression. Upon further discussion of the notion, they realized that they experienced oppressive behaviour frequently in their lives. Their term for those kinds of experiences? *Emmerdé*, or "dumped on." [A. Boal, personal communication, 1992])

For example, a community group with whom I worked chose excessive noise in an apartment building late at night as a problem it wished to address, quite appropriate for these urban renters. The protagonist in the group's play was a woman arriving home late and tired from her day's work as a domestic, only to be prevented from sleeping by loud music coming from a neighbor's apartment. Her first attempt to achieve her legitimate desire, a good night's sleep in her apartment, was to talk to the offending neighbour, but he showed no interest in lowering his music. Her second attempt was to ask her roommate to try going with her to pressure the loud neighbour to stop, but her roommate did not want any confrontation and refused to help. Her last attempt was to call the building manager, who refused to help her since her rent was late—a powerful lever which he held over her.

In another example, a group of teachers chose as their oppressive problem the challenge of working effectively with an increased number and range of special needs learners in their classes in the face of insufficient resources and professional development. The protagonist was a frustrated classroom teacher who realized that she needed better learning resources and more extensive training if she was to be able to work effectively with her class, and thus regain some satisfaction in her work. Her first attempt was to ask her principal for help. The principal was pleasant, but deflected the issue so that she would not have to deal with it—this year's budget is already spent, it's really a decision for the governing board, etc. The teacher's second attempt was to turn to a colleague who shared her concerns. She asked him to publicly raise the issue with her in the school, but he begged off, claiming too much of his own work, and pressure to spend more time at home. A final attempt was to ask for help from the parent of one of her pupils, a parent who also served on the school's governing board. However, the parent was not comfortable in an advocacy role and was much more interested in asking the teacher to provide more time and help to her own child in the teacher's class.

In regard to consciousness, a technique such as Forum Theatre serves not only as a window to the kind of consciousness currently operating within a group (as seen in the first showing of the constructed play), but also as a means of transforming that consciousness through the collective thinking and efforts of the group (as seen in the improvisational interventions the group members can imagine as possible and try out in the second showing of the play). In summary, while Forum Theatre deals with serious, or "heavy," issues, the atmosphere in a Forum Theatre session is usually very positive and energetic as a group works collectively and creatively together to address the issues it faces. As Boal (1979) indicates, Theatre of the Oppressed is not for the depressed who have given up on their lives. Instead, it is

designed for participants who want to influence and shape their future for the bet-ter, not to wait fatalistically for it to happen to them. That outcome is based on the development of a more empowered consciousness among participants, or in Boal's words, "the courage to be happy" (Boal, 1998, p. iii).

The Experience of the Course

Description and Context of the Course

The three-credit undergraduate drama course I taught yearly over a five-year time span was unusual in that it was not designed as a professional course, that is, not a course of methods of teaching drama in school. It was intended, rather, to serve as an academic course and was open in principle to all university students. However, the students in the course were virtually all teacher education students from various programs—elementary, secondary, music, teaching English as a second language, and physical education. They were a relatively homogeneous group—young, middle-class, mostly white, and largely female—who tended to have had little or, more probably, no previous drama experience. Enrollment in the course was approximately forty each year.

In order to aid students' development as future teachers through the course, I decided to primarily target their personal growth through a good deal of develop-mental drama games and exercises, so as to promote confidence and ease in front of others, greater comfort in their bodies, enhanced use of voice, and greater creativity. I also chose to include in the course a good deal of work with Theatre of the Oppressed techniques, especially Forum Theatre, for two reasons. One was to foster a more empowered consciousness among these future teachers as part of their per-sonal development. The other was to provide them experience with certain peda-gogical techniques that could be widely applicable in schools, youth groups, commu-nity groups, and so on as part of their professional development.

Results: Examples of Oppression for the Constructed Plays

The first several weeks of the course focused primarily on developmental games and exercises in order to allow the group members time to get to know each other and for me to begin building a relationship with them before asking them to share personal experiences as content for Forum Theatre, a technique we would focus

on for approximately six weeks in the middle of the course. As was to be expected, the group members at first found the notion of "oppression" to be foreign and not applicable to them. Yet, with further discussion and sharing of examples, the students soon agreed that they indeed did have regular experiences with oppressive behaviour on the part of others and freely offered a good number of examples as possible content for Forum Theatre. (In the course, we tended to refer to these examples of external oppression as "blocks.") These examples that the students were willing to share publicly generally fell into three categories.

A less mentioned, but still regular, category was about several issues students had with their parents. (Many of these students still lived at home with their parents.) One issue was about the pressure parents exerted on their child not to date a particular person. The other issue was pressure from parents on students to continue their studies in university or to choose a particular field of study, despite the student's wishes to do otherwise.

A more common category was comprised of the issues students faced in their part-time jobs, an experience common to all the students (usually in retail sales or the service industry and only occasionally in educational or recreational programs for children). These issues might focus on coworkers, for example, a coworker who did not pull his or her weight or who did a poor job, thus leaving more work for the student to do on the job. More common, however, were problems stemming from the public or from the students' managers. Customers could treat them rudely, demand special treatment, or complain about their work. Problems with managers ranged from keeping employees working longer than required to unwillingness to respond to requests or complaints and even to harassment in a few cases.

A final and frequent category was made up of issues faced by students in dealing with the university. Occasionally, the problem involved an instructor, who was unresponsive to student requests or concerns about the course. More often, however, students shared stories of oppressive behaviours by the university bureaucracy. These might involve rude behaviour from university staff, sometimes blaming or "guilting" students for not knowing regulations or forgetting to do things, or even occasionally saying that they were too busy to deal with the students' requests at that time. The most oppressive experiences occurred when students were making special requests (e.g., permission to substitute one course for another, a request for a certain placement for student teaching, etc.) since that clearly gave the power of decision making to the staff involved and placed students in a less powerful position. At times, students even had problems in taking their requests or concerns to a higher level in

an office, for example front-line staff resisting giving students an appointment with their superior. It became obvious that students experienced many of these oppressive responses from the university bureaucracy, as revealed by their reaction to seeing the constructed plays for the first time. They frequently greeted them with howls of recognition and laughter, in seeing the situation reflected back to them so accurately, but especially for how well and insightfully students could play several university staff with whom all students had had to deal.

The last two categories of part-time work and university were almost always the ones chosen for developing Forum Theatre examples in class since those were the issues shared most commonly by the students.

Results: Student Consciousness Revealed Through Forum Theatre Examples

The kinds of consciousness with which students seemed to be operating in the face of oppression in their lives were reflected through Forum Theatre in two ways. The first was through the task of creating plays to show the kind of oppression they faced and the second was through the kinds of interventions they attempted in the play in order to improve their situations.

In constructing Forum Theatre plays, it is important that the desire of the protagonist be clear and strong, since it is that force that will create theatrical conflict with the antagonists during the play. In many cases, it was obvious that students were much clearer about and more focused on the oppressive blocks they faced in their lives than they were about their initial desires. The very fact of constructing the plays seemed to at least clarify, and perhaps even reactivate, their initial desires. For example, rather than focusing on indifferent or even hostile managers or coworkers at work, they had to consider their legitimate desires in working part-time (i.e., I want to fund my education or I want to help my family financially). Or, instead of focusing on the unhelpful bureaucracy at the university, they had to reignite their desire to become a teacher and to receive the best preparation possible for it. Such a response on their part raises the concern of the kind of society, and even the kind of education, that would dampen individuals' desires so much.

A second key aspect of constructing Forum Theatre plays is that the protagonist must make attempts to achieve his or her desire, so that the desire is clear even though not attained in the play. This aspect reflects the kind of consciousness upon which participants tend to be operating. While serious situations certainly prompted

students to act in their interests, in many cases it was clear that students were often not making attempts to achieve their legitimate desires. For example, in their part-time work situations, students often characterized the situation as just putting up with injustices and getting through the experience, so as not to jeopardize their job. In dealing with the university, they uniformly referred to their nonresponse as "sucking it up," that is, being unhappy with the situation, but just accepting it and getting through it—whether it was poor service from an office or an unresponsive instructor. Such approaches hint at a fatalistic, "object" consciousness, assuming that things are the way they are and that not much else can be expected or changed. Such a consciousness was mixed with the beginning of an individual, "subject" consciousness ("I") in that students certainly voiced their displeasure at these situations. However, that consciousness usually stopped at the point of complaint and only rarely moved on to taking action. Thus, even the first step of constructing the Forum Theatre plays seemed to prompt students beyond the stage of complaint about their oppressive situations to initiating some action against the oppression—at least theatrically.

Second, the group's improvisational interventions in the plays suggested the kind of consciousness that the students could imagine and try out theatrically, even if they were not living it currently. Virtually all interventions made by the students in the plays reflected an individual, "subject" consciousness ("I"), but at least one that was taking action to struggle against oppressive blocks and trying to achieve one's desires for a more fulfilled life. For example, they would address the issue, ask for decisions to be reconsidered, express how important it was to them, and so on. What was interesting was that virtually all interventions focused on being "reasonable," asking for the "right thing" to be done in the situation. Thus, in a work situation, interventions would suggest that, if all parties did their part, then everyone would be happier or the job would be done more quickly and efficiently or customers would be happier—and thus return with additional business. In the university setting, interventions tried to point out why a request would improve a student's program or preparation as a teacher or that the university regulations allowed such a request. Students never tried a strategy of appealing to the self-interests of an antagonist as a way of achieving their desires. Such a pattern seems to suggest that students expect others to act in a relatively altruistic manner, wanting to do what is right and best in a situation, rather than acting in their own self-interests (of saving time and effort, maintaining power, etc.). Such a tendency suggests that students may not have a well-developed critical analysis of society, that is, an analysis based on individuals and groups acting in their own self-interests and resulting in an unjust social order, kept in place by a stratified power structure and a limited consciousness on the part of the disempowered. Such an analysis might lead to different kinds of interventions, first theatrically and then in life.

Most notable was that students almost never made an intervention based on a collective—and more powerful—consciousness ("we"). My role as facilitator was not to tell students the kind of interventions and strategies that they could try, but rather to foster their own thinking, strategizing, and analysis of the situation. However, after a while, I began to hint broadly at other possibilities by reminding them that they could create any reasonable alternatives for their interventions, including any other people who might be helpful for them. Yet, despite my hints, students continued to simply replace the protagonist individually and try different rationales with the antagonists. Such a tendency was especially noteworthy in regard to the oppressive situations they shared at the university, since they all seemed to have experienced them and collective action against them would have been relatively easy to organize (unlike situations with one's parents that are of a more individual nature). Yet, such a transformative step seemed to escape them, at least during the time of the course in which they engaged in Forum Theatre. As a result, the students remained relatively limited in their power. Not surprisingly, their interventions usually caused some improvement in the situations depicted in the plays, but it was often of a limited nature. In fact, students occasionally felt somewhat frustrated when their several interventions in a play produced such limited results and questioned the worth of the approach.

Since the oppressive situations depicted in the plays were ongoing issues for students, I encouraged them to try in real life some of the more promising strategies that had come out of their Forum Theatre sessions. While only a few students reported engaging in such attempts, their outcomes were usually insightful. In some cases, there was no improvement in a situation. For example, one student had offered early in the course her problem of her parents pressuring her not to date a young man because he was not of the same religion. When we checked into students' progress, or lack of it, later in the course, she reported that her situation was now worse since her new boyfriend was from a visible minority and her parents were putting even more pressure on her. At other times, students reported a slight improvement in the outcome of the encounter. For example, students reported that appealing to the self-interests of university staff in their dealings with them often seemed to put the staff in a more positive and helpful mood. In the end, most students came to realize just how much effort it took to make even slight improvements in the situation, thus coming to appreciate more deeply the notion of "struggle" for social justice. However, this realization made some students wonder about the worth of even trying, when it was so much easier to just "suck it up."

Discussion

A preliminary consideration, before discussing questions raised by this experience, is the extent to which the patterns of students' reactions in doing Forum Theatre in my course are truly indicative of their actual consciousness. While my reading of this experience certainly does not "prove" that students are limited in terms of their consciousness and empowerment, I would offer the probability that their responses in Forum Theatre "suggest" or "hint at" that condition. In addition, I can only surmise that these students are representative of teacher education students in general. However, the very fact that each year's group of students in the course responded in such similar ways indicates that they may well be representative, suggesting larger and more far-reaching questions about critical pedagogy within teacher education.

Can Teachers Empower Pupils if Not Empowered Themselves?

A major question raised by this experience is the extent to which such students, assuming that they received orientation to implementing critical pedagogy as teachers, would be able to effectively implement critical pedagogy for social justice, unless their own consciousness could be further transformed and empowered from what it seems to be. Setting goals for learners that teachers have not yet attained for themselves seems problematic. It also raises questions about the typically primary focus in teacher education on teachers' learning skills, techniques, and strategies of critical pedagogy, as behaviours that can be dealt with separately from a teacher's own personal development and consciousness. The danger is that the potential of transformation for teachers appears to lie in learning a set of surface behaviours. Such learning of pedagogical techniques and strategies usually implies teachers' unlearning of past patterns of perception and communication (such as providing answers to students). Yet, to accomplish that goal, Freire (1972) himself stresses the necessity of individual teachers undergoing a deep and transformative change within themselves, essentially creating a new disposition toward engaging with others, a new disposition upon which the surface behaviours of critical pedagogy can be grafted and become ultimately effective. Fortunately, even if teachers begin by simply applying critical pedagogy techniques in their teaching, it may well have some transformative effect on their consciousness since, as Freire points out, in critical pedagogy everyone teaches and everyone learns, even the teacher.

How Best to Empower Teacher Education Students?

If that hypothesis is true, a second question that arises is how best to foster an empowered consciousness in teacher education students. A first possibility to consider is attempting to accomplish that goal through their teacher education program. It would be unreasonable to expect major changes in students as a result of six weeks of classes experiencing Forum Theatre in my course. However, it is intriguing to consider the potential of students experiencing in their program, not necessarily an orientation to critical pedagogy, but rather a good deal of critical pedagogy itself, designed to foster a transformed and empowered consciousness among students. While it seems possible in principle, it may well be problematic in reality since students identified the university itself as oppressive in several ways, not surprising since universities tend to be part of a powerful elite in society.

A second possibility within their program for students to become effective critical pedagogues would be to work within classrooms and with teachers already operating clearly and effectively on those principles—for student teaching, special projects, and so on. However, those kinds of classrooms and schools tend to be rare, often flourishing in occasional and alternative settings and unable to host many teacher education students.

Perhaps the best possibility for fostering "conscientization" among teacher education students is to provide within their program alternative field experiences or service learning with community-based, not-for-profit organizations that operate on critical principles and levels of awareness, since they tend to be some of the few organizations in society that actually "live" such principles (Lucas, 2005). Community organizations that fulfill only a service, or charitable, role to community members, such as a food bank or homeless shelter, would not be appropriate for such experiences for teacher education students. While such services are important in certain aspects of society, Freire (1972) himself warns of the non-transformative and oppressive danger of this sole role. "Any attempt to 'soften' the power of the oppressor in deference to the weakness of the oppressed almost always manifests itself in the form of false generosity; indeed, the attempt never goes beyond this. In order to have the continued opportunity to express their 'generosity,' the oppressors must perpetuate injustice as well." (p. 29)

Instead, students would need to work within activist community organizations that truly operate on principles of critical pedagogy, that is, critical analysis of social issues based on an imbalance of power and self-interest, as well as collective action to address those issues to achieve greater social justice. For example, Project

Genesis works within a highly multicultural and generally low-income Montreal neighbourhood. It provides many services for neighbourhood residents, but it also facilitates a number of citizen committees on key social issues, such as health, housing, welfare, and so on. Participants on these committees work to critically analyze the social roots of the problems plaguing these important areas. They may link poor housing conditions for many area residents to lax efforts by the city to crack down on landlords, landlords who pay property tax to the city. Or they may highlight and critically analyze the inadequate public funding of the health care system. That is, while the health care system is struggling financially, they will point out that many large corporations in Quebec pay no taxes at all, thanks to laws made by the very government that is not adequately funding the health care system. Beyond these critical analyses, they also prepare public recommendations to present to appropriate authorities, at times even participating in public demonstrations to foster greater awareness of the situation.

As another example, this time in the area of education, Parents in Action for Education is a project of the Montreal-based Third Avenue Resource Centre. It originally coalesced around the concerns of a number of marginalized parents about the quality of the education their children were receiving in the public school system. The movement has since fostered critical analysis of the self-interests of the school system which are often at odds with the desires of parents, has developed capacity-building experiences for the involved parents (such as public speaking, organizational skills, etc.), has organized public discussions and forums on discriminatory issues within the public school system (dropouts and social class, race and academic success, labelling of at-risk learners as self-fulfilling prophecy, etc.) in order to draw public attention and awareness to these issues, and has pressured school boards to address some of these issues by changing their approaches. In a recent development, the movement succeeded in convincing the city's largest school board to include minority parents in the process of developing the board's policy on parental consultation and involvement.

Ideally, by working within such critical, activist organizations as alternative field experiences or service learning, teacher education students would have a good chance not only to develop critical awareness of social issues, but also to experience collective and transformative means of struggle to change unjust situations—in sum, to develop a transformed consciousness. Only with such experience, learning and transformation does it seem that students would truly be ready for implementing critical pedagogy for social justice.

Theatre and Critical Consciousness in Teacher Education

Finally, Forum Theatre can serve simultaneously as both a window (for others) as well as a mirror (for participants) of the kind of consciousness that teacher education students have developed. At the same time, as a form of critical pedagogy, it can prompt change in consciousness by the participants. Even in the short time that students experienced Forum Theatre in my course, it was clear that they experienced a reactivating and clarifying of their desires as well a prompt toward slightly more empowered responses to oppressive situations that they faced. One can only imagine the potential outcomes for students of experiencing much more critical pedagogy during their teacher education programs.

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"Who We Are Matters": Exploring Teacher Identities Through Found Poetry

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the use of found poetry as a means for exploring teacher identity and argues for its broader use in educational research for studying and representing teachers' identities and values. This project is grounded in narrative inquiry and feminist standpoint theories and presents three identity poems created with teachers working in Canadian secondary schools. The author suggests that by gaining a better understanding of how teachers understand themselves and their multiple identities in the classroom, scholars, teacher educators, and school leaders can better formulate curricular interventions, staff development programs, and policy initiatives that will work more effectively with classroom teachers to improve students' experiences in school.

