

International Journal of Education & the Arts

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<http://www.ijea.org/>

ISSN 1529-8094

Volume 12 Special Issue 1.1

June 30, 2011

Arts & Learning Research Journal Special Issue

Introduction to the Special Issue

Zach Kelehear
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In the spring of the school year, the high school and first-grade students came together for a collaborative, multi-age tile mosaic art project. Three times a week students from two first-grade classes would travel to the high school to work with a high school mentor in creating tile mosaic pieces. Those pieces would be brought together on the wall of the elementary school at the end of the year. Watching those students come together in the shared art experience served to remind me of the real treasure that teaching and learning can be. When school communities risk constructing learning that is outside the traditional organizational pattern, then they “risk” having a place where learning is authentic, and caring for each other becomes real. It takes courage on the part of the student, the teacher, and the principal to risk this type of experience.

I wrote these lines in 2003 as an introduction to a leadership publication in which notions of collaboration, empathy, research, and practice were highlighted. In many ways, these same characteristics represent our Arts and Learning SIG. We have an eclectic membership in terms of formal training and experiences but we enjoy a shared commitment to the cultivation of the arts and learning. We work together offering our different skills to a synergistic outcome. We are present to each other’s viewpoints and we value those different perspectives. And, we aggressively engage in research that informs the body of knowledge as well as the practice of art production and meaning-making.

I suspect that no one has profited more from membership in this SIG than I. Some six years ago I came under the careful tutelage of Sally Gradle, professor at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, who was then Program Chair and she taught me much about the SIG community and about producing a robust agenda for the annual AERA meeting. These past two years Robin Mello, professor at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, has once again created remarkable and engaging agendas for the AERA meetings. Out of each of these AERA meetings the Arts and Learning SIG has produced the highly respected, peer-reviewed research publication, *Arts and Learning Research Journal*. Having an outlet for publication of AERA presentations has always remained an important commitment of the SIG.

This year we have undertaken an exciting initiative that will make our research available to an ever expanding readership. With guidance from professors Liora Bresler from the University of Illinois Urbana/Champaign, Margaret Macintyre Latta of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, and Christine Thompson from The Pennsylvania State University, we are for the first time publishing in a special edition of *the International Journal of Education & the Arts*. Sally Gradle has taken on the important work of editing this publication and I once again am grateful to her.

I am convinced that next year's publication will be exciting as well as we draw on the important research presented at AERA 2011, New Orleans. Robin Mello, Program Chair, and Kimberly Powell, Assistant Program Chair from The Pennsylvania State University, have crafted 12 sessions for this year's meeting. Those titles are listed below:

1. (Re)positioning Learning Through Creative Medias, Literacies, and Modalities
2. Artist-Teachers and Teacher-Researchers: Evolution of Professional Identities Through Arts Instruction
3. Arts and Learning SIG Business Meeting and Guest Speaker Dr. Liora Besler
4. Assessing Achievement, Access, and Equality in Arts-in-Education
5. Both In and Out of the Game: Research With Young Children in Classroom Contexts
6. Community Arts: Social Engagement Inside and Outside School
7. Creative, Cultural, and Critical Pedagogies for Engagement in the Arts
8. Imagining to Learn: Arts Integration and Impact on Content Knowledge
9. Intersection of Pedagogy and Practice In and Through the Arts
10. New Perspectives on the Arts and Liberal Arts
11. Praxis and Perception: Teaching and Learning Music, Art, and Virtual Reality
12. The Critical Body: Learning Through Dancing

In closing let me say how very proud I am to have worked with this SIG and for having made such important friendships among colleagues. Robin Mello will be the Chair of the SIG and

Kimberly Powell will be Program Chair. Jacob Mishook will continue his important work managing our finances. Indeed, our leadership will be strong. And, if we are a little lucky then maybe David Betts will continue the mighty work to keep our SIG on the web (<http://www.uacoe.arizona.edu/ALSIG/>). Finally, Christine Thompson will make it possible for AERA presentations to be published in the premier publication for matters dealing with arts and learning. And, Sally Gradle will continue to receive my pleas for assistance, as six years of dependency is a hard habit to break.

Enjoy this publication. I look forward to seeing you at the next AERA meeting and to hearing about your important research. And, I am honored to have served you in the Arts and Learning SIG for the past six years.

Sincerely,

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Guest Editor's Introduction

Sally Armstrong Gradle
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This Special Edition of the *Arts & Learning Research Journal*, graciously hosted by the *International Journal of Education in the Arts*, marks the first online-only presence of our journal. This is an exciting transition for *Arts & Learning*, which has been a scholarly print journal for over 25 years. As explained in our 2010 Call for Papers, we were interested in exploring how an online venue might expand creative presentations of research, and visually enhance scholarship in the arts.

As always, our journal requires that the authors submit accepted AERA presentations from the previous year on topics pertinent to learning in the arts. All AERA submissions are subject to blind review, and then the *Arts and Learning* review panel and editor read each submission to provide authors with additional feedback. This year's edition had an unprecedented 70% acceptance rate and boasts a wide range of topics in the arts.

As the Guest Editor for *Arts & Learning*'s online emergence, I was fascinated by the diversity in thinking that researchers are currently exploring in the arts. Jennifer Katz-Buonincontro examines the ways that aesthetic knowing influences leadership decisions by looking at several models in the field. She reminds us that there is artistry in leadership, which is seen through organizational beauty, the value of a greater good in leadership design, empathy, and somatic awareness—an embodied knowledge that shapes leadership's expression.

Gianna Di Reeze and Kathy Mantas likewise connect us to tacit understandings by making the embodied experience of teaching and learning a personal, social practice. They reclaim and reframe the many avenues that instructors might mindfully contribute to the growth of learners.

By exploring the social influences inherent in the creative process, Miriam Giguere adds new categories to our aesthetic understanding of what children intuitively feel about their efforts to create with their bodies, and through their bodies. The research shows that their collaboration opens voluntary connections developed through negotiation and trust, and a belief in the efficacy of their own ideas.

Matt Omasta, the *Arts & Learning* Dissertation Award Winner of 2010, illuminates how emotions influence beliefs in a study that examines middle school students' reactions to theatrical performance. The embodied emotions that are caught appear to shape the cognitive processes and establish new meanings—about one's self and about others.

Through three case studies that involve arts-based projects, Joe Norris offers a glimpse of what it means to qualitatively embrace differences and develop assessment that might better navigate future instruction in the arts. What is our responsibility, for example, to those who wish to move toward poesis in their arts-based expressions? How can work be assessed differently when it shifts from a more pedagogically based exercise?

Readers have an opportunity to explore the strengths of a community-based art model through an intriguing look at a film school in the work of Ching-Chiu Lin, Juan Carlos Castro, and Kit Grauer. Set in the idyllic beauty of a remote island in British Columbia, their research shows how the film school encouraged students to leave school boundaries, take risks, explore tension as part of the process, and develop ideas that had both personal and collective significance.

In "Performing an Archive of Resistance," authors Claire Robson, Dennis Sumara, and Rebecca Luce-Kapler explore through two different population studies how fictional identities created through reading and writing practices influence the formation of one's consciousness. They cite new perspectives that illustrate how participation in reading, writing and responding can create and transform conscious engagement, placing it once again within the body and not simply as a function of the mind/brain. The authors ask important questions for all research in education: "If we consider the embodied self a situation, how do we change it? And when?"

Melanie Burdick delves into the possibilities of found poetry as research methodology, describing her work with two teachers in converting transcriptions of interviews into poetic

forms that could be shared and compared as ways of reflecting upon experience in new ways. The revelations that can occur through this multiplication of languages and perspectives suggests the rich potential of this arts-based approach to research.

All of these research studies present readers of *Arts & Learning* with an opportunity to mull over the deeply embodied self that is so pervasive yet often unrecognized in diverse educational applications; from leadership aesthetics to teaching, to creative dance and film, to theatrical engagement and response, and literature, all of which examine educational climate change. Are we giving ample room to teachers and learners to be present in the moment, in their own bodies that tacitly feel more than they verbally articulate? Through the outstanding research in this edition, we have this opportunity to share the scholars' journeys into a less divisive realm of education, one in which the hallmark of excellence is surely the attention that is given to being aware and present in the moment.

I would like to extend gratitude to all the authors for enriching our journal experience and to the *Arts & Learning* Review Panel of scholars whose expertise was so valuable, particularly given the wide range of content in this edition. To the staff and scholars who took the individual papers and worked their magic to make them coalesce into a cohesive edition, you have my utmost thanks and admiration. Readers, I hope, will be encouraged by our online emergence, and consider that their AERA scholarship may also find a home next year in *Arts & Learning*.

Respectfully submitted,

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Southern Illinois University Carbondale

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ISSN 1529-8094

Volume 12 Special Issue 1.3

June 30, 2011

Arts & Learning Research Journal Special Issue

How Might Aesthetic Knowing Relate to Leadership? A Review of the Literature

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Citation: Katz-Buonincontro, J. (2011). How might aesthetic knowing relate to leadership? A review of the literature. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 12(SI 1.3). Retrieved [date] from <http://www.ijea.org/v12si1/>.

Abstract

Aesthetic knowing may be valuable to educational leadership practice because it links feeling and intuition to procedural information to inform decision-making. Within the large and diverse field of aesthetics, some models apply aesthetic knowing to leadership practice. Scholarly interest in this area emerged in the late 1980's, and various conceptualizations of aesthetic leadership abound in the literature. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to review and clarify the relationship between aesthetic knowing and leadership skills. In effort to answer the question, "How do scholars relate aesthetic ways of knowing to leadership?" 23 literature sources from 1986-2010 were reviewed. As a result, four categories of aesthetic leadership qualities emerged: emotional awareness and empathy; sensory and somatic attentiveness; interest in organizational beauty; and the promotion of moral purpose.

Introduction

Aesthetic education has roots in K-12 education (Greene, 2001; Smith, 2008, 2005), but what models explore aesthetic knowing in leadership? This article reviews and explores the relationship between aesthetic knowing and leadership skills with implications for leadership preparation. Aesthetic knowing may be valuable to leadership practice as it might link feeling and intuition to procedural information to inform decision-making. Scholarly interest in the relationship of aesthetics to leadership theory emerged in the late 1980's, but various conceptualizations of aesthetic leadership appear in the literature. Drawing on selected literature sources between 1986-2010, this review seeks to address ways in which scholars relate aesthetic ways of knowing to leadership practices. Four emergent categories of aesthetics related to leadership are discussed, thus extending dialogue about aesthetics to adult learning and leadership preparation by articulating the interrelated aspects of cognition, emotion and the body.

Conceptualizing the Review: The Relationship between Aesthetics and Leadership

In order to conceptualize the review, I first build an argument for examining the relationship between aesthetics and recent developments in educational leadership theory and practice. Indeed, some scholars have explored the relationship of aesthetics to leadership theory and preparation (e.g. Samier & Bates, 2006). However, to date, there have been no comprehensive reviews of these scholarly works. Without a synthesis of this topic, it is challenging for researchers in the fields of aesthetic education and leadership theory to effectively debate and research the topic of aesthetic leadership. Disparate conceptualizations provide us with a general sense of the topic, yet a gap persists for conceptualizing how to study aesthetic knowing for leadership preparation purposes. In the following section, a brief review of aesthetics introduces basic concepts of aesthetic knowing and provides a rationale for considering the incorporation of aesthetic knowing into leadership preparation.

Aesthetic Knowing

Aesthetic philosophers Plato, Kant and Baumgarten's theories of aesthetic knowing explore the metaphysical nature of human concerns, values and experiences heightened through the process of making and appreciating art (Hofstadter & Kuhns, 1964). Educational scholars subsequently adopted aesthetics as a guiding teaching and curricular philosophy. In this passage, I briefly review essential definitions of aesthetic knowing. Because the general field of aesthetics spans a diverse range of academic disciplines and interdisciplinary theories, I

focus on a few scholars who appear to have a considerable impact in educational scholarship. By no means is this a comprehensive review of contemporary aesthetic scholarship.

In the chapter *Defining Aesthetic Education*, Greene (2001) emphasized humanistic and holistic aspects of development that not only use the arts, but also seek to integrate what is learned from the arts into education. When the learner engages with a work of art (e.g. a dance, a painting, a poem) senses and emotions are conceptualized as important features of ‘noticing.’ Interestingly, she distinguished aesthetic education as taking the learner beyond the limits of material exploration—a hallmark of traditional art education—to engage in the meanings of the artwork in social and cultural terms. Similar to Greene, educational philosopher Smith (2008, p. 4) stressed the role of positive emotions in aesthetics, recounting Beardsley’s five-part explanation of feelings: object directedness, felt freedom, detached affect, a sense of active discovery and wholeness. Elsewhere, Smith (2005) elaborated on the integration of art into school curriculum as well as more generally using the senses and perception. Aesthetic sensibility has even been highlighted in the area of teacher training as:

a high level of consciousness about what one sees...a fine attention to detail and form: the perception of relations (tensions and harmonies); the perception of nuance (colors and meaning) and the perception of change (shifts and subtle motions). (McCrary Sullivan, 2000, p. 221-222 in Rodgers, 2002)

In summary, aesthetic knowing can be characterized along two axes. First, immediate qualities of engaging in an artistic experience include physiological (senses—touch, feel, hear, smell, etc.—related to perception and attention) and cognitive (feelings and understandings) responses to works of art. Beyond the immediate associations of artistic engagement, a second layer of associations with that engagement emerges: Repeated introductions to artistic novelty are believed to cause the producer of the artwork or the viewer to wrestle with that novelty. In turn, the act of considering new ideas may lead to open-mindedness and attitudes that are accepting towards diversity of thought and cultural expression (Smith, 2008). These two axes of aesthetic knowing imply that engaging in aesthetic learning may impact the quality of how we function and interact in more general terms in schools and organizations. The longstanding tradition of studying and infusing aesthetics into everyday life and educational processes substantiates the argument that leadership training might benefit from aesthetic knowing, too.

Need to Consider the Role of the Arts in Leadership Preparation

As leadership theory diversifies, the use of art and literature has been suggested by prominent educational leadership scholars Crow and Grogan (2005) for their emotive capabilities, moral explorations and potential for yielding psychological insight into the self. “By tapping into

any of the arts,” they explain, “we understand a subject like leadership more fully because our emotions are engaged” (p. 363).

While educational leadership and organizational management scholars have highlighted the need to improve leadership preparation (Millstein & Kruger, 1997; Murphy, 2006; Pounder, Reitzug & Young, 2002) by focusing on the *quality* and *type* of learning experiences (McCauley, cited in London & Maurer, 2001, p. 222; Weick, 2007), scholars have yet to fully examine how to incorporate aesthetics into leadership (Kelehear, 2008) and lessons learned through art into leadership thought and practice (Crow & Grogan, 2005). Most of the current demands on the field arise from improving leadership accountability of student academic performance but also efforts to make university-based learning experience more relevant to professional experience. Therefore, expanding leadership preparation methods emphasize applied and experiential aspects of praxis as well as a focus on self-understanding as a way to improve leadership performance. Narrowing the university-workplace gap means focusing on helping leaders make sense out of their current practices, airing their assumptions about their abilities and organizational problems, and then revising their leadership approaches with actionable plans that target these problems.

Take, for example, Duke’s (1986) aesthetic leadership model, which builds an analogy between the artistic process and the leadership process: Much like an artist, it is contended that a leader’s behavior shapes the “effects of experience.” However, less is known about actual characteristics of leadership behavior itself. Therefore, additional analysis of literature sources might reveal more fine-grained insight into the actual psychological aspects of aesthetic knowing. More recently, educational leadership professors have related aesthetics to teaching, and many professors and school leaders are interested in accentuating emotive and social aspects of leadership praxis to think more holistically about pressing school problems and derive appropriate solutions (Kelehear, 2008).

Literature Review

This article presents a narrative synthesis of articles on the topic of aesthetic leadership in the order they were most frequently discussed by authors. A search was conducted using the descriptors “aesthetic,” “organizational aesthetics,” or “art” in combination with the terms “leadership,” “administration,” “management,” or “organization” in arts, education, psychology, and social science databases including ERIC, PsycInfo, Business Premier, Academic Search Premier, JSTOR and Arts and Humanities Index, as well as in a university library book catalog. Articles that focused solely on aesthetics or solely on leadership were not used—they had to combine the two concepts. The database and catalog search yielded 21 articles (19 conceptual and 2 empirical) and two books from 1986-2010 (listed in the

Reference section), written mostly by management/leadership scholars. The review did not include book reviews, unpublished materials or conference papers. In order to make thorough and consistent connections between the concepts of “aesthetics” and “leadership” in a text, I read and highlighted key definitions of ‘aesthetic qualities,’ and clustered them together to form emergent categories.

Four Aesthetic Leadership Qualities

My analysis of how scholars related aesthetic ways of knowing to leadership produced four categories of aesthetic leadership qualities. Scholarly interest in aesthetics ranged from considering the very nature of dispositions and characteristics of educational and business leaders to how organizational life is experienced and perceived.

Emotional Awareness and Empathy

Authors’ discussion of aesthetics in the context of leadership practice most commonly referred to the ability to use emotional awareness and empathy to positively engage and identify with others in a leadership role. Emotions were conceived as central to laying a foundation of empathy in order to understand another person’s viewpoint (Smith, 1996). The alleged advantage of emotional awareness is that a leader should develop an understanding of her own feelings and capitalize on positive emotional connections in his or her communications to the entire organization. ‘*Authentic feeling*’ was also described as being subjugated to false acting and behaving in organizations (Witz, Warhurst & Nickson (2003).

Building on the notion that emotional connections bridge a leader with other organizational members, organizational management scholars Brady and Hart (2006, p. 125) presented a more complex aspect of emotions with the concept of “aesthetic burden”—“conflicts of obtaining personal goals with universal caring in organizations.” When a leader is empathetic, he or she is more likely to remain open to understanding multiple, competing views. However, he or she may encounter a sort of logjam in decision-making in terms of how to produce sound ethical judgments. Brady and Hart thus acknowledge that this type of conflict is an inherent part of leadership and administration and should not be avoided in leadership theory and practice.

Affect was highlighted in the context of working in the service of historically marginalized groups of people (English, 2008). This puts a twist on the model of charismatic leadership, which emphasizes the social psychology of influencing others through manipulation or by overwhelming the feelings of organizational members (Ladkin, 2006); scholarly orientations included inspiration, passion, engagement (Duke, 1986), and excitement or pleasure in one’s work (Weggeman, Lammers & Akkermans, 2007). The expression and recognition of feelings

as a legitimate source of knowledge (Taylor, 2002), even when feelings may be “vague” or difficult to express (Stein, 2003; Taylor, 2002), is an important aspect of studying aesthetics in organizational life. This work employs a postmodern, critical organizational theory perspective that focuses, in part, on the dynamics of power between people in organizations.

The leader’s responsibility to promote connections between students, teachers and staff on an “emotional level”—not just focusing on student performance—was emphasized (Hurley, 2002). Emotions were conceived as part of leadership students’ core foundation to help them become aware of their own personal balance as they handle various stressors (Cowan, 2007). The orientation towards caring, relational leadership has been associated with female leaders’ style in the past, but the current emphasis on compassion and empathy indicates that these aspects will continue to play an important role in leadership development regardless of gender. The aesthetic leadership quality of emotional awareness and empathy reflects the longstanding service orientation of school principals and administrators, who aim to improve the quality of life in their local communities, and mirrors the trend of researching the role of emotional management and emotional intelligence in positive psychology.

Sensory and Somatic Attentiveness

The category of sensory and somatic attentiveness involves meaning and experience related to one’s body. This implies a complex range of things in the context of leadership and organizational life, e.g. the implications of a person’s senses, physical appearance or even how a leader or organizational member physically comports him- or herself. The concept of physicality is sometimes difficult to separate from the concept of emotions. Scholars provided a number of ways to consider how emotions and the body are ignored in organizations as well as how a leader might use her body to demonstrate or reveal power. For example, the “embodied way in which they [leaders] attempt to motivate, direct, or transform” (Ladkin, 2008, p. 31) organizational members stressed the idea that leaders’ bodies are expressive features of their behavior. A leader’s physical presence is not divorced from how and what they communicate to other organizational members. Elsewhere, Ladkin (2006) referred to the significance of a leader’s senses as signals or signposts used for interpreting his or her environment, especially in regard to social interactions.

A leader’s senses and perceptive faculties guide his or her “gut feelings” about a particular choice or decision (Weggeman, Lammers & Akkermans, 2007). “Gut feelings” is a colloquial term suggesting the interrelationship between feeling and physicality and refers to intuitive acts of decision-making with regard to moral judgments or difficult decisions made in turbulent organizational environments. ‘Sensation’ is rooted in both cognition and emotion, but was not described much beyond the concept of ‘perception’ (Welsh, 1996; White, 1996). Like the category of emotional awareness and empathy, “embodied knowledge” was

conceptualized in many literature sources as preceding all other types of knowledge (Hansen, Ropo, & Sauer, 2007; Ladkin, 2008; Palus & Horth, 1996, 1998). “Multi-sensory awareness” in the forms of sight, touch, sound, smell and taste were recognized as vital aspects to shaping organizational life (Griffiths & Mack, 2007, p. 268). “Felt” and “embodied” experience was downplayed in research on organizational members’ experience of leadership in order to focus on intellectual knowledge, particularly in the form of writing as a way to express ideas (Taylor, 2002; Witz, Warhurst & Nickson, 2003).

In contrast to Taylor’s (2002) description of felt experience, Strati (1992) discussed the way that a leader manages his or her own physicality in terms of visibility and privacy within the physical setting of an organization by allowing or, conversely, not allowing subordinates to access his or her meetings. Similarly, Duke (1986) drew on sociologist Erving Goffman’s concept of public versus private frames, or how a person chooses to present him- or herself: A leader’s physicality may be significant in that his or her actions form a sort of performance which followers observe and about which they make judgments. In this way, physicality is described as a theatrical metaphor for leadership.

Interest in Organizational Beauty

Scholars applied the Romantic concept of ‘beauty’ – an ideal, pleasing or harmonious essence of form – to the context of the modern organization. In terms of common, tacit interpretations of ‘aesthetics,’ beauty is probably the concept most synonymous with aesthetics as it evokes a highly subjective adoration of an object or experience. In the leadership context, ‘organizational beauty’ was described in two ways: a) a sense of coherence (Ladkin, 2008) and harmony (White, 1996), and b) a great sense of pleasure in one’s work. In this way, beauty is related to how a person feels about one’s work. On one hand, pure pleasure could be associated with indulgence, or ‘hedonism’ (White, 1996) and narcissism, so the concept of beautiful work appears to hinge upon a balance between self-indulgence and service to others. Beauty and positive emotion are related in the way that the idea of doing good (morality) contributes to feeling good (affect).

Strati (1992), a pioneer in the field of organizational aesthetics, analyzed beauty as an important dimension, act or object of work. On the surface, ‘beauty’ reminds us of the way things look, like the selection of art works, furniture, and architecture that are placed in buildings, schools and offices as pieces of decoration. But, a deeper examination of physical objects and design choices can reveal political and cultural choices about the values of an organization that “bridg[e] the gap between life outside and inside the organization” (Strati, 1992, p. 574). In this sense, beautiful work is about the leader’s role in promoting affinity between an organization and its community, not just the design of workspaces. Organizational beauty was also associated with the qualities of the sublime (Ladkin, 2006; Welsh, 1996) and

the attributes of organizational life as “sacred” or filled with “charm” (Griffiths & Mack, 2007).

White (1996) applied Kant’s (1791) conception of beauty as necessary, universal, disinterested and purposive to extend organizational theory. Thus, implications for ‘organizational beauty’ are threefold: a person derives innate enjoyment in their own work aside from monetary compensation and other purposes; the organization is perceived as a ‘whole;’ and there is a common, pervasive organizational value. Nissley, Taylor and Butler (2002) analyzed ‘felt meaning’ in songs created by the Maytag corporation, a symbol of the darker side of organizational coherence-cultural hegemony. Merritt and DeGraff (1996) discussed how to achieve White’s (1996) conception of organizational beauty. As part of a matrix of aesthetic awareness development in leadership education, ‘beauty’ and ‘realism’ are part of a leader’s promotion of group process in several areas: implications of organizational initiatives; learning dynamics; influence; rituals, stories and symbols; objectives; facilitation of a diverse value perspectives; communication on divergent perspectives of desired states and decision making processes (p. 82).

Promotion of Moral Purpose

In this review, instilling moral purpose rounds out the categories of emotional awareness/empathy, sensory and somatic attentiveness and appreciation of organizational beauty. As implied in the previous discussion about organizational beauty, instilling moral purpose is necessary for bringing people together around a common cause and appealing to the human desire to be noble or good. Scholars discussed moral values like justness, reason and truth in contrast with injustice, corruption and oppression (English, 2008; Maxcy, 2006; Samier & Bates, 2006). Drawing on Brown’s (1977, p. 45 in English, 2008) conception of “the aesthetic dimension of sociological knowledge,” English advocated for a “cognitive aesthetics” lens that is sensitive to particular contexts, values, emotions and moral function. He drew attention to the role immorality plays in cases of leadership that have failed to serve humanity and are considered to be evil or wrong, versus moral cases of leadership based on social justice. To English, “leadership as an embedded moral enterprise located and intimately connected to one’s sense of personal and historical identity within a specific culture” (p. 58). Overall, because leadership development literature and courses emphasize establishing a vision and organizational purpose derived from one’s own moral compass, it was surprising that scholars did not discuss this aspect more.

Definition of Aesthetic Leadership

In an effort to describe how scholars relate aesthetic ways of knowing to leadership, this review identified four aesthetic leadership qualities. Aesthetic leadership can be defined as leaders who demonstrate ‘**emotional awareness**,’ *evoking feeling to empathize and positively engage with others*; ‘**sensory and somatic attentiveness**,’ *using senses and intuition to make decisions*; ‘**interest in organizational beauty**,’ *fostering a harmonious sense of coherence within an organization*; and the ‘**promotion of moral purpose**,’ *emphasizing justness, reason, truth in contrast to injustice and corruption*. These four aspects are reflected, in varying degrees, in classic aesthetic philosophical works, and indicate ways they can be used in the practice of leading schools and organizations. This review clarifies my initial thesis that aesthetic knowing may be valuable to leadership practice because it links feeling and intuition to procedural information to inform decision-making: In addition to these aspects, this review suggests that promotion of moral purpose and appreciation of organizational beauty are also important.

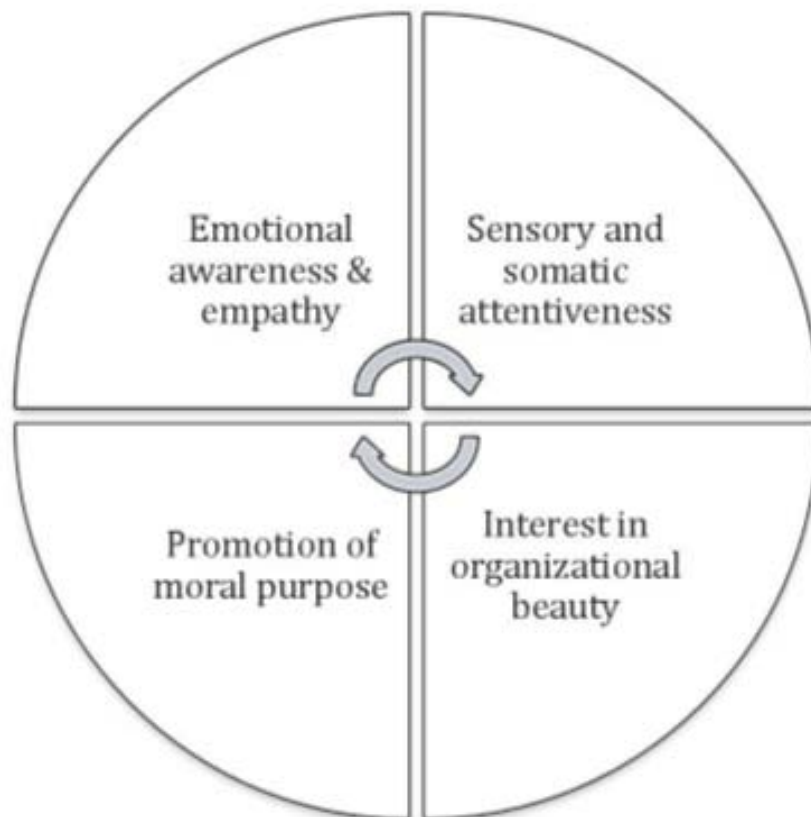


Figure 1. Aesthetic leadership qualities.

