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Songs in Our Hearts: The Affordances and Constraints of an Intergenerational Multimodal Arts Curriculum

Rachel Heydon
The University of Western Ontario, Canada

Susan O'Neill
Simon Fraser University, Canada

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Abstract

This qualitative case study examines the affordances and constraints of an intergenerational multimodal arts curriculum that was designed to expand communication and identity options for children and elder participants. The authors drew on actor-network theory to conceptualize curriculum as a network effect and refer to literature on multimodal literacy to discuss how interests, knowledge, and the modes themselves (e.g., art and singing) influenced communication and identity options in the curriculum. Focusing on singing, the findings indicate that the affordances and constraints of the curriculum were created through a network that included the participants and the materials of communication (e.g., musical instruments). Art and talking supported singing as did the emergent curricular model. The elders had mixed prior experiences and facility with singing, however,

their desire to support the children engaged them in the practice. The curriculum supported symmetrical relationships between participants, and the case adds to the literatures on intergenerational programs, multimodal literacy, arts education, and curriculum.

Introduction

In their book *Telling Pieces*, an educational study of art as literacy, authors Peggy Albers and Sharon Murphy (2000) write,

being human means not only struggling to make sense of our environment and our place in it, but sharing and elaborating on that struggle with others. Human beings strive to make sense of life. We seem to find solace, challenge, pleasure, and sociality in representing our sense-making to others and in considering and interpreting the sense-making of others. (p. 7)

We read in this statement that people yearn to understand themselves in relation to others and their worlds and that *art, sense-making*, or what could be called *literacies*, provide the means to accomplish this. Art can be seen as literacy when one uses the notion of multimodal literacy (Jewitt & Kress, 2003); here, literacy refers to any situated practice where people draw on any number of semiotic *modes* to communicate. Modes are “a regularized, organized set of resources for meaning-making” that can include “image, gaze, gesture, movement, music, speech and sound effects” (Walsh, 2011, p. 1). The modes people use to communicate depend on a number of factors such as what tools are available to them in a given situation (e.g., paint brushes, musical instruments, etc.), their interests, their facility with given modes, and the purposes of their communication. Further, the question of modes, like all literacy-related questions, has implications for people’s *identities*, meaning a way of describing a sense of self that is in practice” (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005, p. 155). Here the practices of concern are multimodal arts practices.

Being able to choose amongst a variety of modes and media to select what is most apt given what one wants to communicate and to whom within the circumstances of the communication (Jewitt & Kress, 2003) requires that people have *communication options*. Some researchers have suggested that literacy options may be greater early in life. Fraser and Gestwicki (2002), for instance, have noted that children have “not yet settled into the fairly narrow range of methods of communication used by the adults around them” (p. 249). Children may be more open than their adult counterparts to experiment with modes and to draw, dance, and sing as their primary modes as they may not yet be language-centric. Heydon’s (2012) comparative study of young children’s and elders’ literacy practices in an intergenerational multimodal arts curriculum in a shared site setting (i.e., where 3, 4, and 5-year-olds shared space and

programming with elders) reinforces Fraser and Gestwiski's notion and illustrates the reciprocal relationship between people's communication options and the possibilities they have for their identity formation or *identity options* (Cummins, 2001). In a bid to identify constituents of intergenerational curricula that can produce expansive opportunities for young children's and elders' communication and identity options, we developed and implemented an intergenerational multimodal curriculum based in singing and art. In this paper, we offer an introduction to this curriculum and consider its affordances and constraints in relation to participants' communication and identity options. In particular, we highlight the relationship between the modes with a particular concern for the practice of singing.

Literature and Context

The study is located within the literatures related to intergenerational learning as well as multimodal literacy pedagogy and curriculum, particularly as they apply to arts-oriented modes.

Intergenerational Learning and Curricula

Geographic dispersal and increased institutional care for children (McCain & Mustard, 1999) and elders (Jarrott & Bruno, 2007) amongst other contemporary demographic trends have reduced intergenerational opportunities that had once been commonly provided in families. Much can be lost when people of different generations are segregated. Children have been found, for example, to develop important communication practices within intergenerational relationships (Gregory, Long, & Volk, 2004). In response to the decline of familial intergenerational opportunities, systematically planned intergenerational programs appeared in North America in the 1960s (Larkin & Newman, 1997). Intergenerational *learning programs* emerged to focus on providing learning opportunities within intergenerational contexts, primarily those involving skipped generations. Known benefits of intergenerational learning programs include increased appreciation for diversity (Jarrott & Bruno, 2007), lifelong learning (Brummel, 1989), and aging as a natural part of the human life cycle (Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, 2003).

An important caution in the literature is that all intergenerational situations may not create desired effects just because they are intergenerational (Aday, McDuffie, & Sims, 1993). The benefits of bringing skipped generations together are perhaps best achieved through intergenerational *programs* rather than *activities*. Programs "provide a way for experiences and interactions to take on meaning relevant to one's life" whereas activities "do not allow the level of meaning to exist because they lack depth and long term significance" (Friedman, 1997, p. 105). Activities, like a visit to a retirement home, can serve distinct purposes, but programming that is sustained and fulfills the criteria we describe next, is more meaningful

and tends to “reduce ambiguities about . . . relationship[s], lessen social distance, and support [intergenerational] solidarity” (Jarrott, 2007, p. 6).

Jarrott (2007) identified some “essential criteria” in the literature on intergenerational programs, which includes that they should promote equal group status where “each participant” regardless of age “has something to contribute and something to gain from the contact setting, as well as provide opportunities for participants to work on “common goals” (p. 5). Friedman (1997) added that programs need to be “ongoing, lasting for as significant length of time to establish relationships,” “serve the community,” and “include a curricular . . . component” (p. 105). Curriculum that is based in artistic visual practices has been used in many intergenerational programs (La Porte, 2004), and singing has been used in intergenerational settings too (Conway & Hodgman, 2008). Heydon’s (2012; 2013a) studies of intergenerational programs have found that art curricula focusing on the making and viewing of visual texts are a productive means of expanding literacy options in an intergenerational setting and help to foster intergenerational relationships. Our literature review and study of the prevalence of intergenerational singing, however, suggests that more needs to be understood about all arts curricula including their affordances and constraints and the effects of introducing new modes, such as singing (Beynon, Heydon, O’Neill, Crocker, & Zhang, 2013). Beyond producing knowledge that might well be used for the building of multimodal curricula, the study may also provide important illustrations of multimodal practices including “what and how” people “communicate with and through” particular “tools and signs” (Morrison, 2010a, p. 11) within specific curricula and contexts.