*T*eachers working in schools have many influences, both internal and external, shaping how they perceive and act on the world. In order to have a clearer understanding of how teachers construct their understanding of themselves as professionals, it is important to explore the internal influences that they bring with them to the job. This paper presents the use of found poetry, or poetry constructed from the words of others, as a means for exploring teacher identity and argues for its broader use in educational research for studying and representing teachers' identities and values. The poems from this study offer a rare glimpse at the internal influences that shape teachers' interactions with their school environments. Such identity poems can offer insights on how teachers interpret and apply the external influences of their school community, including policies, curricular demands, administration, as well as informal social structures. By gaining a better understanding of how teachers understand themselves and their multiple identities, it is

possible to work more effectively with classroom teachers to improve school climates and student learning by working more intentionally and effectively with students and colleagues in increasingly diverse communities.

Found poetry is one approach for representing qualitative research data by using participants' own words and distilling them into a poem that is cocreated by the researcher and the participant. Other educational researchers have shown how this as a valuable approach for analysis and representation. They suggest that poetry is a unique tool for exploring and writing about participants' subjective experiences (Butler-Kisber, 2002; Feldman, 2004; Kennard & Johnston-Kosik, 1993; Nielsen, 2004; Sullivan, 2004). This paper shows how found poems can be constructed and demonstrates how they can be used more fully to help teachers understand and explore their own identities.

This exploration of teacher identity emerged as part of a larger study on bullying and harassment. I was seeking to understand how and why teachers intervened in certain forms of bullying and harassment more than others. Bullying is defined as negative actions that are intentional and repeated that hurt or insult another person (Olweus, 1993). Racial harassment is any unwelcome behavior, intentional or unintentional, that has an ethnic or racial component. These incidents may be repeated or may represent one single incident of greater severity (Meyer, 2007; Reed, 1996). Gendered harassment is any behavior, intentional or unintentional, that polices and reinforces traditional heterosexual gender norms such as (hetero) sexual harassment, sexual orientation harassment, and harassment for gender nonconformity. This may also include repeated behaviors or one single incident of greater severity (Meyer, 2006; 2008). Previous studies indicate that gendered harassment is prevalent in secondary schools and teachers consistently fail to intervene or support students who are targeted. This is in contrast with other forms of bullying and racial harassment that research shows may get a more consistent institutional response (Bochenek & Brown, 2001; California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004; GLSEN & Harris Interactive, 2005; Kosciw, 2001; Smith & Smith, 1998).

What became clear through constructing found poems with research participants was that the way teachers construct their personal and professional identities is an important factor that shapes how they perceive and act on incidents in the school. This study shows the strength of found poetry. It provides a concise yet detailed approach to representing a large quantity of qualitative data. Through the course of interviewing the participants in this project, they shared deeply personal stories and powerful influences that shaped their work in schools. Traditional

methods of representing interview data do not provide readers with a multilayered understanding of the multiple forces that influence how teachers perceive and act on situations in their classrooms. I propose that by studying teacher identity through found poetry we can deepen our understandings of educational phenomena and enhance educational research. Improved understandings gleaned from research can potentially provide better educational experiences for students and teachers. Hicks has pointed out the value of exploring teacher identity for empowering educators to teach more creatively and critically:

> The implications of this notion of identity are powerful for teachers, for in it lies the opening for a new possibility to emerge. The transformative intellectual—the teacher—who considers actively his or her identity is more likely to come into an understanding of the social and intellectual reality of his or her world. (2001, p. 142)

The transformative possibilities of teaching for educators who are aware of their professional and personal identities and how they influence their daily actions in school are important to acknowledge. Other recent studies have emphasized the importance of making space for teacher identity work in preservice teacher education as well as for in-service professionals (Jackson, 2001; Johnson, 2007; Lasky, 2005). In fact, Goodson asserts that in the vast quantity of educational research, teachers' voices and identities have been ignored. He states, "By systematically failing to record the voices of ordinary teachers, the literature on educators' careers actually silences them" (1998, p. 16). This paper will present one approach to making space for teachers' voices by exploring teacher identities through found poetry. The first section presents the methods used in this study to create the poems. The second section provides a series of poems cocreated with the teachers in this study to illustrate how poetry can represent diverse identities, and how these identities have influenced their practice. Finally, I will discuss why this arts-based method of inquiry is important in the field of educational research.

Methods

In order to access the internal experiences of teachers, the primary data for this study was collected through a series of three in-depth interviews using Seidman's (1998) model of life-history interviewing. This approach enabled me to establish a rapport with the participants and to gain a deeper understanding of the

factors that influenced their responses and attitudes towards various forms of bullying and harassment. By placing participants' comments in context and building on information discussed in previous interviews, participants were able to understand and make meaning of their experiences. If their statements have deep emotional impacts as well as connections with the experiences of other participants, then validity, or trustworthiness, is achieved (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As of this writing, there have been no qualitative studies in peer-reviewed journals that have systematically examined bullying and harassment from a teacher's point of view, therefore this study was exploratory and aimed to uncover common themes between experiences that could help inform future studies and school interventions. How teachers make meaning out of their experiences with bullying and harassment will shape how they interpret and apply school policies and respond to incidences that they witness. The goal of this inquiry was to explore,

> how human beings make sense of experience and transform experiences into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning. This requires methodologically, carefully, and thoroughly capturing and describing how people experience some phenomenon — how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others. (Patton, 2002, p. 104)

I asked participants to speak openly about their experiences with bullying, racial harassment and gendered harassment and how they make sense of these complex issues in schools. I approached this question with the intent of exploring the multiple forces that shape how teachers construct their understanding of the phenomenon.

Participants were chosen using a combination of maximum variation and snowball sampling. Maximum variation sampling, also known as purposive sampling, seeks out persons that represent the most diverse range of experiences with that phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Snowball sampling was useful in this study as it helped address the problems of access to participants. This form of sampling starts with one or two key informants who then refer colleagues to participate in this project. This word-of-mouth recruitment ensured that participants were more personally invested in the research and met the objectives of locating teachers from a diverse range of backgrounds and professional experience. The resulting group of participants represented a demographically diverse selection of secondary school teachers. In order to protect their identities, they are profiled individually with their complete demographic information. The numbers of teachers who self-identified with each given descriptive category are presented in Table 1.

Table 1:
Participant Demographics

GENDER	3 men	3 women
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	3 heterosexual	3 gay or bisexual
ETHNICITY	3 Euro-Canadian	1 Indian 1 French-Canadian/Métis 1 Arab
RELIGION	3 No affiliation	1 Christian 1 Muslim 1 Bahai
LANGUAGES	**1st (First language)** 4 English 1 French 1 Hindi	**2nd language (Fluent)** 3 French 2 English 1 Arabic
CITIZENSHIP	3 — 1st generation Canadian	2 — 5th+ generation Canadian 1 — 2nd generation Canadian
AVERAGE YEARS TEACHING	5.6	1-4 years: 3 5-10 years: 2 10+ years: 1
AVERAGE AGE	31	Min: 27 Max: 39

I faced some limitations in recruiting participants. As a result, most of the teachers were relatively young with an average of 5.6 years of classroom teaching experience. Although I made repeated efforts to locate and invite more teachers who were older and who had been in the classroom for over ten years, I was unable to do so. This challenge could be partially explained by reports from younger teachers that the more experienced teachers were perceived to be less likely to intervene in cases of bullying and harassment. This perception is consistent with a bullying study that showed that more experienced teachers become "progressively more tolerant of most undesirable behaviors" (Borg, 1998, p. 77).

I conducted a series of three 60-90 minute interviews. They consisted of open-ended questions in order to allow the participants to explore the issues as they understood them. The first interview provided an opportunity for the teachers to reflect on their path that brought them to a career in teaching as well as the issues of bullying and racial harassment. The second interview started with a reflection on questions or issues that arose from the first interview and needed clarification or further exploration. Once these were covered, the rest of the interview focused on the concept of gendered harassment. These interviews provided detailed descriptions of specific incidents and cultural factors that the participants viewed as significant in shaping students' behaviors in school. The third and final interview asked questions about the links between various forms of bullying and harassment as well as the institutional responses they witnessed in their schools. Teachers also spoke about the tools they used to address bullying and harassment and how they developed these tools.

The three interviews for each participant were transcribed, reread and excerpts were selected to construct a profile for each participant (Seidman, 1998, p. 103). Profiles are designed to allow the participants' own words to tell the story of their experience with the phenomenon. Approximately 50-60 pages of interview transcripts were distilled down to an average of six pages of personal narrative. The guiding question that informed this process of editing down the participant's narratives was: "What are the individual and cultural influences that are shaping and impacting how teachers construct their understandings of the problems?" Selections were included when the participant spoke about his/her personal experiences, educational biography, teaching philosophy, and identities. The following excerpts are examples from two teachers' interviews that became part of their narratives:

> *The biggest challenge probably was…and all of this is about who I am, and how I work as a teacher. Having my lessons put together so that I know exactly how I'm gonna follow through the next day. So, absolutely the top thing for me was…an overload in terms of preparation. (Anita)*

> *When I was a student I think about the times when I got called fag. It's not a healthy way but I think that's what happens to kids like that who feel like they're being harassed, they'll turn around and do something bad and I think it has a big impact on kids, a huge impact. Because I had memories of that when I was growing up and they're probably the most poignant memories of my high school and elementary career when I got publicly pointed out as being gay. (Pierre)*

In order to represent this data in a way that conveys the emotions and values behind participants' words, I crafted each profile into a poem using an approach suggested by Butler-Kisber (2001; 2002).

Found poems were created in order to convey a large amount of information gleaned from the interviews in a concise manner. The idea was to give the reader a clearer window onto the teachers' identities and values while retaining the voices of the participants. This form of arts-based research aligns with the feminist and queer theories informing this study as it disrupts traditional ways of understanding and values the unique perspectives offered by participants. It also allows for the expression of distinct identities and experiences that have helped shape each participant's view of the world. Sullivan describes the power of using found poetry as the ability to "compress and render accessible the results" and to merge data and interpretation into a "single act, a single form" (2004, p. 34). She explains the strengths in this method by revealing how the detailed attention to the data necessary to construct such poems can lead to new insights about the data and can deepen the understandings generated from the study. Kennard & Johnston-Kosik also acknowledged the value of using poetry as a method to explore mentor-teacher relationships and experiences by explaining: "through poetry, both of us found a way to know our own stories and to tell them to each other. Our poems freed us from the powerful constraints of the expert-novice myth and allowed us to begin to tell a new story with each other" (1993, p. 85).

I shared a similar connection with my participants that led Butler-Kisber (2001) to this form of data representation. "I wanted to try to write for, rather than about, these young, capable research participants by disrupting some of the more conventional boundaries of representation, while attending to their gendered world" (p. 34). I also wanted to "re-create the poignancy of their quiet message" (p. 35) and to honor the voices and experiences of the participants in this study. By presenting information about the participants in this form, I hoped to give the reader a more intimate and vivid portrait of each teacher as well as to "make meaning emotionally clearer for the reader" (Feldman, 2004, p. 12). By distilling their words into these poems, I wanted to share with the reader the respect, care and emotion that I felt as I listened to each participant talk about his or her experiences.

To construct each poem, I began with each teacher's shortened narrative and highlighted "nuggets," or short chunks of data that represented something about the teacher's identities, philosophy, or educational biography (Butler-Kisber, 2002). These nuggets were usually "I" statements such as: "I love kids," or, "I was always

afraid." Sometimes they were general "you" statements such as: "You get desensitized," or "you worry until your job is secure." To preserve the strength of these words, qualifiers such as "sort of" and "a little" were removed from these statements. Once these nuggets had been selected, they were grouped into the following emergent themes: why I got into teaching, my values and teaching philosophy, memorable school experiences, and personal identity. Duplicate statements were removed and a poem was constructed with the remaining nuggets by organizing them into thematic stanzas. The last step was to add punctuation and organize the statements within each stanza so that they flowed to help the reader to connect with the content in the poem.

These much shorter found poems were then sent to all participants for their response and feedback. The idea was to have the participants feel that the constructed poems authentically represented their experiences. By engaging them in this part of the analysis I endeavoured to honour their participation in the research process and to include their voices. I endeavoured to maintain an ethical research stance and increase the trustworthiness of the work. Participants were sent a description of my analysis process and a copy of their poem. Their responses were overwhelmingly positive with a few participants making minor changes that then led to an iterative process of revision. Revisions of the poem went back and forth between the researcher and the participant until both were satisfied with the final product presented in this paper. This was a rewarding process that allowed me to reconnect with the participants a year after the interviews had been conducted and provide them with an update on the project.

Identity Poems

Each individual brought a specific set of identities and experiences to his/her teaching as well as the research process. What quickly became evident in the interviews was the significant influence of their personal identities and their own experiences in school (Britzman, 2003), on shaping how they perceived the culture of their current school. As I worked to write up the complex and detailed information each teacher brought to the study, I struggled with how to create a portrait of each individual that would offer the reader a brief, yet emotionally powerful representation of the internal influences that shaped a teacher's daily actions and choices. These found poems were intended to provide these insights about how the teachers constructed their identities while maintaining their signatures by using their own words.

Anita Day[1]
(female, age 31, 7 years teaching)

I can't say I've always dreamt
of being a teacher
that would be a lie.
I could do two things which I enjoy:
work with young people and teach math.
The most important thing is
to create
an environment where they feel
safe and respected,
building that trust.
You stand up there and
lead by example.

It's tough as a teacher of color.
I have to be very careful.
It really hits me personally.
It's hard to not let my emotions get all
tangled up in there.
I have very little room
to slip up.
Is this because I am a woman of color?
Is that really about race?
Yeah, maybe.

You get immune.
You get desensitized.
I consciously make an effort
to get at my own prejudice.
How much work this has been
frightens me.
The kids need to see you
being firm, being fair.

When we moved to Canada,
my dad was outright discriminated against,
to his face.
Words,
behaviors,
are very hurtful.

Anita is a dedicated teacher who is passionate about her work in the classroom. She cried at times during the interviews as she reflected on experiences she has had during her time in the classroom. The challenges she faces as a teacher of color and the individual work she has done to unlearn her own cultural biases impact her work in education. She acknowledges how teachers who have been in the classroom longer can get desensitized to student behavior and how she actively works at being firm and fair. She also spoke about her own experiences with discrimination and how they make her sensitive to the damaging effects of words and behaviors. Anita has taken a sabbatical from teaching to return to graduate school full-time.

Pierre LeSage
(male, age 39, 14 years teaching)

I love kids.
Teaching meshed with my personality.
To make them learn something.
To touch success.

I think about the times
when I got called fag
They're the most poignant memories of
my high school and elementary career.
I made sure my students knew
I didn't tolerate any of that stuff.
It's the one that I hear the most.
It carries the least consequence.

I looked for schools that were disadvantaged.
It's there that I do the most good.
I've never been able to put a picture
of my partner
on a desk.

I was always afraid.
The lack of respect
from the kids.
Being a gay man,
I'm more sensitive.
I can't detach myself.
Having experienced harassment,
made me define my role
as a teacher.

Pierre is an experienced teacher who spoke of many difficulties he faced in his career as a gay man in schools. His experiences being targeted as a student, and being harassed as a teacher by students, colleagues, and parents, have caused him to develop a deep awareness of how sex, gender, and sexual orientation shape people's experiences in schools. In addition to graduate coursework on the topic, he has been pursuing a harassment case against his school from a previous teaching position. He talked about his struggle to stay in the field of education in spite of the severe discrimination he has faced. At the time of this writing, he has left education to pursue a career in real estate.

Homer
(male, age 35, 7 years teaching)

I was searching for myself.
I wasn't happy.
I needed to reorganize my life.
I decided to get a teaching degree.
I'm here to make the students
happy.
I want students to feel
welcome.
I want to push the envelope.
It's hard every year.
After the tenth time of hearing the same thing,
you lose that sensitivity.

I came from a high school that was
very very violent;
lots of knives,
lots of guns,
lots of drugs.
We were the only minority group
I got incredibly bullied.
I was called everything:
Black, Jew, Vietnamese.
I got into fights every single day.

When I started teaching
I started remembering all those horrible things.
When I was young, I was using that word
quite a bit,
'you're a fag.'
I have to tell the other kids,
stop using these words,
they're hurtful.

I don't necessarily agree with homosexuality.[2]
I catch myself sometimes saying,
'oh that's so gay,'
What did I just do?
I'm conscious of what I'm doing,
I'm trying to correct myself.

Homer was the only heterosexual man who participated in this study, but his experiences of being bullied in school and as a target for racial harassment made him sensitive to issues of bias in schools. He talked about how more experienced teachers may lose their sensitivity to certain issues and spoke freely about his own process in learning to confront sexism, racism, and homophobia in his school. At the time of the study, he had the narrowest definitions of bullying and harassment but was a vocal critic of the racist and sexist practices he observed in some of his colleagues. The footnote to his poem (see Notes) shows an interesting development from his earlier statements in the interviews. Homer continues to teach in public schools.

Discussion

Each individual brought a specific set of identities and experiences to his/her teaching as well as the research process. What quickly became evident in the interviews was the significant influence of the teachers' personal identities and their own experiences in school (educational biography) on shaping how they perceived and acted in the culture of their current school. All of the participants talked about their experiences of having felt marginalized in society due to their identities as sexual minorities, women, or people of color. These experiences in their own schooling and lives acted as very strong motivators to act out against discriminatory behavior that they witnessed as teachers. At times, these factors also acted as barriers to consistent intervention because they felt vulnerable as minorities in their schools. This vulnerability and the tensions it caused for the teachers was a major source of struggle for the participants. They cared deeply about reducing the harms of homophobia and sexism and other forms of bias for their students, but also had to negotiate how they experienced these forces as teachers.

Most teachers in this study spoke of their personal desire or commitment to challenge issues of gendered harassment but felt limited in their actions due to a perceived lack of support from the administration and their colleagues. On the other hand, every single participant spoke of a personal commitment to challenging bias in the classroom. This was often paired with an articulation of a marginalized aspect of the teachers' own identity. Each of these teachers had a political consciousness about social inequalities that had been shaped by their own education and personal experiences. This consciousness influenced their teaching philosophy and how they perceived their students and school cultures.