Limitations of the Review

Challenges to categorizing aesthetic leadership qualities include the fact that scholars do not always use the term “aesthetics” to mean the same thing, nor do they agree there is a universal definition of aesthetics. Because aesthetic leadership is not a concrete field per se, there are several epistemological views, or ‘camps,’ that shape how scholars address aesthetic leadership qualities: organizational aesthetics, which represents a postmodern, critical organizational theory perspective; educational leadership development/education literature, which emphasizes the practical nature of leadership; and aesthetic education, which primarily examines aesthetics as artistic knowledge and skills.

Implications of Aesthetic Leadership Qualities for Educational Leadership

Taken together, the four aesthetic leadership qualities can be considered as a conceptual framework that departs from traditional scientific management models which associate replicable, efficient ways of managing a school and use quantifiable approaches to school reform and improvement (Dantley, 2005). The aesthetic leadership framework suggests an alternative approach to this model because it emphasizes the process of developing humanistic and expressive qualities. This framework can be used to advise educational leadership students, shape higher education pedagogy, curriculum and research. To promote further inquiry in the area of aesthetic leadership that stems from this literature review, I present two propositions.

Proposition #1: Emotional awareness/empathy and moral purpose will continue to be salient 21st century leadership themes.

One might wonder if all four aesthetic leadership qualities are salient for leadership practice in the 21st century. Like other scholars (Ladkin, 2006; Welsh, 1996), it is possible to argue that they cannot be separated. But, of the four aesthetic leadership qualities, I would contend that emotional awareness/management and moral purpose offer the most significant and useful areas to apply to educational leadership preparation and research. They represent a lens to examine deeply the social-psychological aspects of leadership practice. First, the subject of emotions in educational leadership practice is a legitimate–albeit complex–yet understudied topic. Educators experience emotional bonds with students and draw upon this bond as a key part of their calling to teach and to lead, yet research in this area lags behind practice. Emotions inform how we think, act and lead in schools (McDowelle & Buckner, 2002). Further, emotional intelligence is a significant topic in business leadership research (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2001) and psychology (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 2004), but research on this topic in the educational leadership field is in its fledgling stages of development.

Contemporary approaches to educational leadership preparation in the twenty first century will continue to stress the role of emotions and moral purpose in self-understanding and meaning-making (Crow & Grogan, 2005; Dantley, 2005). This means that we must examine more closely the psychological aspects of how leaders manage emotions in themselves regarding creatively solving school problems in the context of high stakes accountability; acknowledging and managing emotions in others to empathize with student, teacher and parental concerns; and appealing to students', teachers' and parents' innate interests and desires to care about, and thus participate in, shaping the quality of the schooling experience. Just as emotional components of learning have been studied as a facet of student engagement and teacher competence (e.g. Jennings & Greenberg, 2009), so should emotional awareness and empathy be a facet of understanding and developing leaders. A leadership challenge to managing emotions was reflected in the "aesthetic burden" concept (Brady & Hart, 2006, p. 125) as "conflicts of obtaining personal goals with universal caring in organizations." In other words, a leader needs to weigh the needs of the individual versus the community. The implication of paying attention to emotions for educational leadership and teacher education faculty is to consider ways we model or fail to model the characteristics of empathy and compassion in our teaching and research work with students; asking students to recount and analyze interpersonal conflicts they experience in schools; and asking students to reflect on ways they evoke positive emotions with students, staff and parents around instructional leadership goals.

In addition to emotional awareness and management, instilling a sense of moral purpose emerged as an aesthetic leadership quality. Despite the fact that morality was the least frequently discussed aesthetic leadership attribute in the literature review, it is arguably more important than sensory and somatic attentiveness and promoting a sense of organizational beauty. Efforts to promote equity and question the status quo in schools are a constant moral challenge of educational leaders, especially in urban school systems. English (2008, p. 58) conceptualized "leadership as an embedded moral enterprise located and intimately connected to one's sense of personal and historical identity within a specific culture." This includes addressing "otherness" and "undemocratic practices" (Dantley, 2005, p. 39). The implication of incorporating morality into leadership thought and practice means that educational leadership and teacher education faculty should reflect on the degree to which we address sociological perspectives on educational policy and practice in our teaching and research work with students. This means teaching about various cultural histories and ways of knowing and being. And this also means that we cannot assume that the field of educational leadership is value neutral with little room to scrutinize or be critical of mainstream educational policies and practices associated with reform.

Proposition #2: Deliberative use of the arts may help to promote aesthetic leadership qualities.

Aesthetic leadership qualities raise challenging questions for how the arts can be used in educational leadership preparation courses. After all, aesthetic philosophers like Plato, Baumgarten and Kant pursued an understanding of the metaphysical nature of human concerns, values and experiences heightened through the very process of making and appreciating art (Hofstadter & Kuhns, 1964). So, what does this mean for a leader to learn through the arts? We may wonder how aesthetic leadership qualities like emotional awareness and empathy and moral purpose can be enlarged through making art, and relate to outcomes deemed valuable by university preparation programs.

Table 1.

Suggestions for Fostering Aesthetic Leadership Qualities through the Arts

Aesthetic leadership quality	Learning objective	Art activities	Leadership skill
Emotional awareness and empathy	To evoke feeling to empathize and positively engage with others.	Expressive, interactive activities: Role-playing in improvisational theatre. Watching dramatic theatre performances.	Creative problem solving. Mentoring, supervising others. Empathy for students and families.
Sensory and somatic attentiveness	To practice intuition of “gut” feelings to make decisions.	Visually oriented activities: Watching scenarios, films, plays, etc. multiple times to deepen an understanding of current/novel social situations	Conducting in-depth informal and formal observations, e.g., classroom visits and staff evaluations.
Interest in organizational beauty	To promote enjoyment in the workplace and beauty in one’s physical surroundings	Creating multimedia productions, poetry and music that reflect school spirit and student interests.	Fostering school spirit and pride; deterring vandalism.
Promotion of moral purpose	To serve one’s community through improving schooling for underserved student populations.	Large scale wall murals that reflect cultural groups.	Supporting student learning, cultural diversity, fostering relationships with families and communities.

One particular challenge is how to use art activities in meaningful, rigorous ways that go beyond ‘edutainment,’ or superficial learning. Table 1 presents ways to conceptualize aesthetic leadership qualities in relation to course learning objectives, activities and desired leadership outcomes. Arts activities for leaders need to be highly relevant to leadership issues and process-, not product-, oriented. For example, leaders reported enhanced emotional awareness through making “touchstone” sculptures, led by leadership trainer Cheryl De Ciantis (1995, p. 12):

“My personal plan was to stop being such a lawyer. It [the touchstone] was great. It helped me be more *emotional* and more open, less analytical.”

“The touchstone will be the most useful for me because it involves *emotions* as well as thought and will be a lasting, practical reminder of how to move forward and a check on where I am going”

A focus on expressive, interactive activities such as role-playing in improvisational theatre can help leadership students hone their creative problem solving abilities (Katz-Buonincontro, 2006, 2008). Theatrical activities are valid tools for sharpening collaboration and creative problem solving, but rely on looping the activity with a leader’s organizational goals or else they lose meaning. The ‘felt freedom’ and ‘wholeness’ implicated by Smith (2008) applies to the idea of solving emotional problems through improvisational theatre role-playing, for example. Sensory and somatic attentiveness in the context of improvisational role-plays comes from ways leaders move and act, not just talk and write, an example of embodied cognition.

Visually oriented arts activities include watching scenarios, films, and plays multiple times to deepen a leadership student’s perceptual understandings of situations, an approach stressed in Kelehear’s (2008) arts-based instructional leadership practices, and art education professor Graeme Sullivan’s (2005) visual arts research practices. For example, Palus’ and Horth’s (1996, 2002) visual-verbal journaling exercises are designed to give students opportunities to reflect on their leadership experience and produce new understandings of their current and future practice. Honing the instructional leadership practice of conducting careful, in-depth informal and formal observations during classroom visits and staff evaluations (McEwan, 2003) might benefit from the visual acuity and perception practiced in visual-verbal journaling.

Interest in organizational beauty means helping others enjoy their workplace especially in regard to the design of inclusive, physical surroundings. Meaningful projects might include the actual architectural design of a school or building to facilitate enjoyment in the learning

process. For example, a Native American school that I worked at in St. Paul, MN, built a round shaped room for holding Pow-Wows and student assemblies. Small-scaled art projects might include making videos, music, poetry, photographs of one's school to foster a sense of school pride and spirit, and to deter vandalism. Lastly, exploring moral purpose in educational leadership would mean reinvigorating a sense of serving one's community through arts activities e.g. large murals, collages, or sculptures that involve and represent the collective identity of local school communities. This type of focus would highlight the leader's moral purpose through attention to the diversity of families represented in schools.

Conclusion

In closing, it is hoped that this review contributes to scholarship in the field of aesthetics by infusing traditional conceptions with contemporary views of educational practice. Leadership preparation can benefit from consideration of emotional awareness and empathy, sensory and somatic attentiveness, interest in organizational beauty and promotion of moral purpose. The meaning of aesthetic leadership qualities as applied to educational practice offers ample space for future inquiry and research. As we navigate school reform in the 21st century, it is imperative to stress the emotional and moral bonds between educational leaders, teachers, students and communities. These qualities will most likely strengthen current practices aimed at improving academic achievement, not dampen or derail these efforts. Many teachers and students strive for organizational beauty—coherence and harmony—in what can feel like a disconnected, or fragmented learning climate where the individual is valued mostly for what he or she produces as opposed to feeling a sense of belongingness, purpose and enjoyment. The four aspects of aesthetic leadership suggests that we reclaim a focus on humanistic experiences of schooling, and present a challenge for us to highlight leaders' social and emotional competence as a way to compliment more traditional, managerial approaches to school improvement.

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International Journal of Education & the Arts

Editors

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Pennsylvania State University, U.S.A.

<http://www.ijea.org/>

ISSN 1529-8094

Volume 12 Special Issue 1.4

June 30, 2011

Arts & Learning Research Journal Special Issue

On Becoming 'Wide-Awake': Artful Re-search and Co-creative Process as Teacher Development

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Citation: Mantas, K. & Di Rezze, G. (2011). On becoming 'wide-awake': Artful re-search and co-creative process as teacher development. *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, 12(SI 1.4). Retrieved [date] from <http://www.ijea.org/v12si1/>.

Abstract

In this essay we reference a co-creative art installation entitled Box-ing In/Out (Di Rezze & Mantas, 2006; Mantas, 2004). Through this collaborative project we describe how artful re-search and the co-creative process can help teachers access and reframe tacit understandings of teaching and learning. We argue that the personal meaning making, which results from such a re-search process can be understood as embodied learning. We propose that when teachers identify, reclaim and continually reframe their subjective understandings of teaching as social practice, they can embody a more response-able (Di Rezze, 2000; Surrey, 1991) disposition toward students; that is, be able to respond to them more thoughtfully, mindfully and with care. As agents in their own learning, teachers can then begin to create more nurturing teaching and learning spaces for both self and the students entrusted to them.

Introduction

Alienated teachers, out of touch with their own existential reality, may contribute to the distancing and even to the manipulating that presumably takes place in many schools. This is because, estranged from themselves as they are, they may well treat whatever they imagine to be selfhood as a kind of commodity, a possession they carry within, impervious to organisational demand and impervious to control. Such people are not personally present to others or in the situations of their lives. They can, even without intending to, treat others as objects or things. (Greene, 1978a, p. 29)

We are teachers and artist re-searchers who have worked in public school systems, at the elementary and secondary levels respectively. Gianna has taught in elementary schools for twenty-five years. She spent the first decade of her teaching life in mainstream classrooms teaching children from grades 1 to 8. The last fifteen years, however, were spent in a variety of special education contexts working with students who struggled with learning. In many schools in which she taught, both she and her special education students were relegated to a stand alone portable building - the box - positioned on the fringes of the schoolyard. During this time the number of children who needed additional support through special services had grown to the point where she was forced to begin the practice that Freedman (1990) refers to as “educational triage”. Freedman (1990) defines this practice as “the process - and principle - of separating the casualties and concentrating efforts on those who are most likely to survive” (p. 114). Gianna felt less and less able to make a significant difference in the lives of the children entrusted to her and decided to return to graduate school. Several years after the completion of her doctoral work, she decided to leave the board altogether and is presently teaching students with special needs in alternative settings, collaborating with colleagues, making art and re-searching.

Kathy has taught students in a variety of contexts for over twenty years. She has worked in rehabilitation centers as well as in alternative and mainstream classrooms. For most of her teaching life she was a middle and high school teacher with specializations in second language learning and visual arts. Despite these credentials, she was also asked to teach outside of her areas of expertise. For the most part, she found herself teaching students who were learning in the margins - outside the box - of the educational system, such as special needs students, newcomers to the country, as well as students drawn to the arts. Over the years, she witnessed the impact that cutbacks had on students, support staff, teachers and select programs in the arts and second language learning. But what disheartened her the most was the realization that many “of today’s students find the learning of discrete, unconnected subjects difficult, boring, and irrelevant to their lives” (Noddings, 2005, p. xxiv). Over time,

she found herself questioning her own complicity in sustaining the status quo. To re-engage her students more thoughtfully in their learning processes, she began turning to the arts and arts-based teaching approaches. She also began to get more involved with new teachers through various mentoring and new teacher induction programs both at the school and board levels. In an attempt to better understand her own transition of becoming a teacher and the complex contexts in which teaching and learning happen she too decided to return to graduate school. Kathy is currently a pre-service teacher educator in art education.

We both began our doctoral work several years into our teaching careers. Much of our individual and collaborative work as well as our re-search relationship began during this intense period of study. In our work together, we specifically use the hyphenated form of re-search to emphasize the “inescapably personal nature” of learning that includes that which “takes place in families, among friends... intimates, at work, and generally going on about living” (Salmon, 1980 p. 60).

Our discussion for this paper focuses on a prior collaboration, which resulted in an art installation entitled, *Box-ing In/Out* (Mantas, 2004; Di Rezze & Mantas, 2006). It is drawn in part from a larger inquiry entitled, *becoming AIR-BORNe: women co-creating, ex-pressing, and in-forming our lives* (Mantas, 2004). Using the box as both form and metaphor, we co-created an installation using boxes that then became visual prompts for examining our lived experience as women, teachers and artist re-searchers. The individual boxes in this installation acted as containers to hold the fragments of our lived experience. The process of box-ing in/out allowed us to identify central themes and tensions in our teaching practice and to better understand the nature of our work with students. This co-constructed knowledge led to different and more thoughtful ways of thinking about, and being with, self and students. It became a starting point for further reflection and action in both personal and professional contexts.

We continue to resonate with Greene’s (1978b) notion of ‘wide-awakeness’ to describe this new state of attentiveness to the forces which influence and constrain teachers’ work. When teachers are ‘wide-awake’ they cannot play out their daily teaching life unconsciously in a mechanical fashion. This new insight gives rise to some of the ethical questions embedded in their work with students. The transformation of perspective is a way of characterizing learning and this characterization presumes that “self knowledge yields critical consciousness” (Diamond 1991, p. 17). When teachers are in touch with this critical subjectivity they begin to ponder, as does Clark (1990), some of the following questions:

By what authority do I push for change in the lives of these children? At what costs to their freedom and autonomy? Where does my responsibility for these young lives begin and end? How should I deal with true moral dilemmas in which it is simply not possible to realise two goods or avoid two evils? How much pain and discomfort am I willing to endure on behalf of my students? How are my character flaws affecting the lives of others? (p. 264)

Greene (1995) also connects this new clarity to existential concerns and reminds us that teaching is a social practice that is connected to our notion of the good:

We who are teachers would have to accommodate ourselves to lives as clerks or functionaries if we did not have in mind a quest for a better state of things for those we teach and for the world we all share. It is simply not enough to reproduce the way things are (p. 1).

Our own experience has demonstrated that when teachers become more aware of the forces that impact their work with students, they are better able to connect with their critical subjectivity, thereby creating more caring learning spaces. By caring we mean “a way of being in relation, not a set of specific behaviors” (Noddings, 2005, p. 17). Relational knowing (Hollingsworth et al., 1993), empathy (Surrey, 1991), response-ability (Surrey, 1991), reciprocity (Lather, 1991) and connectedness (Surrey, 1991) emerge as important considerations for our personal/professional knowledge. To know relationally is not peripheral but central to teaching life; therefore, it becomes important to consider “the quality of those relationships...to ensure that they are caring...rather than harmful, oppressive” (Thayer-Bacon, 2003, p. 246) and keep students and teachers from being boxed-in.

Through our artful re-search process we identify and describe how this form of teacher development based in the arts helped us access personal ways of knowing. It allowed us to better describe our state of alienation and disembodiment, and how this way of being manifested in our relationship with students. In addition, it compelled us to examine our own complicity in the reproduction of limiting teaching and learning experiences that allow for few opportunities to box-out. In this paper we describe how knowledge made through participation in arts processes yields new understandings of the self in the classroom and in the world. Artistic processes also allow us to define and represent ourselves and our experiences in the re-search literature. In this inquiry we use both the form and metaphor of the box “to see more in our experience, to hear more on normally unheard frequencies, to become conscious of what daily routines have obscured, what habit and convention have suppressed” (Greene, 1995, p. 123).

On the Nature of Teacher Knowledge and Identity

The autobiographical nature of teaching means it is impossible to understand teaching without understanding the teacher; that it is impossible to understand the practice apart from the practitioner; that it is impossible to understand the knowledge apart from the knower. We challenge any positions that support the objectification, disembodiment, and decontextualization of teacher knowledge. (Cole & Knowles, 2000, p. 9)

Constructivist notions of identity suggest that the formation of a teacher self is rooted in personal autobiography and continues to be shaped by personal and professional contexts. Aspiring teachers enter formal teacher training having served an “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975, p. 62) in their own lives as students through which they have formed both implicit and explicit ideas about the nature of teaching and learning. Left unexamined, this primary experience of education may only facilitate teachers’ replication of regressive practices (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991).

But becoming a teacher is more than just the transition from pre-service practice to the actual classroom. Becoming a teacher is an ongoing process; “a continuing story of selfhood, undertaken through making and sharing texts about it” (Diamond & Mullen, 1999, p. 67). It is shaped by our personal histories and by educative and miseducative experiences (Dewey, 1938). This knowledge is “intuitive and imitative rather than explicit and analytical” (Dewey, 1938, p. 62). Naming and identifying the conditions that shape teacher knowledge is a step toward rectification.

In our experience, the seeds of teacher alienation are planted when teachers are relegated to the position of being consumers of prepackaged knowledge funneled through the school system conduit into their classrooms (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). Subjective and relational ways of knowing are undermined or “neutralized” (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). This narrow definition of the complex social matrix of the classroom, which sees teaching as transmission and learning as acquisition of facts, demands proof of learning that can be measured by test marks and report cards. The more emotional, relational and embodied aspects of teaching and learning which cannot be articulated as easily are not given their due importance in large part because this kind of knowing cannot be measured in traditional ways. These implicit misunderstandings, once revealed and made explicit, can be questioned and then critically evaluated.

Fenstermacher (1990) characterizes the private world of the classroom as being an oral culture requiring the proximity of mouth to ear in order that dialogue and relationships can be built. The more public world of the educational system (school, board, ministry), on the other hand, is a more public space reflective of a written culture requiring the proximity of pen to paper (accountability). Teachers live out their professional lives in both worlds and experience this duality as a tension in their practice. Teachers who do not understand the institutional and power structures that shape and distort their work begin to experience a “spilt existence” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 5) or fragmentation of self as they move about these different spaces in educational settings. Teachers who have little insight into these dilemmas of teaching (Lampert, 1985) are the most vulnerable to becoming a functionary for the system while treating students as cogs in the machinery. “Lacking wide-awakeness... individuals are likely to drift, to act on impulses of expediency. They are unlikely to identify situations as moral ones” (Greene, 1978b, p. 43).

These understandings of teacher knowledge and development suggest that a merely cognitive or managerial approach to teaching and teacher education cannot deal effectively with the range of social and academic concerns reflected in schools. Decisions about students as whole persons (J. Miller, 1988, 1993; R. Miller, 1990) require that teachers build frameworks of meaning around the moral and social purposes of teaching. We believe that teaching and learning co-exist and are inextricably linked. “When teachers redefine their own relationships to knowledge about teaching and learning, they reconstruct their own relationships to knowledge about teaching and learning, they reconstruct their classrooms and begin to offer different invitations to their students to learn and know” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 101). These new and emerging understandings make a teacher more aware of her/his practice.

On Artful Re-search and Co-creative Process

We concur with Dewey (1938) who construed inquiry as a process of reconstruction by which open and doubtful situations become understood in new ways. We use the prefix “re” in many of our terms to indicate the dynamic and tentative quality of constructing new understandings only to revise them once again as new information comes to light. Our artful inquiry is a process of re-visiting, re-telling and re-framing of experience in the light of new understanding. It also seeks to re-position the teacher as learner and agent in her/his own development. Our inquiry also acknowledges the teacher as a curriculum maker (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) and teaching as a reflective practice (Miller, 1994).

In addition, our understanding of learning is also rooted in feminist understandings of praxis that see knowledge production as “a process rather than a product, an experience rather than work, and lived rather than done” (Melamed, cited in Reinharz, 1992, p. 218). We agree that learning is “a journey of the self” (Huebner, 1993, p. 405). Our re-search, therefore, begins

with our experiences and is “situated in places we know, and in which we participate” (Neilson, 1998 p. 198). It is connected to our life. Knowledge that results from engagement in such re-search is personal, nuanced, embodied, and integrated into one’s life as opposed to knowledge that is objective, static, linear, factual and absolute.

In our paper, we choose to use the term artful inquiry to describe our Box-ing In/Out (Di Rezze & Mantas, 2006; Mantas, 2004) collaboration because making art was our re-search process; art processes were used to collect and represent the data as well as inform the actual box form of our final installation. Also, we attempted to re-create an aesthetic experience of being in a/our box for the viewer/reader. Our co-creative process (Di Rezze & Mantas, 2006; Mantas, 2004, 2007; Mantas & Mieztis, 2008), both artful and relational in nature, can be defined as “learning and experience being rediscovered in community” (Christ, cited in Christ & Plaskow, 1979/92, p. 231). When we co-create, we come together “to create something that would have been impossible to make alone” (Paley, 1995, p. 55). It “does not imply a making something out of nothing but has to do with reshaping, renewing the materials at hand, very often the materials of our own lives, our experiences, our memories” (Greene, 2001, p. 96). Our inquiry also presupposes innovative forms of representation “which give texture to an individual life” (Deri, cited in Firestone, 1997, p. 27) and can include the invention of new language (Daly, 1978) – a “language of familiarity, reverence, and affection by which things of value ultimately are protected” (Berry, 2000, p. 41).

This process was documented by Kathy, the re-searcher and one of the co-creators, through journal entries, e-mail correspondence, photography and taped conversations (Di Rezze & Mantas, 2006; Mantas, 2004, 2007; Mantas & Mieztis, 2008). We “played” (Nachmanovitch, 1990), side-by-side and together, with acrylic paint, oil and chalk pastel, paper and brushes. Soon after we became interested in the box as a form for our work, we began to collect various sized boxes, personal artifacts, co-created images, and text pulled from our re-search transcripts. The artifacts were later sorted, grouped thematically and collaged into the various sized boxes. Afterwards, we examined the boxes, regrouped the finished boxes thematically and glued these themed boxes on several large boards. In the beginning the process was somewhat tentative, but our commitment to the inquiry, desire to reconnect with art, and our trusting re-search relationship that developed through the process of co-creating for close to eighty hours carried this artful re-search process. Since then we have been using various artful forms to elaborate further on the various themes that emerged from this work.

On Box-ing In/Out

Our use of the box as form was inspired in part by artists Joseph Cornell and Susan Hiller. In an art exhibit entitled *After the Freud Museum* (2000), Hiller used artifacts and found objects, photographs, shards of rock, and various texts to create her series of archaeological boxes in which “she does not materially alter the objects but creatively and skillfully contextualizes them” (<http://www.susanhillier.org/Info/bio.html>) through her art making process. Cornell too, used pictures, diagrams and trinkets that another might have discarded to create his now famous Cornell boxes. Over the years he also kept dossiers which document aspects of his personal process of art making (Blair, 1998). Cornell’s boxes can be said to be a dialogue with fragments of the self, understood as “an elusive construct that we assemble and construct through making and sharing texts about it” (Diamond & Mullen, 1999, p 67). His dossiers and his box constructions literally encapsulate his “urge towards self revelation” (Blair, 1998, p. 22) which to some degree parallels our own artistic process of coming to know other facets of our teacher selves (Diamond, 1991).

This process revealed to us some of the paradoxes of being women who teach (Mantas, 2004) – being both knowledgeable and not knowing, powerful and powerless, and having authority while lacking authority (Walkerdine, cited in Munro, 1998). We identified the erosion of teachers’ response-ability and the centrality of relational knowing and resistance as central motifs in our teaching life (DiRezze, 2000). Using both the metaphor and actual form of the box, we also began describing the nature of the fragmentation and alienation of the teacher self in overly bureaucratic school systems. Below we share with you a glimpse into our co-creative re-search process through selected box text fragments and photographs. These words emerged and were recorded while we were in process; that is, while we were co-creating our boxes. These fragments are shared below through our merged voice named *Pyxa* from the Greek “pyxos” for box. This voice was named and shaped by Kathy from the re-search data. These boxes represent our unique collective voice and encourage us to consider the following questions: What does (box-ing in/out) art bring to re-search? What does (box-ing in/out) art bring to wide-awakeness? What does (box-ing in/out) art bring to teacher development with respect to creating more caring and thoughtful learning environments?

Box Fragment 1: Pyxa, our merged voice, speaks on “What does (box-ing in/out) art bring to re-search?”

Introspection through the box and with others brings us back to ourselves because it invites us to reflect upon and then reframe our experience. It is not navel-gazing. It’s about reshaping the box for ourselves and those in our care and finding a different box in which to be. The box we were in two years ago will not be the box we construct for ourselves and others down the road. This form is not an accident.

Box Fragment 2: Pyxa, our merged voice, speaks on “What does (box-ing in/out) art bring to wide-awakeness?”

Artists see the world in a certain way. I believe that the eye of the artist sees the beauty even in the sorrow. I remember F. M., one of my favorite teachers, saying that for the artist and “their artistic eye” everything is grist for the mill. It doesn’t matter whether you’re sitting in your living-room or whether you’re in a museum or a classroom.

My real problem is the systemic undermining of people’s ways of knowing. I often ask myself what part am I playing in this system? How am I complicit in this? Am I doing good by being here? How do we create spaces for people to learn in and to help them keep their love-of-self? How are we complicit in keeping our students from tapping into their own creative energies?

I believe that stifling someone’s potential to create is a...form of violence. It is dismissed, silenced, belittled and laughed at because there are no marks left on someone’s body. This kind of violence doesn’t make the papers. Imagine the frustration at not being able to be who you are, not being able to become who you want to be.

Box Fragment 3: Pyxa, our merged voice, speaks on “What does (box-ing in/out) art bring to teacher development?”

Over time the teacher begins to ignore her/his intuitive and subjective understanding of students and may eventually become a functionary for the system. Pressures put on teachers to be accountable for delivering a centralised curriculum at an inhumane pace facilitates objectification of others. Sstudents are put into boxes.

What makes me most angry is when I see kids who can't advocate for themselves being unjustly punished. I don't believe in power-over someone but I do believe in discipline; discipline comes from within. Real discipline is dialogue. As a teacher, I found that the more I talked, the less I needed to discipline in an authoritarian way. When I talk about myself as learner, I always think of the children I teach as learners. Some kids work better in groups; others, prefer to work on their own. People do learn differently.

There is a dialectic there. Good teaching, like good facilitating of a creative process, is not didactic or pedantic; it's more about teaching kids the love of something. It's also about teacher education. If the teacher is creative, s/he's going to be creative in the classroom. School shouldn't be punishment. In school you have a captive audience because students don't really have an option of getting out of school.

I know that children still have the spark for learning. Now, what happens on the other end? I'm talking about the child who sees the world in a different way. Is this all there is? Is this what life, living, teaching and learning are all about?



Image 1.

Co-creators Gianna & Kathy
(Wednesday, January 3, 2001). Voice
Boxes: Choosing/Sorting Themes &
Artifacts (boxes in various sizes and
shapes). Photograph by Kathy
Mantas.



Image 2.

Co-creators Gianna & Kathy
(Thursday, February 1, 2001).
Untitled (mixing and creating
colours). Photograph by Kathy
Mantas.