Theoretical Framework

The project had two components: the development and implementation of a multimodal arts curriculum and a study of that curriculum. Central to both were specific theories of curriculum and literacy as elaborated on below.

Curriculum

The program created a *programmatic* (Doyle, 1992) curriculum, meaning we developed materials that could be used with the participants in the program sessions; yet, the focus of our data collection was the *classroom* curriculum (Doyle, 1992) or what Eisner (2005) calls the *enacted* curriculum which refers to what actually gets “played out” (p. 147) in a teaching and learning situation in real time. We looked to Actor-Network Theory (ANT) to help us apprehend the classroom curriculum’s nature, movement, production, and effects relative to affordances and constraints.

ANT is a somewhat recent innovation in curriculum theory that understands curriculum as plural, dynamic, and the *effect* of the relationship between people, objects,

documents within a network (DeVincentis, 2011; Perillo & Mulcahy, 2009). A network is a web of relationships whose constituents may be human and/or non-human actors (Bleakley, 2012). Given ANT's insistence that human and non-human actors be "treated in equivalent ways" (Hamilton, 2010, p. 3) within any analysis, in the study we were on the lookout for how material objects might be part of the curricular network. Thus, we entered the study being especially interested in the materiality of the available modes and media and their relationship to participants' communication and identity options.

Curricular Orientation

The programmatic curriculum was designed to correspond with literatures related to curriculum and intergenerational programming (e.g., essential criteria). It has been suggested that an actor in curriculum production is the type of curricular orientation at play (Heydon, 2013b) which can affect the degree to which learners are provided opportunities to be "curricular informants" (Harste, 2003) or play a part in what is taught. The program was based on an emergent curricular orientation that invented new solutions to fit the situation (Schwab, 1971) and that were premised on the participants' interests and what Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez (1992) call "funds of knowledge" (e.g. cultural and communicative resources be they linguistic or otherwise). We reckoned that a program that resourced participants' interests and funds of knowledge might help solve the problem of how to make learning meaningful and engaging to people of skipped generations. Also, having one's funds of knowledge form the basis of curricula has been found to provide a means of affirming "the richness of [learners'] lives" and "invites recognition of [learners'] interests" (Hedges, Cullen, & Jordan, 2011, p. 201). There is a reciprocal relationship between interests and funds of knowledge with interests stemming, in part, from people's "knowledge and experiences" (Albers, 2007). Interests are foundational to literacy practices given that they help to inform the decisions of what to communicate and how (Jewitt & Kress, 2003). Investigations into children's funds of knowledge and their relationship to literacies and curricula are fundamental in contemporary literacy research (Berghoff & Borgmann 2007; Moje et al., 2004). Newer, are questions that consider these issues in relation to multimodal curricula, particularly as they relate to art and singing and in intergenerational settings.

Multimodal Literacy

The project drew on multimodal literacy theory in the design of the curriculum and the study. Multimodal literacy decries literacy as "solely" a "linguistic accomplishment" and arises at a time when there is a call for the demise of "the habitual conjunction of language, print literacy, and learning" (Jewitt, 2008, p. 241). Multimodality has been defined as "the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 20).

Multimodal literacy “may include listening, talking, enacting and investigating as well as writing, designing and producing” such semiotic texts, and the “processing of modes” either receptively or expressively “can occur simultaneously” though “specific modes may dominate or converge” (Walsh, 2011, p. 12). Multimodal literacy, then, is inclusive of all modes of sense-making and the range of media through which one can construct meaning.

In the curriculum, we offered participants multimodal literacy learning opportunities; though we used the more familiar terms *art* and *singing* with the participants. Using the language of multimodal literacy, in this paper we refer to the art and song produced in the curriculum as *visual* and *aural texts*. Using *text* as the frame of reference in the study makes explicit that the participants were exposed to learning opportunities that might expand their communication options rather than solely providing opportunities in the specific knowledge domain or discipline of art (Albers, 2007) or singing. By its very nature, multimodal communication crosses boundaries; thus, researchers interested in its investigation must draw on the knowledge of a variety of domains and fields (Morrison, 2010b) and be willing to learn about modes that might not be part of their primary discipline. This lends a tentativeness to studies such as this one, but also opens up fresh avenues for the contemplation of communication and provides a perfect opportunity for transdisciplinary collaboration such as we created in this project (e.g., Heydon is a multimodal literacy and curriculum studies scholar and O’Neill is a psychologist, arts education scholar, and musician).

To provide the theoretical undergirding for the relationship between communication and identity options, the study references what is known about the relationship between interests, social contexts, and modes within the multimodal literacy literature. Pahl’s (1999) foundational investigation of multimodality in a nursery documented how children “started working in one particular mode...then moved across modes as their interest demands” (p. 17). Interests and the longing to express them can promote modal experimentation as people attempt to find the right fit between what they want to communicate and how to communicate it. All signs are “motivated” (Hodge & Kress, 1993), thus people’s movement from mode to mode is compelled by interest and the *affordances* of modes. Affordances refer to “what it is possible to express and represent readily, easily, with a mode, given its materiality and given the cultural and social history of that mode” (Kress & Jewitt, 2003, p. 14). The flip side of this is the *constraints* or limits that are part of modes at a particular time. Materiality refers to a mode’s “physical” features and the social, cultural, and historical aspects pertain to “what has been done in the past with this material, and how the meanings made in the past affect what can be done with a mode” (Kress & Jewitt, 2003, p. 15). When delving into materiality one might ponder “specific [textual] artifacts and how their content and design relates to the text maker” (Rowell & Pahl, 2007, p. 393). One needs also to consider other organizers of textual production and artifacts, “such as globalization, cultural migration, and technology” (Rowell

& Pahl, 2007, p. 393) and the choices in modalities that are available in a situation. In our study, we considered the affordances and constraints of the curriculum vis-à-vis the modes it employed (e.g., song and art), asking what they could and could not accomplish for participants, particularly given participants' facility with them—how they figured (if at all) in participants' histories—and the discourses surrounding the modes and media including how they have been used in literate practice.

The program focused on art and song and created opportunities for participants to move a concept across modes. *Transformation* (Pahl, 1999) is the movement of ideas across modes, and the connected, cumulative practices and products of communication create a *semiotic chain*. These chains are understood to afford opportunities for the development and expression of creativity and concept development (Stein, 2008) and are the basis of *multimodal pedagogies* which “work consciously and systematically across semiotic modes in order to unleash creativity, reshape knowledge and develop different forms of learning beyond the linguistic” (p. 123). The program was built to capitalize on semiotic chains and the participants' familiarity with art to help support singing. Singing is foundational to childhood and has been recognized in the rhythm of their movements (Campbell, 1998). In late adulthood, neurologist Oliver Sacks (Sleepy Moose, 2012) has commented that song can reconnect elders to their autobiographies. We wondered how working with visual texts (art) might support the practice of aural texts (singing) as a new mode and what singing might afford that visual art alone could not.