These poems give us a glimpse inside the hearts and minds of these teachers and how certain experiences and aspects of their identity shaped how they perceived and responded to incidents of bias and harassment in their schools. What shines through in the poems is that these teachers view themselves as different from the average educator. The fact that four of the participants have left the public school setting is also of some concern. It may indicate that more progressive or social justice-minded educators feel that they are not able to work effectively within the current structures of public schooling. It may also indicate that they did not feel as if their identities or contributions were recognized or valued in their schools. As traditionally conservative institutions, it is not surprising that schools may force out more critical and progressive thinkers who are unable to make their personal and professional

philosophies work within the current structures of schools. Another common theme was that aspects of the teachers' identities that have caused them to feel marginalized in society such as their ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, have impacted how they construct their responsibilities in the classroom and how they relate with their students, colleagues, and administrators. This theme supports a similar finding in work done in the area of educator activism around peer sexual harassment. In a study of eleven educators in the Southern U.S., Jones concluded that victimization emerged as a significant impetus for educator activism and intervention regarding sexual harassment in their schools (2005, p. 26). This is an interesting finding as there was not a single volunteer in this study who identified as a white, heterosexual male. As several teachers pointed out, it was their personal experiences with discrimination and marginalization that made them particularly sensitive to these issues in schools. The challenge that these findings present is how to raise the awareness of educators who have not personally felt the impacts of discrimination or exclusion from dominant culture, as well as how to retain passionate and critical thinking educators when certain structures of education seem intent on forcing them out.

Conclusions

The poems presented in this paper indicate that using found poetry as an arts-based form of research provides a rich and detailed way of representing participant experiences and is a unique tool for exploring and writing about teachers' identities. The poems from this study present a verbal portrait of the internal influences that shape teachers' interactions with their students and school culture. This internal filter is made up of important aspects of each teacher's personal history and educational philosophy. By gaining a better understanding of how teachers understand themselves and their multiple identities in the classroom, scholars, teacher educators, and school leaders can better formulate curricular interventions, staff development programs, and policy initiatives that will more effectively work with classroom teachers to improve school climates.

Found poetry as a form of data analysis and representation holds great potential for exploring more deeply the complex structures that shape and inform teacher practice. By immersing oneself in participants' words and carefully constructing a poem in partnership with the teacher, researchers can develop more nuanced understandings of the issues under study. Found poems can address the complex natures of teacher identities and offer a valuable lens through which researchers can

better understand a wide variety of issues. In this instance they show how teacher identity can have a powerful influence on practice and hold promise for influencing multicultural education and other curricular initiatives, policy implementation, professional development, and transformational school leadership.

The importance of individual identity work for teachers has been recognized by many educational scholars (Britzman, 2003; Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007; Goodson, 1998; Hicks, 2001; Johnson, 2007; Nieto, 1999) yet still it struggles to gain recognition as a legitimate and rigorous form of scholarship. I hope that the insights into teacher identity demonstrated by the found poems included in this article, as well as the detailed account of this approach, can help offer other scholars the evidence and the tools they need to include rich and innovative discussions of teacher identity in multiple areas of educational research.

Notes

1. All names in this article are pseudonyms selected by the participants.

2. One year after the interviews, this teacher wrote me after reading his poem and said: "I know that I said that but at the same time I don't feel it reflects my view on the matter. I would prefer to say that homosexuality does not make anyone less of a person. My student who was openly gay and a recent documentary on homosexuality have really helped me in my views on this topic."

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A Quest for a Theory and Practice of Authentic Assessment: An Arts-Based Approach

Joe Norris, St. Francis Xavier University

ABSTRACT

Multiple intelligences and learning style theories articulate that there is a diverse population of students who learn and understand in a variety of ways. If assessment is meant to be authentic and just, teachers and school systems must expand their forms of assessment not only to accommodate, but also to encourage and celebrate multiple ways of knowing. This paper provides concrete examples of how arts-based assignments can be an authentic and rigorous form of assessment.

Darling-Hammond, Ancess, and Falk (1995) lament that:

> With all of the burgeoning interest in alternative forms of assessment, there is yet very little rich description of how schools develop and use strategies such as portfolios, projects, performance tasks, and other documentation of student accomplishments to inform instruction and to stimulate learning. (p. xi)

I n their book Darling-Hammond, Ancess, and Falk (1995) provide examples of projects, collaborative learning, anecdotal comments from student observations, and a primary language record. They recommend forms of self, peer, and supervisory assessment using contextualized learning, meta-cognition, and learning style theories to underpin their search for instruction that is meaningful, and assessment that is authentic. Early in my career as a teacher educator, I undertook a

similar challenge seeking to create multiple ways of assessing student learning, framing my search with the question "How do I model multiple ways of knowing, doing, being, and learning in my teaching with pre-service and in-service teachers so that they may have exemplars to bring to classrooms of their own?" The question is an unbounded one (Henderson, 1992), not meant to lead to a resolution but, rather, to underpin practice. It has guided both my instruction and assessment over the past nineteen years as a teacher educator.

The paper describes a few ways in which I have attempted to incorporate the arts in my classroom, documenting some of the "rich description" that Darling-Hammond, Ancess, and Falk request. Firstly, I link an arts-based approach to epistemological and educational theories, providing a rationale for multimedia forms of instruction and assessment that extend beyond the hegemony of word and number. Secondly, I provide examples of arts-based instruction that I have used to assist students in recognizing the artistry within. One must not only assign, but also teach, in ways that enable students to successfully undertake assignments. Thirdly, I provide examples of student work and their metacognitive logs as evidence, not only of their learning, but also of the power of arts-based assessment. I conclude by making explicit the value of arts-based assessment in education.

From Theory to Practice

Gadamer (1975) claims that whenever we translate something into another language, we recognize the incompleteness of both languages. Both contain traces not present in the other. For the translator, knowing, understanding, and meaning exist in the space between languages. In this space new meanings are found about both the concept and the language. In the act of translation, knowing becomes recursive.

As a drama teacher educator, I initially applied Gadamer's theory to lessons on choral speech. I found that the written text was too quickly translated into the spoken word resulting in the use of clichés. Without knowing what they were doing, I asked groups of students to colour the text of a poem and then instructed them to use the colour to guide their choices in how to divide the lines and to determine vocal inflections. Their conversations were rich and their decisions thoughtful as they used colour as a means of analysis. The act of translating into an intermediary medium enhanced student understanding, and corroborated Gadamer's theory.
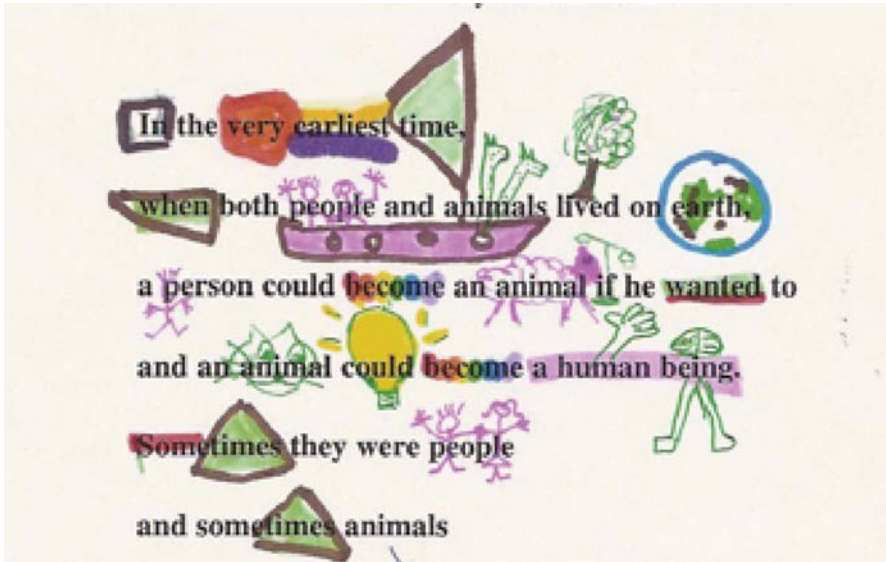
Fig. 1: Colouring of an Elizabeth Cleaver poem (Cleaver, 1995, p. ii)

MacLeod (1987) claims that that there are five ways of knowing and communicating the world, namely, through word, number, image, gesture, and sound. The use of the word symbol system is primarily taught in language arts; number in mathematics, science, and music; image in the visual arts; gesture in dance; and, sound in music. She concludes with the claim that drama integrates all five. As in the example shown in Figure 1, students translated words into colours and symbols and, then turned these colours and symbols into sounds (voice). The lesson also addressed a variety of multiple intelligences (Armstrong, 1994; Gardner, 1983). In this example, students utilized their linguistic, spatial, and interpersonal intelligences.

Setting the Stage

Over the years I have designed a number of multimedia lessons to engage students in the act of translation and processing course content by using a variety of intelligences.

Concrete poetry (Norris, 1995; Wihak & Merali, 2007) has been used as an icebreaker. I begin many classes by asking students to draw their names on file cards

turning the letters into shapes based upon their interests. I ask them to think about how they define themselves, thinking beyond the clichés. I use prompts such as, "What do you do? What interests you (hobbies, books, movies, collections, recreation)? What are you aspirations? What are your fears? Who are the important people in your lives? What puzzles you? What makes you happy, excited, angry, and sad? What are your teaching/research interests?"

I suggest that they spend some private time thinking about themselves before beginning the task. This reflection acts as a form of brainstorming and usually takes them away from the typical responses of self-introduction. I then provide an example with an explanation.

In Figure 2 a pipe forms my "J" referring to Magritte's painting, *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (Magritte, 1928-29). I explain my attraction to postmodernism and the concept of representation. The green "o" is a labyrinth, a metaphor for one's life quest, introduced by Alex de Cosson (Irwin, Grauer, de Cosson, & Wilson [2004]). The backwards "e" (a series of cul-de-sacs) represents my interest in building new homes.
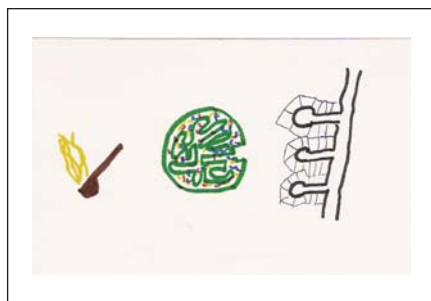

Fig. 2: "Joe" written in concrete poetry

For approximately fifteen minutes students visit themselves through the art making. The self-introductions that follow are always 'sign'ificant as each person tells things about themselves they are willing to share.

Using the "mantle of the expert" (Wagner, 1976), I place students in soft roles as the experts. In a *Principles of Learning* class I enter as member of a search company hired to select an advertising agency (groups of students) to create a campaign for a new school founded upon holistic education principles. The students' readings on the topic are called their "briefing documents." Individually they are instructed to skim through the articles to find quotes that could promote the school on bus ads, newspaper spreads, billboards, and brochures. Once they find the quotes they are asked to choose the best ten as determined by the group. From that ten, one is to be chosen to create a mock-up of a poster. During this one to two-hour activity students are engaged in making their own meanings of the readings.

The poster, as seen in Figure 3, takes its focus from the quote "transcend the here and now by constructing a new reality" (Barnes, 1976, p. 19). The small figure sitting on the frame is based upon what Paul Tillich considers the fatal pedagogical error, "to throw answers, like stones, at the heads of those who have not yet asked the questions" (Brown, 1971, p. 15).
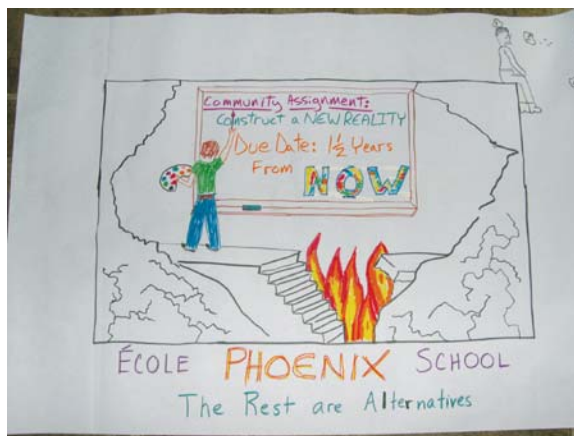

Fig. 3: Poster campaign advertising a holistic education school

The activity demonstrates how students can translate course content visually, processing the information through multiple intelligences. On a few occasions I have used word-to-word translations where a list of quotes was turned into "found poetry" (Butler-Kisber, 2002) with a poster created from the poem.

Orff (1977) instruments, as shown in Figure 4, have been used to demonstrate musical intelligence as students explore emotions through sounds.

In addition to experiences like these that prepare students for an arts-based assignment, two other instructions are given. Firstly, students are asked not to predetermine their meanings but to allow the art-

Fig.4: Samples of Orff instruments

work to generate new meanings. I encourage them to enter what Neilsen (2002) calls the "liminal space": "Knowledge, like fiction itself, is liminal space. It never arrives. It is always on the brink. It is always a waiting space, a green room …" (p. 208). It allows the media to construct meaning. Secondly, the students are asked to keep a metacognitive log, another tool of translation, in which they record their thoughts, decisions, and insights emerging from the process. Metacognition assists learners to become aware of their thinking (Carrell, 1989; Peters, 2000; Smith, Rook, & Smith, 2007). This activity makes explicit the insights found as students document how word informs the art and the art informs the word in a recursive fashion.

In keeping with Pinar's (1975) belief that "before we can learn to teach in such a way, we must learn to learn in such a way" (p. 412), I take the time to let my students experience first hand arts-based processing prior to trying it on their own. Later, many return with exciting stories about how they incorporated the activities into their own teaching.

The Assignments

The following are examples of the artwork generated by the students and the metacognitive logs that accompanied them. They are empirical evidence of the depth of thought and degree of student engagement that can take place when one uses the arts to create personal meanings. Some of the artwork and the metacognitive logs were given to me as gifts at the end of the courses. Students gave me permission to use them in my future teaching assignments and in research. A few commented that they were grateful to have been able to view the works of previous students to inspire them and were happy to reciprocate for students of the future. All students whose assignments are cited were contacted by e-mail and sent the section that discussed their projects. They reconfirmed their willingness to share their works. The following is a small sample of my collection:

Collage

Collage has made up the bulk of the arts-based assignments. It seems to be a comfortable form for those who claim that they are not artists. For some, it was a new medium; for others, it was a welcome return. For me, it was a slow shift. I had never made a collage until a graduate student asked to do one as an assignment. To understand the process, I made one as a response to hers. The experience was powerful and I made notes about the process so that I could pass them on to others (Norris, Berry, & Guercio, 1999). In subsequent classes I provide what I had experienced to my students to assist them in beginning one of their own.

Firstly, I searched magazines for pictures and phrases about the topic, avoiding constructing a preliminary collage in my mind. My general rule was, "Reject nothing that creates a reaction and edit later. One does not know where the subconscious may lead." Secondly, I delayed cutting and selected full pages. I wanted to reserve how I cut the piece for the context in which it would be placed. For example, as illustrated in Figure 5, with one picture of a path through a row of trees, I cut the

path into triangles and pasted the pieces slightly apart in order to accentuate the sense of journey. For me, cutting was an act of interpretation.

Thirdly, the arranging and cutting evolved in a spiral fashion as each informed the other. In a photography magazine I found a series of lenses. I wanted to point them at the posed people. Rather than having a traditional rectangular photograph of the lenses, I cut them, outlining their shapes. The placement of the lenses informed my cutting and vice versa.

Fig. 5: Section of a collage response to a student collage

Finally, even in the pasting, changes occurred. As one stroke of the paintbrush informed the next, I was open to a rearrangement, knowing that gluing meant no going back. This was a scary stage that required a leap of faith.

The collage provided a different avenue of reflective thought. It assisted me in understanding how others may visually process material and, like McDermott (2002), I learned how to utilize it as a meaningful course assignment.

The Collage Work of Kathy F.

Kathy was enrolled in my curriculum theory course in the summer of 2006. For the first assignment, students could choose an educational theorist or theory to study and for the second, they could analyze a movie using curriculum theory concepts, undertake an arts-based approach, or, choose a second theory or theorist to examine. Kathy chose the collage as a means of thinking about gender stereotypes (see Figure 6). She entered the experience with preset assumptions: "Prior to the collage process I

Fig.6: Collage entitled *Gender Stereotype* by Kathy F.

truly felt that gender stereotypes were no longer an issue.… I wanted the collage to demonstrate the strides that our society has made…"

From her collection of images Kathy became aware that her perspective required revision: "This vision quickly changed as I was faced with blatant images of gender-specific professions…"

For those new to the collage experience, there is some doubt regarding the wealth of material that can be found. Usually, term papers are linear and logical, working from a stance of explanation. A paper acts as a form of transmission, demonstrating what one knows. Collage works at a metaphorical level and meanings are transformed as new connections are made with the found material and the thoughts generated through the topic chosen. Kathy was surprised that she easily found so much: "It was not at all challenging to find both pictures and words that fit the perceived female and male stereotypes…. I was not expecting to be over-whelmed by the amount of gender stereotypical material I found."

The curriculum theory class discussed how power and privilege are taught and rein-forced within and outside of the school system. Kathy brought this understanding into the process: "Regardless of the age of the subjects, both male and female, the majority of the advertising images depicted them in their respective stereotypical roles."

From the meanings generated through the process Kathy turned her attention to the collage composition. Her arrangement and additions to the pictures and phrases, as articulated in her metacognitive log, demonstrated her depth of analysis:

> …it became obvious to me that society's gender stereotypical beliefs com-pletely surround and overshadow those individuals who may not fit into the prescribed belief system.

> The border…will help to further illustrate for the audience how stereotypi-cal we are as a society.

Meanings and forms co-emerge from the process as the medium informs the mes-sage (McLuhan, 1977) and vice versa. Scissors not only define shape but also define meaning: "I chose to cut the words in such a way that show very sharp edges; indica-tive of the belief that words can hurt…"

The act of cutting/framing assists in the concept exploration/analysis clearly demonstrating the message within the medium. Arts-based assignments provide a variety of forms not available in the printed text alone.

Throughout the process Kathy incorporated terms and concepts she had encountered in the course. She used these to guide the process. The metacognitive log made her decisions explicit. Her understandings of the course were assembled in and through the collage. The collage did not merely act as a receptacle upon which meanings were placed but a process through which insights were generated.

Kathy concluded her analysis with a decision about placement. Here she extended her thesis through an actual disruption of the frame, creating a border-crosser (Giroux, 1992). She ended this section of her log with hope.

> I have placed one image and one phrase in such a way that they overlap the border and the inside area of the collage.… to illustrate that there are individuals who may prescribe to components of both sides of the gender stereotype…

The Collage Work of Shawn L.