Image 3.

Co-creators Gianna & Kathy
(Monday, February 26, 2001).

Untitled (finished boxes sorted and
mounted on board by theme).

Photograph by Kathy Mantas

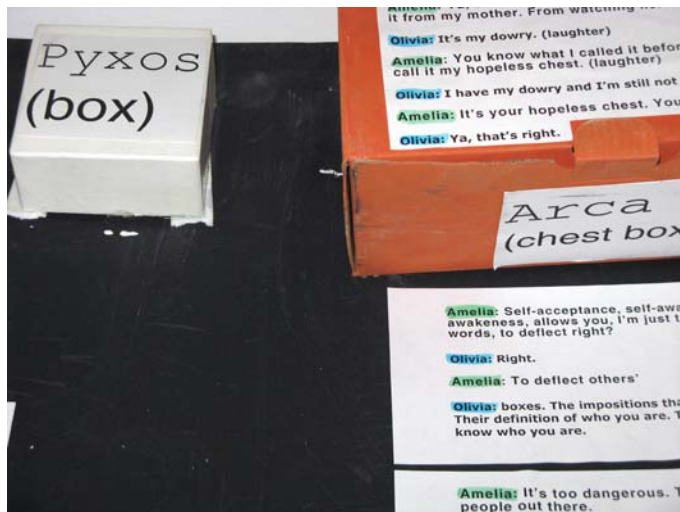


Image 4.

Co-creators Gianna & Kathy
(Monday, June 4, 2001). *Untitled*
(boxes and text mounted on board).

3' X 4'. Photograph by Kathy
Mantas.

On Personal Knowing

Teachers who come to teaching to make a difference by being response-able (Di Rezze, 2000; Surrey, 1991) and trying to enact an ethic of caring (Noddings, 1992) soon must confront obstacles that require choices between obedience to the system or being responsive to the situation at hand. The first indication of this dissonance is an embodied one. We felt an increasing sense of powerlessness, unease, tension, restlessness, and even anger as we undermined our best teacher self. Feeling and thought always seem at odds in this dialectic construction of teacher self in the classroom. This way of being, over time, may result in frustration and insensitivity toward self and students. These embodied signals “are distinguished by their incompatibility with the dominant perceptions and values” (Jagger,

1989, p. 160) and “provide the first indications that something is wrong” (Jagger, 1989, p. 161). But, when we examine and reframe this dissonance, we are able to reconstruct it as “the voice of self-respect” (Donelson, 1999, p. 636). We could also see how our indignation might act as a catalyst and allow us to live and learn outside the box. This ongoing struggle for authenticity to bring one’s best teacher-self into the class each day requires self-knowledge and constant monitoring.

Self-aware teachers who continue to examine and clarify for themselves the nature of their work can turn their energies toward what is more important and better fend off the distractions and box-ing in experiences that interfere and interrupt the real work with students. This questioning disposition, which we continue to nurture in our collaborative work together, can birth and sustain wide-awakeness (Greene, 1978b). But self-awareness is not a fixed state; it requires a constant reflection, questioning, and seeing in/out/back/ahead. It can be cultivated by continually asking ourselves: Who am I serving? Why? What and whom am I protecting? Decisions about students as whole persons require that teachers build frameworks of meaning around the moral and social purposes of teaching. Huebner (1991) reminds us that, all too often, important moral issues are obfuscated by the technical language of education. Teachers need to reclaim their moral agency, constantly undermined by the conditions of the workplace, by talking “about moral values and responsibility since they are often discouraged from exercising either” (Huebner, 1991, p. 268).

A language of practice is “not only a means for speaking about or representing one’s practice to oneself” (Yinger, 1987, p. 295) but is also “a set of integrated patterns of thought and action [which] constitute a kind of syntax and semantics for action” (Yinger, 1987, p. 295). Learning a language of practice suggests deliberation and a conscious choice between alternatives. Teachers who have developed a more nuanced language of practice feel that they are more empowered to humanize classrooms and schools one interaction at a time by choosing pedagogical and personal approaches that honor both teachers and learners.

Artistic processes broaden the language of practice. Forms that emerge from making art and “playful learning” (Melamed, 1985) allow access to more in-depth understandings about the nature of teaching, learning and re-search. The ways in which artistic and co-creative processes invite us to identify, acknowledge and engage the paradoxes and tensions inherent in our personal and professional lives allow us access to difficult knowledge about self in the world. The arts refine our senses so that our ability “to experience the world is made more complex and subtle;...they provide models through which we can experience the world in new ways” (Eisner, 2002, p. 19).

On Co-creating Knowledge

Art is a way of knowing what it is we actually believe. ...Knowing what our beliefs are requires confronting ourselves, our fears, and our resistance to change.... Art making is a way to explore our imagination and begin to allow it to be more flexible, to learn how to see more options. (Allen, 1995 pp. 3 - 4)

Art is “a living process” (Kumar, cited in Gablik, 1995, p. 137). Art invites us to partake in co-creating knowledge in the world and “acknowledge the positions from which we see, the particular embodiment of our own eyes, and then be both critical of our vision and accountable for it” (Meskimmon, 1996, p. 9). When we co-create, we witness and validate each other’s experience, but in order to do so we must become vulnerable, receptive and trusting of each other and the creative process (McNiff, 1998). This process “involves a negotiated...practice of give and take, connection and disconnection, while striving to be mutually honoring and supportive” (Bickel, cited in Irwin et al., 2008, p. 86). Through co-creation we enter into dialogue and meaning making. We become aware of power relations and we feed “one’s capacity to feel one’s way into another’s vantage point” (Greene, 1995, p. 37). This process enables understanding and empathy for others’ points of view and moves us away from disconnected and depersonalized ways of seeing, knowing and being-in-relationship (Mantas, 2004). Ultimately, co-creating “helps us develop a concern for other selves and improve the art of life” (Damasio, 1999, p. 5) which for us includes our teaching practice.

We have begun to link the language and processes of art to qualities of perception that value nuance and complexity in discussions of teaching and learning. Along with content and pedagogical knowledge, teaching has a strong artful, ethical and relational dimension that needs to be foregrounded. Artful co-creative processes that emphasize learning in relationship allow embodied knowledge to surface. This knowledge, which is not static or objective, can best be characterized as fluid and continuously open to new interpretations. It is by nature subjective, paradoxical, multilayered, ambiguous, open-ended, impressionistic and at times, ineffable. Our re-search and co-creative process is a way of tapping this kind of knowing. Through this personal and self-directed form of teacher development we begin to make important connections between the language of teaching and artistry and to interrupt the dominant discourse borrowed from cognitive science, hard psychology and business models. Furthermore, we identify artful re-search and co-creative processes as ways of tapping into our implicit assumptions and examining our complicity in the reproduction of limiting practices that box both teachers and students in.

Teaching consists of a constant negotiation between top down hierarchical demands versus responding to the needs that arise from the complex social matrix that is the classroom. We

agree with and emphasize Kozol's (1981) definition of the hidden curriculum as "teacher's own integrity and lived conviction" (p. 20) because along with teaching a prescribed curriculum, teachers also teach who they are. Our beliefs and assumptions locate us. "They define the stances we take" (Salmon, 1988, p. 37) and point the direction to future actions. Classroom teaching requires that we, as teachers, become aware of our own lived convictions so we can help shape, with thoughtfulness and care, the learning experiences of others.

Concluding Thoughts

The box, a space of containment, confinement and a cautionary metaphor "about the dangers of curiosity" (Brunner, 1998, p. 14) could also be read as a refuge, an enclosure with a way out/exit (Casey, 1991), a space for co-creation (Mantas, 2004), "a female symbol of the unconscious and the maternal" (Chevalier & Gheerbrant, 1994, p. 116), and also as a physical space of inwardness and amplification (McNiff, 1998).

The art of Box-ing In/Out (Di Rezze & Mantas, 2006; Mantas, 2004) helped us realize that we as teachers are simultaneously boxing students in as well as allowing them to box out -- in other words, we became more aware of the tensions and paradoxes in which we teach and learn. Lampert (1985) characterizes teaching life as the managing of dilemmas. She explains that, despite not being able to solve the tensions inherent in teaching life, "the teacher has the potential to act with integrity while maintaining contradictory concerns" (p. 184).

The examination of personal experience through various forms of reflection, including our process, allows for tacit assumptions about teaching, learning and schooling to be made explicit. Once brought to awareness they can be more closely examined and transformed in relationship and through the collaborative artful process. Our ongoing experiences of making art together taught us that "the multiple...perspectives provided by arts- based/informed ...inquiries can promote space for empowerment, construction of knowledge" (Mello, 2007, p. 219). We have come to know that the eye of the artist-teacher begins to "make perceptible, visible, and audible that which is no longer, or not yet, perceived, said and heard in everyday life" (Marcuse, cited in Reitz, 2000, p. 213).

Teacher learning is personal, complex, idiosyncratic and "an active process whereby we learn to make more conscious the meaning that we make out of a lifetime of teaching" (Diamond & Mullen, 1999, p. 68). Our re-search seeks to reposition the teacher as knower and agent in their own development. We therefore see the re-searching "of teaching...as a purview and responsibility of teachers.... They continue to learn to teach and teach to learn" (Cole and Knowles, 2000, p. 2). Finally, co-creative processes help us to better understand what is

important to us in our teaching life. They help move us and our students from being contained to living more authentically outside the box.

Box Fragment 4: Pyxa, our merged voice, speaks....

The art of Box-ing In/Out
is a question
of identity
it's about defining ourselves
and not allowing
the box
to tell us who we are.
The art of teaching
is about moving with conscious intent.
In the classroom too,
If you're sensitive to kids' needs and interests,
don't you co-create a learning environment with them?

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International Journal of Education & the Arts

Editors

Margaret Macintyre Latta
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<http://www.ijea.org/>

ISSN 1529-8094

Volume 12 Special Issue 1.5

June 30, 2011

Arts & Learning Research Journal Special Issue

Social Influences on the Creative Process: An Examination of Children's Creativity and Learning in Dance

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Citation: Giguere, M. (2011). Social influences on the creative process: An examination of children's creativity and learning in dance. *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, 12(SI 1.5). Retrieved from <http://www.ijea.org/v12si1/>.

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to look at the influences of social interaction and learning environment on children's creativity in dance. Data from two separate studies are examined in which a total of thirty-seven fifth grade students created nine dances. This examination aims to (1) identify crucial elements of the classroom environment, which aided the students' productivity and cognitive activity; and (2) look at how working as a peer group affected the participants' creative process.

Theoretical Framework

The designs of the two studies under examination are inspired by the philosophy of phenomenological hermeneutics. This tradition relies on a close textual analysis of study participants' experiences as expressed through their interviews and reflective writing. In using this approach to research children's experiences in dance, I rely on the example of Bond and Deans (1997), Bond (2001), Bond and Richard (2005), and Cone (2005).

My particular interest in representing the child's point of view also links my work with the philosophical underpinnings of feminist, inclusionary research in dance such as Stinson (1998) or Shapiro (1998). These authors conduct research that acknowledges the child's perceptions of her own actions as valid data for analysis. Rather than viewing the creative process exclusively from the perspective of the outside investigator, this style of research accepts the viewpoint of the children who are subjects of the research. Methodologically, my studies relate closely to the work of Ference Marton (1984). Marton's work examines phenomena from educational practice, an offshoot of the parent methodology phenomenology he has termed phenomenography. Research in this tradition looks at learning in a task set by the researcher under a naturalistic situation.

Methodology

The settings for these phenomenographic studies were two elementary schools outside of Philadelphia where the author was conducting Artist in Residence projects in the schools. Artist in Residence programs allow professional artists in a variety of artistic disciplines in the visual and performing arts to integrate with school curriculum. The purpose of such programs is two-fold. Firstly, they give students an opportunity to interact with a working professional artist. Secondly, most artist in residence programs are strategically planned to augment a particular area of curriculum of interest to a cooperating teacher from a host school. For example, in my personal experience, I have numerous times been brought to a school to enhance the language arts curriculum with dance and poetry projects. These residency programs have been popular tools for curriculum integration since the mid-1960s.

Data was collected from the "core group" of each residency, sixteen fifth graders at one school and twenty-one at another. These students attended a choreographic session with the researcher once daily for the ten days of the Artist in Residence project. Students self-selected to participate in the study, providing they returned the appropriate Institutional Review Board assent forms with parent signature. Group make-up was surprisingly diverse, considering the serendipity involved in assembling its members. In school one, twelve girls and four boys participated. Twelve of the students were Caucasian and four were African American. Two

were receiving resource room support for poor academic performance and three were enrolled in the gifted education program. Five students reported that they had dance studio experience, one had participated in ethnic dance lessons, and another in musical theater. In school two, thirteen girls and eight boys participated. Of these students one was Asian, one Hispanic, and nineteen Caucasian. No information was available in school two for academic placements of the participating children. Over half self reported that they had dance experience, although the qualifications for this experience varied from formal dance training to creating dances on the playground. No patterns in the findings of the study correlate specifically to gender or ethnicity.

The students in the core group were instructed by the researcher, who was also the teaching Artist in Residence, to create a dance based on a theme. There were no examples or modeling of the process given. This was a deliberate omission to ensure that the creative process of the study participants was as authentic as possible and to eliminate the potential that the students would adopt the creative process suggested by the teacher and thereby contaminate the findings of the study. The only assistance given the children was to provide them with a large sheet of paper and markers to record their brainstorming process as they searched for a topic or theme for their dance. Core group members created dances in small groups for performances at their respective schools. Four dances were created at school one, five dances were created at school two. Subjects (or themes) created by the children include Seasons, Mystery, Dragons, Music, Growth, Stars, Basketball, Fire and Monsters.

Data collected came from four sources:

1. Videotapes of the choreographic sessions
2. Interviews with study participants
3. Children's daily journal entries
4. Brainstorming sheets created on days one and two of each study.

After transcription, the data were examined for "moments of meaning," or phenomenological instances that illuminated the phenomenon of dance creation. General categories were defined from the specific moments of meaning collected. A category is defined as a core attribute or essential quality of the phenomenon that emerges through hermeneutic interpretation (McNamara, 1999). The process of looking for moments of meaning and categories was repeated three times, bracketing previous analysis each recursion. As a result of this process, several subcategories were discovered as well. A profile developed through this analysis, which describes the detailed process of choreography for each of the nine study groups. Once the children's process was detailed, a final level of analysis focused on the interaction of learning and dance creation by searching for evidence of cognitive activity during dance

creation. This final stage resulted in a detailed enumeration of specific cognitive strategies used by the children. In total, 391 moments of meaning were identified from study one alone. These condensed down initially into 85 subcategories, which emerged as 7 major categories. These numbers are presented here to show the rich amount of data that was gathered from the children's experiences. Recurrence of a moment of meaning, or the frequency of a subcategory, however, in this qualitative research study is not an indication of importance. The fact that a behavior was present during the activity, rather than its relative prevalence, was the focus of this study. I was interested in discovering what behaviors occur through this activity, not which were the most popular. It might be valuable, through further research, to determine what behaviors are most commonly exhibited during creative dance activity, especially when age, gender, experience and pedagogical factors are taken into consideration.

Data and Findings

Seven categories of meaning were identified from the data, each describing a part of the creative process as experienced by the children in these studies. In keeping with the phenomenographic tradition, each category is titled by language used by the study participants. These seven categories are:

1. Making Movement
2. Organizing the Movement
3. Knowing It's Good
4. The Group
5. How It Feels
6. Awareness of Audience
7. New Experiences

Each of these seven categories contains several subcategories. The categories, briefly described are as follows:

Making Movement describes the details of how the students created the vocabulary of steps and movements that were used in their dances. Some of the subcategories include *improvisation, imitation, play* and *the use of props or imagery*. The subcategory, *imagery*, for example, can be seen in the following where the children used the image of an alarm clock being put on "doze" as an example of how to alternate freezing and moving:

MG: The part where you tapped each other and one person went, and then another person went - how did that come about?

G5: Oh - we figured it would kind of look weird if we just un-froze, so maybe we could like, you know like an alarm, you can like turn it on and it goes and then you turn it off and it stops, we kind of like thought of that. (G5-p2)

The category *Organizing the Movement* shows how the children structured the movement material they had created for their dances. Subcategories included *outside opinion*, *revision* and *attention to structure*, and several others. *Attention to structure* (of the formations and sequences of the dances), which took place through out the choreographic process, can be seen in the example below. The children decided who would dance and where they would go before they decided on the actual movements:

MG: Go ahead. Tell me about your dance. What have you figured out so far?

G5: We are all going to start together and then we are going to roll off- everybody but

G7. She's fall- she's like the first. And she'll roll off and then G8 will go next and do her thing. And then me, I'll do my thing and roll and then G4. And then we do a part with everyone together. (2.0)

Category three, *knowing it's good*, describes the aesthetic preferences of the dancer/ choreographers in each group. Frequently occurring subcategories include *comparison to an ideal*, *novelty* or *connection to music*. One common aesthetic preference was for *novelty*. For example:

G10: We were going to do something like cool and jazzy, and we came up with mystery and no one else was doing it. (Mystery-p1)

Another frequently occurring subcategory was comparison to an ideal. Students judged their dances in *comparison to an ideal* absorbed from the wider culture. This was a strong motivator, especially for the Music group, who very much wanted their dance to look like hip-hop. Mystery and Seasons wanted their dances to look "cool" or in other ways fit in with the aesthetic values of the wider socio-cultural context. Some of the preference for fitting in with the wider culture may have had to do with wanting to create a dance that would be popular with the audience. G1 noted:

G1: Most of the people that said they liked our dance because they liked hip-hop.
(Music-p1)

Sometimes the ideal students were pursuing was not that of society at large, but a personal ideal shared by the individual choreographic group. All but the Music group noted that movement was good if it was approved or agreed upon by the entire group.

The fourth category, *The Group*, details group dynamics. Four roles, *Facilitator/organizer*, *Critic*, *Loner*, *Compliant Follower* emerged repeatedly. These were fluid roles that a dancer would take on for a portion of time. Several students who wanted to push forward a specific idea for the dance frequently assumed the role of Facilitator/Organizer. This area will be examined in more depth in the discussion section that appears later in this paper.

Category five titled *How it Feels*, represents the students' emotional responses to the choreographic experience. Emotional responses fell into four subcategories: *Enjoyment (fun, satisfaction, pride)*, *Fear*, *Embarrassment*, *Being challenged*.

An *Awareness of Audience* emerged as the sixth category of meaning. Students were conscious of the audience's reaction to what they were planning to perform. Responses fell into two subcategories: *Wanting the audience to remember the dance*, and *Audience is the judge of what is good*.

The final category, *new experiences*, illuminated contrasts with the students' previous experiences of choreography. *New experiences* includes six sub-categories: *Creating publicly*, *More than one choreographer*, *Self-selected group*, *Variety of dance styles*, *Movement before music*, *No teacher interference*. Several students commented that they had never before been in a dance that had *more than one choreographer*. This new experience highlighted two phenomena: the need to compromise and the individual dancer's sense of agency in their piece. As G10 explains:

G10: Um, I have been dancing for a long time now, but, um, this was not exactly anything like what I did before now because, um, I was with my friends, number one. And, um we made up the dance ourselves. So that was very different and very cool. I enjoyed it very, very much and I would like to do it again. (G10-p2)

While the seven categories uncovered in the data analysis create a detailed picture of the dance creation process for the children involved in these studies, further analysis gives us even more information on how this process relates to learning in the arts, and specifically the role of cognition in the creative process. It is the author's hope that highlighting cognition will

illuminate connections between art creation and other kinds of learning. With this aim, the author re-examined the seven categories, and the sixty six sub categories associated with them, for presence of cognitive activity, defined by Howard Gardner (1983) to be “thinking and learning that involves perception and conceptualization, especially that which involves symbolic knowledge and the use of notational systems” (p. x).

When evaluated by this criterion, four of the categories of meaning bring to light the phenomenon of cognition during the creative process in dance. These four categories include *Making Movement*, *Organizing the Movement*, *Knowing It’s Good* and *The Group*. The subcategories within these four categories that involve cognition are included in the chart found under results below.

Results

Complete data analysis of school two is still underway at the time of submission of this paper, but preliminary results indicate three primary conclusions from the studies:

1. Twenty seven of the subcategories found in the larger categories *Making Movement*, *Organizing the Movement* and *Knowing It’s Good* include evidence of cognition during the creative process in dance, and a detailed description of the characteristics of that cognitive activity.
2. Some of the cognitive strategies involved in the creative process in dance, as seen in these studies, needed a group to execute, and could not be done only by an individual, as exhibited by the chart below.
3. Students engaged in not only verbal and nonverbal communication, but also a hybridized verbal and non-verbal form of communication termed in the study “active discussion.” This appeared as a subcategory in multiple categories.

Chart 1.*Group and Solo Cognitive Strategies*

Play	solo or group
Props	solo or group
Text	solo or group
Skills	solo or group
Altering movement by facing or timing	solo or group
Imagery	solo or group
Improvisation	solo or group
Repetition	solo or group
Attention to structure	solo or group
Responding to stimuli (external & internal)	solo or group
Dancers' abilities	solo or group
Attention to meaning	solo or group
Revision	solo or group
Comparison to a cultural ideal (wider culture & group)	solo or group
Convey Meaning	solo or group
Imagery	solo or group
Spontaneous Idea	solo
Dozing off thinking	solo
Concentration	solo
Viewing	solo
Difference between ideas and execution	solo
Previous Experience	solo
Imitation	group
Dividing	group
Active discussion	group
Contributions from many individuals	group
Outside opinion	group

Discussion

The most significant implication of these results is that to make maximal use of cognition during dance creation—that is, to make available to the children all of the above listed strategies—dance creation should take place in a small group environment. The very fact that the children were working in a group setting, as opposed to working alone, as with many creative projects assigned in a school setting, enhanced the cognitive value of the activity. All

nine groups in the study employed cognitive strategizing that would have been impossible working alone. The social nature of the study task was a significant influence on its effectiveness for cognitive development.

This social aspect of dance creation may provide opportunities for cognitive development because it is collaborative. According to creativity researchers Moran and John-Steiner (2003) collaboration is “shared creation and discovery of two or more individuals with complementary skills interacting to create a shared understanding that none had previously possessed or could have known on their own” (p 82).

Admittedly not all group projects are collaborative. According to Moran and John-Steiner (2003) the hallmarks of collaboration are long-term engagement, voluntary connection, trust, negotiation, and a jointly chosen project. This has implication for curriculum design; not all group projects in dance would fit the above requirements. Students placed into groups by the instructor and given specific required assignments may not become collaborative. For maximum cognitive benefit, the learning environment should include an open-ended creative assignment, which allows for the elements of true collaboration to develop. Open-ended group dance projects can provide opportunities within the school curriculum for cognitive development through collaboration.

The benefits of working collaboratively have also been evidenced in the literature on cooperative learning. According to Robert Slavin (1996) cooperative learning refers to teaching methods in which students work together in small groups to help one another learn academic content. While the assignment for this study did not require the students to learn content, it did contain many of the elements of cooperative learning, such as positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction (including relying on a group for feedback, challenges and support), appropriate use of group skills and group processing (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1991). These activities have shown positive correlation to student achievement and attitudes about learning, particularly when compared to competitive or individualistic efforts (Johnson, Johnson & Roseth, 2010; Tsay & Brady, 2010).

Perhaps a stronger relationship can be drawn between the study assignment given here and active learning pedagogies, which include both cooperative learning and team-based paradigms. This broader category includes activities which can be described as a social and informal process where ideas are casually exchanged through student involvement and intellectual and interpersonal activities (Menges & Weimer, 1996). Most importantly, these activities require the participants to not only do things, but also analyze what they are doing (Bonwell & Eison. 1991). If the only benefit to the students participating in this study were

those gleaned from group work, then it might be possible to conclude that dance creation is another arena in which cooperative learning promotes academic success. While it seems the group effect is powerful here, it is not the only benefit seen from dance creation. Enhanced communication skills, social skills and the ability to problem solve in a group—as opposed to mastering content in a group—were also in evidence, as will be explained in the succeeding discussion points.

A second discussion point, and an area for further investigation, is the discovery of the phenomenon of “active discussion.” While both verbal and non-verbal communication would be expected in a group setting in which dance is being created, all nine groups in the studies engaged in a hybridized form of communication that involved moving and speaking to illustrate points of discussion. While it could be argued that most verbal communication includes non-verbal cuing and body language, the instances that fell under this category did not use pedestrian movement or gesture. Examples of active discussion included times when students were dancing and moving in abstracted ways as illustration of their verbal argument. Students demonstrated ideas that they wanted to include in the dance, suggested formation changes and experimented with concepts while both verbalizing and moving. This phenomenon suggests that embodied creative assignments have the potential for expanding a students’ expressive capacity. Students synthesized multiple forms of communication in an effort to create meaning and communicate to a peer group. It can be extrapolated that this heightened form of communication is a social phenomenon. In all instances in these studies the use of *active discussion* was facilitated by the necessity to communicate to a group.

A third discussion point centers on looking closely at the category *The Group*, and the social roles contained there. Four distinct personalities emerged from the study data:

Facilitator/organizer, Critic, Loner, Compliant Follower. What is significant about this discovery in terms of social interactions and their effect on learning, is that all four of these roles were necessary for the process to be productive. The idealized image of children working harmoniously in small groups, would not be maximally productive, from the examples in these studies. Much cognitively stimulating activity took place around the children’s discussions of aesthetic preferences and the ability of movement to convey meaning. The role of *critic* was necessary to bring about this articulation in many instances. The presence of a “nay sayer” forced *facilitator/organizers*, and sometimes *compliant followers*, to defend and analyze their choices.

Another key social role—that of the *loner*—could have brought about a significant opportunity for teaching children about learning styles. A few children in each school setting preferred to improvise alone and then come back to their small group with movement material to contribute. The most productive groups (in terms of student satisfaction with the outcome)

tolerated this activity, giving the *loners* leeway to separate from the group. The least productive groups saw the *loner's* desire to think, observe or create privately as a defection from the group and made repeated efforts to bring the "offender" back to the fold. In most cases this meant that the *loner's* process was aborted and his/her contribution to the group was lost. Because of the nature of the methodology in this study, the author's role as observer did not allow for intrusion into the process. A skilled teacher in this instance, however, would have had a clear teachable moment to point out to the participating children the differences in individuals' thinking strategies and creative styles, thereby developing tolerance and perhaps some meta-cognitive awareness.

Significance of Work

The results and conclusions from this study can be significant for educators by illuminating crucial elements of the classroom environment related to group activity, which aid students' productivity and cognition. Specifically, the fact that students were working in small groups, instead of by themselves, enhanced the variety of cognitive strategizing that the children used. This implies that embodied group creative work, if it is truly collaborative, can be of value in developing cognitive skills in children. Secondly, heightened communication skills were also in evidence through the phenomenon of active discussion, which was also only possible by virtue of the collaborative group nature of the learning task. Lastly, the continual role shifting that took place during the creative process maximized not only cognitive ability but also the opportunity for demonstrating the value of differing thinking styles to children.

Deeper understanding of the cognitive phenomena utilized by children during dance creation could aid our understanding of how dance and other embodied learning paradigms can be used to enhance teaching and learning. Our further understanding of the group creative process and its collaborative nature has implications for curriculum design. The more we look closely at children's embodied group creative process, the more we are able to craft assignments that enhance the learning environments for the participants, particularly with respect to the value of group projects.

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About the Author

Miriam Giguere, PhD, is the director of the dance program at Drexel University in Philadelphia. Her ongoing research centers on close examination of the embodied creative process, particularly with respect to the cognitive aspects of creativity. Her work has been published in *Arts Education Policy Review*, *Journal of Dance Education*, *Selected Dance Research*, Vol 6, and *Arts & Learning Research Journal*. Dr. Giguere is the 2009 recipient of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Arts and Learning Special Interest Group national dissertation award and was the keynote speaker for the 3rd Annual Dance Education Conference sponsored by Singapore's Ministry of Education in September 2010.

International Journal of Education & the Arts

Editors

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University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.

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Pennsylvania State University, U.S.A.

<http://www.ijea.org/>

ISSN 1529-8094

Volume 12 Special Issue 1.6

June 30, 2011

Arts & Learning Research Journal Special Issue

Adolescents' Affective Engagement with Theatre: Surveying Middle School Students' Attitudes, Values, and Beliefs

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Citation: Omasta, M. (2011). Adolescents' affective engagement with theatre: Surveying middle school students' attitudes, values, and beliefs. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 12(SI 1.6). Retrieved [date] from <http://www.ijea.org/v12si1/>.