Enveloping the whole of these theories is the ANT-inspired notion that just as curricula is a network effect so too are the multimodal literacies that might get practiced within these curricula. Multimodal literacies can also be viewed as network effects whose entities are situational. When thinking about the potential actors within such networks, the previous discussion of multimodal literacy has pointed to (among other things) the importance of literacy “tools” (e.g., media). These tools might in fact be mediators of the relationship with “signs in contexts of communication” (Morrison, 2010b, p. 33). Also potentially important to the network is the actual or implied other. Bakhtin (1981) teaches that communication is relational and involves an actual or implied other. Every *utterance* (or instance of expressive communication) is, in Bakhtin's terms, an *address* of that other. The form of the utterance and the address are contingent upon the perspective, disposition, and values of the person producing it, and, we might add, the constituents of a network. Utterances are thus *dialogic*, containing the other within them (Bakhtin, 1986). We were interested in the dialogism that might exist within an explicitly heterogeneous context such as an intergenerational program, and given the recent research in multimodal dialogism (Morrison & Thorsnes, 2010), we were curious about how such a dialogism might play out in a multimodal arts curriculum.

Methodology

The study was designed to “identify and gain analytic insight into the dimensions, dynamics” (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 81) and consequences of an attempt to create expanded communication and identity options for participants within a multimodal arts intergenerational program. The study asked *What were the affordances and constraints of the curriculum vis-à-vis multimodal learning opportunities? Relatedly, what does the way children and elders participated in the curriculum say about their facility with the various modes, interests, and identity options? What are the implications for educators hoping to offer children and elders expanded communication and identity options?* In this paper we focus the responses to these questions, in particular, on singing.

We used a participatory research and curriculum development protocol that involved working with the educators, recreation staff, and administrators at the shared site to: initiate, plan and develop, implement, evaluate, and expand the intergenerational multimodal arts curriculum (Evans, McDeanald, & Nyce, 1999). The research was an empirical, qualitative case study using ethnographic tools (Dyson & Genishi, 2005) which entailed videotaping classes, audiotaping informal discussion with participants before, during, and after classes, audiotaping semi-structured interviews with participants, writing field notes, and photographing participant interaction and artifacts. Within the specific focus on the semiotic chain, data collection attended to textual “processes and practices” (Pahl, 2009, p. 193) with documentation related to participants’ talk about what they were making as it was being made. The ethnographic tools of the study meshed well with its ANT sensibility (Latour, 2005); though the case study methodology is tempered by an acknowledgment of the arbitrariness of building boundaries around a case. One might indeed need to *cut the network* (Strathern 1996) (i.e., find a focus for inquiry), but “there are no natural, pre-given boundaries” (Fenwick & Edwards 2010, p. 152) in any case. Thus, the study focused on the curricular network, in particular how it was manifest during the classroom curriculum, but understood the limits of isolating any one part of a curriculum.

To design an analytic plan that could accommodate contradiction and nuance while still making the findings intelligible, we looked to other ANT-inspired studies of curriculum (Perillo & Mulcahy, 2009). We analyzed the data by “relating variation” in multimodal curricula and practices across the program sessions and various modes of data collection (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). This entailed juxtaposing photographs from the classroom next to interview transcripts, field notes, and video to find “the relevance of actors influencing experience with curriculum” (Perillo & Mulcahy, 2009, p. 45). It also allowed us to employ “the relations, connections or associations between actors” to issue “the signals” for us “to trace and describe” (Perillo & Mulcahy, 2009, p. 45) the effects of the curriculum, most notably its affordances and constraints. We attempted to be aware of the shifts and

complexity of the data by taking a “looking down” (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. 124) approach to the data meaning that we zeroed in on what actors did within the network to produce effects.

We attempted to foster trustworthiness through this looking down as well as through other key strategies identified in the literature (Johnson & Christensen, 2004) such as sustained field duration (Heydon had been working in the site for over five years prior to the study), the collection of multiple forms of data (e.g., video, written field notes) from various perspectives (e.g., adults, children), triangulation of the data, frequent discussions between the research team, and rich description.

Site, Participants, and Organization of Classes and Program

The project took place at *Picasso* retirement home that had *Picasso Child* a child care centre on site. Picasso was located in a mid-size southwestern city in Ontario, Canada. Participants were seven elders who lived at Picasso, eight kindergarten-aged children who attended the half-day child care program at the site and a half-day kindergarten program at a local school, and six employees/volunteers². Led by an early childhood educator and recreation therapist, the group of children and elders met approximately once a week for one hour from September to May for an art program which Heydon had introduced to the site five years previously. Within the existing program, we introduced singing as a new mode across seven sessions beginning in the middle of January. We reasoned a January start date for the introduction to singing would give participants ample opportunity to become familiar with each other and routines. Wendy Crocker, the research assistant who had been involved in the art program was the lead instructor for the sessions and participants knew her well. While most of the adults were returning participants to the class, this was a new group of children given that last year's group had graduated to grade one and full-time school.

Each of the program sessions moved a focal idea designed to elicit participants' funds of knowledge and interests across visual and aural modes--print text, musical score, visual representation, singing, and talking—(see Table 1). Individual sessions followed a pattern established through previous intergenerational art curricula (Heydon, 2007; 2013a) and adapted to the inclusion of singing: (1) strategies to (re)acquaint participants with each other and foster community and a sense of safety (e.g., singing of gathering song); (2) a catalyst for that day's session that could induce conversation and ease participants further into singing (e.g., the singing of a familiar song); (3) explicit instruction, modeling, and support to work through the project and generate songs to become part of the repertoire or relate visual and aural texts; (4) sustained opportunities to work on the project, draw on fellow participants for support, and have informal singing time; (5) opportunities to focus on singing and the songs generated from class and provide closure to the session.

The dialogical nature of singing activity has been described by O'Neill (2012) as transformative music engagement; it is a form of music making that is capable of acting as a vehicle or catalyst for change among diverse learners in ways that foster a sense of connectedness. The focus on intergenerational singing was linked with the visual arts curricula to engage participants in multimodal practices from which they could derive a sense of relevance, purpose, and fulfillment. O'Neill (2006) refers to this form of music engagement as having both a psychological component (e.g., valuing, meaningfulness, identity, sense of belonging) and a behavioral component (e.g., effort, intensity, focused concentration), with a dynamic nature that is context-dependent and interrelated within particular learning ecologies.