Shawn was enrolled in the same course as Kathy. She noted that changes in her focus occurred as the process progressed.

> I wanted to head in the direction of "fair not always being equal." As I looked through the pages I saw lots of pictures that portrayed happy children in safe environments with their families.… This made me think of the different experiences, or lack of experiences that children have upon entering and during their schooling (see Figure 7).

Fig. 7: Collage entitled *Disparity in Education* by Shawn L.

Being open to the artistic process is an active surrender of the will (Nachmanovitch, 1990; Rutledge, 2004). Like the theatre adage, "the best acting is reacting," Shawn's metacognitive log reported that she allowed the pictures to guide her thinking. While she entered the process with a particular idea, it changed as a result of the materials at hand. In a similar vein, Ballesteros (2008) describes the inner state required to undertake Ikebana, the art of Japanese flower arrangement:

> The learning does not come from merely memorizing the basics but from the process where students begin to attune to their inner selves, to the flowers and branches they are touching, to the surroundings that envelope them, and by extension to the world they exists in. Allow yourself to find beauty in harmony, beauty that only an uncluttered mind can grasp…

Shawn was able to abandon her original theme as the material "spoke" to her. Unlike one method of writing that suggests that one begins with a thesis and finds evidence to support it, an external hermeneutic (Werner & Rothe, 1979), Shawn allowed the found material to redirect her thinking (internal hermeneutic). The metacognitive log served as a record of her emergent meaning-making.

Shawn's authorship lay in her responses to the things in front of her. They influenced her thinking as she both transformed the work and herself. The pictures transformed her, authoring her. "Authorship," "authority," and "authenticity" have the same root "auth" meaning "bringing about" (Klein, 1966). In the case of (auth)entic assignments the known cannot be separated from the knower as there is a dialectic relationship between the collage and the collagist. In a phenomenological sense the collage authors the collagist. The assignment is authentic in that it invites and encourages the authorship of the student rather than demanding a reproduction according to some predetermined outcome. The pictures influenced Shawn's thoughts as she used the course content to conceptualize them.

Shawn also used the collage as a springboard to reflect on her previous practice…

> As I sit and look at this work of art I cannot help but think of a boy I taught many years ago.… I felt he was "lazy" and he spent quite a bit of time with me at recess completing unfinished class work and homework. Surprisingly, Jon seemed to enjoy spending time with me…

> I will never forget the day after he left, a little girl came to me and said that Jon had been crying on the bus ride home.… She went on to tell me that his mom would have parties late into the night and Jon was so scared that he would leave the house and hide in the woods. And I was worried about homework!

Students were encouraged to make the assignment an opportunity for renewal. Shawn's story is a courageous one. She turned her insights towards herself, reexamining her past with a new lens. Shawn's collage and metacognitive log demonstrated how she was able, through the collage, to utilize the course material to reexamine her own practices.

Stained Glass

Sue M. was enrolled in a graduate course called *Principles of Learning* that took an educational psychology perspective. I began with a curriculum theory focus using the concepts of the null and hidden curricula (Flinders, Noddings, & Thornton, 1986) to demonstrate how educational psychology has underpinning epistemological assumptions.

> Continental philosophers, even when they explicitly contest many assumptions underlying hermeneutics, have continued to produce detailed discussions that show how knowledge depends upon being in a world that is inseparable from our bodies, our language, and our social history — in short, from our embodiment (Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1992, p. 149).

Sue chose to make a stained glass window, illustrated in Figure 8, as a way to analyze Eisner's (1985) "five curriculum orientations" and immediately began to experience the interplay of form and content.

> As I thought about each of these orientations, I was able to picture them in a very basic shape.…As I let the light shine through the glass, I think of the possibilities that I as a teacher am able to shape the curriculum that is presented to me.

Fig 8: Stained glass work entitled *Eisner's Five Curriculum Orientations* by Sue M.

The textures of the pieces of glass and her shaping them into form provided her with further insights into her life as a teacher. As she handed me the assignment she claimed that she was able to explore the concept much deeper than she would have if she had chosen a written paper. Through the act of translation, Sue escaped the hegemony of word as the new media "shed a different light" onto the topic.

> Cognitive Processes…. I see this as the process being more important than the product…. The large purple rectangles represent the process; the small purple rectangle represents the product. In my class right now I would say that this orientation is present… (See Figure 9).

Fig. 9: Stained glass panel on Eisner's cognitive processes orientation

Sue continued that, in the future, she will focus her upcoming unit of dinosaurs to generate student thought and voice. Her lessons will not merely focus on the content but on how her students think within the content. She demonstrated her use of theory to guide her practice. She also used theory to critique hegemonic practices in education…

> …the goal of Academic Rationalism is to teach every student the, "best of the best." No time is to be wasted on subjects that are not "most worthy of study"…. I have attempted to show this in glass by having a small orange square inside a large blue square. This shows that we get the best of some things, but it is not everything (see Figure 10).

Fig.10: Stained glass panel on Eisner's academic rationalism orientation

Visually, Sue conceptualized the null curriculum (what is not taught) revealing its limitations. She also reflected upon her previous teaching and extended it into the future with a challenge to the Self. She found/created personal relevance through the project.

> In Personal Relevance children take responsibility of their own learning by investigating things that they feel are important to them…. I know that in my own classroom, I would like to have the children more involved in their

own learning and be given the opportunity to have more input into their curriculum….The heart represents personal relevance… (See Figure 11).

Sue recognized that student engagement comes from a place where spaces are created for student voice (Zyngier, 2007).

Fig.11: Stained glass panel on Eisner's personal relevance orientation

Through the assignment Sue used visual metaphors to add to her understanding of the course content and brought this understanding to assess her role in the present educational environment. Again, she made this a challenge in her practice.

The next panel represents curriculum as technology. In this curriculum, means-ends are all important…. I see this as a balancing act…. The triangles are point to point. One triangle represents the means while the other, the ends. Since the tips are touching, one wrong move and the top triangle will fall…. I am going to make a conscientious effort to include the other curriculum styles into my program of studies (See Figure 12).

Fig. 12: Stained glass panel on Eisner's curriculum as technology orientation

For the final orientation Sue created two panels, as illustrated in Figure 13, exploring the relationship between the two players, the individual and society.

With the final orientation I see as two different styles. Although both deal with society, I see "social adaptation" as society telling us what the problem is and what we must do to correct it…. "Social reconstruction" on the other hand is each individual seeing a problem in society that he/she chooses to work toward to solution…. I showed social adaptation as the individual being the small yellow circle in the middle with society being the dark brown circle surrounding it… Social reconstruction is represented

by the little brown circle (society) surrounded by the large yellow circle.

Figure 13: Stained glass panel entitled *On Democracy in Education* by Sue L.

Floor Cloth

Sue L. took the course *Principles of Learning* in the same year as Sue M. She had previously studied the making of floor cloths and chose this as her medium or threshold to new understandings.

> I decided to work with my knowledge and new awareness of my desire for a more democratic space for learning, through the creation of a floor cloth about democracy. I thought it might serve for me as a portable reminder, and as a meeting place for open discourse and conversation.

Sue's log pointed out that the understanding of democratic teaching is ephemeral. Her desire for future conversations and her goal to implement it indicated her belief in the fluidity of knowledge, that meanings are "placeholders" (Osberg, Biest, & Cilliers, 2008) until new insights emerge. The mat and her thoughts were potential energy waiting for fruition though conversations with others (Barber, 1989).

> I wanted to represent the spherical central essence of the orchid as transparent and illusory, and to represent the illusory transparent depth of the democratic ideal to which attainability though transparent, is also illusive in nature: a rare thing of beauty like an orchid or a learner whose basic needs are nurtured toward self-efficacy and beyond (See Figure 14).

Sue's project fluctuated between plan and inspiration as she collected her materials and readings with potential ideas waiting for the right moment to act. Harman and Rheingold (1984) describe the creative act as information, perspiration, incubation, and illumination. Information is the gathering stage in which Sue collected her materials. Perspiration is the working stage and Sue, in her previous paper and work with other floor cloths, had amassed the cognitive and artistic skills necessary for the task.

She recognized that waiting for incubation was an important stage.

Fig. 14: Floor mat on democratic education surrounded by a structured school system

> The notion of democracy and its exploration seemed to be, not of the obvious black and white surface, but amongst shades of gray. That choices and occasions of gray area not often given time, perhaps ignored, or part of hidden agendas, or partially nullified…. I thought that exploring these gray images, (made by adding black) and seeking clarification might lead me to further understanding of the ideal of democracy. I waited… (again see Figure 14).

Along this vein Poincaré tells a story of the importance of "time-out":

> Disgusted with my failure, I went to spend a few days at the seaside, and thought of something else. One morning, walking on the bluff, the idea came to me, with…the characteristics of brevity, suddenness and immediate certainty. (Poincaré, 1970, p. 82)

He continues with the claim that "Often when one works hard at a question, nothing good is accomplished at the first attack. Then one takes a rest, longer or shorter, and sits down anew to the work" (Poincaré, 1970, p. 83). Time away, rest, incubation, for some seems to be a part of the creative act.

> McGuinness (2007) claims that waiting before the work is procrastination while waiting after the work is incubation. I encourage my students to "wait" and am prepared to extend the 'dead'lines that often rush a project to completion. Sue reported that waiting for the paint to dry was an incubation time and that doodling assisted her in finding/creating her metaphor.

> Since I had been doodling and sketching a checkerboard pattern throughout my first paper…. I decided to sketch and measure using divine rectangles from a center point, creating nautilus shape. I stopped when I came to the outer edge of the circle. I knew that the black and white checkerboard edge had to form the outer part of the circular shape…

For me, meandering is part of the creative process.

Throughout her log Sue made explicit her thoughts on the topic and her artistic choices. The recursive translation of one to the other created a dialogue between form and content, enhancing both as they co-inspired with each other. Through the metacognitive Sue did not represent how she understood the course material but told a story of how meanings and the artwork co-emerged through the process.

Music

Al, a musician, took a curriculum theory course in 2000. I have always encouraged musical assignments and have publicly pondered what different theoretical classrooms would sound like. To date, Al has been the only student to take up this challenge. With his jazz band, he explored Aoki's (2005) three curriculum orientations by producing a CD (See Figure 15)…

Fig. 15: Bass(is) of Orientation by Al C.

Upon first reading *Curriculum in a New Key* by Ted Aoki, I was left confused about how the three orientations he discusses could be used in a classroom and how they related to each other. I was determined to understand what I had read, so I searched for ways to do so. My quest led me back to my roots in the field of music. I started to equate the reference in the title of "a new key" to that of modulation in a music piece.

When I taught at the University of Alberta I had at my disposal a "drama education studio" that was originally designed as a television studio. Al and his ensemble performed for the class and recorded a jazz piece for each orientation.

Al describes Movement #1 with these words:

> Knowledge about the world is gained through guided observation and carefully designed and controlled manipulation. Composed in a standard 32-bar harmonic structure, this movement exemplifies ALL THAT IS TRADITIONAL

Fig.16: Bass(is) of Orientation: Reality – Movement #1 (Empirical Analytic) (Click on Musical Score for Sound)

Bass(is) of Orientations: Response — Movement #2 (Situational Interpretive)
IMPROVISION ON A PAINTING OF A DOOR
NO WRITTEN MUSIC:
(Click on This Sentence for Sound)

Al describes Movement #2 in this fashion:

> In a social situation wherein things, people, and events move together, there are many ways in which they are given meaning by the people in the situation. In the situational interpretive domain, essence and/or meaning are discovered through conversation. The lack of any formal melodic or chordal structure in this movement allows the individual musicians to partake in a musical dialogue that will create an experience that is "emergent in nature."

> The view through the open door is different for each individual. What we see is based upon where we have been and where we are going. In the situational interpretive domain, essence and/or meaning is discovered through conversation or dialogue. The art of improvising is to communicate to others through a medium other than dialogue.

Al's summation of Movement #3 is the following:

> Reflection by the participants allows new questions to emerge which, in turn, leads to more reflection. Embedded in this movement is a brief change in melodic style that represents a changing perspective that can be brought about by the act of reflection.

Fig. 17: Bass(is) of Orientation: Reflection – Movement #3 (Critically Reflective) (Click on Musical Score for Sound)

After the performance the class discussed what they had heard in the music, relating it to the article. It yielded many insights as we articulated where the music took us. My major insight occurred much later while replaying the music for other classes. I had often said that while I identified with critical theory and its examination of power and privilege, I would not invite critical theorists to supper because you cannot relax around them. Over the years my experiences at conferences have taught me that critical theorists can be as didactic as those with a traditional orientation. While listening to the music two aspects became clear: firstly, the first and third movements sounded more alike than the second movement, which was my preferred piece. I tended to be drawn to emergent ephemeral things in life rather than those highly structured Secondly, in the third movement there was an echo. The music followed a rhythm and then a horn blasted with what I call "dat-dat-dat." In describing what I heard, I rephrased it to 'but, but, but'. With critical theory, there can be a constant looking for political fault with negative comments about what is being presented. For me this resembled a spanking. This was something that was embedded in my subconscious level and only through listening to the music could I bring it to words. The act of translation made this explicit. The situational interpretive approach creates space for all participants' voices, making it emancipatory in nature, perhaps even more so than the critical reflective orientation.

For Al, the process was the focal point of the course. While he gleaned greater understanding about the reading he also found a way back to his art.

> This journey was one of great personal discovery. Over the last few years the role of teacher left little time for the art of composition or musical development.… I was determined to create a path that would allow me to reacquaint myself with my voice through music.

> The opportunity to compose and perform this piece helped to begin to answer those questions for me.… On Tuesday, April 11th the boundaries in which I had been enclosed…. vanished.

Such is my hope for all students. Besides articulating his understanding of the Aoki reading in music and word, Al attested that his creativity was fostered.

Discussion

Creativity

My doctoral research question was, "What do we do as teachers that foster creativity and what do we do to inhibit it?" (Norris, 1989). My career has been spent designing creative spaces for my students so that they would bring such activities to their teaching. A large number of them reported that they have done so. In the courses that I teach and in the assignments that I design my aim is to be more fostering than inhibiting, reversing the trend of rote learning that can stifle the creative spirit (Robinson, 2006). With a variety of choices, employing multiple ways of knowing, students can engage with the course content in a number of ways, using a variety of forms. Through the metacognitive logs students demonstrate that their works are not mere representations but co-emergences between themselves and the world.

> If, however, our lived world does not have predetermined boundaries, then it seems unrealistic to expect to capture commonsense understanding in the form of a representation — where *representation* is understood in its strongest sense as a re-presentation of a pregiven world. Indeed, if we wish to recover common sense, then we must invert the representationist attitude by treating context-dependent know-how not as residual artifact that can be progressively eliminated by discovery of more sophisticated rules but as, the very essence of *creative* cognition. (Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1992, p. 148)

Through the act of art making the students recreated meanings, transforming what they knew into revised conceptual placeholders that may go through more revisions based upon future experiences. The projects created occasions for learning that the students enacted (Kieren, 1995). The log recorded their learning and could be assessed as both a process and a product.

Rigour

Many students have verbally claimed that the assignment took a lot of time, was hard work, extremely insightful, enjoyable, and spiritual as they spent peaceful time connecting with themselves and the course content through the art making. The medium chosen acted as a threshold allowing the student to focus deeply as the message and the medium co-emerged. One student said that she had spent the Monday of the long weekend in May lost/absorbed in the process as she returned to her charcoal. It was a returning to a type of experience that she had long forgotten-one that she wanted more of for herself and her students.

In tandem the art work and the metacognitive log demonstrated the amount of work and the depth of thought that the students have processed. Through refection they exhibited what the course content meant to them and the connections that they had made. With a deep connection to the process they seemed to have been more intrinsically motivated, committing self to the journey. As an emergent process, the assignment took on a life of its own, stimulating metaphorical thought (Gordon, 1961), creating new possibilities. The work could not be completed until it said so, creating its own internal rigour.

Authenticity

For me, authentic learning and assessment experiences integrate the knower and the known. The role of the teacher is to provide both content and processes that create spaces or thresholds through which students can take control of their own learning. The content, acting as a muse, evokes thoughts that guide artistic choices. The content, however, is not fixed but changes as the students rework it. In constructivist (Schunk, 1991) classrooms students are brought to the subject through teacher-designed scaffolding. In enactivist (Kieren, 1995) classrooms students become both consumers and producers of knowledge (Freire, 1994) as they transform understanding in unpredictable ways making it immune to the convergent constraints of standardized testing. The art-making media play a major role in meaning construction as the medium influences thoughts on the choices made, making explicit the interconnectedness of the medium and the message (McLuhan,

1977). Collectively, course content, media, and the learner, bring previous knowledge, skills, and creativity to the work as students translate the course material into new forms. Authentic assessment, like authentic learning, must have the students as one of its authors.

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Inhabiting Silence: A Sorry Story

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes how works created in a visual arts workshop enable the author to work obliquely with stories about teaching Aboriginal children generated in a collective biography. The deconstructive work is framed by Prime Minister Rudd's 2008 "sorry" speech to Aboriginal Australians and Mazzei's work on silence with white teachers. The visual arts methodology allows a shift from narrative logic and literal detail to metonymy and symbolism while the materiality of artefacts and art equipment invite particular representations and interpretations to emerge.

> For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations,
> their descendants and for their families left behind, *we say sorry*.
> To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters,
> for the breaking up of families and communities, *we say sorry*.
> And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people
> and a proud culture, *we say sorry*…. To the Stolen Generations,
> I say the following: as Prime Minister of Australia, I am sorry.
> On behalf of the Government of Australia, *I am sorry*.
> On behalf of the Parliament of Australia, *I am sorry*.
>
> (Rudd, 2008, italics added)

*T*his paper is, in a way, my own sorry story. I write it several months after new Prime Minister Kevin Rudd opened the Australian Federal Parliament with the apology for which we had waited eleven years since the publication of the *Bringing Them Home* report (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997). The paper describes how I have used an arts-based methodology to begin to open a space for my own necessary sorry work. Others have

written about the efficacy of the visual in approaching difficult issues in critical autobiography (Camden-Pratt, 2007). I have been involved with academia as a research student and then as an academic for over ten years, and have specialised at times in autobiographical/autoethnographic writing. I was also a high school teacher for around sixteen years. Yet I have never written about my first teaching experience as a white (unqualified) teacher from the city in a Catholic-run Aboriginal boarding school run located in a remote part of Australia. The absence of this story in my writings might be understood as a sort of "inhabited silence" of the sort Lisa Mazzei unravels in her deconstructive work with white teachers in non-white schools in the southern United States (2007). As Mazzei points out, "[s]imply because we were in the minority in our schools did not mean that our whiteness was visible to us: in other words, we still viewed and experienced ourselves as normative and everyone else as Other" (2007, p. 5). She suggests, after Spivak, that the "myopia" of these teachers was shaped by "having been inserted into a history created before we were born" (2007, p. 5). To address this issue, Mazzei develops a strategy for listening to silences in interview data, a deconstructive practice that is "set in motion by something that calls upon and addresses, overtakes (surprises) us and even overwhelms us, to which we must respond, and so be responsive and responsible. Endlessly." (Derrida & Caputo, 1997, p. 51). This work is just a moment in the "endlessly" that is entailed in deconstruction.