Abstract

This essay explores how viewing a single Theatre for Young Audiences production might affect the attitudes, values, and/or beliefs of adolescent spectators. Data is drawn from a mixed-methods case study performed with middle school students who viewed a professional performance for young people, and is considered through the lens of cognitive studies in light of advances in research considering the human mirror neuron system. Data suggest it is highly probable that under certain circumstances viewing a single Theatre for Young Audiences production can influence the values of adolescent spectators. The essay concludes by exploring the ethical ramifications of these findings.

Introduction

Can viewing a single theatrical performance really affect a person's life? This deceptively simple question has been debated by theorists since at least the days of Plato and Aristotle. This essay addresses the question: How might viewing a single Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) production affect the attitudes, values, and/or beliefs of an adolescent spectator? I analyze the results of a mixed methods case study¹ (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) conducted with a group of approximately sixty middle school students who viewed a production of Y. York's *Getting Near to Baby*² (2008) at Childsplay, a professional TYA company in Tempe, Arizona.

Methodology and Methods

To assess the participants' attitudes, values, and beliefs regarding themes the show addressed, I formulated pre- and post-show surveys employing Likert scales.³ The middle school group I selected was ideal for two reasons: they had a sizable group of students attending (approximately one hundred), and middle school populations are relatively under-researched compared to elementary and high school students. I administered the pre-survey to the students in four classrooms of their middle school during regular school hours on the Friday before the Tuesday they viewed the performance. I administered the post-survey to the students in the theatre immediately following the performance. Although I did not use a control group of students who did *not* view the performance in this study, I employed what Greig, Taylor, and MacKay (2007) refer to as *outcome evaluation*,⁴ in which participants are assessed on a range of factors before and after a treatment (p. 104). This method remains valid despite the lack of a control group due to the general rule that "the larger the gain, the shorter the time and the more direct the measure, the more likely it is to be the effect of the intervention" (Greig, Taylor & MacKay, 2007, p. 104). Since the participants took the surveys

¹ This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Arizona State University. Real names are used throughout.

² Readers unfamiliar with the play may wish to review synopsis available from the playwright's website (http://www.york.com/getting_near_to_baby.html) or a synopsis from another recent production prepared by the *Seattle Times* (http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/thearts/2011420343_baby24.html)

³ The Likert scale is a classic measurement instrument with tested, robust validity with children as well as adults that assesses a range of response degrees to a particular prompt. Comparative descriptive and inferential statistics with Likert scale data, such as the two-tailed, paired t-tests employed in this study, enable discernment of any statistically significant differences between one data set and another. All statistical analysis in this study was completed using Microsoft Excel.

⁴ While the term "outcome evaluation" implies a traditional evaluation research project, the purpose of this study was not to formally evaluate the efficacy of this particular production. Rather, this was an exploratory study in which participants' attitudes, values, and beliefs were assessed.

shortly before and immediately after the performance, any significant changes in values were most likely attributable to the performance.

To increase descriptive validity, I conducted participant observation and took detailed field notes as the young audience members watched the play, as it was important to notice how engaged the spectators seemed to be with the performance. If a student were to fall asleep during the performance, for example, that audience member would likely be unaffected by the action on stage. As a group, the students seemed attentive and engaged throughout the performance.

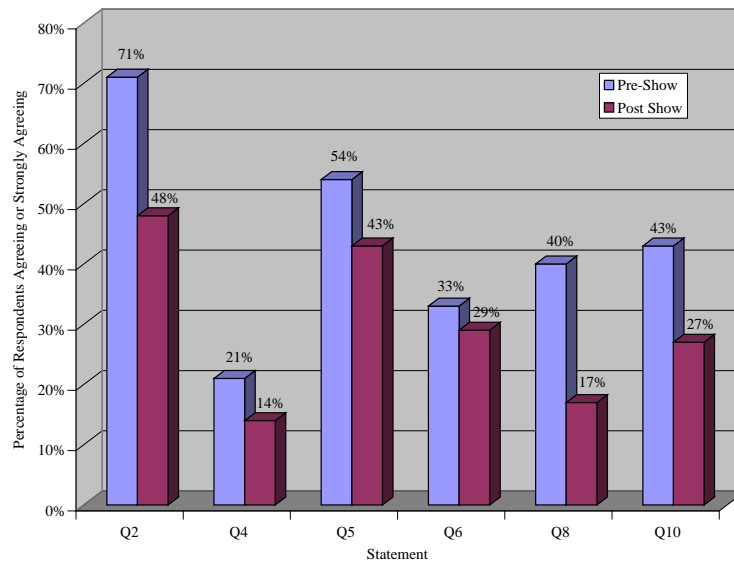
Shortly after taking the post-performance survey, I invited some students to participate in focus group discussions. Since resources did not allow me to include all students, I randomly selected respondents to participate and segregated the groups by gender. During each session, the focus group leaders⁵ asked questions that specifically probed students' attitudes, values, and beliefs regarding the performance and the ideas it addressed.

In analyzing the transcripts of both the artist interviews and the focus groups, I employed Values Coding as a heuristic (Saldaña, 2009, p. 8) to help me construct patterns in the data. When reviewing the focus group transcripts, coding revealed patterns and insights into the young people's experiences.

Audience Responses: Quantitative

Figure 1 displays participants' responses to six survey statements that addressed their attitudes, values, and beliefs regarding various issues before and after viewing the performance. The number of students agreeing with each statement decreased after viewing the performance – sometimes significantly, other times not. Overall, a paired, two-tailed t-test returned $p < .000$, strongly suggesting that viewing the production resulted in a statistically significant difference between the way students responded to statements before and after the production.

⁵ I and other doctoral students trained in qualitative research techniques conducted the focus group. All groups used a single script I prepared, and included questions about the play (e.g.: “Many of the characters in the play were in grief because of the death of Baby, the youngest sister of Willa Jo and Little Sister. What do you think each of the characters believed was the best way to deal with this situation?”), and about the respondents themselves (e.g.: “Do you think that seeing the show . . . helped you see things in a different way?”).



- Q2:** The type of people you are friends with says a lot about the kind of person you are.
- Q4:** If someone is very different from me, I would probably not be friends with him or her.
- Q5:** Adults usually know what is best for kids.
- Q6:** When some people are dealing with hard times, the best thing for them to do is work it out themselves, instead of talking about it with other people.
- Q8:** Once an adult has an opinion about certain types of people, the adult will always have that opinion.
- Q10:** If my parents tell me I should stay away from certain people I go to school with or who live near me, they are probably right.

Figure 1. Participants' responses to survey questions.

Herein I explore participants' responses to two of the statements in greater detail; specifically I consider the statement that revealed the most significant changes to students' values, and the statement that revealed the least significant change. Figure 2 represents students' levels of agreement with the statement: "The type of people you are friends with says a lot about the type of person you are." Twenty-three percent fewer students agreed with this statement after viewing the performance than before. Prior to seeing the show, a majority agreed with this statement; a majority disagreed afterwards. A t-test returned $p < .001$, suggesting a significant difference in response due to the treatment (viewing the show).

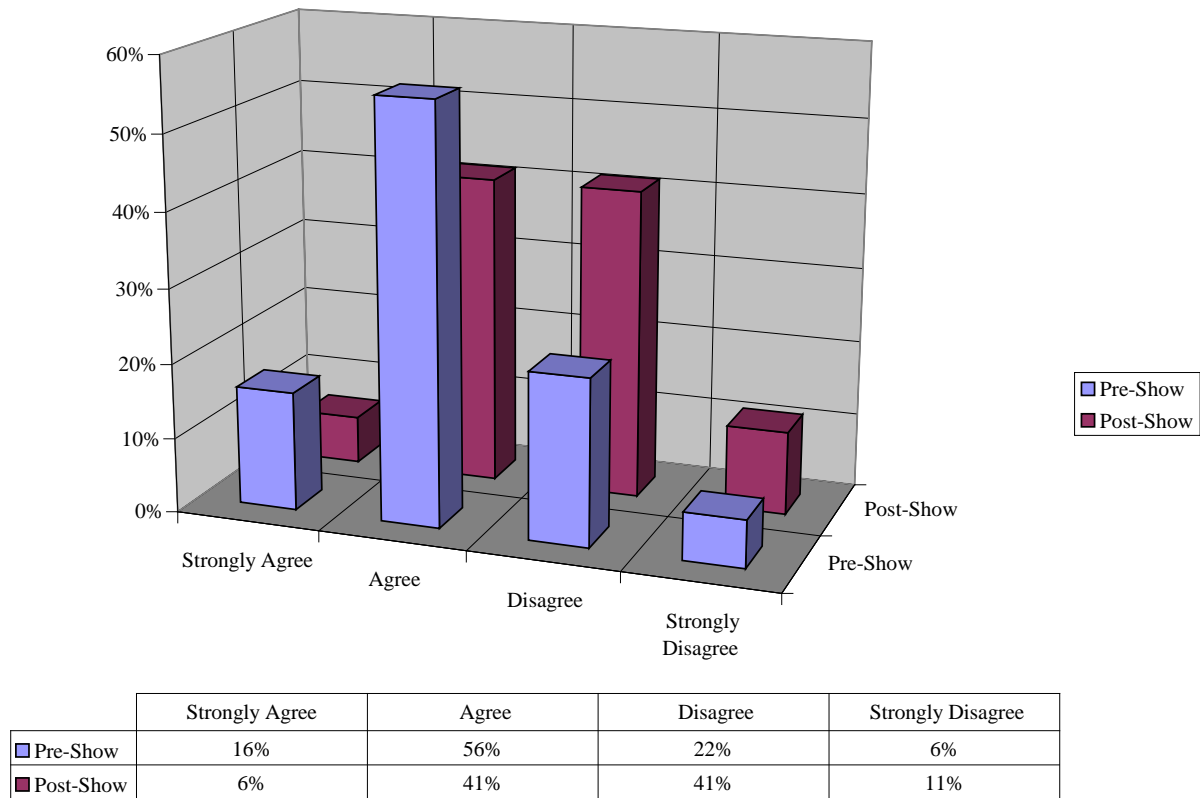


Figure 2. Pre- and post-show levels of agreement with the statement:
The type of people you are friends with says a lot about the kind of person you are.

Figure 3 represents students' levels of agreement with the idea that people dealing with hard times should keep their problems to themselves, rather than talking them out with other people. Although some respondents switched from agree to disagree, there were slight *increases* in "strongly agree" responses and *decreases* in "strongly disagree." As such, with $p < 1.000$, there was no statistically significant difference in responses to this statement.

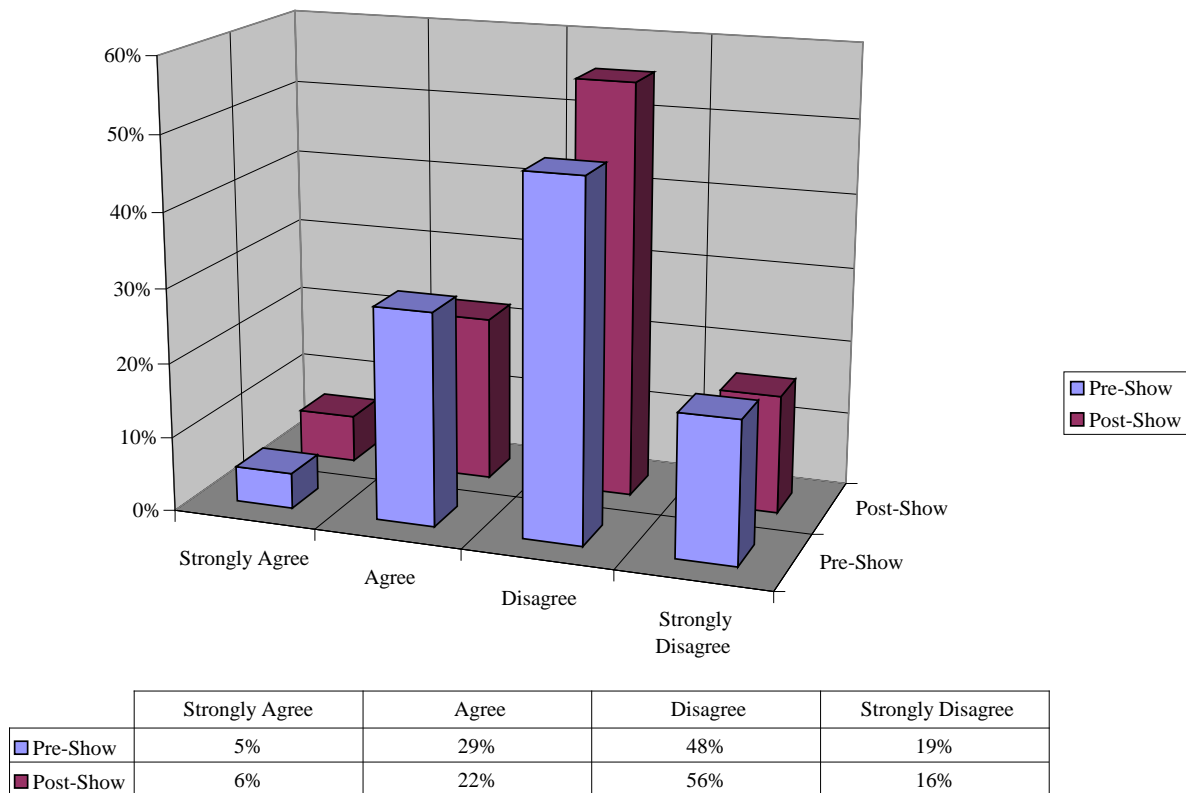


Figure 3. Pre- and post-show levels of agreement with the statement:
When some people are dealing with hard times, the best thing for them to do is work it out themselves, instead of talking about it with other people.

Audience Responses: Qualitative

During focus groups students consistently criticized the views of the characters who judged others in the play, expressing antipathy for these antagonists and their views. When students considered whether or not their own views about judging others had been changed by seeing the play, their responses varied. Some believed their views were unchanged, especially because they "already" felt it was wrong to judge people. Others did report change, for example a respondent who said: "Before [I] felt like it was okay to kind of judge people like a little bit, but like after I saw the play I realized that we shouldn't judge people by just the way they're poor or something that happened in their family. You should judge them by their personality." These qualitative data align with the quantitative data; they indicate some students' attitudes changed, and some remained the same. Although no one expressed the view that it was "good" to judge others, this may be due to the fact that they were speaking to an adult interviewer in front of their peers.

The qualitative data concerning the students' beliefs about the best way to deal with grief also aligned with the quantitative data; there were no indicators of significant changes in their values. Responses indicated definite differences between what students stated was the *best* way to deal with grief and how they believed they themselves would *actually* deal with it. For example, most students said that the "best" way to cope with grief was to "talk about it," "express yourself," "talk about it like crazy," "write about it," or "talk to somebody," though some also believed that it was best to "just keep it in." Many students stated they would employ the latter coping mechanism. One student noted that the characters were like him, stating: "Like me, for example, I build everything up inside and then until it blows up or something, which is a bad thing, to not tell people the problems. Which happens to me every day anyways." Another student stated that the best way to deal with grief depended on the situation, saying: "In the situation when the baby died I think it was much better for her to talk about it with her family and her friends, somebody who she trusts. But there's also situations where I think maybe it would be better to keep it to yourself." Based on the quick responses that stated the "obvious" theme, and lack of any indication that students would change how they dealt with grief in their own lives, there was no significant difference in respondents' values from a qualitative perspective, just as from a quantitative perspective.

Cognitive Theory

Social Learning Theory – An Early Approach

Bandura and Walters' (1963) Observational or Social Learning Theory offered an early and compelling explanation for how theatre might prompt emulation. They assert that much human learning takes place through the observation of others (models), the consequences these models face, and observers' choices to either imitate or refrain from imitating the actions they have observed. As such, an actor's performance (or, a model's behavior via a character) and other actor/characters' responses (the consequences to the model) may result in audience member (observer) learning. Spectators not only learn new behaviors; seeing a production may prompt them to enact previously learned behaviors. While Bandura confirmed his theories through direct experiments with children, such as his now-famous Bobo Doll experiments (1961), the prevalent paradigm of behaviorism at the time prevented research into what actually happened inside the "black box" of the brain. Though his experiments supported the idea that we learned from watching others, *why* this happened was unclear and unexplained.

The Human Mirror Neuron System

Newer theories explaining the human Mirror Neuron System (MNS) and its Mirror Neurons (MNs) may offer neurobiological understandings of *why* the children in Bandura's experiments might have imitated their adult models, *how* children viewing a TYA production might help understand the actions and intentions of characters on stage, and *why* they empathize with those characters and may adopt their values.

Perhaps the most critical function of the MNS for the purposes of this essay is that it allows people to *understand* things (such as the emotions others are experiencing at any given moment) without engaging higher cognitive processes – that is, we can *know* without “thinking” in the traditional sense, making rapid judgments in a fraction of the time it would take us to think through a situation by applying theory or considering past experience to come to an “informed judgment” about something. Theatrical spectators cannot normally “pause” the action of a performance to stop and process its content; thus, this rapid decision-making is extremely important in the live performing arts.

Scientists originally discovered MNs when they monitored individual neurons in a monkey's brain and noticed that some neurons fired *both* when the monkey performed an action *and* when it observed someone else perform that action (Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2008, p. 139). Contemporary studies reveal that human brains possess a MNS analogous to that of monkeys (Pfeifer, Iacoboni, Mazziotta, & Dapretto, 2008, p. 2076). However, not all movements trigger MNS activity – the system generally codes only goal-directed movements (Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2008, p. 23). MNs, which control motor actions, are able to distinguish between purposeful and non-purposeful action (or between the different possible purposes of one action) *without employing higher cognitive processes*. Your brain does not need to “think about” what is going on when you observe a movement; it understands in a fraction of the time it would take to do so (Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, 2008, p. 46).

Marco Iacoboni (2008) suggests that the MNS is able to help humans understand others' intentions and predict their actions because it employs “logically related MNs” (§10). Because these MNs fire before actually seeing an action take place, people can “know” or predict what others intend to do. Iacoboni (2008) suggests it is “likely that mirror neurons ‘learn’ from experience – such as when babies watch or interact with their caregiver” (§11). Thus, once MNs have “learned” traditional action sequences, they can predict actions. (However, since people may not *always* behave the way MNs expect them to, it is possible for MNs to be “wrong” as well; people may not always predict accurately.)

MNs facilitate learning through imitation. Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia (2008) explained that this learning functions because "the activation of the mirror neurons generate[s] an 'internal motor representation' of the observed motor act, on which the possibility of learning by imitation relies" (p. 96). Simply observing someone else perform an action allows people to learn it themselves, and they may go on to enact it.⁶ Amy Cook (2007) noted one of the MNS's effects on audience members: "Even after just two hours in the theatre, audiences leave imitating voices or the bodies of those they have seen onstage; after two hours of simulating the actions and feelings performed onstage, perhaps there is a level at which spectators and performers come together" (p. 592). Thus, MNs not only help us learn new behaviors, they may also be involved in prompting us to perform both learned and existing behaviors. Given this, theatre practitioners have not only aesthetic but ethical concerns to attend to, as I discuss in this essay's conclusion.

While the MNS plays a role in imitative behavior, Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia (2008) contend that this is *not* its primary function. Rather, they assert that MNs "are primarily involved in the *understanding of the meaning of 'motor events,' i.e. of the actions performed by others.*" They explain that this:

does not necessarily mean that the observer. . .has explicit or even reflexive knowledge that the action seen and the action executed are identical or similar. [They] are referring to the ability to immediately recognize a specific type of action. . . , to differentiate that type of action from another, and finally, to use this information to respond in the most appropriate manner. (Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia, pp. 97-98, emphasis in original)

This affirms the unconscious nature of the MNS. We are able to understand actions *and respond to them* without invoking our higher-order thinking skills.

Mirror Neurons and Emotions

Thus far, I have primarily described the ways in which the MNS seem to help us learn, imitate, and predict the physical behaviors of others. However, the MNS's role extends beyond the physical realm; research has suggested that the MNS is also critical in our understanding and replication of others' emotions. In the following sections I argue that, because theatre can influence our emotions via our MNS, and because our *emotions* can guide our values, *it is likely that theatre can influence our values.*

⁶ Several empirical studies confirm this. See, for example, Chartrand & Bargh, 1999, and Iacoboni, 2008.

We are able to understand/read emotions through the MNS because we express our emotions in empirically observable ways (physically and audibly, for example), in what Carr et al. have termed an "embodied model of emotion understanding" (as cited in Pfeifer et al., 2008, p. 2076). We often mimic/imitate the physical actions of those we observe without knowing that we do so. Because there is a connection between our physical actions/stances/postures and our emotions, it follows that we may at times unconsciously embody the emotions of others – even characters on stage.⁷ This leads to a new understanding of empathy as the process by which we understand and embody the emotions of other people. We cannot conflate empathy with sympathy; to empathize with someone is to experience their emotions ourselves, not to commiserate with them or place any other value judgment on the emotions they are experiencing. Nor can we consider empathy the "intellectual identification with" the feelings of another entity; we do not need to think intellectually about another person's emotions to embody them ourselves. Rather, "the neural mirroring of the emotions displayed by others may play an important role in allowing us . . . to feel what others feel, consistent with developmental psychologists' conception of empathy as the affective reaction to an emotion that is virtually identical to what one feels" (Pfeifer et al., 2008, pp. 2081-2082).

The concept of "emotional contagion" has gained currency as a metaphor for explaining this function of the MNS. Goleman (2006), McConachie (2007, 2008), and Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia (2008) have written of emotions being "contagious" – we can "catch" them from others the same way we "catch a cold" – unwittingly, and often unknowingly. We don't always realize we are catching the emotion as it happens, only when we start to feel its effects. Given that theatrical spectators are often highly attuned to the actor/characters on stage (assuming a quality performance that engages its spectators), it seems likely that actors' emotions will be highly contagious among audience members, who immediately share and experience the emotions being performed.

Pfeifer et al. (2008) conducted a functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) study with typically developing ten year-olds to determine what roles the MNS plays in empathy and interpersonal competence; they discovered that children's MNSs play a vital role in empathy (p. 2079). It seems very likely that when young people view theatre they observe and imitate the emotions of actor/characters they see on stage to varying degrees. If this is the case, and children imitate the emotions of characters *without making the conscious decision to do so*, we must consider what roles emotions might play in shaping their attitudes, values, and beliefs.

⁷ For empirical support of this claim, see Iacoboni's (2008) synopsis of Paula Niedenthal's experiments.

Emotions, Feelings,⁸ and Beliefs

Although some people ardently claim that their beliefs are based on factual information and sound logical thinking, this is likely not always the case; reason and logic are unlikely the sole arbiters of beliefs. Rather, as Frijda et al. (2000) posit, "emotions can awaken, intrude into, and shape beliefs, by creating them, by amplifying or altering them, and by making them resistant to change" (p. 5). If our emotions can create, modify or stabilize our beliefs, this also applies to emotions that we "catch" from others, for example by viewing a theatre performance. McConachie (2008) argued that embodied emotions, including those which have been "socially transmitted by others, shape subsequent cognitive processing and generate meanings. . . . Emotions generated through simulation can change how people think" (pp. 68-69).

Emotions are able to influence our beliefs in part because, as Clore and Gasper (2000) articulated, "they provide information and guide attention" (10). Remembering that, as Iacoboni (2008) noted, "MNs seem to have nothing in common with deliberate, effortful, and cognitive attempts to imagine being in someone else's shoes" (para. 7), but rather induce empathy automatically, we can see how the empathic process could be manipulated by theatre artists to guide audience members' perspectives. However, though empathy may help direct attention, it does not necessarily dictate people's reactions to whatever it has brought to their attention because empathy, as defined here, is not synonymous with sympathy. Spectators may or may not agree with a character's assessment of a situation. Although spectators *experience* a character's emotions, they may not or may not feel that those emotions are justified. Rather, after spectators *empathize* with a character, they usually make more conscious decisions about whether to *sympathize with* or feel *antipathy toward* characters.

Susan Feagin explains that a spectator will make decisions based not only on what characters feel but also on her own extant values and beliefs (as cited in McConachie, 2008, p. 99). Thus, sympathy arises only after the spectator has "gotten to know" characters empathetically. However, if the spectator dislikes the characters that she has "gotten to know," she may feel antipathy for them. In this scenario, "instead of hoping for the best for an actor/character, antipathy constitutes *schadenfreude*, the enjoyment of another person's misfortune. . . . Similar to sympathy, audiences side with or against actor/characters on the basis of their desires and interests in the world of the play" (McConachie, 2008, p. 68). In both of these scenarios,

⁸ Cognitive scholars use the terms "emotions" and "feelings" in different and sometimes contradictory ways; confusingly, we lack universal definitions at this time. For my purposes here, I follow Antonio Damasio's distinction between emotions, which are *unconscious*, and feelings, which are *emotions made conscious*. See McConachie, 2008, pp. 98-100 for further discussion.

audience members unconsciously understand the characters (via empathy) and then choose how to feel about those characters.

Emotions can sometimes help *reinforce* existing beliefs, because the experience of emotions signals to people that important concerns are at issue. This leads them to pay greater attention to whatever is happening related to that concern, which further heightens emotion, causing them to pay even more attention, and so on. That is, emotions can draw people's attention to information that reinforces their extant values (Frijda et al., 2000). Feelings can also produce *changes* in values when they cause cognitive dissonance (Harmon-Jones, 2000). This dissonance can occur, for example, when a "good" character, with whom a particular spectator sympathizes, does a "bad" thing that conflicts with the spectator's value system. In order to alleviate the cognitive dissonance this causes, the spectator may shift her beliefs. In summary, *emotions and feelings have the ability to create, modify, and/or reinforce attitudes, values and beliefs. Further, they can focus our attention on specific information that is salient to our emotional concerns, thus affecting our conscious thoughts about our beliefs. Because theatre can unconsciously affect our emotions, it also has the ability to affect our conscious feelings and values.*

Analysis

The qualitative and quantitative data suggest that viewing this Childsplay's production of *Getting Near to Baby* did affect some spectators' attitudes, values, and beliefs regarding some of the themes and ideas assessed (e.g., judging others). However, the production did not seem to affect spectators' values with regards to other ideas (e.g., dealing with grief). Some students asserted that their values definitely changed because they saw the play, while others believed the performance had little or no impact on them. These findings align with the cognitive theories described earlier, which indicate that a variety of factors, including spectators' extant values, come into play to determine any effects that viewing theatre might have on audience members. I therefore conclude that *viewing a single Theatre for Young Audiences production has the potential to influence an adolescent's attitudes, values, and beliefs.* Further study may help clarify the conditions under which this is most likely to occur.

The data further suggest that viewing productions may homogenize spectators' views. Because all audience members focus on the same group of performers, their mirror neurons operate synchronously. That is, "members of an audience share [a form of] neural puppetry. Whatever happened in one viewer's brain occurred in lockstep in the others, moment by moment" (Goleman, 2006, p. 20). McConachie (2008) also suggests that "emotional contagion in a theatre is automatic and usually very quick. Audiences will tend to laugh, cry, and even gasp simultaneously. The more spectators join together in one emotion, the more

empathy shapes the emotional response of the rest" (p. 97). I observed the audience viewing *Getting Near to Baby* share a physical reaction when Little Sister spoke at the end of the play – the spectators uttered a collective gasp when she spoke her first words.

Survey data demonstrated that when audience members' values changed, they consistently did so unidirectionally. Specifically, most participants disagreed with all survey statements after viewing the production, regardless of how the majority responded before seeing the play. Similarly, participants in the focus groups generally agreed about the themes and ideas discussed. In fact, it was often the case that, once a perspective was stated by one participant, the others would agree or remain silent; it was unusual for debate to emerge between the participants. It is difficult to ascertain if the seeming consensus was due to genuine agreement or the participants' desire not to disagree in such a forum. It is also possible that the Mirror Neuron System played a role in generating similar responses. Just as respondents' mirror neurons fired during the performance, they influenced the focus group because as participants observed each other during the discussion, they empathized with their peers and, if they sympathized with each other, it is possible that their attitudes grew even more homogenous during the discussion.

Overall, although neither the quantitative nor qualitative research methods generated unanimous responses, *it seems very likely that the production contributed to the homogenization of spectators' values*. This is likely due in part to the audience members' empathic understandings of characters' attitudes, values, beliefs, intentions, and actions that they accessed via their MNS. These understandings led spectators to sympathize with specific actor/characters who had been written and performed in ways that encouraged audience members to identify with them and subsequently adopt their values.