The total sessions formed a semiotic chain that transitioned from emphasizing the singing knowledge and interests of participants (e.g., *Songs in my Head*) to the class and the world (e.g., *Songs of Us for the World*) across modes (see Table 1). The visual texts were used throughout the program in general to support the singing and initially were used to elicit songs from participants that could become the repertoire for the program. New songs were sung and in the following week added to a participant's song book. Specifically, when a song was elicited by a participant one week, in the next we would teach it and provide copies of the lyrics (and sometimes music) plus an icon for identifying which participants could insert the music into their book. Participants' visual texts also went into the books. Table 1 shows the focus for each session, the media for the visual texts and the songs that formed the repertoire, when they were introduced, and their origins.

Table 1

Session Outline

Session #	Title & Focus of Session	Visual Text Connections	New Song Contributed to Repertoire
#1 Jan. 12	<i>Songs in our Heads</i> : Earworms and songs we know well	Self-portrait Collage	<i>Welcome Song</i> (origin: the children's welcome song from their child care room) <i>The More We Get Together</i> (origin: the children's welcome song from their child care room) <i>How Much is that Doggie in the Window?</i> (origin: from adult participant Nora generated from the Songs in Our Heads project) <i>Closing Song</i> (origin: the children's welcome song from

			their child care room)
#2 Jan. 26	<i>Songs in our Hearts</i> : Songs that are special to us	Drawn Heart Maps	<i>You and Me</i> (origin: new song introduced by programmatic curriculum to correspond with day's focus)
#3 Feb. 2	<i>Being Together Makes me Sing</i> : Songs about being together	Intergenerational Hands Painting	<i>Clap, Clap, Clap Your Hands</i> (origin: new song introduced by programmatic curriculum to correspond with day's focus) <i>He's Got the Whole World in His Hands</i> (origin: adult participant Dale)
#4 Feb. 9	<i>Telling You About Me</i> : Songs that tell about who we are	Multimedia Accordion Books	<i>Aiken Drum</i> (origin: new song introduced by programmatic curriculum to correspond with day's focus)
#5 Feb. 16	<i>Singing I Spy</i> : Songs about the world outside our windows	Marker on Fabric Quilt	<i>Mr. Sun</i> (origin: new song introduced by programmatic curriculum to correspond with day's focus) <i>I Can Sing a Rainbow</i> (origin: children from their child care classroom) <i>Robin in the rain</i> (origin: adult participant Dale)
#6 Feb. 23	<i>My Neighbourhood Sings</i> : Songs about the streets where we live	Drawn Mural	<i>What Are the Buildings in Our Neighbourhood</i> (to the tune of <i>Who are the People in Your Neighbourhood</i>) (origin: new song introduced by programmatic curriculum to correspond with day's focus) <i>Old MacDeanald</i> (origin: adult participant Nora)
#7 Mar. 2	<i>Songs of Us for the World</i> : Song book of songs we create about each other	Portrait Painting	<i>Down by the Bay</i>

Findings: Affordances and Constraints

The affordances and constraints of the program seemed to be produced through the relationship between curricular actors that coalesced with Schwab's (1973) curricular commonplaces: *educator* (e.g., the pedagogical aspects of the programmatic curriculum and the team of researchers, the early childhood educators, and recreation therapists who participated in the program), *subject matter* (e.g., affordances of modes, song repertoire), *learners* (e.g., participants' previous experiences and real and perceived facility with singing, interests, and identities), *milieu* (e.g., institutional expectations and intergenerational context), and the *physical materials of the class* (e.g., song books, art supplies, musical instruments) and the modes themselves (e.g., art and song). We next provide illustrations of how these actors related to each other to produce affordances and constraints relative to participants' communication and identity options. To provide a sense of the rhythm of the program, we follow the typical chronology of a class from entrance to exit.

Entrance

All multimodal literacy practices are dialogic; thus, as in previous intergenerational curricula (Heydon, 2013a) the curriculum attempted to foster relationship building and capitalize on positive identities vis-à-vis the other participants to produce multimodal literacy learning opportunities. The social nature of the program was evident from the moment the participants walked through the door, and as the following narratives suggests, people's interactions were an effect of the network which clearly featured the educators, who worked to connect generations, and environmental actors such as space, time, and even clothing.

It is just before the fourth session and because the room where class is held is in use right before us, there is set-up time needed even though participants are starting to arrive. This is just a feature of working in a busy intergenerational setting. Andrea, Francesca, and Isla (adult participants) have already arrived. The latter two are regular attendees who have been participating in intergenerational art class for years.

"Here they come" announces someone about the children who are walking down the hall towards class.

Andrea in particular is visibly excited. She is in a wheelchair and gestures and yells for someone to move her closer to the children so she can see them better.

The children enter and the adults, admiring the children's attire, comment on it: "Look at her bunny slippers!" "Look at that dress!"

Educator Penny approaches Keith and asks him who he would like to be partnered with today. She poses this question because Charlie, his usual partner, is absent. Keith immediately asks for Charlie and when he learns he is not here, says, “Well it doesn’t make any difference who I work with then. So where’s Charlie today?”

As Penny and Helen, the recreation therapists, organize the seating, adult participant Bryan, who missed the previous week because of illness, begins a conversation that is certainly on point for a class that includes singing. “My voice didn’t go away while I was sick,” he says.

Wendy, capitalizing on the learning opportunity counters, “Well you’re lucky, and you know what? Sometimes your voice changes when you get older. Sometimes your voice changes when you get sick. So your words and ideas are all still in there, you just can’t say them as well.

Child participant Constance gets in on the dialogue, “Guess what? In the night my dad lost his voice, but he wasn’t sick. His voice came right back.”

Bryan looks around at the materials being set out and asks, “Are we doing a collage?” “Tell you what,” answers Wendy, “Why don’t we sing our Here We Are Together song and then we’ll find out! Alright!” And by the time this announcement comes, everyone is sitting and away they go to sing.

The seemingly informal curriculum of entrance in fact provided opportunities for partnering and connection making—*who will sit with whom?*; generating and capitalizing on interest—*what will we be doing today?*; conversations to catch up on what had been missed since the last class by members across generations—*Guess what?* and amongst generations—*Look at that!*; and learning about each other, especially in relation to the modal demands being placed on participants—*Let me tell you about my voice and I can learn about yours.*

Singing to Gather

Each session began with a gathering song, which immersed participants in singing right away, provided a purposeful occasion for its practice, drew on children’s funds of knowledge, and clearly demarcated the time of the class coming together. This session starter connects to the literature which says that intergenerational communication and relationship building can be strengthened by beginning classes with opportunities for participants to become (re)acquainted with each other (Heydon, 2007). This may be important as elders in particular can forget names, their attendance can be irregular due to illness, and a week since seeing their adult friends can seem like a very long time to children. Leveraging funds of knowledge, the sessions began with a gathering song that was familiar to most. In the first session, as this

next narrative expresses, Wendy built on the children's knowledge to teach the group a gathering song.