This paper suggests that creative arts responses might open other deconstructive routes. The poststructural paradigm within which I locate my work suggests that there are multiple stories that might be told about any event: that narratives are evoked in particular ways within specific contexts of time, space, and within specific relations of teller and listener (Gannon & Davies, 2006; Gannon, in press). Within and between the multiple narratives that might be told about any event are also, inevitably, silences. The practice that I discuss here, of inhabiting silence through the visual reworking of narrative data, works into some of these silences. My intention is not to fill silence with words, although I am engaged in that practice by writing here, nor to provide a new truth of my understanding of what was really going on. Rather it is to work into the space between stories differently. Mazzei talks about how poets approach silence differently "not as a tool, nor an extra, but as an essential element in an understanding of meaning and voice" (2007, p. 57). I explore here how non-narrative visual representation might inhabit silence; might allow ghosts to flicker through the absences implied in the silence.

I began to write about my experiences in this school recently in a collective biography workshop (Davies & Gannon, 2006) as part of an investigation into pedagogy and place.[1] In partnership with a number of research colleagues, we worked

intensively over two weeks to generate stories of our lived experience as teachers and learners at all levels of education and in all sorts of sites. The "pedagogical encounter" came to be our theoretical interest. In relation to my own work, this ethics was further informed by the notion of the face-to-face encounter (Ahmed, 2000; Todd, 2003). I did not begin the workshop with the intention that I would write abut this experience. Rather my story was called up in the relational space of the workshop and the other people, readings, and stories that were in circulation there. I will not tell the stories that I told in the collective biography again here, though my usual inclination is towards story. Instead, I will turn to an art workshop that served as a coda.

A month after the collective biography workshop, we reconvened in the visual arts classroom with two secondary pre-service Visual Arts teachers with whom we had worked on another strand of the Place Pedagogies project. Through a visual mode, rather than my usual written mode, and under their guidance, I entered differently into the time and place that I had begun to evoke again in the collective biography workshop. The face-to-face of the images I created in the workshop were of encounters between myself then and now, as well as between myself and my students. Rather than extending the place stories I had told in the collective biography, the art workshop helped me to create a parallel story—one that was not propelled by the temporality of narrative, perhaps not even of story at all.

I had brought to the workshop photographs taken when I was working at the boarding school. I had also brought in a typed list of the names of students and of places, headed: "Where they come from." There were four pages of class lists on yellowed paper typed more than twenty years ago. They gave me quite a shaky start. I was constrained by the literal qualities of the real names and faces, including myself then, in these artefacts. Even the typeface and the thin texture of the paper surprised me. I could have written more detailed descriptions of many of these children and episodes I remembered from when I was there with them. I had already begun to do this in the collective biography story I had brought with me to the art workshop. But I didn't want to do more of this; indeed, what I had already written had caused me some anxiety. Although I had not previously written about this time I know that it had a profound effect and shaped me as a teacher (and a person) in ways that are difficult to articulate. How could I represent the "me" I was then—straight from the city and the south and the sea of whiteness that was middle class Australia at the time—suddenly engulfed/immersed/embraced by this other Aboriginal Australia? The physicality of these memories astounds me—the children leaning on me, touching me, dark brown skin against skin, suddenly made irrevocably white in this place. Like Mazzei's teachers, my "whiteness was made visible only by its absence in the

surrounding milieu" (2007, p. 4). The photographs dramatised this. The story that I had told was about both my separation from and difference from the children. What the photos tell is how we were together. Many of them have the young teacher in the middle of groups of children sitting around in different locations in the school. Others are of wall displays in the "Language" classroom where she worked alongside a Christian Brother monk and an Aboriginal teaching aide from one of the communities from where the children had come.

In the art workshop I looked over the photographs and the yellowed list I had forgotten I still had.

Cavefish (Me)

I began to be freed from the literal truth of the photographic image, and of memory as veridical truth when I started to mask the image rather than elaborate upon it.[2] I had enlarged each of the photos on a colour photocopier. One of them was of a cave painting. I ignored the two ancestral Wandjina figures—cloud and rain spirits in Aboriginal mythology—that were the main subject of the original photograph and, instead, wrapped and glued the other half of the image across a small canvas. This had been the background to the photo of the Wandjina paintings, the wall of the cave. The wall was covered with paint, layers and layers of ochres of different shades. The outlines of hands could just be seen, and a small, white ghostly image floated amongst all the fragments of other colours. The word for white person in that part of the country is *kartiya* or ghost. Mazzei too uses the image of a ghost in her work, suggesting that "a deconstructive methodology… (will) invite, encourage, and demand that the specters breach the walls of our commonplace way of hearing (and telling) data" (2007, p. 59).

In the art workshop I painted over the cave wall, dab by dab, with a small brush. When the wall—itself already layers and layers of other people's loving labour over centuries—was entirely covered over by my own work, in shades that ghosted what was underneath, I glued on a tiny cut-out image of myself sitting in the bottom left-hand corner. In the original photograph the figure of the young teacher was sitting amongst a group of her students, looking relaxed and completely immersed in the experience of being there, and in the cluster of bodies that surrounded her. They too were ghosts in this image. Her body still inclined towards them. She was smiling at something one of them had said.

In the top right-hand corner I drew a fish freehand in ink with a fine black pen, copying it closely from one of the posters I could see in the photographs of the Language classroom. The photograph showed that the pinboards that surrounded the classroom had been divided by strips of paper into panels for each language group. Each panel carried small posters of words and images drawn by students. The name of the fish comes from the Kija language, from a place then called Turkey Creek. Its name in that language is *kuntaril*. The long sweep down to his eyes and mouth suggested that he might have been a freshwater barramundi—I had caught them too when I had lived there. Another ghost drifted by from my relationships back then and the things we did together. I copied the fish carefully from the poster in the photo and sealed it all over with the gold sheen of shellac.

Fig. 1: *Cavefish (me)*

In this work I became part of the place, rather than separate from it. The subtlety of this image provided me with a new means of thinking into my experience of being there—one that did not flatten out the detail but foregrounded one or two specific elements to represent it. The fish—*kuntaril*—operates as a sort of metonym. It evokes a string of other associations to do with swimming, with water, with language and with alienation. I drew the fish because he was the most identifiable poster on the wall in the photograph, but he said something more, as well, about

being there. Although I might have been a fish out of water in some ways, I was also immersed. The strangeness on my tongue now of kuntaril, reminds me that my place there was earned in part by my knowledge of the language. Although I had no teaching qualification I had done some study of Aboriginal languages in the final year of my BA degree, just a year before. I was, and still am, part of the wall of the cave too, with its white ghost haunting the underlayers of the paint and the shellac.

Where They Come From

For the second artwork, I spent a long time cutting out letters with a blade to try and make a stencil of the lists of place names. They were too many and too long. I realised I did not have the time and that I was still being too literal. But now I had begun to work with the places and their names. I painted a white canvas with white paint and set it aside. Though the list of "Where they come from" was like a mantra, a chant, I didn't yet know what to do with it. I went back to the bodies who in my memory still jostled against my skin. The stories I had told in the collective biography had been about the boys I had taught, but looking again through the photographs I began to remember in more detail, the girls. I cut out the sitting silhouettes of three of the girls I remembered most vividly and screen-printed them on to a strip of brown silk. I used another shade of brown, more like the orange colour of the "pindan" soil of that region. Their silken silhouettes were an absent presence, another sort of ghosting. Repetition was another deconstructive strategy that emerged as I worked (Gannon & Davies, 2006). These shapes were at ease, with loose limbs and open knees, in contrast to the shapes that my body had made in the photographs at that time.

At the top of the work I stencilled the line: "Where they come from:" though (perhaps like me), it did not quite fit in the space. Underneath, freehand with the black ink pen, I wrote in all the names of the places, all in lower case and butting against each other—a long string of letters that reformed as you looked at them into words: "broomegibbriverstationhallscreekwyndham …" I put a dot at the end of my list of place names and started listing the names of languages I remembered in the same style. This time the words were not English words laid over Aboriginal country but words from Aboriginal languages with sounds and combinations that are alien to English: "kijanyangumartabardibidyadanga." I began with a rush of joy as if this was what I knew—what I wanted to say—about how special the new knowledge was that I glimpsed there; about ways of being in the world was to me. But I faltered at Bardi—an extra stroke had accidentally turned it into Bandi and I felt undone. I remembered

then, after my hand had already inked out the word, that Bidyadanga was not a language name but the Aboriginal name for a particular Catholic Mission community.

Fig. 2: *Where they come from*

I remembered how far I was now from where I had been then; how much I had forgotten; how much I didn't know. I only lived there for three years and had only worked at the school for two. I was never as deeply involved with the school or the children as the staff who were practising Catholics. So much of school life had operated on religious rituals about which, as an ex-Catholic, I was ambivalent. After the art workshop I searched online to fill in the gaps in the language names, intending to complete the list of names, to complete the piece, and perhaps, tidy away my memories of the place. On a website documenting the history of the school, I found that I was not mentioned at all. I was an absent presence, a ghost in its official story. Other details I stumbled over in my search disturbed me, a suggestion of other stories I did not know then about one of the men with whom I worked, but, a story which

had reshaped my understanding of the milieu. I was reminded of my unknowing complicity. I was compelled to resist the impulse to narrative and to closure—to leave the list unfinished, to leave the work incomplete. I am compelled to begin, again, my own sorry story.

Conclusion

This paper began with an investigation into my earliest memories of teaching through two complementary methodologies. Collective biography, undertaken in a workshop setting with research colleagues, enabled me to retrieve the details of lived experience through telling, writing, and deconstructing stories drawn up from memory (Davies & Gannon, 2006). At an art workshop that followed, I worked more obliquely with the stories I had retrieved and analysed. Visual arts practice shifted me from narrative logic into a deconstructive space inflected by metonymy, symbolism, and the silences that ghosted the images I had shaped and the experiences I had begun to remember.

In this paper my detailed description of the processes of art making aimed to underline the contingencies of representation and interpretation. The materials that I happened to work with—photographs, lists of names and places, silk of a certain colour, shellac and so on—shaped what I was able to know and to bring forth from my memory. This, too, is an interesting question in arts-based methodologies.

Within the context of my country's long history of abuse of Aboriginal people and of white complicity, marked by Prime Minister's Rudd's "Sorry" speech (February 2008), this paper begins a "Sorry" story of my own: an attempt to inhabit the silence that Mazzei (2007) identifies in her work with white teachers of black children. However, this deconstructive work refuses the settling of any single story or interpretation. Rather, it opens up these long silent stories to a process that is endless, unsettling, and—inevitably—surprising.

Notes

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2. Some of the discussion in this section of the paper is based on part of a chapter in Davies and Gannon (forthcoming) *Pedagogical Encounters*.

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Collage Inquiry: Creative and Particular Applications

Donna Davis, Education Consultant

ABSTRACT

Collage from "found" visual imagery is widely employed as an accessible medium for expression and illustration in educational, therapeutic, and recreational contexts. Given the history of collage as a strategy of criticism and subversion in the fine arts, visual researchers seek to develop a methodology of collage as a means to knowledge, affording insight into the negotiation and embodiment of media imagery in subjective experience. Highly relevant issues of body image and eating disorders are addressed through the presentation and analysis of a self-study series of collages and life writings. The resulting intuitive "figures" of anorexia demonstrate the creative potential of collage to reconfigure experience excluded from standard texts, and suggest alternative interpretations of both suffering and healing on an individual and cultural level.

In the last two decades, educational researchers in alternative and arts-based representation have sought to reveal, synthesize and voice realities excluded by the linearity and power dynamics inherent in traditional academic text and analysis (Vaughan, 2005; Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999; Eisner & Barone, 1997; Eisner, 1991). Collage has emerged as a problematic yet exciting strategy for the exploration of memory, imagination and experiential reflection in an increasingly "mediated" world.

Accessible and ubiquitous, photo-collage from "found" media images is widely employed as an expressive and illustrative exercise in educational, therapeutic, and recreational contexts, from media studies to scrapbooking. Often requiring

only ephemeral, inexpensive materials and a minimal investment in technique, the practice of collage thrives upon the tacit understanding of design and photography pervading a culture dominated by visual media. The automation of such basic operations as "cut," "paste," and "layer" in digital software has further popularized collage processes, reducing the emphasis upon craft, history, genre, and individual "talent" associated with traditional art media such as painting and drawing. Unfortunately, media collage is often regarded as "visual text" or illustration, a means to a corresponding message or lexicon; and many amateur efforts founder at this stage. The collage becomes a visual poem or pun scarcely hiding a verbal one. Yet a simple collage of magazine photos may at the same time evoke inexpressible feeling states that "seep" through the fissures and layers, tugging at what lies below, behind or beyond the choice and arrangement of pictures: an "elsewhere" (Butler-Kisber, 2006).

For many years I have explored collage theory and practice as a research methodology, producing and interpreting complex media collages as a form of visual journal, as both spontaneous reinventions of personal experience and directed critical responses to research issues and texts. As artist/visual researcher, I seek a deeper understanding of the properties of the medium as a means to knowledge, and the conditions under which it presents opportunities for new personal and cultural insight. My interest in collage is primarily grounded in its capacity to disrupt, parody, and challenge the logic and sophism of conventional signifying practices and representations.

Collage Medium: History and Theory

Historically, the collage/montage aesthetic emerged from popular/folk art origins to become a critical discourse defying the traditional master narratives of authority, mythic individualism, and essentialism in which literature and painting were heavily invested. A medium of the modern era that anticipates the intertextuality of postmodernity, collage has particular applications for the invocation of paradoxical and liminal experience, implying forces in perpetual flux between and among juxtaposed and superimposed elements. It may be useful in fact to regard collage as an organizing principle, conceptual strategy or method rather than an art form per se. In his survey of 20th century collage, art critic Brandon Taylor writes:

Modernity's fragments, some collages suggest, are its history, its residue; they are what is left over when the great feast of consumption has ended for the day, when trading and exchange have ceased and the people have gone home for a rest.

Collage…allows us to see that it is somewhere between the bright optimism of the official world and its degraded material residue, that many of the exemplary, central experiences of modernity exist. (Taylor, 2004, p. 9)

On the one hand, the making of media collage is an appropriation and celebration of mass culture, its endlessly plastic activities of production, reproduction, and commodification; on the other, it is driven at an intensely personal level, visceral and erotic, not only in the choice of images as from an immense virtual buffet, but also in the continual destruction and reparation of objects, a "metaphor of universal becoming" (Kuspit, 1983, p. 506). While a collage can be constructed according to a precise, premeditated plan, media collage is typically composed in a more impulsive, fluid, and expedient manner, a method which at once accesses and undermines the hierarchies of signs, effectively exposing them as both compulsory and arbitrary. The artistic creation of collage may thus furnish a means to take back a measure of power over spectacular representations and renegotiate them versus everyday experience and identity (Davis, 2000).

In her discussion of visual methodologies, Rose (2001) describes how images are organized to situate the viewer in a particular space and, by extension, a subject position with various attributes of power and desire. Collaged imagery often problematizes this inherent positioning of "scopic regimes." For example, the collagist may exploit the photographic illusion of depth, creating a "window" on a virtual world that apparently obeys traditional pictorial effects of modelling and perspective, only to disorient the viewer through contradictions of image scale, material layering, and figure-ground reversal that evoke the alternative spaces of fantasy or tactility. Notably, Taylor asks if traditional collage is not also intrinsically bound up with the raw manipulation of printed signs as material—a process of resistance requiring the physical rupture of an analogue image/object (Taylor, 2004). Indeed, one may designate collage/bricolage practice as an embodied intervention in the slick visual surfaces of corporate signification, perhaps all the more when it later disowns its physical origin and masquerades among the seamless elite of digital illusion.

Applications to Self Study: Visual Culture, Body Image and Memory

In 2004, I produced a series of digital prints and a graphic artist's book which incorporated reductive collage imagery in a multivalent poetic narrative. In an introductory statement to these works I wrote:

As artists we employ different modes of representation sensing intuitively that they enable us to evoke qualities of perception and feeling that written texts exclude. Clearly we seek to bring to consciousness and communicate the tacit knowledge that resides in our subjective experience of life. And as "designers" we may be privileged not only to search out new metaphors on the edge of existing cultural representations, but also to give form to new experiences themselves.

Surely the crux of our human condition is that we live as both symbolic and physical beings…Our actions and responses are not merely registered and catalogued by our minds, but are translated into the chemistry of our brains and written into the functioning of our bodies. Yet even in a culture teeming with eroticized images of the external body, on a personal level we may lack a true voice for our experience of life within a body…When my conscious mind cannot define the mute… gestures of pleasure or pain at the threshold of my awareness, I project the ideal body, its parts and its animal or machine correspondences, as the only evidence of the multiple emotions, memories, and phantasms that remain unsaid. (Davis, 2004, p. 1)

listening

Fig. 1: *Incomplete*

As this commentary indicates, many of these mysterious and intimate art-works haunted me (see above figure). Ultimately I wished to develop and elaborate their content in a more personal and focused way. In April 2007 I created a series of small collages hand-crafted from images found in magazines, books, and other print media, in the context of a self-study/memoir. Rather than trusting the content of the collages primarily to mood, "intuition," or chance, I intended to grapple more consciously, from the outset, with my experiences of eating disorders throughout my adolescence and adult life. I accompanied the visual project with ongoing reflective, interpretive life writing prompted by the collages in process. Thus grounded in intense memories, fantasies, and feelings, my reconstruction of the media imagery through collage might more clearly suggest the extent to which my individual subjectivity had contrived an identity from the poses of different sociocultural discourses. Moreover, I might be challenged to re-imagine or *recognize* the body—*this* body, implicitly *my* body—as site of communication and metaphor, creation and destruction, distortion and illusion, taboo and violation.