Implications for Practice

This study has a number of practical implications for theatre artists who desire to influence the emotions, feelings, and/or values of their spectators. Practitioners who seek to motivate social change through their performances may employ the specific strategies below to increase the efficacy of their productions. Even artists who do not explicitly seek to influence values may better understand the potential effects their performances may have on spectators' attitudes, values, and beliefs by considering these findings.

Before setting out to write or direct a production that seeks to influence audience members' values, it would be important for artists to have a strong understanding of the spectators who will view their work. Specifically, artists should be aware of viewers' extant value systems, as these will play a critical role in how the spectators respond to a piece. While all theatre-goers

will empathize with characters in a piece, spectators choose to feel sympathy or antipathy for characters largely based on their relative "goodness" within the world of the play. Because goodness is relative to the arbiter, people who hold opposing values will likely disagree on how good various characters are, and thus may sympathize with different characters. Once a playwright, director, or actor understands her potential audience, she might write/direct/perform characters in such a way that some become likely targets of audience members' sympathy, while others will more likely be viewed with antipathy. From early in the piece, actor/characters ought to perform values that will likely align or conflict with those of audience members. Characters who perform values that align with spectators' values will likely be viewed with sympathy; characters performing values that challenge spectators' values will likely be viewed with antipathy. Once audience members have had sufficient time to establish a sense of rapport with sympathetic actor/characters, those actor/characters can begin to perform the target values of the performance, while the characters the audience feels antipathy for challenge those target values. Put simply, *once spectators have identified with a character, if that character begins to express the target values, there is a higher probability that audience members will adopt those values, especially if characters they do not identify with openly oppose those values.*

It may also be wise for sympathetic characters to hold the target belief throughout most of the performance. For example, the characters in *Getting Near to Baby* did not come to believe that the best way to deal with grief was to come together as a family until the last moments of the play. Throughout most of the play they thought it was better to keep their grief to themselves. When I asked the middle school viewers what the characters believed about dealing with grief, they responded that the characters thought it was best to keep it to themselves. Student viewers did not understand the change the characters experienced at the end of the play, or they did not accommodate it. Further, the spectators' own views about how to deal with grief seemed unaffected. It is possible that this may be due to the young people not having had sufficient time to accommodate the characters' value shifts, even though they identified with them.

Finally, my research suggests that *characters and situations should be realistic and believable in order to have the maximum possible affect on spectators' values.* As Green (2004) argued: "fictional narratives can change beliefs as much as factual ones" when those who are immersed in the narratives become transported and believe the story is plausible (p. 252). Thus, practitioners who seek to affect audience members' values may wish to employ the staging practices of realism or naturalism rather than theatricalism, expressionism, surrealism, or even Brecht's (1938) epic theatre, despite Brecht's belief that such non-realistic models would serve as better teachers than traditional Stanislavskian realism.

Future Research Questions

In line with my finding that audiences seemed unaffected by beliefs the characters held for only a short period of time (e.g., dealing with grief), future studies could explore the factors that lead spectators to adopt characters' values. These may include the length of time that the character holds the value, the value's importance to the character, how other characters respond to the value, and so forth. Studies might also compare how respondents' values are affected when they see multiple productions that espouse different values, or if values are more likely affected by live performance than by film or television.

We could also benefit from longitudinal studies of theatre's effects on spectators' attitudes, values, and beliefs, exploring how long changes in audiences' values endure, and what factors affect values over extended periods of time. Even short-term projects such as this study could benefit from additional rounds of data collection. My work would likely have been richer if I had had the opportunity to speak with students a second time after I had analyzed and coded the data from the surveys and focus groups. Follow-up interviews or focus groups may have helped me answer specific questions that arose only after initial data analysis.

Finally, future studies might benefit from the use of an even more diverse range of methods when studying theatre's potential effects on audience members. For example, a qualitative study that combined focus groups and individual interviews with audience members might allow participants to speak more freely their personal views on sensitive subjects (e.g., examples of how they have dealt with grief in their own lives). While the material circumstances of this study precluded time-intensive individual interviews with each participant, they may have provided further data not generated by focus groups alone.

Closure: On Ethics

I began this study by asking how viewing a single Theatre for Young Audiences production might affect the attitudes, values and beliefs of adolescent spectators. By combining quantitative and qualitative data with cognitive theory, I have concluded that *a single theatrical performance has the potential to influence adolescents' values if the production meets certain criteria*. Spectators' extant values and the values performed by actor/characters play a critical role in the process of value adoption. Specifically, audience members first empathize with characters through their mirror neuron systems. Based on the visceral pleasure or pain they experience *vis a vis* those characters, the spectators then develop feelings of sympathy or antipathy for them. These feelings, along with the spectators' extant values and life experiences, may strengthen or change the spectators' beliefs.

I believe that future research should move from a focus on *if* theatre can influence adolescents' values to developing more nuanced understandings of *how* and *why* it does, and under what specific performance and audience conditions. We must also explore the ethical implications of theatre's power. If performances can alter spectators' values, sometimes without their conscious awareness of the process, we must endeavor to establish the ethical parameters of this practice. As Stephani Woodson (2006) notes, adults generally control the content of theatre for young people, selecting what ideologies will be performed for children (pp. 20-21). Moreover, with few exceptions, these adults are members of the dominant class. The perspectives of people of color, people with disabilities, and non-heterosexual orientation are frequently omitted from mainstream TYA. As such, young people attending performances may be repeatedly exposed to material that promotes particular attitudes, values, and beliefs to the exclusion of others. This leads to a number of questions for us as theatre practitioners.

Given that theatre may unconsciously influence young people's beliefs, is it ethical to predominantly produce works from a limited canon that primarily presents the ideologies of the dominant class? Should we deliberately focus on producing work that promotes a plurality of perspectives? If so, how can we discern if we are doing so successfully? Are companies obliged to attempt to present all perspectives, even (or perhaps especially) those that conflict with the values of the local community or the company itself? What rewards (and repercussions) might this yield?

Many scholars and practitioners have advocated broadening the scope of values represented by relying on alternatives to traditional TYA. They point to forum theatre and other tools from Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, devised youth theatre performances, community cultural development practices incorporating deliberative democracy, and educational theatre methods such as process drama as opportunities for young people to have a say in representation. While these practices promise to expose a select number of adolescents to alternative theatre practices, for the foreseeable future the majority of young people will primarily encounter the art form in more traditional settings. Given the potential impact of such performances on young people's attitudes, values, and beliefs, we must challenge ourselves to think critically about the content of our work and strive to ensure that theatre's potentially transformative power is wielded with the highest regard for ethical practices.

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International Journal of Education & the Arts

Editors

Margaret Macintyre Latta
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.

Christine Marmé Thompson
Pennsylvania State University, U.S.A.

<http://www.ijea.org/>

ISSN 1529-8094

Volume 12 Special Issue 1.7

June 30, 2011

Arts & Learning Research Journal Special Issue

Towards the Use of the ‘Great Wheel’ as a Model in Determining the Quality and Merit of Arts-based Projects (Research and Instruction)

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Citation: Norris, J. (2011). Towards the use of the ‘Great Wheel’ as a model in determining the quality and merit of arts-based projects (research and instruction). *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 12(SI 1.7). Retrieved [date] from <http://www.ijea.org/v12si1/>.

Abstract

Building upon a First Nations circle metaphor this paper explores how employing the interrelated concepts of pedagogy, poesis, politics, and public positioning can provide a more holistic approach in designing and assessing arts-based projects be they for instructional and/or research purposes. It takes a ‘postmodern’ stance (Giroux, 1991), integrating Western and First Nations epistemologies to provide an organic framework that articulates how these and other concepts interrelate, providing a more inclusive model of assessment. First, it outlines a conceptual framework that follows Paula Underwood’s (2000) suggestion to use a “traditional medicine wheel for enabling learning and for gathering wisdom.” It then utilizes the constructed model to examine a few arts-based cases, indicating how each project will have its own particular emphasis within the various quadrants with unique characteristics.

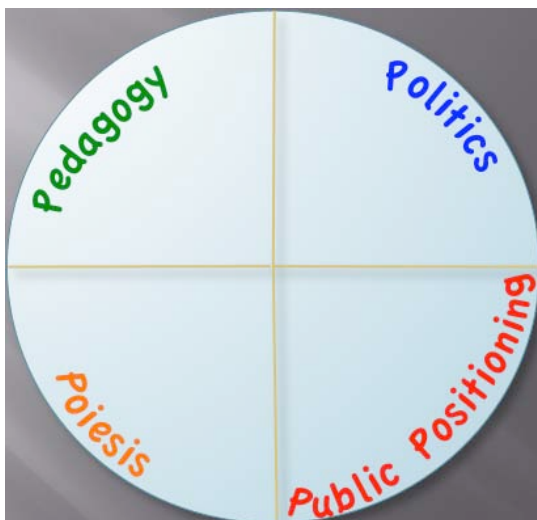
Toward Establishing ‘a’ Holistic Model on Quality and Merit

Paula Underwood (2000), giving a general Iroquois perspective on the “Great Hoop of Life” (p. vii), claims,

Words and phrases mean different things in different cultures. In my tradition, instead of bifurcating life with oppositional nouns like “health” and “sickness” we only use the positive term “health.” The way we describe a specific condition is “We are moving toward” or “We are moving away from health.” Location and direction are the critical elements. (p. xiv)

Knowing, for her people, is an act of positioning. She tells a story of how her father assisted her in finding North. He asked her to close her eyes, spun her in circles, until she was dizzy and waited until she felt a ‘nudge of energy’ (p. 1). He then picked her up and whirled her asking her to find North once again. Finally, he held her by her feet and swung her upside down. Underwood states, “You see how it is? How, in my tradition you are asked to learn each new vital lesson three times . . . in three different ways” (p. 1). In this way Underwood introduces her book on how one may use the ‘Great Wheel’ (p. 2).

Adopting her position that learning has a minimum of three perspectives, I suggest that our discussions surrounding arts-based projects employ ‘polyocular vision’ (Maruyama, 2004), and examine arts-based projects using the *Great Wheel* to assist in the determination of the position or stance one can take in designing arts-based research and instructional projects and assessing their quality and merit. To begin, we divide a circle into four quadrants. In the place of North, South, East, and West, we insert Pedagogy, Poiesis, Politics, and Public Positioning, equally spaced along the circumference of the circle.



In so doing one can simultaneously map these four dimensions of arts-based projects. Unlike a geographic position, however, in which an object or person can only occupy one position at the same time, in this framework, an arts-based project can be moving ‘toward’ all points simultaneously. A complete mapping may look like the following with the arts-based piece; in this case, dissemination to a large public is not deemed strong.

The quadrants, therefore, are not necessarily opposing directions. Although a greater emphasis may be placed on some criteria over others, by devoting more time and effort to specific dimensions, it must be recognized that sometimes an emphasis on one may implicitly enhance the other dimensions. For example, an artist with a strong political position may desire to improve a piece's pedagogical dimensions in order to assist skeptical others in understanding the political position taken.



Each arts-based project can then be defined and assessed based upon how well it achieves its intended purposes. Most will have a particular emphasis or position and it is towards these characteristics that an assessor can look. While other positions, or lack thereof, can be noted, making distinctions among appropriate criteria is part of an assessor's responsibility and should be articulated. As Barone (2001) suggests, "Most arts based research texts will exhibit some, but not all, of the qualities [he] listed and may, therefore, not achieve the status of art. Hence, the research may be characterized as *arts-based* rather than as full-fledged art" (p. 25). 'Arts-based' does not, however, imply that such projects are of lesser quality. Rather, it is an indication of a different genre. The issue of quality then is not universal but contextual and an assessment of arts-based projects can be better served when the appropriate criteria are utilized. Adapting the *Great Wheel* to one's own circumstances, as Underwood encourages, provides a conceptual framework that moves us away from universal standards and towards more holistic discussions about quality and merit. In some cases the meanings that the research participants provide or the insights that students obtain from a role-play in drama supersedes the need for polish, and the *Great Wheel* can chart this stance/position/location. In the following section I explain the four quadrants in depth and in the following section provide cases of its usage.

Towards an Understanding of the Pedagogical Quadrant

Gadamer (1975) claims that "the work of art has its true being in the fact that it becomes an experience changing the person experiencing it" (p. 92). This change could be considered pedagogical, as there is a sense of intellectual or emotional growth in the individual. Such growth can take place with the artist as s/he comes to understand the world differently as a result of blending the content to the unique artistic form. It could also have pedagogical effect on the viewer of art as one views Picasso's *Guernica* or watches Brecht's *Three Penny Opera*.

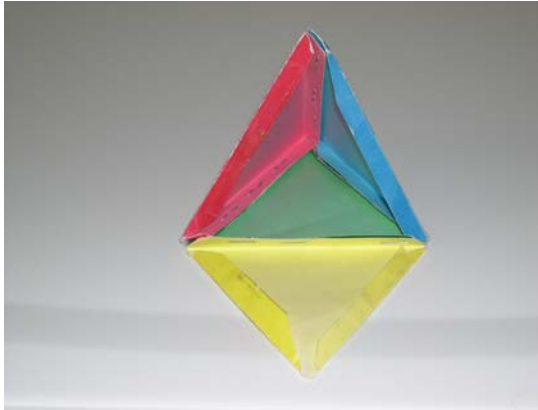
These works have value in addition to the aesthetic. The aesthetic understanding merges form with content (topic) of the composition assisting both artists and their audiences in a reconceptualization of the world. Such can be the pedagogical intent and ability of arts-based research, or qualitative research, in general. It reflects Denzin's (2003) claim and challenge that qualitative research and arts-based research must recognize their pedagogical and political nature/intent. As Eisner (2005) suggests:

the aim of research is not to advance the careers of researchers but to make a difference in the lives of students. That aspiration is not only realized by sharing conclusions about matters of fact, but by changing perspectives on how we see and interpret the world. (p. 21)

For Eisner (2005), Denzin (2003), Corbin (2009), and many others, research in the postmodern world will recognize and accept that their works do intend to teach their audiences and are therefore pedagogical. Researchers with such a stance expect changes in the perspectives and behaviors of their readers and/or research participants.

Schwab (1978) outlines four commonplaces of curriculum: the subject, the student, the teacher, and the milieu (physical, social, and political environments). Each plays a role and each exerts a certain power. A subject-centered curriculum would be prescriptive, predetermined by a government's educational ministry, relying on the works of previous experts in the fields, privileging previously held values over emergence, similar to Eisner and Vallance's (1974) description of *academic rationalism*. A teacher-centered one would give the power to the teacher who would determine what is worth knowing and possibly mediate such knowledge with the students. A student-centered approach would create an environment conducive for students to explore using their own devices, possibly looking like the Reggio Emilia approach to instruction (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998), Waldorf schools (Petrash, 2002), or Summerhill (Neill, 1966). A milieu-centered curriculum would bring in the greater environment, including physical, social, and political dimensions. Each, alone, is problematic; their integration provides a well-rounded curriculum.

While we could also use the compass diagram to chart a particular classroom's emphasis on Schwab's commonplaces, here, I employ what I label a 'balanced tetrahedron' as the operant three-dimensional metaphor. I encourage classrooms in which the four commonplaces interact dialogically, all four interfacing with one another equally, informing and supporting one another and all four taking turns serving as the base. Its center relies on its constituent members and obtains its power from their dialogic union.



we assess arts-based research projects based upon their pedagogical context and the degree that they have reached their aims.

How the researcher frames (Goffman, 1974) data collection, and a teacher frames instruction always influences the products generated. In the case of research, the content (subject) rests with the participants (student/research participant), albeit mediated by the researcher (teacher) and the literature (milieu). For me, curriculum and research are negotiated spaces and an understanding of the interplay among the four commonplaces can assist us in creating appropriate pedagogical spaces. Only then can

There also exist two complementary but sometimes competing foci. One is an understanding of the ‘content’ upon which artists base their compositions. The other is a mastery of the ‘form’ that one chooses to represent that content. In an acting class, the emphasis will be on theatrical form. In an English class using ‘process drama’ techniques (O’Neill, 1995; Perchard, 2010), where role is used to explore content (arts-based instructional approaches), the emphasis would be on an understanding of material. Both have merit within their own contexts. However, Goodman (2005) cautions that an overemphasis on form is a misplaced focus, distracting the learner “from what he or she is trying to say or understand through language” (p. 5). One learns form as one uses it to mediate content and vice versa. We must be pedagogically patient as we witness our students experimenting with form as they create meanings for themselves and others. Through exposure, they are moving towards the arts as dynamic forms of expression.

The same argument applies with arts-based research. Drawings, paintings, photographs, videos, performances, poetry, songs, and music, generated by research participants, may not achieve a high artistic standard but nor should this be expected. The arts are used to assist in the articulation of meaning and the projects move the participants towards poiesis. Their artistic merit will most often be not of gallery quality, but the attempt of employing a medium different from words may uncover stories and beliefs that further elucidate not only what one knows but also how what one knows is transformed by the medium chosen. An artistic act can be, and often is, a pedagogical one (Isenberg & Jalongo, 2010; Norris, 2008; Ogden, DeLuca, & Searle, 2010). One does not ask those being interviewed to speak as orators, so why should we expect that level of quality when we ask research participants to paint, compose, dance, or act? Like Kostera’s (2006) use of narrative collage as a means of assisting participants in articulating their existing meanings on a topic, one does not expect publishable stories.

Rather, the stories are a creative arts-based approach of generating data. By making arts-based requests, we are encouraging and inviting research participants and our students to move towards our art forms. By not asking them to use the arts, we, by neglect, are reinforcing the hegemonic research forms of number and word.

Towards an Understanding of the Poiesis Quadrant

Johnston (1997) defines poiesis as meaning making, referring to “all common forms of artistic creativity in the visual and plastic arts, music, drama, poetry, and prose fiction” (n.p.). An artistic endeavor, therefore, is one in which there are two products, the artistic piece and the emergent meanings that the artist evokes as a result of the art making. Depending upon the context, one may have greater emphasis. With an ‘arts-based’ project, significant meaning may be the desired outcome. In an art class, it may be the execution of artistic form.

Best (1982;1992), however, makes a distinction between the aesthetic and the artistic. For Best, a natural phenomenon, like a beautiful sunset, can elicit an aesthetic experience but to define something as artistic, one must consider intentionality. Art, therefore, is created in order to create an aesthetic response from either in the artist and/or a larger public. For Best, many things in the environment can have an aesthetic quality but only things made by humans are considered artistic.

Berger (1972) reinforces this distinction between the aesthetic and the artistic by claiming that there is a difference between being naked and nude. Everyone without clothes is naked but to be nude means to be aware of the gaze of another. To be nude is an intentional act of portrayal. The song ‘Poetry in Motion,’ written by Paul Kaufman and Mike Anthony (1960) is misleading. At times walking down the street is just that, ‘walking down the street;’ a pipe is just a pipe. If a painting of a pipe is accompanied by the phrase ‘Ceci n'est pas une pipe’ or the walker becomes aware of an audience and adjusts her/his walk accordingly, there is artistic intent. As Best would define it, a walk without intent can be aesthetic (poetry in motion), but with intent, it is artistic.

We read pre-historic cave drawings, for example, by referencing other works that we understand. As Merleau-Ponty (1962) attests, perception is influenced by previous knowledge and understanding. The historical and political are always embedded in poiesis, as poiesis is influenced by generations of cultural traditions. Like Culler’s (1982) claim that women can only read as men because language itself has patriarchy embedded within it, we must recognize that poiesis is fraught with hegemonic frames that often go unquestioned. Such questioning is a dimension of the political quadrant.

Still the goal of creating an aesthetic experience for another is noteworthy. Hansen (2004) calls for a poetics of teaching in which aesthetic, intellectual, and moral elements are drawn together (p. 119). To deny the aesthetic is to deny the experience of wonder and awe in one's life. Arts-based research and instructional approaches most often invite the novice to move towards poesis. In so doing these approaches foster the development of an artistic appreciation. When determining the quality of art-based approaches, an understanding of the current location of the emergent artist must be considered an important variable.

Towards an Understanding of the Political Quadrant

The determination of the standard of poesis of arts-based projects cannot be completely separated from their cultural and historical contexts. As Berger (1972) and Baudrillard (2001) aptly point out, no art is politically neutral as the lens or position of the artist is a form of framing. In addition, neutrality itself is a political stance. Given this, the quality or merit of art can also be assessed on its degree of political stance, as Denzin (2003) encourages.

There are, however, two different political stances when it comes to arts-based pedagogy and research. First there are the political statements made within works of art, be they protest songs, political cartoons, social issues theatre, visual arts, or contemporary dance. All deliberately make statements about the world.

Monkman's paintings and other works (2010) are imbued with layers of political overtones that reveal multiple frames and framings. His painting, 'The Academy' (Monkman, 2008), portrays an assortment of painters and their subjects. A bride sketches the posing Greek figures while what appears to be a circus ringleader finishes his painting of the same models but in color. A Native American sits in front of a blank canvas. Among other things, the painting makes explicit the colonization of Native American Peoples through art. By using the art form of the colonizers as both the medium and the content, he adroitly brings both into question. Giroux (1991), in his definition of the postmodern, includes the political points-of-view of art and research whether they be tacit or overt. It is works such as Monkman's that make obvious the 'man behind the curtain,' pulling the strings. In assessing art, it is important to note its political position, whether explicit or deceptively appearing benign.

The second is the politics of the process. My first experience with an art teacher was to trace a template of a body of a rabbit, cut it out, assemble arms and legs from other templates and have a puppet just like hers. There was no imagination and I was judged by my conformity to the connoisseur (Eisner, 1977), Miss Henry. The process was a political one of the top-down kind, not that of the enabling of students to become producers, that Freire (1986) encourages.

I must confess that I do have a fear that prescriptive standards of the quality of art, based solely upon an assessment of its high degree of polish, will silence those emergent voices who are moving toward our art forms. I have encountered many an art-phobic in-service teacher in my graduate classes who tell horror stories about their art making experiences where the judge entered too soon and discouraged exploration. Such experiences move many away from art making. As Flinders, Noddings, and Thornton (1986) point out, all teaching is a political act by what we choose to teach or not and the manner in which we teach.

Sir Ken Robinson (2006; 2009) claims that children are born creative and are educated out of it. As teachers and researchers of, in, and with the arts, we must reverse this trend, inviting all to move towards the arts as ways of knowing, doing, being, and living. When the only criteria is a strict lens of a high degree of polished poiesis, the pedagogical process takes a political stance reinforcing a narrow definition of art that can dissuade people from moving towards an appreciation and usage of our art forms. I consider an acknowledgement of the politics of the process to be vital when discussing the quality of art works. The authority/authorship must rest with the creator/student/research participant. It is their voices that inform the research and the lessons. The teacher/researcher is the guide on the side, the muse beckoning the creative voices of those present.

Towards an Understanding of the Public Positioning Quadrant

Beyond stylistic preferences, quality can be an issue even when it is not the primary focus. Some arts-based projects are not ready for public consumption. I have witnessed productions that have been ‘slapped together’ with no apparent desire to move toward poiesis and/or pedagogy whether they be in music, dance, theatre, the visual arts or the written word. I also admit that sometimes when non-theatre people suggest that they can do a play about a particular topic, I shudder with the realization that they know little of the discipline and in all likelihood will produce a piece that will lack both depth and luster. Still, I do not want to deny them the opportunity to try if they are serious about moving toward the art form.

But it needs to be recognized that the bringing of one’s piece and/or oneself into a public domain means entering into an aesthetic type of political arena. Once there, an assortment of judges becomes ever present. The popular television shows *So You Think You Can Dance* and *American Idol* clearly show a range of talent in the performing arts, with many eliminated participants obviously not possessing the necessary ‘star quality.’ They have not reached a degree of poiesis necessary for public recognition. Those who do succeed either possess a raw talent and/or have dedicated their lives to mastering the art form. Within the ‘acceptable’ range there are various strengths and weakness. Some are critiqued on their song choice, others on their lack of emotional connection to either the song or, in the case of dance, their

partners. The judges or connoisseurs recognize the importance of the integration of form with content and comment accordingly. Still, as one show wisely puts it, the winner is “America’s ‘favorite’ dancer.” The producers recognize that at a certain point it is not about who is ‘best’ but about public perception. The finalists have merit but the ultimate quality is one of popularity. Even the judges don’t always agree, reinforcing that ‘beauty’ or value is in the eye of the beholder, always possessing a degree of subjective preference that can tip the scales one way or another.

For those not making it to ‘Hollywood,’ a comment that is often made is, ‘You’re not quite ready.’ The judges recognize there is a moving toward mastery and applaud these contestants for it. However, at this time, a degree of quality is lacking. For those falling into this range some go home, work hard at improving their skills and return the following year, having taken the pedagogical steps suggested by the panel of judges. They have chosen to dedicate themselves to a higher degree of personal mastery.

Chapin (1973) tells a story of Mr. Tanner, a cleaner from the mid-west, whose clients appreciated his voice, encouraging him to go further. He did and received poor reviews. He retreated to his business and since then only sang late at night when no one else was around. Chapin sings:

Music was his life; it was not his livelihood
and it made him feel so happy and it made him feel so good.
And he sang from his heart and he sang from his soul.
(And) he did not know how well he sang; it just made him whole.
(Chapin, 1973)

Unfortunately, Mr. Tanner retreated, not recognizing that he did have an appreciative local audience, far away from the critics of Carnegie Hall. His public was on a smaller scale.

Displaying student work and the work of novice arts-based research participants enters a contentious, grey area that spans the private/personal/public chasm. By private, I mean works that are meant for the eyes of the artist only. Diaries may fall into this category. By personal, I refer to works, stories and thoughts that are meant to remain within a small circle of peers. The individual doesn’t mind sharing but it is not for public consumption. Going public means that the individual feels ready for some form of public audience. Memoirs would be an extension of private diaries to a public audience.

Most student works in the majority of school subjects are created for one purpose, as class assignments. They exist for the teacher’s eyes only and are infrequently viewed even by

parents and peers. They are personal communications between a student and the teacher. In the arts, public display is much more expected. High school music recitals, art displays, theatrical performances, and dance routines all fall into a unique category. Their intent is both pedagogical and poiesis but all too often the only criterion brought into the conversation is poiesis. Eisner (2005) claims that “there is a tendency to allow aesthetic considerations to trump the need for an epistemic orientation to disclosure” (p. 11). When determining quality or merit I position all artwork on a private/personal/public continuum. An understanding of the context or audience for which a piece of art is intended positions it in an appropriate frame from which it can be discussed. I have found that some conversations about quality omit the context from the discussion, always assuming that a paying public standard of poiesis is the only legitimate criteria for display. How the public positions someone can inhibit her/him from moving towards the arts as ways of knowing, doing, and being. As teachers and judges of arts-based research we must question whether our comments are stumbling blocks or steppingstones as we advocate the use of art forms.

Nachmanovitch (1990) claims that the creative act can be inhibited by the fear of the judge; that such fear interferes with the artistic flow. I challenge those judges who uphold some higher moral precept regarding the artistic quality of arts, suggesting that they might be dissuading many others from our art forms (either as producers or consumers), by insisting upon a degree of artistic quality to which people are moving towards but have not quite achieved. Such a judgmental stance must be tempered with an understanding of developmental (pedagogical) concepts that recognize others as moving toward poiesis and encourage them accordingly. Like the parable that cautions against the opening the chrysalis before the butterfly is ready, our zealotry for a certain degree of poiesis when art is publically displayed can be pedagogically limiting, stunting student development and success, and research participants’ voices. In the case of displaying the works of novices, including or ignoring the political and artistic context of the artists is a political act that can either give voice or silence.

Applying the Great Wheel to Arts-based Projects

Having established a conceptual framework that can be used in the determination of quality and merit of arts-based instruction and research, it is now applied to specific cases of both arts-based pedagogy and research demonstrating how the *Great Wheel* as a tool/model/framework can inform the creation and assessment of arts-based projects.

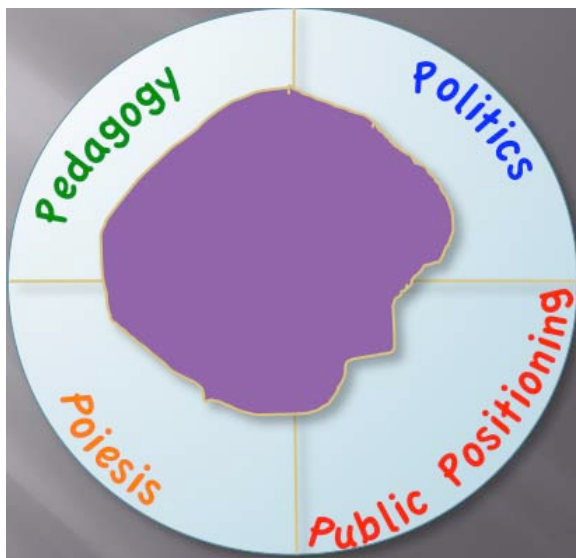
Case One – Concrete Poetry for Pedagogical Purposes



In my graduate course with in-service teachers, I begin with an icebreaker activity that asks graduate students to introduce themselves using concrete poetry¹. My intent is to assist them in thinking about self in nontraditional ways and to begin using the arts much more to both process information and to communicate it.