"The first thing we're going to need to use is our voice this morning," begins Wendy, "and I know that my little friends were just practicing. . . we would like to share with everyone. Are we ready? Are we going to do the clapping part too?" Then, drawing on the children's educator from the child care centre, Wendy says, "Okay, Penny, let's go!" Penny and Wendy clap their thighs and rock their bodies to communicate the beat as they sing, "Good morning, good morning, good morning to you. Good morning, good morning, How do you do?"

The children join in.

Wendy and Penny change the beat and launch into "Oh here we are together, together, together, Oh here we are together all sitting on the floor!"

Perfectly attuned to the educators, the children immediately sing along.

Penny explains to the adults that in the child care centre they sit on the floor. Adult participant Nora smiles and Penny explains, "and then we say everyone's first names," and she sings, "There's . . ." and points to each person around the table in turn.

When everyone has had a chance to sing his/her name, Penny closes with "Oh here we are together, together, together, Oh here we are together all sitting on our chairs!" Some of the children still sing "floor" and there are smiles when Penny says, "We need to change it a little."

Wendy now explains, "So when we get together, why don't we borrow that song from our little friends so we all know who's here, and what everybody's name is?" Many of the participants nod.

In this and subsequent sessions, all participants sang or kept beat with the gathering song, though adult Keith did complain in his exit interview that he felt there was "too much repetition" with everyone's name and this could put the children "to sleep". There was one class which we discuss later, when the children played a game of pretending to sleep during the singing of a song—prankster Bryan dramatically slumped over in his seat and loudly snored and breathed in time to the music, but the data do not suggest that the children were bored. The concern over repetition came specifically from Keith and though it was framed as a concern for the children, it perhaps better speaks to the constraints of making the song repertoire relevant and interesting to all participants.

Singing a Known Song

Interest was part of the curricular network, which produced affordances and constraints, and interest in the song repertoire was complex. Within each class to scaffold participants' singing and song knowledge the program provided opportunities for the singing of (at least) one well-known song, one song that had been introduced the previous day, and one new song. At the beginning of class, right after name introductions, participants were invited to sing a song from the previous day. The next narrative suggests how this practice allowed participants to collectively sing songs that were relatively familiar if not well known and the song repertoire built on their interests and funds of knowledge.

Child participant Bryan puts the image of a dog in his self-portrait collage in session one to signify the song, How Much is that Doggie in the Window. This song was initially introduced by adult Nora, and as is often the case in intergenerational programming (Heydon, 2013a), the participants fed off each other. Bryan knows the song well and says it often gets stuck in his head. The song is quickly a favorite of the class, and Wendy uses it in session two to bring the group together right after the welcome song. Bryan leads the singing, punctuating key junctures with whole-hearted barks. Participants laugh, smile, sing, and bark with gusto prompting Wendy to promise, "And we'll sing this song again towards the end of class. We'll even have a sheet with the words for you, and you'll know it's the song, because there's a picture of a dog at the top." Wendy refers to the song books.

Later, when Wendy interviews Bryan about his participation in the program, Bryan explains that he feels "sad" to leave his own puppy home alone when he goes to school, so he likes to sing this song.

Someday, he says, "I'm gonna bring that puppy [to Picasso] and I will bring it up to our class and we can sing, How Much is that Doggie in the Window.

In this case as in others, all participants sang, used shakers, and/or kept the beat with a body part (e.g., foot tapping, clapping, and nodding of head). Yet some of the data suggest that singing was not automatically accepted or easily practiced by all. For instance, in his exit interview, after the children had selected to sing *How Much is that Doggie in the Window* during every session (a song that only one child did not identify as her "favorite" in the children's exit interviews), adult participant Keith had the following exchange with one of the researchers:

Keith: (With a smirk) If I hear that doggie in the window one more time I'm gonna scream!

Interviewer: (laughing) I think Bryan had something to do with that! That was his

favourite song.

Keith: Oh yah, yah, well. . . . I don't know how many times we sang that darn song. . . [then] that night [after class] we had entertainment [for the adults in the Picasso entertainment program and], this lady [came], and it was the first song she sang! (laughing)

Nora also expressed some difficulties with singing due to the repertoire. Through the course of the program, adult participant Nora sang every song every time, and admitted as much in her interview, "Oh I sing!" She, however, suggested that she did not feel completely comfortable with the songs. In the exit interview, she mentioned, "a lot of the music is different for me . . . when [the children] start singing they have songs that I don't even know... the songs that I like are old . . . I know all the words . . . but I don't know a lot of the words when they start singing." The children, she explained, "have their own songs." We were curious about Nora's experience given the emergent orientation to the repertoire (i.e., the participants forwarded their own songs to be sung) and that with the exception of Bryan's inclusion of Usher's *DJ Got Us Falling in Love*, children did not forward popular contemporary songs; all the songs they contributed and that we adopted for the repertoire were fairly traditional and likely to be known by both generations. Also, the program implemented song books to mitigate the possibility that participants would not know each other's songs and to aid as a mnemonic. When asked about the books and questioning if they could have been a support to her, Nora commented only on *How Much is that Doggie in the Window* being included in the book, "but I know THAT one!" The adults all used the song books, but the extent to which they promoted or sustained interest in singing is unknown. Nora's interview suggests that even with the emergent curricular orientation and the songbooks, there may have been gaps in knowledge between generations, which the program did not sufficiently mediate.

All adults, however, did appear to persevere with the singing, even when it was not easy. Adult participant Isla, for example, wanted to connect with the children and did not have great facility with singing, did not know all the songs (which could be related to her severe memory difficulties), but she was willing to push through constraints to sing *with* the children. As the next narrative illustrates, in February, Isla was in class trying hard to produce voice even though a recent cold had made this very difficult.

It's the end of class and Bryan has been uncharacteristically quiet during the singing of the last song of class, which was B-I-N-G-O. In fact, he had put his hands over his ears during the singing of that song. Heydon inquires, "Hey Bryan, can I ask you a question?" There is affirmation in his nod. "How come you put your hands over your ears?"

“Because I didn’t want to sing.”

“You didn’t want to sing?” Heydon probes.

“I didn’t want to hear it,” Bryan clarifies, and with this, he exits with his class.

Adult Maeve, has been watching the interaction. Heydon offers, “He didn’t like the singing that much, hey Maeve?”