It is an unproven truism that fashion and media images, or such images mirrored in the appearances of celebrities, models and performers, promote the relentless pursuit of thinness. This commonsense logic takes the (typically feminine) gaze to be an instrument of passive visual consumption and contagion (Burke, 2006). Yet who knows how the multiple exposures of faces, breasts, weddings, desserts, victims, cellulite, mountain peaks, living rooms, lovers' embraces, flowers, handbags, forest fires, pleasure, penguins, pain relievers, desire, lunar landscapes, blue skies and anguish are processed in the interior spaces of the body and screened onto its communicative surfaces? How *is* "body image" distilled, and where does this figure reside, in private and public space?

Moreover, current discussions of eating disorders note the prevalence of "Ophelia" discourses around female adolescence, flattening the experience of real persons into tropes of crisis (Mastronardi, 2006). A scenario emerges in which the media construct, and authority figures must rescue or punish, essentially passive women who are judged incompetent to claim or voice their own power (Burke, 2006; Inch & Morali, 2006; Ferris, 2003). For example, although conventional treatment seldom resolves anorexia, "Pro-Ana" web communities are condemned as deadly traps and shut down, in effect silencing alternative possibilities. (Pro-Ana blogs and forums, originating with sufferers themselves, may be said to not only "discuss" anorexia and bulimia, but also to promote or prescribe the behaviours and attitudes by which pathological objectives can be attained. Thus it is construed by critics that Pro-Ana may in effect advocate suicide. In-depth research and content analysis, however, has

produced a richer, more diversified profile of a creative, alternative community [Shade, 2003].) Similarly, theorists deplore the demonization of severe cases, which conceals the suffering of "subclinical" and older/chronic anorexics and helps to deny the painful obsession with body image and food in our culture at large. Of course, it is a complementary truism that familial, social, and personality dynamics are the progenitors of eating disorders (Bruch, 1978, pp.26–27). Here, my own experience has belied the popular and therapeutic fictions of recovery despite the sentimental attraction these canonical texts exert.

Collage, created from a synthesis of shattered fragments, realized in an emergent, often randomized composition, arrives at meaning in a very different way—accidentally, capriciously, provocatively, tangentially. Scraps, details, and hints intrude from the periphery, both literally and figuratively. One may thus theorize the relationship of collage to the "margin," admitting the sidelong glance rather than the privileged gaze, and speaking to outlaw experience excluded from representation (Vaughan, 2005). Creativity theorist Edward de Bono, describing lateral thinking, contrasts the definitive "rock logic" of identity to the mutable, indirect "water logic" of intuition and suggestion, that which provides no definitive answer but asks, instead: to where does this flow…what happens next (De Bono, 1999)? In honouring the disconnected, inexplicable, irresolute and relative, collage process engenders an inclusive reality where disintegration, disorder, and even destruction can be coincidental paths to meaningful renewal, and insists that restoration and insight are not easily rationalized and prescribed. Collage, originating through changing visual patterns, perceptually configured and reconfigured, "found" rather than "made," works against the inflexibility of abstracted representations and definitions imposed on a dynamic reality.

South African artist/animator William Kentridge, distinguished for his work with silhouette "processions," sheds further light upon this process of "figuration," where perception provokes the recognition of meaning through the experiential resonance of form:

I did a workshop…at my children's school. They cut or tore roughly the elements of a vertebrate—a head, limbs. torso, pelvis. And they made a dog do a somersault, a dinosaur rearing on its hind legs, a monster hiding its head behind its arm. If we had started the other way, this would have been impossible of course. None of them could say or draw what a dog doing [a] somersault looked like, but all could recognize it as it appeared before them, made by them. (Kentridge, 2004, p.159)

"Simultaneously, there can be a realization that cognition and representation are inextricably linked…and that different forms of representation can alter perceptibly one's understanding of phenomena…" (Davis & Butler-Kisber, 1999; Eisner, 1991).

To further contextualize, I note that Malson and other authors have disputed the still-prevalent assumption that anorexia is a monolithic syndrome which overtakes and renders all its victims monotonously the same (Bruch, 1978). Malson's extensive analyses of interviews emphasize the widely varied subject positions that constitute many diverse "figures" of the eating disorder (Ripa di Meana, 1999; Malson, 1998). More radical researchers propose that the "pathology" may present a rare opportunity to work through cognitive and developmental problems at the deep— yet explicit—transformative level of bodily and material experience (Garrett, 1998; Ripa di Meana, 1999). It is the sheer difficulty of this undertaking, then, which often leads to tragic fixations and misguided conclusions, and which requires profoundly creative resolution. My thesis—that collage is a methodology analogously suited to the investigation of the personal/social construction of self/body images in a media culture—recommends collage to the (self) study of such recalcitrant subjective issues as eating disorders.

Collage Project: Technique

Typically my collage work is created mainly from printed images culled from magazines, books, and ephemera such as calendars and cards. Some pictures will be pulled directly from source, others from loosely organized files, previously compiled. For this self-study series I chose to exclude words and original drawings; all collages were devised within approximately 10" by 8" rectangles, mostly vertical, and pieces were cut, not torn. Published images from various sources—magazines, books, calendars, etc., dating from the 1970s to the present—were selected and amassed according to simple categorical criteria or descriptors: women, plants and flowers, animals and birds, thinness/fatness, hunger and eating/devouring, food, skeletons and viscera, and landscape or interiors. While at this stage I sought few overt correspondences to personal memories or fantasies, I granted media images their strong emotional bias, letting them to "speak" to me, in effect "hailing" me, as my process notes indicate:

Clearly, I could give free reign to my love of emaciated and mysterious *fashionista* heroines. Skeletons, anatomical diagrams and x-rays, stilt-legged

flamingos, herons, and sandpipers were epitomes of thinness. And…the polarity, the temptations of St. Anthony and Christ: Bread, food, particularly vast stretches of lavish desserts and oozing icing and slabs of red meat. With their counterparts in landscape: Yes, *deserts*, and sugary peaks of crystalline snow, and bloody Outback sunsets. I was drawn to images of deep space, doorways, and holes. I pulled photos of cutlery, shining accomplices of dirty deeds, and of jewellery, not only for the sparkling gems but also for the erotic chains of bondage and hoops of performance that its traditional forms imply…But repellent flesh, and indulgent sloth…came in their most primitive forms, as snail and slug. (D. Davis, process notes, 2007)

In the next phase, I began grouping images and working freely with individual collage layouts. Large pictures were left intact for backgrounds and smaller figures were closely cut out and integrated into prevailing lighting and colour schemes; some of the first trials were abandoned at this stage. Using a découpage technique, bordering images were feathered to downplay edges, and later retouching in Photoshop® would reemphasize "seamlessness." The evolving collages often depicted scenarios or implicit narratives with women and animal "characters." As the collages progressed, many episodes of my adolescent and childhood experience surfaced in relation to particular images or combinations, and I began to write interpretations and vignettes provoked by my recollections. I adopted a new strategy: rather than complete collages in sequence, I left many unfinished compositions "active," enabling me to integrate and reorder new images in a dialogic process among collages and writings.

Fifteen collages were completed in this series. For the purposes of this paper, I am presenting four, preserving their sequential order following figure 1 from my earlier work. My discussions integrate passages from my original process notes and lifewriting/memory work, here framed in a larger critical context.
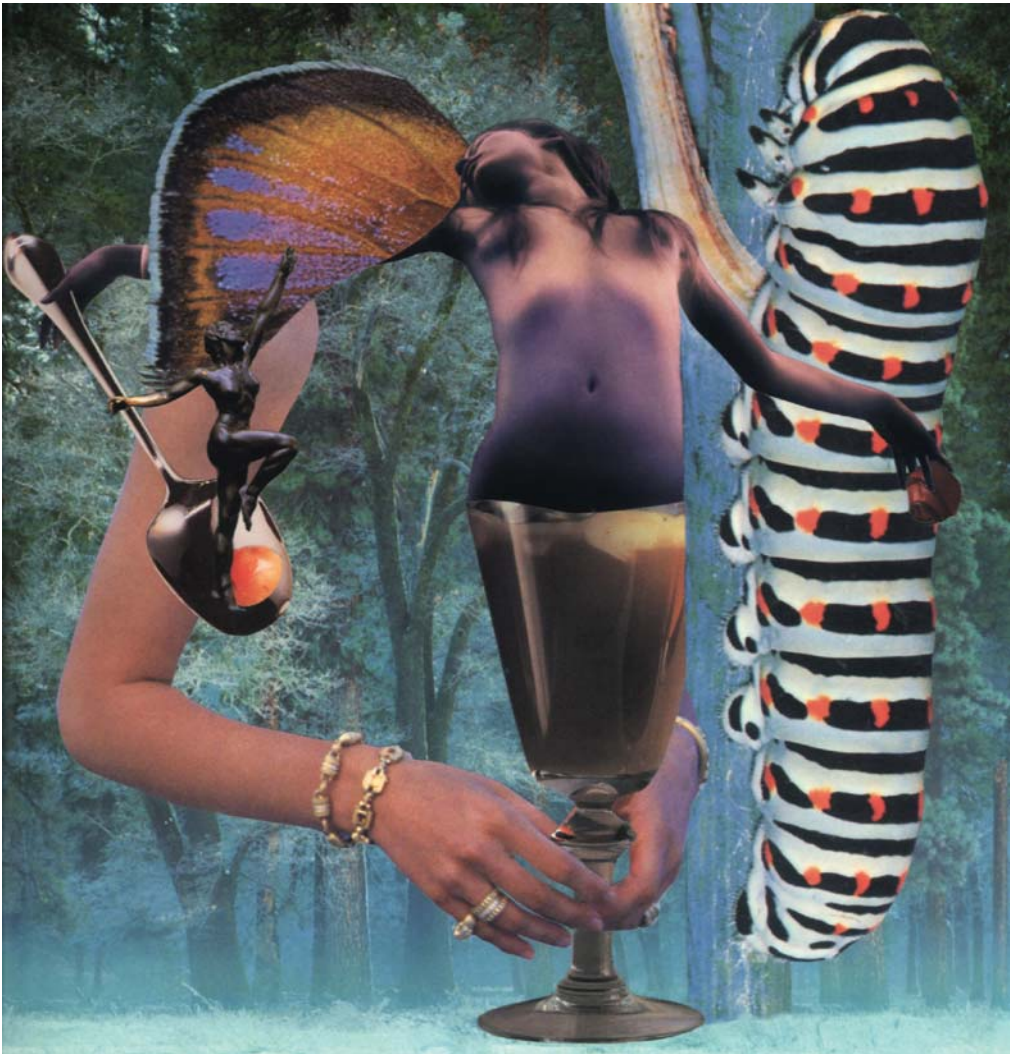
The Collages

Fig. 2. *Incomplete metamorphosis*

I am often drawn to butterfly imagery, and in the bookwork collage series I had used a number of pictures of moth and butterfly metamorphosis pulled from the ubiquitous old *Life Science and Nature Library* of my schooldays in the 60s and 70s. In the *Life* volume on insects, there is a photo essay that has always provoked a morbid fascination in me. A series of scientific experiments is depicted in which a

Cecropia moth pupa has been cut in halves and the segments separated by a glass tube. These sadistic manipulations are apparently intended to study how development proceeds or fails depending on chemical intercommunication among the head and other centres of the larval body. Of the three examples, only one, in which the tissue spanning the intersecting tube remains active, leads to a fully metamorphosed moth. Then a full-page photo shows this moth on *A Fatal Flight*: Instinctively crawling upward to spread its wings, it breaks the thin walls of tissues linking its upper body to its abdomen, and falls to the ground and dies. I can only begin to speculate what macabre cultural impulses underlie the making of this spectacle and fabula in the name of science education. But in context my puzzling earlier title, *Incomplete*, appears to be an intuitive punt. Incomplete…metamorphosis, as in the case of those hapless insects diddled by science. An untimely intervention in the processes of growth, a moratorium that one can never overcome, dooming all later attempts to fly.

These reflections arose from the inclusion of the caterpillar in this collage; I had pulled the larval images originally as tokens of bloated voraciousness, and realized in the process of assembly their relation to previous work. Here, wanting to expand the nymph's lower body, playing on fears of "middle-aged spread" and sexual power, I inserted the "parfait" glass. And I recalled my mother's insistent mantra: "Everything would be fine if you would just eat." Those adult hands holding the glass: Who drinks from that cup of sorrow now, if not me…transformed now, into my mother's image? A no-exit problematic, lost in a tangled though beautiful Narnia wood covered with sweet, glittery frosting. A scene painted dreamily in hallucinatory, *Lucy-in-the-Sky-With-Diamonds* colours, true again to the palettes of my coming of age.

Weber and Mitchell, through the Image and Identity Collective, have plumbed the relation of stereotypical imagery, narratives, and scenarios to the memory and understanding of personal reality (Weber & Mitchell, 2004, 1995). Their initial studies indicated that the reductive schema, and the easy repetition and promulgation of such stereotypes, often dominated the imagination at the expense of lived complexity and contradiction. However, my discussion above suggests that the psychic and metaphorical incorporation of media imagery is folded, braided, and layered in unexpected and idiosyncratic ways; the *Life* photo-essay, the caterpillar as eating machine, play into my childhood interest in real insects but then substitute for deeper, more inchoate desires and fears, now mobilized by juxtapositions and contrasts in the collaged imagery.
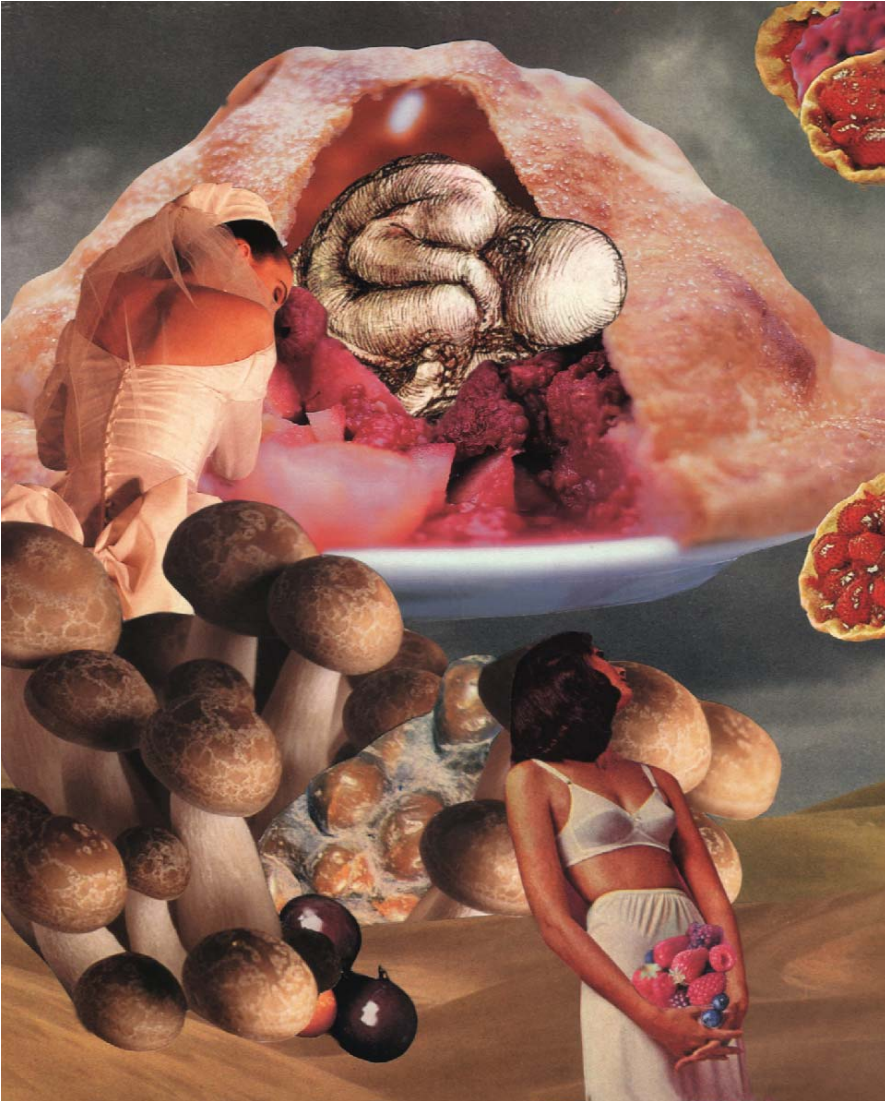
Fig.3: *Invasion of the body snatchers*

This farcical image, inspired by a classmate's reference to the "monstrous feminine," grew out of my decision to make the pastry on the plate float in the ominous grey sky above the desert sands, leading to the realization that it then resembled a flying saucer. However, I only chose to follow this association to its comic conclusion when faced with the need to fulfill the right side of the image toward which the bride and Da Vinci fetus are turned, though with averted gazes. Now the blissful

70s woman in the white slip, caught red-handed on the brink of a stain, turns to watch the arrival of the strawberry tarts from outer space.

The Alice in Wonderland mushrooms, ambiguous emblems of food, poison, and decay, partly conceal a Venus of Willendorf-like fetish, and the fetus buried in the raspberry filling similarly follows from the primitive line of proto-reasoning that fantasizes the swellings of pregnancy as invoked by the ingestion of certain magical foods. Anorexia, like pregnancy (and, indeed, wedding preparation) presents itself as demonic alien force that invades the female body and converts an innocent girl into a monster, overtaking her conscious will to employ it for its own sinister, robotic devices. Implicit, but not yet realized here, is the gory eruption of this body as the parasite finally breaks out of its shriveled and decrepit host. Little wonder I reached for some comic relief.

Although anorexia may be characterized in therapeutic accounts as an attempt at alternative selfhood, it is imperative to replace this false attempt with normalization and adjustment to the "real." The anorexic is configured as Other by omnipotent experts and outsider witnesses; and "confessional" authors describe their recovery in similar borrowed terms, in a double alienation that perpetuates the duplicity and splitting said to diagnose the disorder (Hinz, 2006; Ferris, 2003; Bruch, 1978, p. 55). In this collage, the explicit use of visual puns, multiple identifications, and humour—particularly in disarming and conflating the said enemy, *food*—strive to break the impasse of bad faith. Given the power of collage to override and disrupt established systems of signification, even to break down semiotic codes into chaos, dare we look at anorexia as an embodied bricolage that might join in artful play (Hebdige, 1979)?