The ‘J’ is a broomstick that represents my like for all things ‘Harry Potter.’ The ‘O’ is the hermeneutic circle (Gadamer, 1975) full of spirals and tangents. The ‘E’ is a capital ‘E’ representing stage lights and my interest in theatre. The activity moves my students and I toward both a more intricate understanding of self and simultaneously enhances the use of art in analysis and expression.

We can also now define or assess this activity and its products using the Great Wheel:



Its purpose was pedagogical, to assist students in the reconceptualization of self (Pinar, 1995), and student responses clearly indicated that I achieved that aim. It affirmed and supported student knowledge, moving the class toward an environment in which their voices would be expected and accepted. While the content was not necessarily political, the process of writing fostered a climate conducive for student voice, making the process a political shift in classroom power. These and most concrete poetry examples made over the years would not be considered of enough value to display

publically much beyond the class and the students’ immediate circles. They did not possess a degree of polish to be gallery ready. Yes, there was a strong sense of artistry or poiesis, as

¹ *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2010) defines concrete poetry as “poetry in which the poet’s intent is conveyed by graphic patterns of letters, words, or symbols rather than by the meaning of words in conventional arrangement.”

people found new forms of representing self. However, given the time constraints and experience with the craft, its polished poesis was not as strong. Still the activity had merit. It had strong political and pedagogical emphases and was moving toward a stronger sense of a “poiesis of curriculum” (Trueit, 2005) in that the process/activity itself had artistic merit. Students explored and found their own voices within the flexible structure. Many students, some of who were resistant at first, were proud of the meanings that they uncovered. Some eagerly tried the activity with their own students, with equal or greater success. Some returned to class claiming that a few students who seldom participated became animated in discussing their name. In these cases, teachers and students considered themselves moving toward all four quadrants and many were impressed with the degree of poesis in their peers and themselves. These four broad criteria, collectively, produce a better description of an arts-based project and an assessment of it.

Case Two – Concrete Poetry for Research Purposes

Wihak (2004; 2007), a former student of mine in an arts-based research course, employed concrete poetry as part of her doctoral research methodology. Having participants draw their names with both before and after pictures, she assisted them in articulating their emotions. “The Before drawing (Figure 8a), with a sense of conflict and tension represents the turmoil in Soshana’s life before going to Nunavut” (Wihak, 2004, p. 86-87).



Before



After

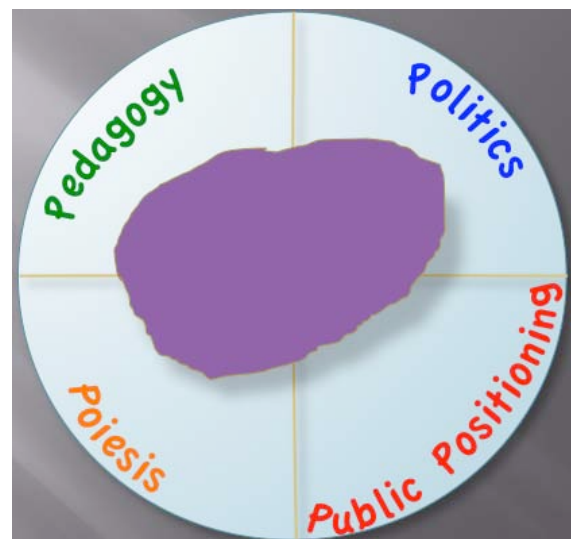
“Soshana’s positive experience about her Nunavut experience shines in the bright colours of her During/After picture” (p. 87). Clearly, these drawings possess what Leavy (2009) considers the capacity of “conveying emotion and the multiple meanings articulated via the art” (p. 228). The public or audience to whom they are destined is a research audience, not an art critic, and they should be appraised accordingly. A charting of this project, using the Great Wheel, would be similar to the use of concrete poetry for pedagogical purposes. Such projects promote the arts and need to be applauded, not discouraged, as they move our greater community toward the arts as ways of knowing, doing, and being.

Case Three – Drama-in-Education as Instruction

In a writing-in-role activity (Neelands & Goode, 2000) that I used with student audiences, I asked them to write letters home as characters during the Klondike gold rush. A language arts teacher could be more interested in the students' abilities to write a standard letter. A social studies teacher could focus on content, emphasizing an understanding of the lived experiences of those who lived in that historical time. While both form and content interrelate and complement one another, different teachers may place more emphasis upon moving toward either the form or the content and assess identical work differently. A poorly structured letter, fraught with technical issues, could demonstrate a rich understanding of dislocation from one's home and loved ones and a polished letter could lack an understanding of the content being examined. If the role were changed to being 'newspaper journalists,' a higher degree of polish would be expected. While demonstrating a proficient degree of both would be ideal, the piece's assessment will, to some degree, be determined whether its pedagogical intent has greater emphasis on form or content within the context of the desired learning outcomes.



English



Social Studies

Case Four – Applied Theatre for Education and Social Change

I work with social issues theatre, which means that the content and the process are equally imbued with political intentions (Cohen-Cruz & Schutzman, 2005; Mienczakowski, 1995; Norris, 1999, 2002, 2009a; & Norris & Mirror Theatre, 2001; Prentki & Preston, 2008; Thompson, 2009). We create, through a collaborative process (Filewod, 1982;1987), a series of vignettes that Rohd (1991) calls 'activating scenes' (p. 103). They are open-ended in that they invite the audience to rewrite them during the devised performance/workshops (Norris,

2009a). Their intent is both political and pedagogical as the presentations move from the didacticism of Aristotelian theatre to a form of participatory theatre that includes the voices of our audiences. The scenes are full of an improvisational raw energy that resists a high degree of polish. Many audience members, through their watching, believe that they could do such work and when we move to audience participation for pedagogical and political purposes, many participants volunteer to devise scenes of their own and present them to their peers. Many times their polished poesis is not strong, but this is not the point. They are re-conceptualizing through the art form to make important personal meaning. In this case, the political dimension of giving voice to the audience members supersedes the need for a high degree of poesis. The insights they glean from working through the art moves them both toward artistic forms of expression and an expanded understanding of the concept being examined. As one grade-eight student said, "I thought you were going to come here and tell us not to do drugs. Thanks for trusting us to work things out on our own" (Norris, 2009a, p. 130). Enabling voice is both a pedagogical and political act that can be stifled by an over reliance on polish as the ultimate criteria. The criteria for this type of theatre rest in the performance's pedagogical ability to invite and engage the audience in discussing the issues through effective activating scenes.

Moreno (1983) calls for a theatre of spontaneity in which every performance takes on a new life and cautions against well-polished pieces that can lack heart and substance. Polishing also maintains the status of the fourth-wall (Brecht, 1957) through which audiences gaze. Raw improvisational energy can make it permeable, giving voice to all present. While polish has its purpose, it is not universally desirable.

My fear—and yes it is a fear (just ask many of my colleagues in theatre departments who are relegated to second-class status for their work in Theatre for Young Audiences and Applied Theatre)—is that the quality of social issues theatre will not be valued according to its own set of criteria, but by a Broadway standard that is inappropriate for the context and purposes that it exists to serve.

Gray's work (1998) with female cancer patients provides a good example to extend the discussion. The women themselves wrote and performed their collection of stories. Such stories, based upon their life histories, are empirical evidence. The arrangement into a series of well scripted, polished, and performed monologues, mediates that data into an arts-based research project. The performance had a successful tour with many 'standing ovations' that later became the title of a book that documented this production and others, including one with men experiencing prostate cancer (Gray & Sinding, 2002). The performances were pedagogically strong, both for the participants who grew as a result of the project, and the audiences, who appreciated this form of presentation over didactic and boring written or

spoken research reports by ‘talking heads.’ By having the participants playing themselves, the approach gave them political agency. Since it was well accepted by the types of audiences for whom it was designed, it was positioned for the appropriate public. I do, however, question certain aspects of its poiesis.

Handle with Care (Gray, 1998), in a video format, presents a number of people talking to the camera. There is little interaction, little drama, and little shift in style and energy, collectively making the entire piece theatrically weak, albeit, much better than the reading of a research report. Gray confides (2002) that he entered the project with little knowledge and understanding of what he and those assembled were up to. They eventually chose the monologue as their primary form of presentation. Monologues are theatrically effective when used sparingly. As a primary theatrical style, they can become tedious, as stories begin to drone on, one after another. I am torn. I celebrate the pedagogy, political stance, and the acceptance of a particular public, but I wanted more. But the audiences to whom they were directed were appreciative. Knowing the audience to whom the piece is directed is also an important consideration when determining quality.



The *Great Wheel* has helped me to reconcile my own position on this important work and I chart my own description/assessment of Gray’s work:

The pedagogical process for both the participants and the audience is sound. The political stance provides a space for agency and is an example of working ‘with’ people. The public for whom it was created was appreciative. Its theatrical quality, while moving toward poiesis, was lacking. The monologues were strong in themselves, but there were too many of them. Still I accept the work and applaud its efforts. The voice of non-actors

(Boal, 1992) must not only be encouraged but forums must be created to provide them with a variety of media through which they tell their stories. If not, we lack good manners by not minding our P’s (poiesis, pedagogy, politics, and public positioning) in Q (Quality). I ask, “What is our responsibility in assisting those who desire to move towards poiesis to do so, as we assess their work?” “Should not assessment take a pedagogical position?” In the case of *Handle with Care*, the writers/performers elucidated many important aspects of cancer and its treatment by moving toward poiesis. They appeared to have no aspirations of taking it to Broadway, as some of the characters in the mockumentary, *Waiting for Guffman*, (Guest,

1996) did. The cast of *Handle with Care* recognized their context and wrote and performed accordingly. This is/was their right and I defend and applaud them for it.

Case 5 – Assessing Children’s Work

Maddox (2002) takes it upon her/himself (gender unknown) to cruelly critique children’s drawings on his/her web site, “I am better than your kids” (<http://www.thebestpageintheuniverse.net/c.cgi?u=irule>)

The site states:

If you work in an office with lots of people, chances are that you work with a person who hangs pictures up that their kids have drawn. The pictures are always of some stupid flower or a tree with wheels. These pictures suck; I could draw pictures much better. In fact, I can spell, do math and run faster than your kids. So being that my skills are obviously superior to those of children, I’ve taken the liberty to judge art work done by other kids on the internet. I’ll be assigning a grade A through F for each piece:

An assessment of the work of Bryce, age 10 reports,

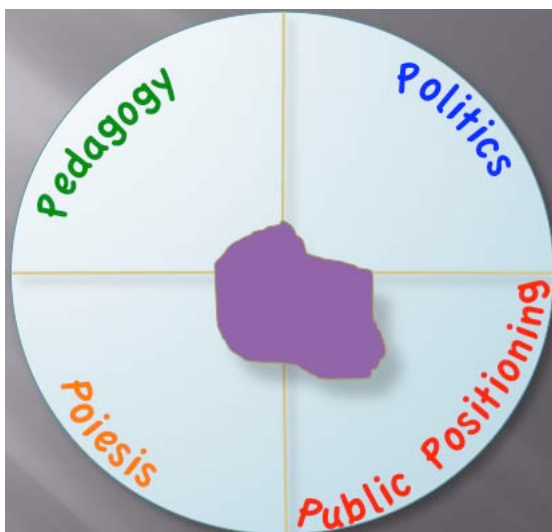
This one wouldn’t be too bad if the color were kept inside the lines, you picked a new perspective, used non-abrasive colors and asked someone with talent to paint it for you. On one hand I want to give an A for effort but... F

While the example is extreme, it highlights the type of violence that can take place when something is judged outside of its context. This assessment defines the context then proceeds to completely ignore it by establishing an inappropriate frame that dismisses the work. Like Li’s (2006) assertion that the framing of ‘civilization’ gives those within it impunity to act unjustly towards those outside of that frame, the art critic can equally fall into solipsism by ignoring the legitimate criteria of others frames. I ask, “Who judges the judge, the critic, the connoisseur? How do we define and determine the quality of poesis of the child, novice, student, research participant, or different Other and the appropriateness of them going public? Should all children’s art be judged by the recent work of the prodigy, Kieron Williamson?”



Williamson, 2010. Permission granted.

His work is exceptional for a person his age but to deny others from picking up a brush, in order to move toward art for personal exploration rather than mass appreciation and consumption, is a travesty. Most of my poems remain private but were of value as they assisted me in thinking through things. Only a few entered the public arena (Norris, 1993, 2007, 2009b). Art must be judged/assessed for the context in which it resides. Without employing this variable we may prevent many from moving toward our art forms.



Office/Refrigerator Drawings



Kieron Williamson

In the case of both these examples, other than the process of artists creating their own works, there is little to no political stance in the compositions. Little understanding of the extended content of the work is made evident. Williamson's pieces are far more polished and consequently have a wider public appeal. Still the works of many young children are displayed by a close circle of friends and family and are appreciated for what they are. They could be included as research data, and doing so, would make them arts-based.

Towards an Inclusive Stance on Arts-based Research and Instruction

Our statistical colleagues label an event that includes items that don't belong, a 'Type I error' (a false positive). A Type II error (a false negative) is when something is excluded that should belong. They recognize that all assessment instruments have limitations. In assessing arts-based instruction and research, my (dis)position is moving towards a willingness to make a few more Type I errors with the hope that this will avoid making more Type II errors. My preference is to invite those who are admitted to move towards all compass points. That's the pedagogue in me.

I take to heart Sir Ken Robinson's (2006, 2009) question, "Do schools kill creativity?" He critiques the structure of schools and their narrow-minded unholistic approach. We, as teachers of the arts and practitioners of arts-based research, must be continually cognizant of both our political stance and our pedagogical intent in how we position (frame) those working with the arts. We must continually question our role as gate-keepers, asking, "Whose voices are heard and whose are silenced?" Assessment is always a political act, underpinned by allegiances to particular philosophical values and epistemological beliefs as determined by those who have power. Nothing is neutral. Even the perspective of being neutral is a political positioning. Any stance positions one in reference to the Other. Criteria may tell more about those judging than those being judged. The *Great Wheel* model demonstrates that various individuals can describe and assess themselves and their works in a variety positions on the wheel. One may desire to look more closely at the meanings generated by the participant through the process of creating that piece and another may prefer to examine its political message. They are different but both are legitimate. As Maruyama (2004) claims, we must develop polyocular vision and look through multiple lenses.

Leavy (2009) in her discussion of participatory arts-based projects also takes an inclusive stance:

When considering participatory visual arts-based methods the issue of aesthetics becomes important. Despite the potential for visual arts to captivate and impress messages upon viewers, when amateurs are invited into the art-making process,

certainly they cannot be expected to possess artistic ability or training. Therefore, in participatory projects the aesthetic quality of the resulting visual art takes a back seat to the other advantages of the methodology. More over, although produced by amateurs, the visual art produced by research participants can still be quite powerful with respect to conveying emotion and the multiple meanings articulated via the art. (p. 228)

Jongeward (2009) discusses such a research participant who had become intrinsically motivated to move toward poesis:

She bought a blender, a book about paper making, and jumped right into the process. Discouraged at first because the paper didn't turn out well, she persisted and gradually learned the steps, adjusting her ideas to the needs of the materials. As she made more paper and got better at it, she enjoyed the process. (p. 243)

I suggest that we cease our quest for the 'gold standard' as Barone (2007) suggests, but, rather, employ an inclusive set of criteria that is "a step forward in moving away from facile and simplistic answers toward nuance and complexity" (Gutiérrez, 2010. p. 448). By asking, "What are the pedagogical, poetical, political and public positioning stances of any arts-based research and/or pedagogical project?" we can act responsibly, looking at the bigger picture. If not we run the danger of desiring only what select connoisseurs or aristocrats (Boal, 1979) appreciate. Let's invite, not exclude and run the risk of a Type I error.

In conclusion, I return to my doctoral research question (Norris, 1989), asking what Henderson (1992) calls an 'unbounded question' (one that influences practice but is never answered). I ask, "What do we do as teachers that fosters creativity and what do we do that inhibits it?" I have found that using this adaptation of Underwood's 'Learning Way' has assisted me in moving towards a holistic evaluative approach that may better foster creativity through the recognition of the value of the poetical, political, pedagogical, public components in arts-based instruction and research. Different positions don't necessarily mean better or less quality. Many works of art have strong aesthetics and weak political positions and vice versa. Both have a place at the table (Woolf, 1977) as each provides insights to both artists and audiences as form and content uniquely blend to create meaning.

The Learning Way begins with the assumption that it is the responsibility of each of us to learn to understand who we individually are, the unique way in which we learn, what we need from our community, and what we can give in return (Underwood, p. xiii).

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International Journal of Education & the Arts

Editors

Margaret Macintyre Latta
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.

Christine Marmé Thompson
Pennsylvania State University, U.S.A.

<http://www.ijea.org/>

ISSN 1529-8094

Volume 12 Special Issue 1.8

June 30, 2011

Arts & Learning Research Journal Special Issue

“There is Nothing Else to Do but Make Films:” Urban Youth Participation at a Film and Television School

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Citation: Lin, C-C., Grauer, K. & Castro, J. C. (2011). “There is nothing else to do but make films:” Urban youth participation at a film and television school. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 12(SI 1.8). Retrieved [date] from <http://www.ijea.org/v12si1/>.

Abstract

Our three-year inquiry at the Gulf Islands Film and Television School (GIFTS), a community-based media arts educational center, presents a practical model illustrating how urban youth explore their own strengths and connect themselves to a learning space in a rural environment within the context of filmmaking. It also offers pedagogical insights for art education by envisioning possibilities for learning spaces that are relevant to both out-of and in-school arts programs. We first present an overview of GIFTS in conjunction with participants’ reflections, then provide discussion addressing implications for art teachers and art educators which explores the role of space in relation to the media arts practice for urban youth.

Introduction

In this article, we focus on how a rural learning environment has become a transformative space for urban youth engagement in media arts practice. Our three-year inquiry at the Gulf Islands Film and Television School (GIFTS), a community-based media arts educational center, presents a practical model illustrating how urban youth explore their own strengths and connect themselves to a learning space in a rural environment within the context of filmmaking.



Research indicates that situating community-based media arts programs outside of formal school settings provides diverse spaces for youth to introspectively respond to and reflect upon their experiences in relation to the complex world in which they reside (Cohen-Cruz, 2005; Goldfarb, 2002; Irwin & Kindler, 1999; Weber & Mitchell, 2008). Such community-based initiatives strive to foster shared commitment of creative, social, and moral capacities of individuals and communities (Buckingham, 2007; Darts, 2007; Peppler, 2010) and attempt to facilitate learners' artistic representations of knowing across time and space as manifested through their pedagogical engagement in media art forms and digital tools (Burn, 2009; Castro & Grauer, 2010; Eger, 2010). Evidence indicates that such digitally-mediated arts teaching and learning experiences occurring in the community are effective mechanisms to build individual skill sets, promote community engagement and provide broader social benefits (Darts, 2006; Goldman, Booker, & McDermott, 2008; Heath, 2001). While many of these community based programs are situated within urban neighborhoods serving youth (e.g., Goodman, 2003; Levy, 2008; Poyntz, 2009), alternatives, such as the one that is the focus of this article, are located in rural areas where urban learners are brought into the setting that is unique to them to foster alternate learning experiences. At GIFTS, an emphasis on creativity, critical analysis, identity development and voice are achieved through an intense immersion into film production. Although participation in GIFTS requires traveling from the comfort of home and peers, we have observed its popularity with urban youth; some of whom repeatedly participate in various programs and become highly involved at GIFTS.

Through this study, we have come to understand that programs like GIFTS offer a distinct place of arts learning in the larger learning and media ecologies that youth and young adults navigate. This is not to suggest that community-based arts programs are somehow superior to in-school arts programs; rather they form an important part of the learning ecology in learner's lives outside of school boundaries. The value of such community-based art programs is that they provide an occasion to create encounters for learners to experience differing ways



of knowing. This model also indicates a learning opportunity through the collaborative process of filmmaking where participants are able to explore themselves in relation to their interactions with peers and surroundings. We first present an overview of GIFTS in conjunction with participants' reflections, then provide discussion addressing implications for art teachers and art educators which explores the role of space in relation to the media arts practice for urban youth.

The Gulf Islands Film and Television School (GIFTS)

Founded 15 years ago by documentary and commercial filmmakers on the site of a former logging camp, GIFTS is a community-based media arts educational center on the island of Galiano in British Columbia, Canada. The island is situated across Georgia Strait from Vancouver and isolated by geography. Galiano Island is one of a series of small islands that are strung across the American/Canadian border in the Salish Sea and make up the San Juan Islands to the south and the Gulf Islands in Canada. It is a 45-minute ferry ride across from Vancouver on a ferry that operates twice a day in good weather. The island itself is 26 kilometers long with a population of less than 1000 permanent residence. Most of the cottages on Galiano are owned by weekenders who want a get-away from the accelerated pace of urban life and a return to an idyllic natural setting. Two small clusters of stores at the south end of the island provide basic services but there is limited cell phone and Internet coverage for most of the island.



Promoted as a “film boot camp,” GIFTS offers intensive, residential programs to youth and adults lasting a weekend to one or two-weeks. Participants are invited to work in small groups with professional filmmakers - addressed as mentors - to produce short films featuring such genres as drama, documentary, and animation. They are immersed in an environment of cooperative, collaborative, and creative practice, mirroring experiences of the professional film industry. The basic film making equipment and editing programs are seen as professional tools and treated with respect; participants are treated as filmmakers and taught to use professional language, tools and techniques. Simultaneously, they are separated from their normal daily routines and social contacts, residing communally on the island, with the shared goal of creating a film within a given time. As Mentor Alex commented, “The island is a big one. You’re here; there’s nowhere to go; there’s nothing else to do but make films – there’s no distractions here.”



GIFTS draws youth learners aged 14-20 from urban areas across the Pacific Northwest and beyond. Students participate due to their own interest in digital media or adult recommendations from acting agencies, teachers, parents or First Nations Bands.¹ Participants

¹ In Canada, many First Nations Bands provide education funding to members of their communities. Both urban and rural Bands send participants to GIFTS in programs specific to their own interests and/or to regular programs.

attend and pay full fees, receive scholarships, participate as unpaid interns, or are funded by special interest groups and agencies.



Prior to taking GIFTS' one-week Media Intensive Program, the students know that arrival is Sunday evening and they are expected to publicly screen finished film productions by the following Saturday afternoon. Leaving the comfort of their previous lives, clutching their pillows, clothes and possessions, students have described the Sunday ferry ride like a Harry Potter trip to Hogwarts. On the trip across the Straight of Georgia—usually in the dark—they know no one on board and are headed

into the middle of nowhere. Picked up by a rickety school van at the ferry terminal, students are taken through the rainforest where they experience darkness and silence in a closed space with other equally uncertain participants.





Awakening in an unfamiliar dorm bed, on Monday the students finally are able to see where they are situated. Within a lush second growth rainforest, GIFTS' campus features a large courtyard surrounded by student dorm rooms, a kitchen, and classrooms. The common courtyard area serves multiple purposes including dining, socializing, and working. The founder of GIFTS, George, orients the group and introduces the mentors while trying to make

students more at ease in this new space. In the beginning of each program, a mantra of respect is evident in George's orientation, "Respect yourself. Respect everyone else, including the mentors, and the staff and the kitchen people, and everybody. And respect the equipment." For the remainder of the week, students work with mentors with differing expertise - acting, directing, documentary, drama, and animation. The curricular premise of GIFTS is simply to conceptualize, script, act, shoot, edit and produce a short film in a week. There is no fixed block scheduling at GIFTS except the mealtimes, yet the compressed timeline makes students devote their days and nights to get ready for the public screening at the end of each workshop, as one young student observed, "... you're on a timeline; you have to get it done."





Learning through Collaboration

In addition to the pressure of a production deadline, students are asked to work collaboratively with peers they just met. Initially, they have expressed mixed feelings about such requirements and then recognized each other's strengths through their collective endeavors. Jeremy claimed, "Part of the whole thing of GIFTS is you learn to work with people...I think respect is important; people have to learn not to argue with each other;" while Stephanie described, "It's not easy to work with people you don't really know. It's more about helping each other learn." Anna observed the collective effort with her teammates was about "pulling it all together from just the three of us." Both Anna and Jeremy commented that the practice of living together in a dorm environment caused them to know their teammates' interests and strengths, not only from their experience of making films, but also from their daily interactions. As Jeremy explained, "We see each other days and nights; you get to know someone really well, not only their films and personality."



Allison, a mentor, observed the transition of this cooperative and collaborative experience and considered, “It’s a very uplifting moment when [students] finally work together.” She described,

Making a film together can be a hard adjustment for someone, I suppose, at that young age, if you’re shy or awkward, and you’ve never had to take leadership over other people or direct people. So when you get that role suddenly thrown at your feet, where you have all these people in front of you and you need to organize and lead them through a movie. You have to step up to the plate suddenly, and it’s a big adjustment. But [students] sort of need to have that experience and call those shots, and by the end of it, they get used to it...I think by alternating those roles, they learn a deep respect for each other and understand the roles and how to respect those roles on set. And their friendships grow really strong with that experience too.

Commenting on this learning style, Alex, another mentor, noticed, “It’s not so much about the film. It’s about learning the process of the making of film.” He further explained,

Like right now, a group of kids have got a documentary about love, and they might have three different ideas of love. So when they go to start editing, they’re going to have a major, major argument about what to actually put in the film. Because they’ve got all these people who said all these different things and they might or might not agree with them. You know, they’ve got to compromise. They might have to take something out or put something in that they don’t like.

Learning through Decision Making

While engaging in learning activities and relationships, students also attempt to seek out resources for their films in an unfamiliar isolated island. Mentors are there to offer local insights, suggesting potential interviewees or shooting locations, but students are “on their own,” according to a student, Jenny. She described, “Our group had to talk to people on the island to let us interview them, and we had to interview them again because we forgot some questions. It’s kind of awkward, but we figured it out and got better.” Residents on the island are familiar with the presence of GIFTS students who are regularly visible – acting in the woods, shooting at the beach, or perhaps interviewing a local artist. The students may appear amateur, asking an artist to repeat a sentence that they forget to record or feeling shy acting in public, yet they are engaged and becoming more comfortable with the unfamiliar surroundings. Jenny joked, “I can’t believe I survived without my cell phone for a week;” Jonathan claimed, “From now I am going to think of work instead of a vacation when I’m at the beach.”



Although mentors are present at film sites, students are supported in a context where they make decisions, take responsibility, and have control throughout the production process. As a result, students feel their ideas are valued and respected. Anna observed that a mentor “had his ideas and he didn’t force them on us.” Some students expressed a sense of ownership, of being capable of navigating media and learning: “At GIFTS, they don’t tell you what to think, they teach you how to think.” Anna remarked on the freedom of being able to “...do whatever you want as far as your creation goes.” Some also mentioned how such experiences differ from learning at their home school that was more controlled and did not focus on developing independent learners. Tyler described his learning experience at GIFTS as, “This is so cool; it’s better than school. It’s actually fun,” while Jonathan commented, “It’s different. It’s hard to believe this is a film ‘school.’ We are supposed to be working on sheets or writing down stuff and working at desks if this is a ‘school,’ but [GIFTS] is more free.”



Mentors at GIFTS

Avoiding titles such as teacher or trainer that may indicate power and authority in a learning context, a mentor's role at GIFTS is much closer to that of mediator and facilitator. Mentors would say to students, "Do it and learn by the experience of making something;" "Don't worry if you make a mistake, that's part of the process;" or "What if you tried it this way, and if you don't like it, put it back to how you had it?" We observed the mentor's role as managing producer in the film and television industry, one who resourcefully oversees the execution of production. Warren claimed, "My job is to help students work together to commit to their own ideas in a collective;" Allison remarked, "I just need to be there to sort of facilitate so that [students] know what's possible and what's available for them to use, to their advantage of making their films."