Maeve replies that perhaps he didn’t know the song. Adult Isla adds, “I don’t know them all, but I know some.”

Educator Hana who has noticed that Isla tries to sing every song, says, “I think you know enough!”

“I love to hear them, that’s all,” responds Isla.

Heydon wonders if by “them” Isla means the songs or the children. “You love to hear the songs?”

“I’ve got a sore throat,” Isla answers.

“Oh you’re having trouble singing today?” wonders Heydon.

“I just said the words quietly,” Isla explains, then after a bit points to her throat and says, “I have a hard time with my throat, but I just sing the words quietly, and I like to hear the songs, and that was great and I had a good time.”

Despite her physical limitations, Isla chose to participate in the program, getting “a good time” out of it. So too did Keith, Nora, and all the children, even those for whom singing was not always an automatically easy or interesting thing to do.

Catalyst and Support

The next section of class time involved the creating and viewing of visual texts and the data suggest that there was a reciprocal relationship between the modes with art and oral language (e.g., talking and listening) supporting the singing and vice versa.

The existing art program provided needed familiarity for participants as singing was a new mode for the intergenerational program. In *Songs in Our Heads*, for instance, participants

were invited to create collages of songs that got stuck in their heads, and these songs informed the repertoire. After singing the welcome song and one song from the previous day, Wendy modeled how to create the visual text that would support the singing. In the first few sessions, the art helped participants generate the songs for the repertoire. For example, in the first session when participants were invited to consider the songs in their heads, they were provided with magazines and other images that they could use to create their song collages. Most participants selected images first and then came up with songs that fit them; for instance, one of the magazines contained Christmas images and the adults and children who had access to the magazine included Christmas songs in their “heads.” In the next session when participants were invited to draw a map of their heart to show the songs that they loved or that referred to something they loved, they did not have the visual prompts from the magazines, and it was more challenging for them to come up with songs. Aided discussions between participants as they worked through the visual texts did, however, provide some prompting for what to sing as described in the narrative that features Bonnie in the upcoming section.

Visual texts supported singing even after the initial sessions when the art component was no longer needed to elicit songs for the repertoire, because there were already enough songs. Once there were sufficient songs in the repertoire that participants had a choice of songs to sing during the open song book portion of class, the text-making related to the focal idea of the day and the new song introduced (e.g., see sessions 4 through 7 in Table 1). The visual texts supported singing by giving participants something concrete to do with their hands and eyes while singing so that they were less self-conscious; for instance, during the period when participants worked on their visual texts, Wendy hummed or quietly sang focus-related songs. Participants gradually caught the tune and also started to sing as they worked. There was a natural rhythm to cutting, pasting, and drawing while singing. Building the aural mode on the visual also allowed participants to consider and rehearse songs without having to first share them with the whole group.

Materially, singing was also supported through musical instruments (e.g., shakers, tambourines). This was of particular import for participants who had difficulty or reluctance singing either due to physical or other reasons. For example, a child named Charlie hardly spoke in class and his educator said this was not unusual for him. Adult Keith took Charlie under his wing by always choosing to sit with him and trying to provide him with support to participate. Charlie never did sing in class, but by the second session, he was using a maraca, and he continued to use instruments in subsequent classes. Finally, in his exit interview Charlie quietly sang some of the words to *Aiken Drum*. The following post-session discussion demonstrates some of the effects of the maracas on Charlie. It also demonstrates the importance of relationship in the curricular network and the way Keith’s identity was formed in relation to Charlie (i.e., as a mentor to Charlie).

Keith and Heydon are discussing the children, and Keith focuses on two boys: Charlie and the gregarious Bryan. Referring to the boys Keith says, "Oh yeah, the two opposites!" He then remarks, "This is the first time that Charlie has been . . . more expressive shall I say? . . . This is the first time that I've got him to draw anything himself."

Keith, Wendy, some of the other adults, and Heydon continue to comment until Keith says, "I asked him if he had any brothers or sisters, and he said yes, two . . . It's the first time I think I've gotten through to him a little bit, you know?"

Adult participant Dean compliments Keith saying, "Good show!" and adult participant Maya reinforces the compliment with, "He was looking up to you today." Heydon turns to Keith and says about Charlie, "He was using his maraca today too."

"Oh yeah!" replies Keith; "Oh yes, he was shaking!"

"He was loving it!" remarks Wendy.

"More into things today," explains Keith. "He had more expression. He was doing things. . . . That's the first time I've seen him do that."

Heydon says, ". . . he doesn't use a lot of words."

"No," says Keith, "he doesn't talk."

"But he was expressing himself by drawing." Heydon offers.

"Yup," confirms Keith.

"And he was expressing himself by using his maraca," says Heydon.

"Yup," nods Keith.

Wendy adds, "[He was] Smiling!"

"He was a happy little kid today" confirms Keith smiling himself.

"He'll go home and talk about it." asserts Dean.

Several adults also expressed having difficulty with singing, because they were short of breath (e.g., Keith and Bonnie), and the instruments and the multimodal nature of the classes supported them to be able to participate and communicate with each other.

Sustained Opportunities to Work on Visual Texts

The curriculum focused on providing participants with time to work together to create their visual texts and engage in informal singing. The data suggest that all participants needed time to connect with others to develop identities that could help them participate in class and communicate with each other. For adults, this meant identities that were formed in relation to supporting the children, and finding that is supported by McAdams and Logan's (2004) concept of generativity. Generativity is described as an important quality of older adults who want to assure the wellbeing of future generations by nurturing them through activities that may be expressed in teaching or mentoring situations.

Prior to the introduction of the singing into the art curriculum, participants worked primarily on their own texts with support from the people around them. Adults and children aided each other with communicational decisions; for example, children were documented as helping adults with idea formation and adults have been seen to help children with technical issues such as spelling when they have wanted to include writing in their texts (Heydon, 2007). Assuming the role of supporter seemed to gain even more importance to participants following the first introduction of the singing into the program. The case of Keith, who had been an avid participant in the art classes for several years, is especially telling of this.

The children were the primary actors involved in the curricular network that afforded Keith's engagement in it. After the first session, when singing had been introduced, he complained that he did not like the class, and he named the singing as the problem. Heydon, who had known Keith since he began the intergenerational programs years earlier, discussed his displeasure with him. She learned that Keith was missing his friend from the previous intergenerational art program who had now gone off to first grade and was no longer in the child care program. In their discussion Keith repeated, "Everything's changed. Everything's changed." When Heydon asked, "What else is different than just the singing?" Keith responded, "The kids aren't the same. Roger's not even here." Roger had been Keith's friend for two years and had become, in Keith's words, his "honorary grandson". The data suggest that Keith's predominant concern with the program was that he was mourning the loss of the relationship with his young friend and that singing as a new mode in the program, and one with which Keith had little experience, exacerbated the notion that there had been a change.