Fig. 4: *The gold standard*

An image came to her, that she was like a sparrow in a golden cage, too plain and simple for the luxuries of her home...Until then she had spoken only about the superior features of her background; now she began to speak about the ordeal, the restrictions and obligations...She enlarged on the image, that cages are made for big colorful birds who show off their plumage and are satisfied just hopping around in the cage. She felt she was

quite different, like a sparrow, inconspicuous and energetic, who wants to fly around and take off on its own, who is not made for a cage. (Bruch, 1978, p. 22)

A testimonial from an anorexic teenager inspired this collage; her simile is also the origin of the title to psychotherapist Hilde Bruch's *The Golden Cage*, an early account of the emergence and treatment of anorexia. Bruch's straightforward explanations that widely skirt the darker complexities of psychoanalysis, her attitude of competence and compassion, evoke the idealized healers of contemporary popular fictions. Yet that sparrow makes me wince. The fable is cited as proof of the patient's ongoing recovery of health, integrity, and thus insight, that she gives voice to her frustration and inadequacy within the "cage" of parental expectations. But was that cage not already represented in the skeletal body converted by a Midas touch to incorruptibility and preciousness? What of the big (fat?) colourful bird who may impersonate a trapped and entrapping mother, and the girl's residual longing to escape, to disappear? The energy of a sparrow will not take one very far; this image of "natural" independence is imbued with qualities of inferiority and domesticity. Content to feed on the few crumbs it is thrown, the sparrow is essentially a scavenger and nuisance.

The anecdote also underscores an early argument that the rise of "Women's Liberation" bore responsibility for the phenomenon of anorexia. Girls were faced with an array of choices too overwhelming to confront, and at the time of adolescence retreated into the forced hibernation of the childish anorexic body to forestall these demands. Not only a daughter's ineptitude was implicated, but also the envious mother's relentless projection of her own unmet aspirations. An interpretation, of course, which too neatly packages the complex and difficult transition from the staunch ethics of the mid-20th century to the media-driven culture of narcissism in the 1970s and 80s.

Within the soothing pathos lurks a Bosch-like grotesquerie. Consequently I spent extra time on the gradual evolution of this collage, beginning with the isolated "ribcage" to suggest how a prison has been constructed both within and without, the anorexic body making manifest the condition of this tacit imprisonment. Having first intended to place the sparrow in the ribcage as a basic visual metaphor, as I began working with the large image of the kneeling woman, who is pinching the thin layer of fat over her ribs, I decided that the skeletal cutout, though more frontal, could be interestingly superimposed over the woman. She holds it gently like a shield—or a Halloween costume. The photograph of the blonde is one of a series in a "woman's encyclopedia" of the 70s, and illustrates a chapter on maintenance of the body

beautiful. Anonymous experts recommend a strenuous but "rewarding" daily "discipline" of forty-five minutes of self-message as a defense against cellulite.

I included a disproportionately large caged canary in the background to emphasize the link to the original extended metaphor; I also noted that the yellow bird recalled my first pet parakeet and accompanying experience of death and guilt. Moreover, during my acute teenage anorexia, my parents bought me a second blue parakeet, which I unsuccessfully attempted to characterize as a magic sign for my recovery. So more blue entered the background, and the blue glass ribbing of the backdrop called to mind the ubiquitous fishbone of Surrealist Max Ernst—and how Dorothea Tanning (2001) has characterized their marriage's late moments of shared recollection as the tracing of the spine of a fossil. Then I added the split fillets of the trout, spread by the hands of the (remembered? fantasized?) lover/healer, which now merge into the thighs of the woman.

As the comments above suggest, this *glamourous* image triggers in me a profound nostalgia and mourning for the lost adolescent body and potential, while dramatizing the unitary denial of its loss, the urge to control and preserve, to silence competing voices. Gold for the blended childhood impressions of urine, honey, beer, and sunshine, for the Golden Age of youth in the year of Expo '67, for Midas's condemnation to starvation, for the eggs of the magical goose which was cut open and found empty. Nothing gold can stay. Trying to insert more empty eggshells in the fish, I could not resist the tidy fit of the pinkish-grey, intact clutch. The last additions were the other small birds: The woodpecker hammering home the message, the bunting inside the ribs, the parrot, yellow finch, and—almost unnoticeably tiny, inaudible—the bluebird of the impossible, happiness and omen. Multiple voices of instruction, instinct and sensation, within and without. Moreover, at this point my texts/collages became increasingly multivocal, my anecdotal memories one voice among the citations of theorists and recovered anorexics, and the detached theoretical musings of the academic self.
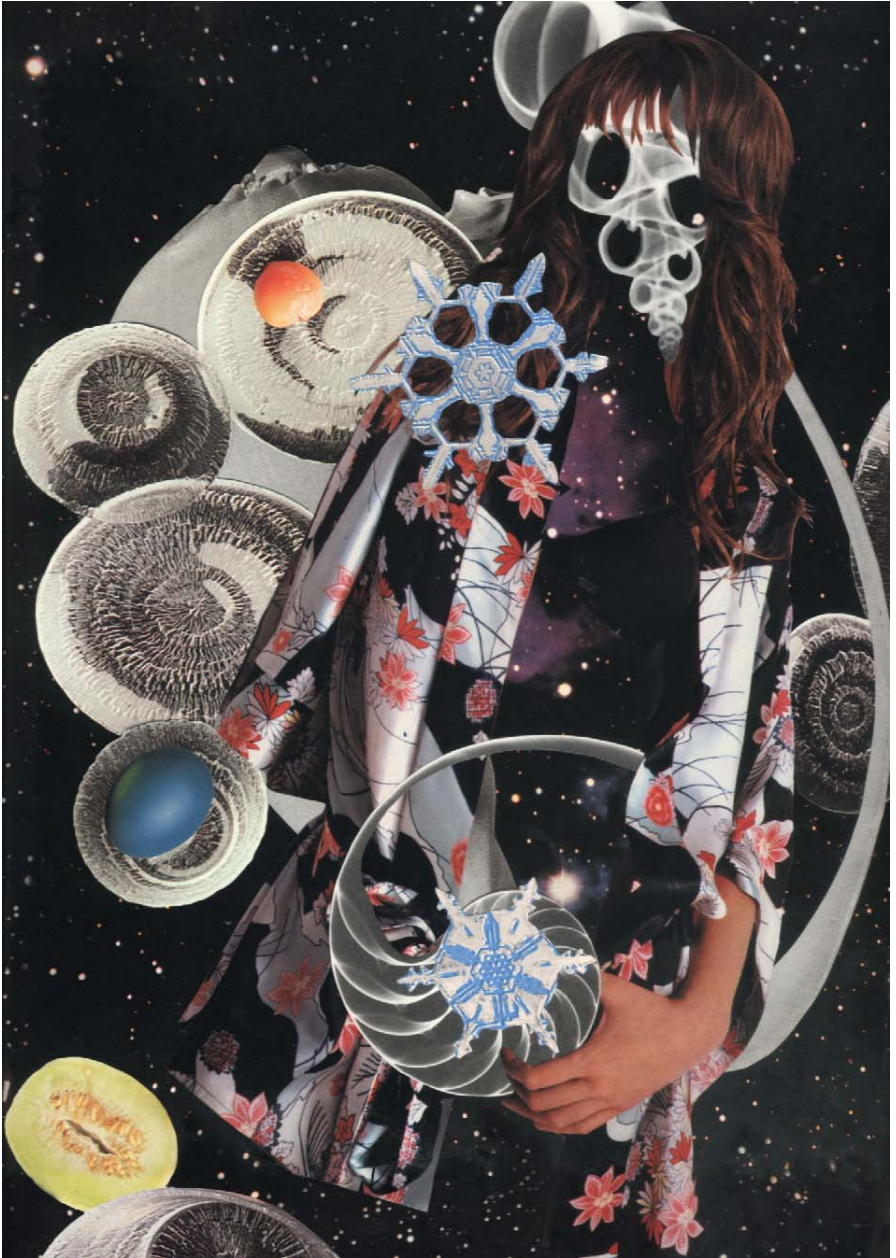
Fig. 5: *Nature abhors a vacuum*

I had read a magazine article in which a recovered anorexic spoke of the pursuit of the perfect zero—a clothing size, but also a powerful metaphor of the

vacuous and otherworldly perfection that the enviable thinness of the anorexic body may appear to offer to a girl struggling with feelings of worthlessness and inadequacy. In its extreme form, such a goal becomes metaphysical, as if one could divest the physical body entirely and stand by its side as pure spirit. Such a profound wish may be credited with the long series of rescues, sometimes terminated in accidental death or suicide, that characterize anorexia in its acute phases.

Less evident, though clearly discerned by Bruch, is the fact that anorexia, untrue to its name, is not a state of "no appetite" (Bruch, 1978). The anorexic's hunger for experience, in contradiction to her weakened material grasp on the world, is immense, not in the least because severe or prolonged deprivation temporarily sharpens sensation and perception. But just as psychic disorientation produces perceptual distortions of the body image, so space and time arise in the anorexic view as perilously vast and unformed, a chaos which must be filled with a bewildering array of objects, intentions, and plans, often listed just as meticulously as the amounts of food eaten and their calorie counts.

In the later collages I am often chasing this fugitive equilibrium, seeing just how much elaboration, how much detail and surfeit, the chaste rectangle of the picture may bear before it dissolves into visual cacophony and illegibility. Before, in all its complexity, it nonetheless reverts to the blissful state of perfect zero…which is also, paradoxically, Dionysian oblivion. Here I believe the layering inherent to the collage has achieved profound results, communicating the sense of groundlessness, the lack of a stable self persisting through place and time, which underlies the food obsessions and starvation panics of eating disorders. Instead, there is the incoherence of desire and the emptying out of interior contents, regulated and replaced by small portions of food counted out meticulously and distributed to constitute manageable units of time. While the media imagery continues to constitute or present an inflated, spectacular sense of self, there is a visible movement from the beautiful, intoxicating and celebratory moments of a culture which prizes and values anorexia as an extraordinary performance of its professed values, to a visible emptying-out of all internal contents in the service of an addictive mechanism. By the very images that have constituted and supported it, the real effects of the chronic pursuit of the thin body—physical and psychic—are manifest in this ghost. Apparition—"the act of appearing."

Donna Davis

Afterword/Conclusions

The product of my collage and textual investigations is neither purely a case study, a confessional, a lifewriting, nor an illustrated theoretical paper. While it is admittedly a "research document" in progress, a "database" open to further critical and experiential investigation, it is also a multifarious, yet unified, poetic—and fantastic—*body* (of work). The disorientation and multiple perspectives of postmodern collage have converged on an intuitive whole, though one which may widely distribute the sense of agency and even selfhood among relationships and phenomena. Noteworthy is the evocation of telling memories and the illumination of obscure psychic and physical states, often through the effects of the peculiarly disturbing media references that seem to stand in for (if not replace) inarticulate emotions and desires; and the rapid progression from seemingly elementary, nominal categories to complex analogies and observations of anorexia as existential and cultural dilemma. Further self/body image investigations are indicated, to be accompanied by more extensive semiotic analysis and exploratory activity in collage as "figuration" of visceral and emotional experience, especially at the level of tactile operations as well as visual image-making.

My results strongly underscore the disturbing idea that waves of sociocultural imagery work on a level below or above the apprehension of visible denotation to communicate through all "incarnations" a few "master narratives": power- and value-driven myths of presence and absence. More is required to pierce our cultural obsessions than the Internet distribution of a photograph of a vulnerable, naked anorexic actress. Collage, dissembling and ultimately inauthentic, captures and finally reveals the inauthenticity and false promise of the subject position into which the anorexic has—only more or less consciously—bought. At the same time, however, the methodology of collage illuminates the paradox of the eating disordered condition, in which an apparently rigid will patrols a sense of psychic and physical self that has become infinitely extensible, permeable, without borders; in which a stance of defiant exhibitionism is paired with an equal drive to disappear; in which internal and external, visible and invisible, symbolic and real, even life and death, are scrambled, exchanged, and confounded.

I hope that the intense sharing of my images and lifewriting may appeal to both academic and general readers in the field of education, recommending collage methods as means to alternative perceptions and reflections. Educators still strongly oriented to written culture may find in collage a means to precipitate a more con-

scious understanding of the effects of our immersive multimedia environment. In-service teachers, always powerfully grounded in concrete experience, intuitively understanding that one must *show* more than *tell*, are surely aware that traditional discussion and interpretation of visual imagery and media narratives does little to mitigate their impact; these are intimately internalized models, keyed into lived experience in unpredictable ways, that must be re-created, exorcised, and renegotiated on their own terms.

Weber and Mitchell, in their feminist theorizing of such touchstones of material culture as shoes and dresses, have moved from attention to the rhetorical/metaphorical implications of clothing to delve deeply into the ritual enactments and embedded symbolizations involved in the draping of the gendered body (Weber & Mitchell, 2004). Ultimately one thinks not only through the art process but also through a web of rhetorical identifications, associations and cultural/historical contexts, a project which may be driven less by "representation" than by "figuration," and performativity—the attributes of an art medium being mapped metaphorically onto diverse activities to evoke a radical *jouissance*. Perhaps collage thus offers a parallel means in which to rethink and reengage the cultural struggles among image, body, and self; an opportunity to realize or liberate the unspeakable creative tensions locked into the eating disordered stance (Bordo, 1993; Garrett, 1999; Knapp, 2003). Through the collagist's weaving together of theory, personal memory and fantasy, and active creation, researchers and educators may imagine and identify an integral body, world and community even amidst the fragmented image-play of media ideologies. I would thus advocate a practice that implicates the power of the body/image in educative change and validates arts-informed methodologies in their opening of alternative spaces for learning and healing.

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Research as Experience and the Experience of Research: Mutual Shaping in the Arts and in Qualitative Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the experience of being a researcher and how this experience shapes who we are in a process of mutual shaping. The very engagement with research, the author suggests, parallels the engagement with music and the arts. In this engagement, problem setting and problem solving, the conceptual and the embodied, the analytic and the holistic, are interconnected and interdependent. Assuming the role of an *animator*, the communication of the research intensifies our engagement, contributing to the shaping of who we are.

Overture

"We teach who we are," wrote Parker Palmer (Palmer, 1998, p. 2), famously, making a case that teachers'"inner landscapes" are central to what they do. Other occupations, too, to various extents, are shaped by those who "occupy" them. Indeed, one can distinguish occupations by the degree to which they offer opportunities to express who one is. Being an artist is an obvious example of an occupation that allows space to express who one is. As importantly, who one is is shaped by his or her artistic experiences. In this paper I suggest that researchers, too, like artists and teachers, "research who we are," and in turn, are shaped by this experience.

The inclusion of the experience of being a researcher in qualitative research accounts is relatively recent, arising out of the postmodern realization that in the social sciences, the researcher is the main instrument. In a constructivist worldview, interpretive research begins with the biography and the self of the researcher (Denzin, 1989). Examining the self interacting with the data is essential to interpretations (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Peshkin, 1988a).

Traditionally, research reports have provided little information about the researchers and the ways that their understandings were shaped by their biographies and their research experiences. In the past 40 years, however, interpretive ethnography has taken a more reflexive stance, with its critical examination of the anthropologist's presence and actions, and its interest in the ways that self and others are mutually shaped in the process of fieldwork. As producers and consumers of ethnographic accounts, we now want to know more, in more depth, and from a more self-reflexive standpoint, about the authors' subjectivity, their interactions with participants, the ethical dilemmas the researchers faced in the course of their work, and how these were handled. A more reflexive anthropology has also meant a greater concern with the recursive nature of fieldwork, that is, the reciprocal relationship between the ways fieldwork unfolds and the tools that the ethnographer employs (Bresler, Wasser, Hertzog, & Lemons, 1996). This relationship underlies the process of interpretation.

This paper takes yet another step in the direction of examining the role of the experience of research. I suggest here a focus on the experience of being a researcher and on how this experience shapes who we are. I call this *mutual shaping*. There is a long tradition, at least from the 19th century, of literature on such mutual shaping in the arts: the experience of artists and how this experience shapes creative expression. I noted above the emerging literature on how researchers' subjectivity shapes research (e.g., Peshkin, 1988a; 1988b; Feuerverger, 2001). However, there seems to be little written about the other half of mutuality, that is, how researchers are shaped by their research.

The parallel between occupations in the arts and in research runs on yet another, finer level. The very engagement with research, I suggest, parallels the engagement with music and the arts. In this engagement, problem setting and problem solving, the conceptual and the physical, the analytic and the holistic, are interconnected and interdependent. The communication of the work with fellow-researchers and with audiences intensifies the engagement, contributing to the shaping of who we are.

As those involved in the process of doing research, it behooves us therefore to examine the experience of being a researcher. The goal of this paper is to invite such explorations. In so doing, I draw on writings about the making of art and about art appreciation, as well as on my own experiences as a musician and a pianist, in the tradition of self-study (e.g., Bruner, 1996). While self-study researchers acknowledge the role of the self in the research project, they focus on the space between self and the practice in which one engages (Bullough & Pinneagar, 2001). Unlike Escher's (1948) self-referential hand drawing itself (http://www.worldofescher.com/gallery/A13.html), emerging from a sleeve situated on a blank page in a featureless base, the self-study researcher operates in a specific context, addressing specific research questions, involving specific participants. Going beyond oneself and navel-gazing, the focus is on the interaction with a dynamically changing world and self.

Parallelism does not imply equivalence. Instead, it aims to propose fresh issues for reflection and discussion. This is what this paper sets out to do. The theme of parallel processes between the arts and research has invited the counterpoint-like writing style of this paper, with the weaving together of two sets of experiences, engagement in the arts and engagement in research, parallel yet each displaying an individual and differentiated contour.

Engagement, Exploration, and Craft

While textbooks on teaching research methods abound, including some excellent works, these are but guiding texts. Ultimately, the researcher is left in the field on her own, to conceive of interesting and important research questions, to craft a study that will be responsive to the research goals, to the setting and participants, and that, not less important, will satisfy advisor, committee members, and the researcher herself! The conceptualization of qualitative research precedes and emerges through the actual conduct of research in what is typically a process of prolonged engagement. In qualitative research, data collection and analysis overlap. Design is responsive to participants' stories and observations (Bresler, 1997).