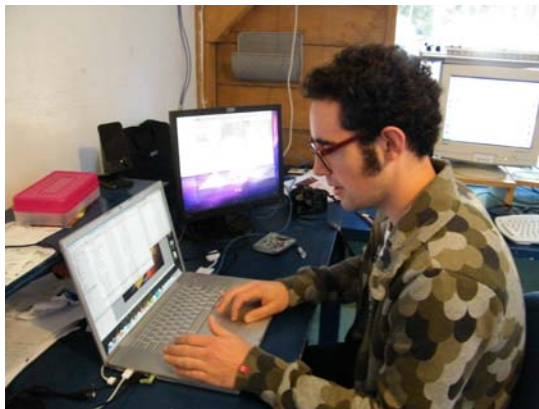
Many mentors working at GIFTS are alumni who took a course at GIFTS as preteens or teens and returned as interns and mentors while studying in colleges or working in the film industry. Allison, a mentor who had not been a student at GIFTS, finds this return phenomenon "amazing." She observed, "There's a lot of mentors and interns who have been students of GIFTS, and there's a sort of progression of coming here as a student and becoming an intern and then eventually mentoring and that sort of evolution." Nick and Dan, both GIFTS students and now mentors, feel it is hard to describe why they returned. Nick, a freelance animator introduced to the world of animation at GIFTS when he was 16, said, "I just keep coming back every year." Dan, an English and Film major at McGill University remarked, "I love Montreal as a big city, but I also really enjoy the simple, solitary learning experience [at GIFTS]. I love coming back." Jeremy, currently an intern and former student who wants to become a mentor, explained his reason for returning to GIFTS:

The whole experience was a lot better than just the end movie, right? It's not about: Oh my God, the movie I made was really good. It's about: In that week, what did I do? I wrote a script; I made five friends; I learned how to use a camera;

I learned how to edit on a computer. And another thing about why people keep coming back is because you come here for one week and time just goes out the window. For example, I already feel like I've been here a week, but I've been here just two days. Time is just like...Time is longer. I feel like I'm doing more stuff here.

Liam, a veteran mentor also commented on this phenomenon:

The reason why these kids come back is because they have a good time here...There are no grades [at GIFTS]. Some kids care about the product, but some are more interested in socializing and that experience. It's not mandatory, so we have to remember that it's the fun and enjoyment that keep them coming back and make them remember it.



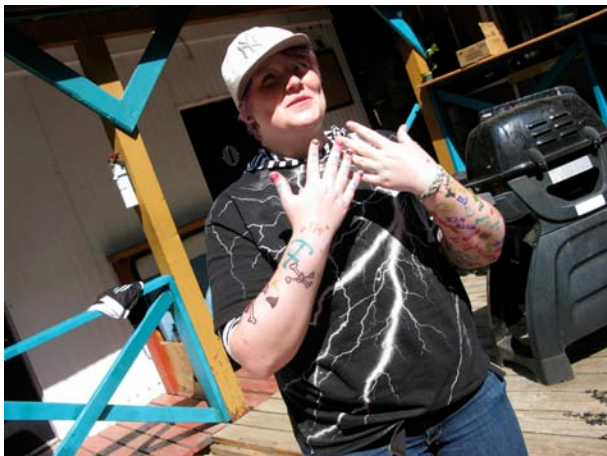
Implications for Art Education for Urban Youth

The description of GIFTS in conjunction with reflection from participants illustrates how an informal learning space outside of formal schooling provides young people from an urban context a new kind of learning community that brings together elements of cooperation, collaboration, empowerment, social engagement, identity, and media arts practice. Situating GIFTS' locale in a non-urban setting leads us to discuss how its unique structure and program can offer a model for creating an authentic, engaging learning environment for arts education practice. We consider the pedagogical model of GIFTS as more than just a get-away or therapeutic experience for urban youth in a natural environment. Instead, placing urban youth in an unfamiliar environment where they have to develop their ownership and initiative beyond their comfort zone leads to what many described as “a transformative experience.”



Envisioning the Potential of Space

We believe that engaging learning places are critical for developing social practice. Evans and Boyte (1986) connect the notion of free spaces to discussions about community, public life, and civil society, defining it as “settings between private lives and large-scale institutions where ordinary citizens can act with dignity, independence, and vision” (p. 17). Our research sheds light on GIFTS’ capacity for being a free space and supports Evans and Boyte’s theoretical insight that a free space is where “people are able to learn a new self-respect, a deeper and more assertive group identity, public skills, and values of cooperation and civic virtue” (p. 17). We observed how participants at GIFTS experienced learning as cohesive, and at times, discordant groups, working through challenges and tensions that the pressures of time and resources created in ways that simulated the reality of the film industry. This constraint of filmmaking resulted in bringing creative tension, cooperation, collaboration and stress to the forefront throughout production processes, yet it also created conditions for taking risks developing trust and communicating ideas of personal and collective significance. Lessons from GIFTS demonstrate that an enabling learning environment depends upon its ability to inspire mutual and empowering learning relationships among mentors and learners.



We suggest that successful arts and technology integration programs should not be fully dependent on state of the art technology, but focus instead on learning activities are structured by student engagement and mentorship. GIFTS, as a free space, represents a learning environment that develops cooperative and collaborative peer learning so that participatory engagement fosters a sense of belonging and accomplishment.

Seeing Learners both as Agents of Change Personally and Professionally

The structure and location of GIFTS help to promote digital media as a pedagogical means for youth to become aware of their strengths, construct new identities, and develop their potential. Unlike territorially-bound communities where people know each other, learners at GIFTS, during the process of making films, come to know each other through collective interests and quickly build new relationships and identities. These new identities may differ from who they are outside the island and become shaped by an autonomous, self-directed GIFTS learning experiences. We observed that such experiences encourage urban youth to see themselves as agents of change in their own communities and to develop a greater degree of self-agency in the pursuit of professional goals. Agency is defined as a freedom to act from an understanding that youth are depended upon and can have an effect not only on their peers, but on the working environment, the mentors and the final product. It is a sense that what they do matters, not only to themselves but to each other. For example, a First Nations young man took his GIFTS experience back to his community, where he has served as a youth leader to teach other youth filmmaking. An Aboriginal student who was not successful in a typical school environment achieved success in GIFTS' programs and returned a number of times. In addition, many alumni return as interns and mentors, forming an interest-driven network in which they share common experiences and give back to GIFTS as a community of educators.



Participants at GIFTS expressed positive comments on mentors' openness to their ideas and working styles and on the realizations that the constraint of time created a place where they had a sense of ownership and control over their creative productions. We observed that media arts practice at GIFTS encourages youth to recognize the correlation between learners and settings and to develop a sense of agency through their learning experiences.

Final Thoughts

In a discussion about values of lifelong learning, Heath (2001) suggests the need for attention to examine community organizations as a "third arena of learning" (p. 10) that takes place beyond family and school. A community-based media arts program like GIFTS responds to this need and presents pedagogical insights that can offer urban youth an alternate to cultivate creative and social engagement. Narratives from GIFTS indicate that youth learned more than merely how to negotiate filmmaking processes informed by professional practice; they had an opportunity to create new working relationships and to advance their evolving self-identities.

Current and former GIFTS' participants valued learning space where social interaction and dynamic relationships occurred along with their filmmaking experiences. This participation should not be viewed as an exotic island experience for urban youth; it represented conditions that allow cultivation of a free space where learners were transformed from passive receivers to active advocates for learning. It enabled a dialogue between communities of educators in media arts programs across geographical locations, and an approach for urban youth to study filmmaking processes in an unfamiliar context that facilitated their individual and collective exploration and knowledge construction.

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Acknowledgement

We would like to thank the editor, reviewers, and Dr. Enid Zimmerman for their constructive comments that helped to improve the manuscript. In addition, we gratefully acknowledge financial support of this research through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Grant (Kit Grauer, principal investigator). This article is part of this larger study, and it brings forward another dimension related to work already in print.

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International Journal of Education & the Arts

Editors

Margaret Macintyre Latta
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, U.S.A.

Christine Marmé Thompson
Pennsylvania State University, U.S.A.

<http://www.ijea.org/>

ISSN 1529-8094

Volume 12 Special Issue 1.9

June 30, 2011

Arts & Learning Research Journal Special Issue

Performing an Archive of Resistance: Challenging Normative Life Narratives through Literary Reading and Memoir Writing Research

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Citation: Robson, C., Sumara, D. & Luce-Kapler, R. (2011). Performing an archive of resistance: Challenging normative life narratives through literary reading and memoir writing research. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 12(SI 1.9). Retrieved [date] from <http://www.ijea.org/v12si1/>.

Abstract

This research explores the ways in which normative structures organize experiences and representations of identities. It reports on two groups, one in which the members identified as rural and heterosexual and the other as urban and lesbian. Both participated in literary reading and response practices organized by a literary anthropological research methodology (Iser, 1993; Luce-Kapler, 2004). Informed by research in literary theory and consciousness studies, the paper suggests that fictional

identifications influence the development of human consciousness and the narration of stories, and that “close reading” (Gallop, 2000) and effortful practice (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2008) help us to reconsider “normative” identity narratives through identifications with literary characters and through writing practices that require us to shift our perspectives.

Introduction

“Reasonable modesty has hitherto set the limits of female talent...none have ever trampled upon all prudence in the attempt to emerge beyond the given world” (de Beauvoir, 1961, p. 667)

De Beauvoir neatly describes the way in which women have conspired in the construction of the very cultural narratives that have constrained them; at the same time, she gestures toward the possibility, at least, of agency in the deconstruction of these narratives – a project undertaken through the imprudent (and impudent) acts of feminism that followed her pioneering work. Working with Foucault, McLaren (2002, p. 146) has identified two “technologies of the self” that women have used in these endeavors: consciousness raising groups and self-writing. Here, we examine research that engaged two groups of women in similar processes, in order that they might reconsider their experiences of cultural identity.

One group was composed of heterosexual women from rural Alberta, all of whom were married or widowed. The other was a group of urban lesbian women from the east side of Vancouver. Though the women’s worldviews, situations, and experiences were in some ways quite different (both between and within the groups), their discussions and literary productions share important commonalities. In this paper, we consider one such commonality – the use of reading and writing practices by the women to consider the domestic structures they inhabited (and may still inhabit).

Research Questions

The reported research was guided by three questions:

- 1) How do identifications with literary and other fictions influence the personal and cultural stories people remember and report about their experiences of consciousness?
- 2) What happens to personal remembered experiences when normalized stories of personal and cultural identity are re-presented through literary fictional forms?
- 3) Can changing one’s fictional identifications change one’s remembered history and, if so, how do these changes influence one’s sense of presently-lived identity?

Theoretical Framework

Considerable work in the area of reader response theory has been conducted in the field of literacy education. Principally inspired by Rosenblatt's (1938, 1978) theorizing of the importance of the relationship between reader and text, reader response researchers have endeavored to study the *experience* of reading, rather than focusing only on the qualities of texts, the conditions of reading, or the biographies of writers and/or readers. Work in this area has included phenomenological (Luce-Kapler, 2004; Luce-Kapler, Catlin, & Kocher, 2008; Sumara, 2002), psychoanalytic (Salvio, 2007), social constructionist (Beach & Myers, 2001), and critical studies (Lewis, 2000). While these studies differ in emphases, they share an interest in learning about the complex relations of reader/text/context, particularly experiences identified as "literary" or "imaginative" or "fictional." Absent from most accounts of reader response, however, is an explicit examination of the role that human consciousness plays in all acts of perception and learning. In most of the published research in reader-response theory, 'consciousness' appears as the assumed backdrop of theoretical approaches to reading. Only in psychoanalytic approaches is there any mention of consciousness, and then usually only in the Freudian theories of the relationship between interpretation and the unconscious.

When it comes to writing, there is a large body of commentary on the act and purpose of composition, conducted in the field by practicing writers (Dillard, 1990; Shields, 2002; Winterson, 1995) who suggest, among other things, that as we write, we can both experience and communicate some of the subtleties of our own experiences and the experiences of others. Curriculum theorists (Butt, 1983; Davies & Gannon, 2006; Grumet, 1988; Miller, 2005; Pinar, 2004) and philosophers (Denzin, 1994, 2000; Gadamer, 1989; Merleau-Ponty, 2007) have also investigated autobiographical methods such as narrative inquiry, phenomenological representations, and collective biography, considering them as tools in the understanding of self and culture, even in poststructural times. However, this work has focused mainly upon scholarly and academic writing rather than fiction and creative nonfiction. It has thus overlooked the role of devices such as form and genre, analogous processes such as imagery, and those other aids and obstacles to the act of composition that are generally held to be the province of the field of creative writing. Here again, a close examination of these matters in terms of their relationship to learning takes us into the study of consciousness (Juarrero, 1999; Lakoff, 1989; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999; Zunshine, 2006), memory (Baxter, 2004; Felman & Laub, 1992; Freeman, 2003) and psychoanalytic theory, with its rich material on association, interpretation, and resistance (Britzman, 2006; Freud, 1999, 2006; Pitt & Britzman, 2003).

In earlier work, we drew on research from neuroscience (Donald, 2001; Johnson, 2004) in which it is argued that the mind is not, as commonly believed, organized only by the individual human brain, but rather that it is a hybrid byproduct of the complex interweaving of the biological brain with the largely invisible cultural symbolic web. This ongoing adaptive

relationship between the biological brain and the various technologies and systems of culture create what Donald calls a “distributed cognitive network” (2001, p. 154). From this perspective, the mind is not so much located in the brain but exists more fluidly and ambiguously in the complex relations of the human biological body and the human-built and more-than-human world (Abram, 1996).

This understanding of what constitutes “mind” implies a theory of consciousness that does not conflate it with perception, knowledge, or experiences of self-identity. Instead, consciousness is conceptualized as what Cohen and Stewart (1997, p. 63) describe as phenomena that arise “when two or more complex systems interact in a kind of mutual feedback that changes them both, leading to behavior that is not present in either system on its own.” This theory not only explains the biological manifestation of conscious experience, but also the human desire to understand why consciousness ‘feels’ the way that it does and how these feelings are both individual and social/cultural phenomena. From this perspective, consciousness can be understood as an experience that is embodied at various levels, including the human physiological, the socio/cultural, and the environmental. Consciousness then is not pre-given, nor is it biologically or culturally determined, but instead is an ongoing emergent property of the relations of all of these.

These new theoretical perspectives of consciousness have implications for the field of literary theory, specifically for the field of autobiographical methods in the curriculum, and for the fields of literacy education and curriculum studies more generally. Rather than assuming consciousness as correspondent with the human brain/mind, consciousness is understood as both participating in acts of reading, writing, and response and, at the same time, as being altered/transformed by them (Lewis, 2000). It can thus be argued that acts of literary engagement or fictionalizing influence the ongoing development of human consciousness and subjectivity.

The researchers specifically chose to work with senior women as participants because they have a long life history. Their significant experience with acts of fictionalizing widened the potential for richer phenomenological data in our investigation of the relationship between consciousness and such fictionalizing. Furthermore, they are women who have lived through challenging historical events (including World War II, the rise of feminism, and the advancement of gay and lesbian issues) where notions of “women,” “sexuality,” and “subjectivity” have been extensively challenged, debated and interpreted (Stein, 1997). Through literary anthropological work (Sumara, 2003) and through reading and writing practices (Robson, 2010; Sumara, 2002; Sumara, Davis, Filax, & Walsh, 2006), this study explored the role of literary engagement in understanding human consciousness.

Methodology

Adapted by Sumara from Iser's (1993) phenomenological studies of literary engagement, literary anthropology aims to use literary identifications and interpretations as sites to collect and subject to critical analysis the emergence of personal and public experiences and expressions of identity. In this study, literary identifications were mediated by critical readings of and oral and written responses to contemporary fiction and memoir. The texts studied included *Unless* (Shields, 2002) and *Vertigo* (DeSalvo, 1996), which were read and extensively discussed by both groups. As the work progressed, each group branched out to include other works. The women in Alberta studied, among other things, poetry by Lorna Crozier, *Stone Angel* by Margaret Laurence (2004), and artifacts such as photographic representations of women in various situations. The women in Vancouver studied some additional texts written by and about gays and lesbians (Brown, 1977; Hall, 1928; White, 2000), as well as essays and articles on the topic of home and exile (Aciman, 1999; Bryson, 2006). Individual and collective responses were then reformulated into memoir, epistolary, and creative fiction forms. Through the development of specific reading and writing practices, participants generated data that represent the complex ways that different "bodies of knowledge" can co-exist to produce the ongoing experience of remembered, currently lived, and projected consciousness. Here we present two short examples to represent some of our findings.

Edith: "I'm Going to Be a God Damn Woman!"

Edith was one of the quieter members of the Alberta group. Though the transcripts are punctuated by her brief, supportive comments on what others had to say (remarks such as "Is that right?" or "You don't say!"), she was the most reserved member of the group as far as lengthier comments and analyses were concerned. However, we did locate one thread of conversation that generated some quite visceral responses from Edith. It was that very issue raised by De Beauvoir in the opening quotation – the limits of female talent as they have been defined in the 'known world', and as Edith has experienced them.

Edith raised this issue early in the group's work together and in response to a poem by Lorna Crozier (2005). The poem is a feminist revision of the creation myth and comprises a dramatic monologue from 'The First Woman' or Lilith, Eve's twin (and predecessor by a narrow margin). Demonic and difficult, Lilith immediately begins to argue with God about the subservient role he has assigned her. Crozier (2005) recreates the consequences:

...I wouldn't lie placid
as a hooked and fatty fish under Adam,
my wings pinned back. For punishment
God banished me and turned my sister into bone,
honed away everything she'd been
when we lay together among stars.

Luce-Kapler (who was co-facilitating the group with Sumara) read the poem without preamble, comment or exegesis and invited the group to share their immediate responses. Somewhat unusually, Edith was the first to speak (October 30, 2007, Transcripts, p. 2).

Edith: I liked how she put this here, "the hooked and fatty fish under Adam".
Rebecca: What do you like about it Edith?
Edith: ...I don't think a woman is really that curvy, maybe ... or can be fitted under a man...maybe I'm more rebel too, my wings pinned back. I think you should be given your freedom... I think if you're married or you're a partner or whatever, I think when they try to take away your freedom - I don't think it's fair!

Edith identified immediately with Eve's sister's refusal to conform to societal standards such as those around physical appearance ("I don't think a woman is really that curvy") and gender expectations ("or can be fitted under a man"). Her succinct interpretation goes to the heart of the poem and mirrors the responses of many feminists who have adopted Lilith as a symbol of female insurrection ("Lilith," 2010).

In later discussions, Edith expanded upon these initial insights and began to relate them more closely to her own life and experiences. Again, the discussion was prompted by the readings conducted in the group and organized by structured exercises. In October 2008, the women were asked to choose passages from Louise DeSalvo's (1996) autobiographical novel *Vertigo* that had particularly caught their attention. Edith chose to return to the issue of women surviving difficult and unfair situations, citing DeSalvo's (p. 165) description of her embattled mother, who worried constantly and felt "homeless all her life." Later in the discussion (Edith, October 30, 2008, Transcripts, p. 19) the women are invited to share anything the chosen passages reminded them of about their own life journeys. Edith used this opportunity to explore the domestic structures she had inhabited as a girl:

- Edith: My mom ... had the two kids at home that were crippled, and ...it was diapers until they died, and she'd carry them to the table and feed them at the table...[and] she used to take all her anger out on me. I knew what was going on because I was the oldest ...I said, "Okay mom. I'll take it because you are so imprisoned, so jailed with these two kids that I will take your rash - whatever you're going to give me.
- Bernice: Well Edith, I think you had a lot of insight for a young woman to understand that and to compensate for your mother.
- Anna: You were thinking about how can I read and get the hell out of here!
- Edith: No I couldn't. I understood her, you know, but sometimes it took a lot to love her for the things she'd say to you. It was just she was tired. Like I said, you had to pack water to wash clothes, you know, and that was all there too. Every day.

Here, Edith communicated her understanding of a complex situation, juxtaposing her compassion for her mother's lot (described unequivocally as "jailed and imprisoned") and her conviction that as oldest daughter, it was her duty to share her mother's burden and become the passive recipient of her rage. In an act of quiet resignation, Edith accepts her mother's "rash" – described here so strikingly as ugly, painful, contagious, and in Edith's case, enduring. As she tells it, even when Edith left her demanding family home to marry at 17, she encountered onerous responsibilities (including the counseling and care of her husband's siblings), worked hard, and made compromises that included "pulling men out of mud holes...and patting them on the back" (Edith, May 30, 2007, Transcripts, p. 13).

Edith used both the texts and the group as a commonplace to recall the situations she inhabited as a child and young bride. As she considered the stories of the women represented, she began to remember more and more of her own life stories and described them in ways that become increasingly literary. In his essay on screen memories, Freud (2006, pp. 541-560) describes such memories as "isolated recollections, often of questionable or perplexing significance" and has much to say (p. 545) about the psychic potential of the images they generate, in which "inessential components of an experience stand in for the essential, or the replacement of what is repressed by something in its (spatial or temporal) vicinity". In one meeting, Edith struggled to find the metaphor that would describe her situation most exactly, and was helped out by the group:

Edith: ...when you do marry like I found ...I had to learn a whole new way of living...and you lose yourself...You take on a lot of their customs and [you say] "Well where did mine go?" It's...one of these fellas that go along and change [their] colours as [they] go around ... what is it?

Bernice: Chameleon?

Edith: Chameleon!

In October 2009, Robson and Luce-Kapler visited the group as they met for the final time, in order to celebrate their work together and to record any final insights they might wish to share. Edith (October, 2009, Transcripts, p. 3) immediately brought the conversation back to the topic of female insurrection by referencing the dramatic monologues they had written about their own anger and rage in imitation of Lilith's rant. "We had a unity just by being females," she began. "I remember the crazy pieces we wrote about ranting [that] brought the nature of the beast out of all of us." Robson followed up on this line of thought by sharing the Vancouver group's anger at the ending of *The Well of Loneliness* (Hall, 1928), in which the self-sacrificing lesbian protagonist deliberately drives her lover into the arms of a man who she believes can offer a better life:

Claire: You get to the end and you're like, 'I'm damned!' You know? "I'm screwed! What a disappointment!' You know? 'I'm never going to find happiness!'"

Edith: 'Is that all there is?'

Claire: 'Is that all there is?' Is the noble thing just to pretend that you're not gay and get over it?

Edith: Oh my goodness. I remember when I was 13 and I went down into the sheep pasture and climbed up into this old favorite tree of mine. And I was thinking 'I'm going to be 13, and I've got to grow up and be a stupid woman and wear a dress'.

Claire: Really?

Edith: Yeah.

Claire: Well 13 is when it hits you isn't it really?

Edith: 'I've got to be this stupid woman!'

A lengthy discussion followed, and at the end of it, Edith and Anna quietly summed things up between them:

Edith: I was very depressed.

Anna: 'I'm going to be a god damned woman!'

This incident provides a useful instance of a screen memory, one of those isolated memories that is trivial on the face of things (a girl climbs a tree), but which stands in for something psychically significant. In this case, at least in our interpretation, it represents Edith's reluctance as an adolescent, to embrace her role as a woman. Its significance is heightened, in our opinion, by the fact that Edith offers it as a culminating comment on the work she completed in the group. Had the group continued its work together, it would have been interesting to reread Crozier (2005), to see what the women made of *The Well of Loneliness*, to write more 'rants' - perhaps fictionalized ones from other points of view (say Edith's mother). The moment in the tree that Edith identifies as a moment of insight would provide an excellent starting point for her to begin writing her own memoir. It is to these writing processes that we turn next.

Both groups used literary practices to identify stories or memories that helped them to perceive and examine the family structures and normative gender narratives they inhabited. The Vancouver group, working on a regular basis with Robson, a writing coach, used the processes of writing and revising to explore some of these stories further. Three main strategies were used.

Firstly, we invited the women to pay close attention to any imagery that emerged from their writing. As many commentators, particularly Freud (1999, 2006), have suggested, such images are generated by unconscious associative processes that may elude our attempts to repress them. Secondly, we attempted to constantly unsettle fixed positions and assumptions by a variety of methods, including moving between activities (such as reading the texts and writing responses to them), writing within enabling constraints (Davis et al., 2008) such as form and genre, and writing about transitional objects, such as artifacts, settings, and landscapes, instead of addressing emotional issues head on. One of the most successful strategies we found in the second category was to encourage the women to shift points of view. Thirdly, we constantly used the texts as models and exemplars of this work, pointing out the techniques professional writers employ. Again, we have chosen to represent this part of our research through the work of one woman.

Chris: "The Last One Standing"

Unlike Edith, who lived in one place for most of her life, Chris became nomadic in her late teens, migrating from England to Vancouver via a number of different homes and locations. Instead of living within the structure of a stable marriage and family (again unlike Edith), she divorced her husband early in life to become a lesbian, and has had a number of relationships since. Despite these differences, Chris shares some important commonalities with Edith. She is also one of the quieter

members of her group, and she too felt imprisoned at an early age, both by her mother's oppressive rules and by societal expectations based on her gender.

Like Edith, Chris used the texts available to her group to explore these childhood experiences of family restraints and gender constructs. She (September 14, 2007, Transcripts, p. 6) told the group at their first meeting that reading had been crucial to constructing and sustaining a sense of identity since childhood: "It was my survival when I was a kid. If you don't have other kids to play with, or you want to escape your parents, it's this secret place." Like Edith, Chris (ibid) made use of *Vertigo* (DeSalvo, 1996, p. 6) to better understand her own relationship with her parents, especially her mother, identifying the following passage as one which prompted insight

Talking about books verifies, for me, that the feelings I have struggled with alone in the solitary space of my private suffering are shared by other people, and that I am powerful enough and resilient enough to withstand hardship, and hardy enough to endure and prevail. That I have already endured, already prevailed.

Here is Chris's (ibid) analysis of the text, and the connection she is able to make with her own childhood:

Chris: I'm looking at page 6 of *Vertigo* and Louise is talking of this strong sense of survival, and that's the reason I read when I was a kid - because I was a victim of the same thing - that I think they call emotional abuse.

Many of the life stories Chris wrote early in the next two years reinforced this original perception of herself as victim of abuse, concentrating on times that she had felt under attack, neglected, and rendered powerless. As the work progressed, however, Chris began to write stories that suggested moments of agency, however fleeting – walking down the village street in a cowboy suit, visiting a kindly aunt, or listening to Dvorak for the first time. Like Edith, Chris enjoyed expressing the anger she felt about the unfairness of the female role, but she also began to see her story differently:

It feels like I have changed a bit and changed my story. I had thought that my childhood was a long continuum of impositions that I had to tolerate. I now see my childhood in terms of a struggle and eventual emergence from an oppressive household. (Chris, November 14th, 2008, Transcripts, p. 40)

Chris remained extremely angry with her mother as an adult and wrote a number of difficult and bitter stories about her in her time in the group. On a number of occasions, Robson, thinking with Zunshine (2006) that fictional representations offer us the opportunity to 'read the minds' of others, suggested that she adopt her mother's perspective, just to see what would happen if she tried to recreate her point of view. She also suggested that it would be difficult, but perhaps informative, to

describe herself (Chris) as she thought her mother might have seen her. Chris was quite resistant to the notion for a long time, saying that she wanted to try the exercise but was not yet ready. She completed it quite suddenly, in the final stages of the project:

I don't know why people never listen to me. I tell them all about my pain and illness and it seems to put people off. I have no close friends. Esther was my great friend. We worked together in the war but she died a little while ago very suddenly – a brain aneurysm. Chris isn't what I hoped for. I thought we'd be great friends, but we don't get on. That kid has fought me every day of her life it seems. She's got an insolent look. I can read the feelings on her face, but it doesn't give me any comfort (April 17, 2009, Transcripts pp. 27-28).

In the discussion that followed the reading of this piece, Chris homed in on her mother's relationship with Esther, realizing the extent of her mother's grief at the loss of her friend and the way in which it changed her life. When Esther died, "the stuffing went out of my mother," Chris (*ibid*) told the group – "she went downhill further faster" and she (Chris) "bore all the pain and frustration of what she was suffering." Like Edith, she 'took her mother's rash'.

She picks up on this insight in a later piece of writing about her mother's death and burial, exploring a recurring image in her work – money – in this case the bags of coins she had been counting when she heard that her mother had died:

I hadn't felt any remorse until I saw the coffin, and suddenly my eyes were full of tears. "What a total waste," I thought. But of what? Of time, or effort, or of strong feeling? Like anger? Later, standing in the bitter wind and snow, watching the coffin go into the ground, I thought, "Thank god that's over! I can get on with the rest of my life!"

I considered the significance of the bags of coin. Were they the weight of my conscience?

No. They were the weight of my un-forgiveness, and it took another thirty years to let them go.