The data suggest that the adults' past and present experiences with the modes involved in the curriculum (e.g., singing) and related knowledge of and interests in said modes, were part of

the network that produced their engagement in the classroom curriculum. The rationale for participating and the meaning in the intergenerational program for Keith, for instance, came from his desire to support the children to become better communicators. Through our interviews with Keith, we learned that he did not have experience singing and did not have, as he said, “a tremendous amount” of music in his adult life. He explained, “I was born in 1929, and my dad ran out of work, and we lived with an uncle on the farm. We didn’t have a radio until 1939 or so. So there was nobody either on my mother’s or father’s side that were into music and nobody had a piano.” The situation was not so cut and dried that one could say Keith simply did not enjoy music or singing. He commented favorably on “watching” a musical performance in high school, recalled fondly traveling to a neighboring city as a young man to attend the symphony, and when pressed about his experience with singing in this point in his life he mentioned “enjoying” ballads that “has a story to it” and some of the singers who provided “entertainment” at Picasso. Even here, however, Keith made a point of describing certain types of singing that were off-putting to him. Unprompted, Keith described how much he disliked “music that gets into that nasal sound like Willie Nelson –ooh, that really drives me up the wall!” (laughter). He complained too about some of the adults-only singing programming at Picasso; “we have [a] lady who comes who is a professional, she was in Broadway, and for some reason or other she insists on using a [microphone], and she’s just screaming at you. She doesn’t need a mic. . . . the last couple of times I take my hearing aids out and she’s still screaming at me!” (laughing) He also lamented that “there are many (singers that) come [to Picasso to perform] that are very good. But when you’ve heard them six, ten times and they don’t change their repertoire too much . . . I don’t get down [to the common room to attend the performance] quite as much as I used to.” Keith claimed he had “no ability to sing,” joking, “the last time I sang the dog left home. . . I don’t have the ability with art of music, that wasn’t my thing.”

Keith had limited positive memories, experiences, and facility with singing and his rationale for participating in the program was almost exclusively about the children. Singing did not play a big part in his life story, but children did. Keith did not see himself as a singer, but he did see himself as having facility with children, and he expressed wanting to help *them* to sing. When asked about why he participated in the program, he emphatically responded, “I enjoy the kids! . . . this is . . . at least the third year I have done it . . . my daughter and I were talking about this not too long ago, and she said, ‘well dad, you’ve always had kids around the house.’” High engagement in the curriculum was afforded by his past experiences with children and his desire to pass knowledge on to them. Keith cited his former role as a funeral director when discussing why he wanted to be part of the program saying, “it’s a matter of helping people. And I think this is part of it. I—while I enjoy the kids and I become friends with them. But this is part of supporting them . . . they need all the support they can get.”

Being with and supporting the children was also key for even those participants who said they enjoyed singing, had a history with singing, and engaged in singing outside of the intergenerational program. Nora, for instance, reported, “I like to sing” and pointed to singing in her life before coming to Picasso; “my daughter played [the piano] . . . and she was in the choir in the church . . . I led the little kids.” She participated in singing-related activities at the time of data collection (e.g., “fellows come in and play the piano . . . They want you to sing too, so I sing too!”). Yet Nora responded to the question “What was it that you enjoyed the most [about the program]” with “I just like the children, eh?” These examples again connect to the notion of generativity (McAdams & Logan, 2004), and the data suggest that the curriculum with its singing and art were part of what afforded the effect of child-adult relationship-building. The relationships did not, and perhaps could not, be created without these other network actors.

The intergenerational literature emphasizes the importance of equal group status in programming (Jarrott, 2007), and the data relate that the curriculum afforded opportunities for the children to also be supporters of the adults. The following narrative speaks to the curriculum affording this balance in the relationships.

Adult participant Bonnie who had been participating in intergenerational programming for two years arrives eager to participate in session two of Art and Song, but admits, “I don’t feel well today.” She takes her seat and is quite breathless. Despite her quiet, raspy breath which she produces with much effort (Bonnie shared her diagnosis of Parkinson’s disease with us), she tries to engage with the children and the curriculum.

When it is time for the participants to be making their own heart maps (maps of their heart that show songs they love), Heydon walks around the table checking in on participants. She comes to Bonnie and child participant Cleo and inquires, “Hello! What songs are coming out here?”

Cleo shrugs and said, “um . . . Wendy” and Bonnie answers laughing, “We’re not so bright. We’re short on songs.”

Noticing child participant, Lauren’s, inclusion of the song BINGO in her heart map, Wendy begins to hum the song. The participants around the room quickly pick up on this and begin singing and/or clapping, Bonnie and Cleo included. Wendy pauses the song in a way that provides an opportunity to support participants in the making of their own heart maps. She says, “Listen to this. I think that was the song that was in Lauren’s heart.”

The participants pick up singing the song again and while singing, Heydon sees Cleo write “B-I-N-G-O” in her heart. Now, Bonnie quietly sings O Canada and gestures toward Heydon. Heydon sees Cleo has a maple leaf in her heart and it is in response to this that Bonnie is singing. Soon thereafter Heydon notices that Bonnie has put a maple leaf in her heart too and she, Cleo, and child participant Lauren (who has added a maple leaf to her heart) begin to hum O Canada. Struggling for breath, Bonnie manages to hum a flourish in the song and then put her hands on her mouth as though she’s blowing a trumpet to add a string of toots. The whole table is now humming, and while they do, Bonnie sings the finish, “O Canada we stand on guard for thee!”

In the above narrative, participants reciprocally supported each other in text-making and singing, and the visual texts could be understood as affording the necessary memory aid for recalling songs, piquing interest in singing, and helping participants to share ideas. These same conclusions can be seen in the next narrative also.

Nora has also been participating in the art program for two years and never misses a session. While completing her heart map she begins to sing The Itsy-Bitsy Spider and gestures the words of the song with her hands. She pauses and asks, “What’s that song? How does that song go?” She turns to Heydon, “Do you know that one?”

Heydon redirects her to child participant Cleo and offers, “Cleo will sing it!” which she does, albeit quietly.

Nora, who is unable to hear directs to Cleo, “Can you sing?”

“I already sang it,” Cleo corrects her good naturedly.

All together, Nora, adult Maya, and Heydon plead with Cleo to please sing it again loudly. Cleo begins, “The itsy” and as soon as she had begun, Nora joins in singing with her. The two happily sing the whole song together, and at the end, Nora announces laughing, “I forgot that one!”