The textbook methods of research commonly provide some general guidelines on how to take field notes (e.g., Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995); how to interview (e.g., Kvale, 1998; Spradley, 1979); and how to analyze data (e.g., Miles & Huberman, 1984; Patton, 2002). These provide useful tools that help researchers get oriented, structure observations, focus, and construct interviews that

have coherence. Beyond this level of methods, most crucial is allowing a space for the setting to present its unfolding story, and a space for participants to lead us into topics and areas whose "compellingness" we could not have anticipated. This open-endedness, I have found time and again, enables me to comprehend a perspective different from my own. It takes an attentiveness, a responsiveness, to emic, insiders' voices, and to an etic/emic interplay where I am expanded not only by findings to my original questions, but also where the questions themselves, my curiosities and wonderments, are expanded. To provide a specific example: in my study of arts education (Stake, Bresler, & Mabry, 1991), my initial questions addressed the nature of the operational and perceived curriculum in elementary schools. As I observed and talked with the teachers participating in my study, I noted a discrepancy between teachers' arts practice (mostly teacher-centered and rote), and what they shared as their views of arts (the arts as highly affective, and a tool to cultivate self-expression). This discrepancy became a focus for further inquiry.

Engagement in music, such as performing, involves a discernment of melodic lines, rhythms, and harmonic progressions, in order to create an expressive whole. When confronted with a new musical style that lies out of immediate likes (I recall, for example, practicing my very first Stockhausen), the analytic and conceptual are crucial in making sense and befriending the music. Whether parts to whole, or whole to parts, the process of connection and crafting an interpretation is never linear, always iterative.

As I became acquainted with key scholars of visual art education, I realized that musical analysis has its visual equivalents. Feldman (1967), for example, identified the elements of grammar (shape, light and dark, color, texture); organization of artistic elements (unity, balance, rhythm, proportion); and aesthetics (empathy, psychic distance, fusion, and good gestalt) as analytic tools in art appreciation. Broudy (1972) coined the term *scanning*, focusing on similar parameters, categorized as sensory, technical, formal, and expressive qualities.

Similarly, in doing qualitative research, the analytic tool of scanning helps structure observation as well as data analysis. We attend to the sensory aspects and (the metaphorical) qualities of shapes, and textures of education. We investigate formal qualities, the relationships between occurrences (e.g., teachers' actions, students' behaviors and experiences,) and how they are organized. We reflect on the expressivity and the meaning of curriculum and the teaching.

In his book Move closer: *An intimate philosophy of art*, art appreciation scholar Armstrong (2000) identifies five aspects of the process of perceptual contemplation of an artwork: 1. noticing detail, 2. seeing relations between parts, 3. seizing the whole as the whole, 4. the lingering caress, and 5. mutual absorption. The first three, which correspond to musical analysis tools and the ones established by Feldman and Broudy, also apply to the conduct of research. Noting the sensory, formal, and expressive qualities of research, as well as looking at the expressivity and meaning of the case as a whole, is an example of how these aspects can support the conduct of research.

The last two aspects, lingering caress and mutual absorption, evoke different kinds of relationships in the experiential encounter with artwork. They point at dialogical relationships, where, in addition to being task oriented, the viewer opens to a receptive mindset, to be changed by the encounter. Lingering caress is characterized by the lack of instrumental purpose—a form of engagement which is traditionally associated with the concept of aesthetics. When we linger, Armstrong notes, "Nothing gets achieved, nothing gets finished — on the contrary, satisfaction is taken in spinning out our engagement with the object" (Armstrong, 2000, p. 98). The process of a deepening relationship allows for artistic and aesthetic discoveries. The same lingering associated with the concept of art, I suggest, is crucial in research. The cycles of data collection and noting, intertwine with the more leisurely cycles of immersion with the data, letting it sink in and speak to us, to dialogue with our assumptions, values, thoughts and feelings. I find that this is where the growth happens, where I get off my own "beaten track" of thoughts into fresh paths.

The fifth aspect, mutual absorption, refers to the transformative character of this deep engagement. Armstrong writes, "When we keep our attention fixed upon an object which attracts us, two things tend to happen: we get absorbed in the object and the object gets absorbed into us" (p. 99). In my own experience of mutual absorption in music, whether with Bach, Schubert or Ligeti, I "become the music." The boundaries between what I commonly perceive as inside me and outside me are blurred. Sound penetrates the self, engaging me on bodily, mind and spirit levels.

Mutual absorption takes, I believe, a heightened form in the process of making and creating. I think of that process as mutual shaping. I have experienced it in the act of performing music and the construction of musical interpretations, a process in which I am affected by the sounds and interpretations I create. Similarly, I find that as I construct ideas, issues and interpretations in research, these ideas and interpretations expand my conceptualizations, and as importantly, my understanding, enabling

me to gain empathy for a perspective foreign to my own.[1] This dialogical space, where I interact with materials and generate ideas in a process of forming and re-forming, becomes, as I discuss in the next section, tri-directional in the process of communicating to others.

Making in music commonly takes the form of performance, improvisation and composition. In qualitative research, there are three interdependent levels of making. There is the research process: the conduct of observations, the interviewing, what we commonly refer to as "fieldwork." There is data analysis with its different forms and stages. And there is the writing. The writing is based on the fieldwork, though writing can also lead the interaction. Wolcott (2002) recommends that researchers start with writing as a way to articulate their preconceptions, and only then move on to fieldwork.

Making, whether in music, in visual art, or in research, requires craft. There is no art without craft, writes sociologist Sennett: the idea of a paper is not a paper; the idea of a musical composition is not a musical composition (Sennett, 2008, p. 65). Craft, whether in musical performance or in research, is founded on skill developed to a high degree. Skill is a trained practice. Materials are central. Just as becoming a musician involves proficiency with a voice or an instrument, becoming a researcher requires proficiency with the materials and the craft of research. The craftsman's efforts to do good quality work and shape materials depend on curiosity about the material at hand, curiosity generating (and generated by) an interaction and a dialogue. The line between craft and art may seem to separate technique and expression but this separation is false.[2]

While we often imply technical accuracy and the notion of utilitarianism when we use the word craft instead of art, the Greek origin behind our use of the words technology, technique and technical suggest there is more to examine. To the Greeks, there was no distinction between art and craft; it was all *techne*, a term they used to indicate that we make form visible, whether drama, weaving or recitation. Techne meant a good fit between the form of the idea and the use. So, craft at its best is bringing forth the form, and doing so in a manner that animates it.[3] Fieldwork (interviews and observations), data analysis, and writing, are critically dependent on craft. Craft in research is acquired by coursework, readings and practice, mediated by cognition, emotion as well as intuition. But to be at its best, the craftsman's deft use of tools and materials, combined with an intuition developed from years of knowing the craft, create a reciprocity that animates the form. It is the matter of using cognition to cast intuition and emotional resonance with the research, getting into origi-

nal and interesting research questions, as well as the aspiration to understand what is unknown. The craftsman, musician or researcher can possibly pattern herself after the form she feels, thus giving form to one's soul in the process.

Sennett uses the example of pottery, where raw clay is "cooked" both by the tools that shape it into a pot and by the kiln, which does the literal work of cooking. Cooked clay provides a medium for making images that, on a pot, create a narrative as the pot is turned. This narrative can travel and it can be traded or sold as a cultural artifact. Clay, Sennett claims, is "good to think with," quoting Levi-Strauss that symbolic value is inseparable from awareness of the material condition of an object; its creators thought the two together (Sennett, 2008, p. 129). Sennett argues that the craftsman, engaged in a continual dialogue with materials, does not suffer the divide of understanding and doing. The craftsman, writes Sennett, must be patient, avoiding quick fixes. Good work of this sort emphasizes the lessons of experience through a dialogue between tacit knowledge and explicit critique (Sennett, 2008, p. 51).

Musical craft follows a similar route. My initial engagement, exploration and cultivation of musical skills were acquired in playing piano as a young child, before my formal music education had started. These skills involved playing by ear, picking up melodies and harmonies to match. This stage of learning, though intense and powerful, was informal, implicit and untested. Comprising of knowledge of sound, musical phrases, rhythm, and harmony, the learning was characterized by a heightened experiential quality, a quality that is often related to a musical community. Technique and expression were interwoven. Later on, in my formal training, technique did assume the narrower meaning of an imposition of a form, separate from experience in what Dewey (1938) would have classified as miseducation.

Miseducation is always a danger of academic learning, including in the teaching and learning of research methods. As a teacher of research, I strive to go beyond the narrow definition of methods. I also attempt to cultivate in my students the harnessing of cognition to their deeper curiosity and aspiration to understand. Craft in research, I suggest, involves self-cultivation. Research materials consist of observations and interviews—fundamental to social interactions and to learning in its deepest sense. Becoming proficient in the subtle experiences of observing and listening (a practice that is never complete) and in the interplay of the concreteness of a specific situation, with the abstraction of issues, are skills useful in our everyday interactions.

A continual dialogue with materials necessitates a capacity for sustained attention. Attention is at the core of perception and exploration, and the building block of intimacy, wisdom and cultural progress. Attention, writes William James, "is the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneous possible objects of trains of thought. It implies withdrawal from some things in order to deal effectively with others" (quoted in Jackson, 2008, p. 13). The opposite of attention is the scatterbrained state of distraction. Jackson (2008) portrays the increased states of distraction in our society where we are pulled constantly by virtual universes, the addictive allure of multitasking people and things in a constant state of motion.

Distraction, indeed, increasingly part of academic life, is the enemy of scholarship. The musical engagements of focused listening and performing, I realized, provided me with models for sustained attention in research. In music, attention comes in different forms. There is the holistic listening, when a musical piece captivates. Another type of attention is required in encountering a new piece where the analytic mode takes the forefront. The attention of the analysis is different from the attention of the lingering caress, and these two are different from the attention involved in embodying the piece as we learn to perform it. These forms of attention have their equivalents in the practice and conduct of research.

The relationships implicated in the act of making, interactive and recursive, rather than hierarchical and linear, go beyond methods. The encounter with musical and artistic materials requires dialogic relationships, paralleling the researcher's encounter with setting and participants, or the scholar's craft of words to shape ideas and issues in the research document. These aspects infuse the various stages of qualitative research, including the processes of interviewing, analysis and writing. In my own experience, research often starts with lingering, a space to identify what is compelling, what calls for a deepening of understanding and sustained investigation. Once a focus has been determined, it functions as a starting point, to be reconsidered and revised as the relationships with participants and data, rather than a definitive end point. The initial stages of fieldwork are typically analytic and task oriented, with the focus on detail, noting relations and patterns, and grasping for meaning and interpretations. The lingering aspect is ever present—from the preliminary data analysis of the contact summary sheet to the interim reports (Miles & Huberman, 1984)—in preparing for the next cycle of observation or interviews, till after the paper has been published, when my relationships with it can still evolve, taking me to the next presentation or paper.

The craft and the interaction with materials exist, of course, beyond qualitative inquiry, in diverse types of research. A well-known example is Nobel Prize winner Barbara McClintock's work in genetics. McClintock did not approach her research with a pedestrian textbook notion that her task was to analyze it into data bits. Instead, she approached genetic material by observing how genes function in their environment rather than regarding them merely as isolated entities, and in the process, discovered that bits of genes can move about on chromosomes (Fox Keller, quoted in Palmer, 1998, p. 55.). When Evelyn Fox Keller interviewed McClintock in order to write her biography, it became clear that McClintock's work went beyond the relationships among genes to include the relationship between the genes and the scientist who studied them. When asked what enabled McClintock to make her discoveries, McClintock emphasized the need to cultivate the patience to "hear what the material has to say to you," the openness to "let it come to you." "Clearly, it took extensive knowledge and sophisticated analytic skills," writes Palmer, "data and logic and the distance they provide are only one pole of the paradox of great science." Indeed, in the arts, as in research, connectedness is not the opposite of formal skills but complements them (Palmer, 1998).[4]

Communication in Music and in Research: The Researcher as an Animator

The dialogue between the musician and the music, artist and artwork, anticipates communication. My own experiences of performing classical music involve three primary gestures: (i) absorption--looking at the score,[5] aiming to comprehend it and get it as accurately as possible; (ii) introspection and synthesis--reaching into my inner landscapes, searching for resonance, resistance, emotional and intellectual resources to comprehend and relate to; and (iii) communication--reaching to the audience in trying to communicate the newly cultivated understanding. Research, too, consists of these three gestures: (i) absorption--reaching towards the phenomena under study to understand it as accurately and fully as possible; (ii), introspection and synthesis--reaching into oneself, drawing on our inner landscapes of subjectivities, and values, to make meaning; and (iii), communication--reaching to our audience.[6] In qualitative, "human science" research, the final product is evaluated not only by its correctness, but also by its depth and the resonance it creates in others. These three gestures coexist, building on and supporting each other. Accuracy has a specific focus. Going inside requires depth and introspectiveness that, indeed, enable us to

bring to our interactions with the arts and research who we are. Communication to others traverses personal and spatial boundaries. The anticipation of an audience shapes and directs the work of musical performer.

My earlier example of playing folksongs as a child exemplifies the interrelationship between learning and performance. Picking up melodies and harmonies was closely followed by performing these songs in home and preschool gatherings to accompany singing of Israeli folksongs. These performances informed the next cycle of playing by ear and learning more melodies. Here, the cultivation of skills and craft involved recursively listening to the music, practice, connection and communication through lived musical encounters, in relationships with a keen community of singers.

I find a similar close interaction between craft and communication in my research practice. The awareness of the audience in research is present at various stages, way before the actual communication. The process of research, like musical performances, involves the discovery and shaping of meaning for oneself as well as for others. Already in the early stages of fieldwork, the observations attend to what is observed, but are shaped by the prospect of its communication to others. Ethnographers are propelled by intellectual-emotional curiosity, intensified with the commitment to an outside audience. Losing that sense of audience can be experienced as losing their raison d'être as ethnographers, or "going native." In the worlds of professional music and professional research, it is the acts of communication that give both performance and research meaning (and the institutional validation that is an essential part of these professions). The awareness of a potential audience, I find in my own work, heightens perception, rendering what could be a lonely activity into a social one, part of community making.

Performance is a heightened experience. Stubley quotes Dolores Grondal's description of performance as a "way of being." In the process of discovering and shaping the music, the performer lives in and through it. Quoting Ricoeur, the self is both actor and observer (in Stubley, 1995, p. 64). The aesthetics of communication involves an embodied cognition and affect. As classical performers know, losing aesthetic distance during performance—being swept away by our feelings—is risky. In research, this self-expression can take the form of advocacy. More often in communicating research, the delicate balance between emotion and cognition loses the emotive aspect.

Communication to others, that delicate dialectical interplay between the private and the public, is at the heart of qualitative research and teaching. Learning to negotiate these intersections, artistic and musical experiences can provide rich materials from which to learn. They involve concentrated, sustained focus and perception that often leads to personal transformation, juxtaposing cognition and affect.

I have struggled for some time with the right image for the communicator of research: composer? performer? conductor? first violinist? Miller and Boud (1996), highlighting the role of experience in teaching, and focusing on activities that create circumstances in which others can learn, came up with the notion of the *animator*. They draw on the connotations of the word, which include, among others, "to give life to," "to quicken," "to vivify," "to inspire," and "to activate." Miller and Boud refer to the function of working with the experience of others as animation (1996, p. 7), and to the person who works to promote others' learning as an animator. They see the function of animators to be that of acting with learners, or with others, in situations where learning is an aspect of what is occurring (Miller & Boud, 1996, p. 7). This image fits with my image of the musician, and directly relevant to this discussion, to the researcher as communicator, as creator of experiences.

Collaborating in Music and in Research

In collaborative research, the three primary gestures of solo music (absorption, introspection and synthesis, and communication) become a four. Added is the collaboration with other researchers. There is increasing recognition in the social sciences of the collective nature of knowing and social theories of development, but little about the role that researchers' interactions with each other play in the co-construction of knowledge.[7] Chamber music provides us with the metaphor for an "interpretive zone" (Wasser & Bresler, 1996),[8] the intellectual realm in which researchers work collaboratively. The concept of zone assumes more than one party—at least two if not more—negotiating, and interacting from different perspectives. Thus, the term zone, more than the term interpretation, moves us away from the traditional image of the researcher as a soloist working independently to that of a socially embedded researcher grounded in social interactions. As in a chamber ensemble, the notion of zone implies dynamic processes—exchange, transaction, transformation, and intensity. In the interpretive zone researchers bring together their distinct voices—various areas of knowledge, experience, and beliefs, to forge new meanings through the process of the joint inquiry in which they are engaged.

Harmonies range from neutral (scaffolding), through conflict (struggles), to amicable (negotiations). These same qualities characterize research groups. It is the unexpected meeting between different ideas and perspectives that breaks new intellectual ground.

Coda

I opened the paper suggesting we research who we are. Paralleling experiences in the arts, research is shaped by exploration, engagement and craft. It moves recursively among the phases of absorption, introspection and synthesis, supported by a collaborative zone and communication. Mediated by cognition and lingering caress, it is inspired by the deep wish to understand. Ultimately, as the research unfolds, in the process of mutual shaping, we also research who we may become.

Notes

I am indebted to Ma'ayan Bresler, Yoram Bresler, Chris Higgins, and Sally Gradle for their reading of this paper and insightful comments.

1.   This reminds me of Goldsworthy's comment (2004, quoted in Barrett 2007, p. 644) that "art-making is a process of discovery, rather than a rendering of preconceived knowledge or experience. The artist is making art in order to better understand what he is making art about. Through his art-making the artist comes to a better understanding of an aspect of the world and how to render it in visual form."

2.   A misperception I, too, have shared as I was trying to distinguish between different types of arts curriculum, mistaking craft for "rote" and technical (Bresler, 1998). I am grateful to John White for a conversation that sensitized me to the complexity and the richness of craft and to Sally Gradle for sharing her insights on craft.

3.   I am indebted to Sally Gradle for this observation.

4. I have elaborated on the place of connectedness in qualitative methodology in Bresler, 2006.

5. Sometimes preceded by being reached by the music, in which the process is bidirectional.

6. These three aspects are also central to teaching (Bresler, in press.)

7. This includes theoretical and practical work on the nature of groups and interpretation in diverse fields, including anthropology, the sociology of science and clinical psychology.

8. We drew on scholarly uses of the term including Vygotsky's *zone of proximal development* (1986), Bakhtin's *character zones* (1986), Pratt's linguistic *contact zones* (1992), and Giroux's (1992) *border zones*.

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