Both Edith and Chris commented upon the ways in which the processes of reading and writing helped them to move 'beyond' painful memories. Chris (May 6, 2009, Transcripts, p. 3) references the usefulness of DeSalvo as a model in this regard:

[Reading DeSalvo] showed me a way to write about that kind of experience. And as I'm tackling all the pieces around my memoir, I'm writing about very emotional stuff. And I'm connected to it, but I now somehow feel that I can see a way forward through it. I'm not going to be entrapped in it anymore...it's not going to be sticking to me.

Two of the women in the Albertan group (Marion & Elsie, January 22, 2008, p. 36) identified the same central paradox – the memories can be at once released and retained in the act of recalling them:

Marion: But in the letting go ...

Elsie: The pain is gone.

Marion: But you still have the memories.

Edith (ibid) joins their conversation with a perfect 'bon mot':

Edith: Oh yes the memories are still there but they're not tied up in knots.

Conclusion

Identification practices and narrative representations make evident the intersections between various nested bodies (bodies of knowledge, practices, individuals, literary collectives, social and cultural histories). As work in complexity science (Cilliers, 1998; Davis & Sumara, 2006; Sumara et al., 2006) has shown, these various “bodies” are engaged in ongoing recursive processes of transformation. This study has the potential to show how everyday practices of fictionalizing and narrating influence the trajectory of self and cultural learning. As well, the study will make more evident how seemingly fixed remembered identity narratives can be transformed through close reading, responding, and activities of transposing genre. While it is too early in the study to provide more definitive statements, it seems likely that results from this research will be useful to those literacy educators who are interested in learning more about how everyday fictional practices can enhance learning opportunities in planned pedagogical settings. Questions that might guide some practical applications of this research include the following: If we consider the embodied self a situation (de Beauvoir, 1961), how do we change it? And when? How can curriculum encourage effortful literary practices that create opportunities to alter personal, social, and cultural bodies of knowledge?

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International Journal of Education & the Arts

Editors

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<http://www.ijea.org/>

ISSN 1529-8094

Volume 12 Special Issue 1.10

June 30, 2011

Arts & Learning Research Journal Special Issue

Researcher and Teacher-Participant Found Poetry: Collaboration in Poetic Transcription

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Citation: Burdick, M. (2011). Researcher and teacher-participant found poetry: Collaboration in poetic transcription. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 12(SI 1.10). Retrieved [date] from <http://www.ijea.org/v12si1/>.

Abstract

Different ways of writing and seeing can jointly provide a more multidimensional discussion of inquiry in education. This paper, which reports on findings of a qualitative study focused on action research with practicing teachers, describes and analyzes the ways poetic transcription of interview texts by both researcher and participant can provide a more collaborative analysis of interview data, resulting in a multifaceted reflection of teacher practice. Two teacher-participants, after being interviewed, created found poetry from their individual interview transcripts. The researcher did the same. Each set of found poems were then compared and synthesized to better distill metaphor, theme and narrative positioning from the original interview data.

Introduction

Both qualitative researchers and theorists in composition have done substantial work describing the connection between written form and meaning (Bishop, 1999; Elbow, 1991, 2000; Ellis & Bochner, 1996; Friedrich, Malarky, et al., 2005; Gulla, 2003; Murray, 1978; Richardson, 2003). As written form changes, meaning subtly shifts. Following this understanding, teachers would be well advised to write in varying genres to more thoroughly reflect upon and understand their practice, and qualitative researchers might discover the potentials of using arts-based methods in the form of varying genres to better understand and analyze their research data. Different ways of writing and seeing can jointly provide a more multidimensional discussion of inquiry in education. This paper, which reports on findings of a qualitative study focused on action research with practicing teachers, will discuss the ways poetic transcription of interview texts by both researcher and participant can provide a more collaborative analysis of interview data, resulting in a multifaceted reflection of teacher practice.

The method explored in this paper resonates with Eliot Eisner's 1981 article, published in *Educational Researcher*, which described the differences between scientific and artistic approaches to qualitative research. In this article, Eisner states that artistic forms are "closer to a hermeneutic activity than a technical one" (p.8). This paper, which poetically analyzes interview transcripts regarding the experiences of teachers, delves into spiraling issues of interpretation: interpreting the transcripts of interviews, interpreting experience depicted in those interviews, and interpreting observations as a participant-observer in this group. The layered relationships of meaning and interpretation demand a more hermeneutic inquiry. A technical one may in fact only uncover one layer of this spiral. Eisner further states, "Artistically oriented research acknowledges what already exists and instead of presenting a façade of objectivity, exploits the potential of selectivity and emphasis to say what needs saying as the investigator sees it" (p.8).

Complicating Eisner's discussion, this paper attempts to create a more collaborative approach to qualitative interviewing. Kakali Bhattacharya used found poetry to represent her research participants, and suggested her primary reason for doing so was in response to the many deconstructive arguments regarding how participants are represented and voiced through "academic filters" (Bhattacharya, 2008). Other qualitative researchers rejecting positivist approaches to interviewing have also created new models (Ellis & Berger, 2003; Ellis & Bochner, 1996; Rubin & Rubin 2005; Scheurich, 1997) that focus on conversation and collaboration. This study also rejects many of the positivist assumptions and power delineations of researcher and participant, and looks to complicate both the creation and the analysis of interview transcript data.

Found poetry is a particular form that can be especially helpful to researchers as a way to re-see a static data-driven text. Monica Prendergast describes found poetry as “the imaginative appropriation and reconstruction of already existing texts” (2006). A found poem is created by selecting words and phrases from an original text, then re-arranging these words to create a poem that represents the meaning of the original text anew.

The following three questions guided the study:

1. How do teacher research participants reframe their interview transcripts through found poetry?
2. How do researchers’ and participants’ found poetry compare thematically, stylistically, and representationally?
3. How can tandem found poetry be useful for teachers and researchers to collaboratively analyze and represent information in static research texts (interview transcripts, observational notes, etc.)?

Theoretical Perspectives

Found poetry has been used in numerous ways in qualitative research, both to formally present research process and findings, and through its use as another form of methodology and re-visioning a research text. Found poems have re-presented a literature review (Prendergast, 2006), interview transcripts (Bhattacharya, 2008; Cahnmann, 2003; Glesne, 1997) and observational field notes (Kusserow, 2008; Piirto, 2002). Described as “interim research texts,” researchers have used found poetry as a text that comes between the field texts and the final research reporting (Clandinin, et al., 2006). Several researchers caution that writing good poetry is different from using “poetic methods” or in Glesne’s term, “poetic transcriptions,” because poetry requires a thorough understanding and in some views, training in this particular art form (Cahnmann, 2003; Piirto, 2002).

However, the use of poetic methods is a way to use the insight, compression and symbols of this genre in ways that allow a new understanding of a research text (Cahnmann, 2003; Glesne, 1997; Piirto, 2002). This makes found poetry a particularly helpful way to re-see an interview transcript. Glesne (1997) uses poetic transcription (found poems from participant’s interview transcript) to re-present 10 hours of interview transcripts with one participant. Bhattacharya (2008) combines words from the transcripts of several participants’ interviews to synthesize and distill the experiences of Indian women attending American graduate school. Each researcher has described a careful process of working through interview transcriptions, and coding the texts in a way that collects themes and condenses meaning to

then re-examine or re-present the interview in a found poem. Their work informs this study which moves a step further, inviting teacher-researcher-participants to create their own poetic transcription, and then comparing the results to the researcher's poems.

Poetry as a form is not only a different way of writing, it is a different way of presenting and viewing the world: metaphorically, symbolically and in a condensed form. These effects allow a stronger impressionistic meaning for the reader or listener. Usually in poetry, hefty ideas are represented through relatively few words (Baumgaertner, 1990; Cohen, 2009; Richardson, 2003). Seurich (1997) problematizes the interview process by describing how language is contextually grounded and how interview relationships are inherently power-relationships in which the interviewer has the opportunity to colonize the participant's voice and language through the questions asked and through the process of data analysis. Comparing transcription to photography, Mishler (2003) also points out how formatting and structural changes of transcriptions can subtly change the meaning and focus of these texts, and one's transcript should reflect one's theoretical stance. In these ways, interviewers must not only acknowledge, but also design their textual representation since this stance influences the interview process from start to finish. By including the participant in much of the process, the hope is to minimize some of these complications. Including found poetry in the transcription analysis encourages a condensed and metaphorical representation of text.

Inquiry Methods

The two participants discussed in this paper are classroom teachers and colleagues in an action research group. Observations were conducted over nine months during seven 90-minute action research meetings. The two teachers participated in 20-minute interviews regarding their experiences with action research. I used the following five prompts to elicit information from the participants during the interviews. My hope was to use fairly open-ended questions and prompts in order to allow participants to tell stories, provide description, and move the interview into places in which they were particularly interested.

1. Why did you decide to participate in an action research group?
2. Can you tell me the story of an action research project? It could be one you are working on now, or it could be one in the past.
3. How would you describe your action research group?
4. How do you think our group affected your research project?
5. Is there anything else you would like to add or share?

The interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and then transcripts were e-mailed to each participant. Each participant was invited to read through the transcripts and make any revisions she felt were necessary to represent her experience appropriately. These revisions could be the addition or deletion of text. Participant A added several pages of text, which did alter the focus of the transcript to some extent. She also used various fonts and colors in her revisions, making the text her own visually and in meaning. Participant B did not choose to make revisions to her transcript. Following the transcript revision, the participants and researcher created found poems from the transcript. These poems were written and exchanged. Finally, the researcher read through and analyzed the poem pairs, to find similarities and differences in content, figurative language, word choice, style and point of view. Later, two informal interviews allowed participants' analysis of the poems and reflection on the process. Participants also wrote formal reflections on the process. Field notes were taken throughout.

This process is being labeled "tandem found poetry" because two found poems are created separately but at roughly the same time, from the same text, by the interviewer and the participant. Therefore the poems are unified, yet unique, originating from the same text, but created through separate perspectives and writing styles. This tandem found poetry illustrates the researcher's subjectivity/bias by making her poetic interpretation only one piece of the analysis, and gives equal validity to the participant's own poetic self-representation. It not only allows for comparison, it unselfconsciously acknowledges both the connections and the disconnection between the researcher and researched representations. This demonstrates the multiple perspectives held within any research, and also deconstructs the positivist hierarchical assumptions of researcher and researched.

Evidence and Data

The poems were analyzed and coded in pairs focusing on content, figurative language, word choice, style and point of view. Literary analysis was the main mode of examination, and a close reading of literary devices—metaphor, repetition, rhythm, pattern, style and word choice—was performed to better compare and contrast form and meaning in the poems. Direct and lucid connections could be made between the interview transcripts and the found poems when observed as connected data sources, yet the poems in themselves allowed a more metaphorical and nuanced interpretation of meaning that wasn't easily apparent in the transcripts alone.

After the literary analysis of the poems, informal interviews and written reflections by participants were used as further sources of data regarding the meaning and form of each poem set as well as the efficacy of this experience for teacher-participants.

Participant A used a different font for some words when she revised the transcript; I assumed the font difference was to show emphasis for certain words. As I read through and circled phrases, I was aware of this emphasis and her intention that these words were important to her; however, I did not focus my selection only on those words, nor did I leave them out intentionally because of the font/emphasis. Participant B did not request any revisions be made to the interview transcript.

Comparing Poetry – Participant A

Participant A went through several drafts of her poem before settling on one for analysis. Once again, she took this process very seriously, and was conscious about how she was textually representing herself. She said in an e-mail that she was getting “alliteration-ed out” – meaning, she judged that she used too much alliteration in the first draft of her poem, so in her final draft she took out some of this alliteration. As she worked through three separate drafts of her poem, sending me a copy of each one, I refrained from comment, as I didn’t want my response to affect her revisions one way or the other. When I read her final draft, I was immediately struck by the craft and the careful arrangement of words. There was a very careful selection of words from the transcript and a conscious specificity to the ordering of words and lines and stanzas on the page. Following are Participant A’s and my own found poems based upon the interview:

Researcher’s Poem

Heart . . . Inquiry . . . Action

Committed trust, inquiry, sharing
 I felt a connection
 I felt you are open
 Diversity, change, inquiry sharing
 New ways of seeing
 As another’s sounding board
 Springboard
 Audience
 Because I trusted you
 Support one another
 Challenge one another
 As educators and as people.

Shaping my questions in
 This linear process of
 Qualitative and quantitative

Strategies
Working
Pertinent
Not a one size fits all anything
Growth
Learning
Inquiry
I walked away and
Just wanted to carry on
I wanted to mirror
I keep finding challenges
But that's my story.

Information accessing activities
What are the risks involved?
If the thinking by teachers ends there?
The need ends too
Energy level drops
Not getting fed
This influences the process
Unless I'm invited in
So that's different
Revision is virtually shot. Gone.
I'm not finishing?
I'm not doing a good job?
I see from the outside when the
Real challenge is
To get to the heart
In my world
That's my next story.

Participant A's Poem

A New Way of Seeing...
Choice...
Approached with authenticity
Empowered by diversity

Trust...

Built by dialog

Clarified with feedback

Motivation...

Grounded by challenge

Defined by growth

Inquiry...

Shaped by observations,

Impacted by interactions

Reflection...

Affirmed by progress

Committed to action

Revision...

Captured through sharing

Purposed by audience

Presentation...

Modeled by format

Polished with edits

Ownership...

Disseminated with purpose

Celebrated by transformation

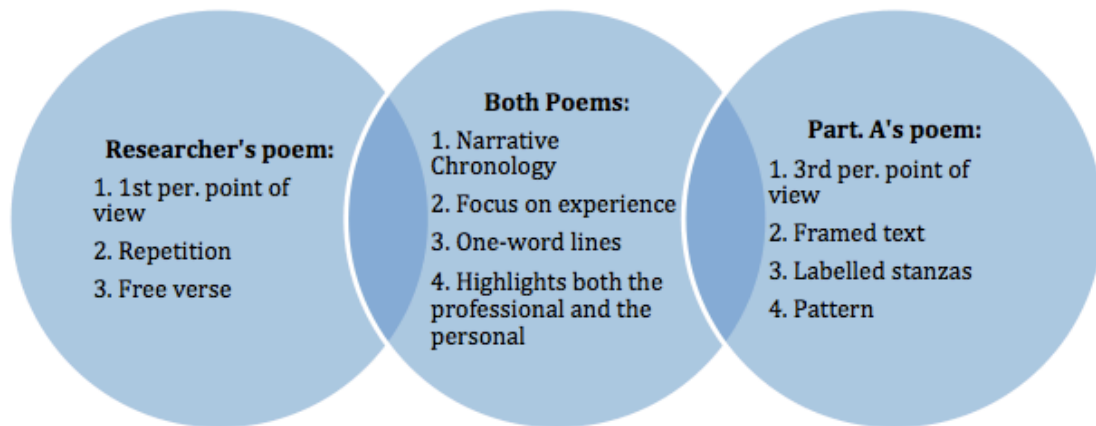
A New Way of Being...

My poem began with a description of more personal experience in the first stanza, using words like *trust*, *support*, and *connection*. The phrase *Challenge one another/as educators and as people*, also portrayed how Participant A placed value on personal relationships within her interview. In the second stanza, the focus is more on the research process, and more academic words are used: *learning*, *inquiry*, *strategies*, *linear process*. Finally, the last stanza of my poem includes many questions, portraying a hopefulness that this process will continue.

Participant A's poem is very patterned. There is a repetitive framing device wherein the entire poem is sandwiched between *A new way of seeing* and *A new way of being*. Within this frame, the eight stanzas portray a linear process of moving from seeing to being. These stanzas, too,

are patterned and repetitive as each opens with a single noun followed by ellipses, and then two lines, made up of three word dependent clauses. The inference here is that the dependent clauses become complete ideas when connected with the stanza's introductory word, as in "Choice is empowered by diversity." To go from *seeing* to *being*, there is a process moving through the action research that combines personal activities, such as: *trust, reflection, ownership, impacted by interaction* with more academic and professional activities such as: *revision, presentation, disseminated with purpose*.

In my poem, I used first person point of view (I, me, my) for the speaker's voice mainly because I wanted to keep it authentic to Participant A and the way she sounded in the interview transcript. She spoke a lot in first person within the interview, and made her discussion of the action research group quite reliant on her own personal experiences and feelings. It is interesting that Participant A chose to write her poem in third person, with some abstracted speaker presenting the process in a seemingly more universal way. I will comment more on point of view in these found poems later.



The similarities and differences in our poems are fascinating. As you can see in fig. 1, we both presented the experience of action research in a chronological way, and in a narrative way – we both showed this experience as a sort of story and a process. The two poems focused more on the experiences than the results. We both used extreme brevity in places, using one-word lines to focus our ideas. And finally, we both portrayed the duality of personal and professional experience while working in an action research group. The differences in our poems—point of view, and the pattern, repetition, framing—are all devices that certainly have an effect on one's reading, but these differences seem to be more stylistic, while there were definite similarities in content and meaning. It seems Participant A and I essentially were able

to pull similar meanings out of the interview text, although we presented them in our own individual styles.

Though I worked very hard to keep Participant A's voice within my found poem, there was one phrase I felt was necessary to include, "I am finished," mainly because she said it in such a strong voice during the interview. However, when I wrote this line on the page, in my poem, it felt too negative, and out of the context of our interview, it did not portray the strength and positive outlook Participant A usually shows. So, I put a question mark at the end of that line, softening it a bit. Participant A noticed my seemingly insignificant change, and after reading my poem, and comparing it to hers, Participant A e-mailed a response to me, stating:

I noticed punctuation added too. A question mark. And while partly ashamed of using that phrase, "I am finished," the "?" added at the end of the line helped me to save face. Thank God for punctuation! A simple placement of a particular mark, changed the expression, the momentum of thought, and shaped the entire message of new beginnings. Possibilities. Desires. An inward, outward shift allowing inquiry to rescue heart and open actions.

Which also tied in well with the last line of your second section and the last line of the entire poem. Those two lines highlight that I have much more to say in "my story" and "my next story." Stories with plots that thicken with how I choose to see what is, and resolve with how I reframe my thoughts. Leaving room for me to craft my own happy ending in any situation, because I've learned how "to be."

I was pleased and also a bit surprised by this passionate response she had to my minute punctuation change. So here, my intuition of who Participant A is, and how she should be portrayed affected the way I used her interview words in poetry, and while the question mark re-presented her voice in a way subtly different from the original interview text, it was still true to who she is and how she sees her work. Her response to that change clarifies that the question mark is a better portrayal of how she envisions herself and how she is comfortable representing herself in writing.

Comparing Poetry – Participant B

While participant A worked through multiple revisions in her transcript and her poem, Participant B did not ask for revisions to the transcript before working through our poetry, and she sent me only one draft of her poem. If she did work through revisions, I did not see them. She e-mailed me the final draft of her poem after sending an e-mail asking if it was OK that she included "a few" words that were not in the transcript. I replied that was fine, and based

that decision on a past writing workshop where I was instructed that found poetry could have a few non-found words as long as the majority text came directly from the original text.

Certainly, Participant B's choice to add words that were not found in her original transcript was a choice I felt she could make for herself, but one I would have felt uncomfortable making. As the researcher, I didn't want to veer from the actual text for my poem's language, as I felt that would somehow make my poem less authentic, or might layer my voice and my intentions to cover or dilute her voice in the poem. I am happy with the results of both poems, and can see how Participant B's additional words (which I have underlined) add to the metaphor that is central to her poem.

*Researcher's Poem***Figuring Seeds**

Once upon a time
There was a teacher
A teacher who said
"I'm planting seeds"
Seeds of love
Seeds of better choices
Seeds of surviving

Trying to figure out
What seeds don't plant?
Seeds of a felony
Seeds of a miscarriage
Seeds of terrible failure

Once upon a time
There was a teacher
A teacher who saw
Several students come back
Come out on the other side
In a precarious pendulum
Trying to make sense of it all.

Actually trying to figure out
What seeds don't plant?
Seeds of test scores
Seeds of objective feedback

Seeds of data

Can you really measure
How many seeds sprout?
A story not ending
Not an actual ending

A giving up . . .
Once upon a time
There was a teacher who
Figured and
Planted seeds.

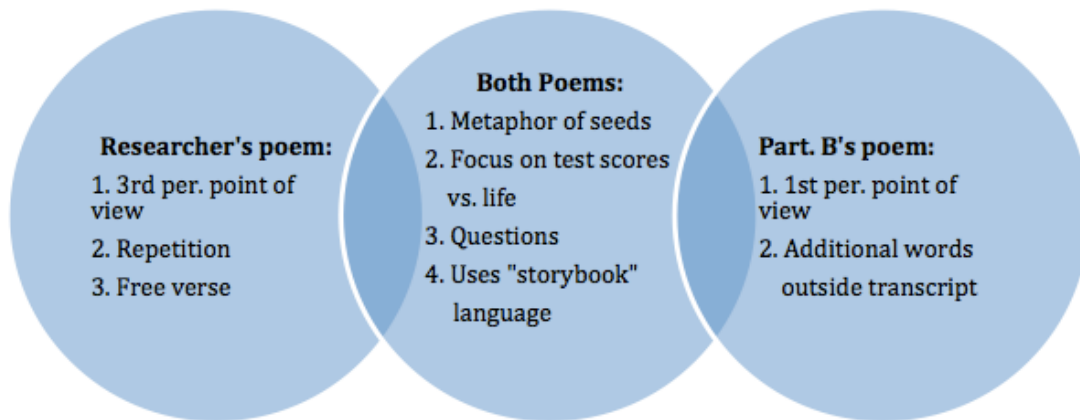
Participant B's Poem

Burpee Research

Active research asks
Questions
Am I effective?
How do I know?
Did it change a life that I was here?
Each student, each teacher
 A different story.
Once upon a time inside
 A teacher
A good little girl wanted to matter
To plant seeds in the students' lives.
What seeds to plant?
Seeds of test scores?
Seeds of college
Seeds of avoiding gangs and drugs and teen pregnancy
Can we really measure seeds sprouting in
 Fertile soil unfolding soft petals
 Into the waiting sun?
What is
The effect
Of me?

Participant B wrote her poem in first person, and begins the poem with the idea of questioning, then actually asking very pointed questions: *Am I effective?/How do I know?/Did it change a life that I was here?* She then moves into the storybook language of *Once upon a time* and *A good little girl*. She portrays the metaphor of planting and growing seeds in her students' lives, using beautiful natural imagery, *Fertile soil unfolding soft petals/Into the waiting sun?* Finally, she ends with one last question, framing the metaphor and storybook language with inquiry. Also within her poem, Participant B describes the idea of multiple stories, or stories within stories, which is an interesting addition to the storybook language of *once upon a time*. She says, *Each student, each teacher/A different story*, and then moves into the storybook language. She uses the metaphor of seeds to contrast what is valued in her school, *Seeds of test scores?/Seeds of college*, and shows the various and sometimes conflicting priorities in a teacher's work.

I too focused upon the metaphor of growing seeds as it seemed a vivid symbol that came out of the interview transcript. I used the metaphor of seeds and growth to portray Participant B's inquiry into what she was nurturing in her students and her conflicting feelings between what the school and district told her to nurture (higher test scores) versus what she felt she must nurture (character, responsibility, a love for learning). I also reflected her fear that there are other influences over which she has no control, such as gangs and poverty. So these ideas were all used in a patterned poem portraying various influences as various seeds. At one point in the interview, when I asked Participant B to tell me the story of one of her research projects, she said "Once upon a time there was a teacher . . ." and I picked up on that phrase and used it at the beginning of my poem. Because Participant B used this third person point of view when talking about her own experiences, I suppose I felt comfortable using third person in this poem, whereas that would have felt invalid if I had used it in Participant A's poem. I repeated the phrase "Once upon a time there was a teacher" throughout the poem, adding a storybook tone to the poem. I also used the words *figure* and *figuring* to describe the research that Participant B did. That word was used frequently in the transcript, and seemed to fit better than the words *inquiry* or *research*.



It is not surprising that we both chose to focus on the metaphor of planting seeds since that metaphor came across so prominently in the interview transcript. I can see how Participant B's added words were selected and included to help her create a stronger metaphor. I on the other hand used repetition to try to create that same metaphor. We also both depended on the storybook language that was a small part of the interview, but somehow seemed to lighten, or add irony to the very serious and at times even sinister ideas that were brought out in the interview. We both included questions, and the conflicting values within teachers' work. The differences in our poems were once again more stylistic or based on format and organization. While Participant B used first person point of view and used outside words to extend her metaphor, I used third person point of view and used repetition to create the metaphor. We both pulled similar content from the interview to use in our poetry – we used the metaphor of seeds, we illustrated the conflict of looking at test scores versus students' personal needs, and we brought out the idea of questioning and inquiry as central to Participant B's experience in action research.

Conclusions

When comparing the analysis between participants' and researcher's poems, there were striking similarities in the choice and use of metaphor, word choice and narrative positioning. Pertinent images, metaphors and content were common across each set of tandem poems. Specifically, the following examples portray connections found between pairs of researcher and participant poems:

- *Common Metaphors and Themes:* One pair of poems centered on the exact same metaphor of gardening to describe the participant's experience. This metaphor was

extended in each poem (by researcher and participant) using symbols of seeds, dormancy and growth to portray the participant's inquiry process. This created a unique and collaborative interpretation of experience.

- *Similar Word Choice*: One pair of poems used storybook language to represent the experience of the teacher, even though this sort of phrasing was not used throughout the interview. This tonal quality present in both poems portrayed a disconnection between the reality and fantasy of expectations in the participant's practice. Another set of poems used mainly process words to portray a chronology of inquiry, expressing that the participant's experience was dynamic and linear.
- *Related Narrative Positioning*: Another set used questions, and the stance of questioner, to portray the transcribed experience, though the actual transcript was not unusually filled with questions. This use of interrogatory over imperative sentences portrayed a tone of uncertainty and flux.

The main differences in poems were superficial, and depended upon each writer's own structural decisions regarding how the words were organized on the page, and how lines, words and stanzas were presented. This seems to suggest that there is a usefulness in this process, as it allows a researcher and participant to collaborate in the distillation of meaning pulled from an interview text. The found poems allowed participants and researcher to collaborate in analysis of the transcript, resulting in an examination of the interviewed experience through commonalities in metaphor, significant word choice and narrative positioning. This allowed for a more synthesized and collaborative analysis, using several texts (the original transcript, researcher's poem, participant's poem) to identify noteworthy themes and content.

Following the process of creating the poems, and my analysis of them, participants and researcher met in person to share the final poems and discuss them. Participant A and I had an in-person conversation about the two poems as well as the process, and she also sent me an e-mail in which she clarified her feelings about the process:

The interview transcript shocked me. I saw fragmented sentences and thoughts trailing from one idea to another. I didn't like what I saw on paper. Text of a yesterday, reflecting me on a new day . . . There is a discrepancy between what I sincerely feel and what I allow myself to say about my experience. There is "me" and there is a way I wish for my interviewer to perceive me. Not just in this interview, but in the very act of any interview . . . Rereading my transcript forced me to be brutally honest with myself about what I'm seeing as my experience. Professionally and personally I am intertwined. The process of looking at my

work is looking at who I am when placed in different environments, under different constraints, some of which are out of my control.

Participant B sent me an e-mail after having read my poem saying, “Both of our poems hit on the metaphor of the teacher's actions like planting seeds and being unable to really know what makes some seeds sprout and not others. I liked how your poem picked up the once upon a time theme, too. I was surprised at how much our poems matched the interview.” She also said she was going to try to do something with found poetry with her students next year. I believe both participants found the research project profitable through the reflection and sharing of their experiences.

This was a very small-scale study, and as some scholars in poetic transcription have pointed out, more material and data collected through the interview process can provide a richer metaphoric portrayal of the data (Pendergast, 2006; Richardson, 2003). Participant B, for example, touched on the metaphor of sowing seeds within her interview transcript, but this metaphor was not fully developed within the transcript itself, so she was compelled to add language that would better develop the metaphor within her poem. Perhaps with a longer interview, and additional material from which to draw, the metaphor would have extended more organically, allowing Participant B to work within a richer array of language. At the same time, I believe this study can show how even a smaller-scaled interview can successfully use this method of analysis. There were still important comparisons to be made, and meanings to be portrayed between poems drawn from a more limited data set.

This process is unique in providing another technique of viewing and analyzing qualitative data. The methodology essentially provides four ways of looking at participant data, through the original interview transcript, through the researcher's creation of a found poem, through the participant's found poem, and finally by analyzing the two found poems side by side. It allowed a deeper and multi-faceted view of what was said in the interview, what was seen in observations, by valuing a different form of writing. Further, it encouraged and provided opportunity for teacher-participant self-reflection and deeper collaboration of data collection and analysis between teacher-participant and researcher.

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