Nora, who had lapses in memory, was reminded of the song and afforded the opportunity to sing, all because of Cleo’s help. The network of song, art, and intergenerational support brought the participants together.

Opportunities to Focus on Singing

The last part of class was when participants’ song books were distributed, and they were invited to select the songs they wanted to sing. Multimodal theory underscores that

communication is creative; people *produce* not just *use* signs (Jewitt & Kress, 2003). This part of the curriculum in particular afforded participants time to sing, and as the following narrative illustrates, in this collective, intergenerational singing practice participants showed facility with remixing songs by adding, deleting, and/or changing lyrics, notes, and other elements to fit the situation and their interests.

Wendy has delegated a child to hand out song sheets and another to distribute the song books they will go in to. When everyone seems ready, Wendy announces, "I am looking for someone to flip through their binder and find a song for us to sing."

Bryan immediately offers, "I want to do the Doggie in the Window!"

Participants flip through the books to locate the right page. "Everybody all set?" inquires, Wendy, "So, we can use maracas to keep the beat, or we can use our voices . . . I am going to need some help with the 'arfs.'"

"I can do the 'woofs,'" says Bryan.

The singing begins and at every pause Bryan and the other participants offer creative dog sounds. Adult participant David even offers a howl at one point, which makes everyone laugh.

At song's end, Wendy redirects and provides an opportunity for normally shy Charlie to contribute, "Charlie, is there a song that you would like to sing? You'd have to tell us which one it is . . . what's the picture?"

Charlie does not speak, but turns to the page in his song book showing He's Got the Whole World in His Hands. Participants remix the song to write themselves into it. After "He's got the whole world in his hands", they sing, "He's got the big friends at Picasso, in his hands" followed by "He's got the little friends from Picasso Child in his hands", then "He's got all of us at Art [and Song] Class in his hands . . ."

"Again! Again!" Bryan and then the other participants cry.

Finally, after more songs, it is time to sing farewell. Today participants have decided to close with The More We Get Together. In an earlier session, Wendy invited participants to change the lyrics to the song, and a child participant had begun to sing, "The more we snore together..." which was followed by child participants making snoring noises and pretending to fall asleep (which was accompanied by adults' laughter). Indexing this remix, Wendy asks Charlie, "Well are we gonna snore?"

The participants start to snore followed by Charlie, and Wendy says, "Yup, we're losing him already!"

Then they all launch into "The more we snore together . . ." By the end of the song, Wendy is modeling a whisper voice for the singing, and participants have followed her lead. They all now have their heads on the tables and are pretending to sleep. This has happened without any explicit direction from any particular person in the class.

Wendy quietly observes, "I think that Charlie and Bryan have gone to sleep. That must mean that it is time to close our binders and get ready [to leave class]." Still whispering she says, "Thank you very much, I'll just collect these binders really quietly." Wendy tip-toes collecting binders and gently singing to each child as she gestures them to the door, "Zebra girl. Zebra girl. Chloe, it's time to go. Bryan, it's time to go; Charlie, it's time to go." Charlie yawns and stretches to leave, and Keith hugs him goodbye.

The soundscape of this section of the session was one of extremes: intense, loud singing with the first song, and the mild, calm, languid sounds of whispers and sleep with the last. The children left in quiet, but the moment they left there was a pause then an explosion of laughter and talking amongst the adults who were so excited about what they had been part of.

Discussion

This case study of a multimodal intergenerational curriculum based in art and song sought to understand the affordances and constraints of the curriculum in relation to young children's and elders' communication and identity options. Such an understanding was itself afforded by conceptualizing curriculum as a network effect and indexing the literature on multimodal literacy, in particular how interests, knowledge, and the modes themselves relate to communication and identity options.

The affordances and constraints of the intergenerational multimodal curriculum were created by an intricate network of actors that included Schwab's (1973) curricular commonplaces in addition to the materials of communication (e.g., media available for the creation of visual texts, musical instruments) and the modes themselves. Aspects of the curriculum had a number of affordances relative to supporting participants to sing; the emergent curriculum made some inroads into providing songs that could be of interest and import to participants. Children in particular, it seems, benefited from this. One might query how a new iteration of the curriculum could better solicit adults' funds of knowledge. Song books were a material resource that brought people together and served as a support for singing. The creation and viewing of visual texts was particularly helpful for generating repertoire, focusing participants

on the ideas in the session, and taking the pressure off performing. The movement of the focal idea across modes also created opportunities for meaningful communication, learning, and practice in communicational decisions. Song within a semiotic chain drew attention to the affordances of modes, and each mode helped to improve facility with others. Instruments were also vital, for adults and children alike. Further, despite some of the constraints around singing, when the curriculum built to moments such as the one illustrated in the last narrative, one can see how it afforded intergenerational connections, even physically uniting people through the melding of their voices, pleasure, creativity and communication, and provided meaning to people's lives and practices.

In terms of the participants' facility with the various modes, interests, and identity options, we concluded that the adults had mixed experiences and interests in singing as well as some physical limitations, still, they all persisted so that they could sing with the children, enjoying their company and forming identities as supporters of children. Helping to produce these effects was that the curricular network positioned all participants in symmetrical ways. The children, for instance, were equally supporters of the adults, helping to engage them in singing. The desire to sing with the children also helped the adults overcome singing constraints, whether physical or related to interest, experience, knowledge, and/or facility. This is particularly noteworthy as many adults are reluctant to sing because they do not consider themselves to be good at singing and may be self-conscious about participating in group singing activities (Burack, Jefferson & Libow, 2003), yet there is growing evidence of the positive benefits of singing on general health and psychological wellbeing among older adults (Clift, Hancox, Staricoff & Whitmore, 2008).

There are many implications for educators hoping to offer children and elders expanded communication and identity options. There is an emotion/pictorial/literary narrative capacity to music that is rooted in particular sociocultural constructions (Small, 1998). For example, both the bodily and vocal gestures that accompany singing articulate meanings and emotional states that when combined constitute a particular narrative. These narratives can generate meaning making that is heterogeneous and capable of offering different and expansive identities that are made possible through the dialogic interchanges and multimodal expressions. In terms of identity options, these narratives do not necessarily help the participants discover who they are; rather, they provide affordances for defining and sharing significant aspects of who they are, who they were in the past, and who they might be in the future. The literature quoted herein relates some of the curricular ingredients that might be necessary to help expand people's communication and identity options within relationships. Such curricula are still in a nascent stage, as too is the understanding of what children and elders do within them and with what consequences. The study hopes to address these gaps and has implications for educators of young and old.

Notes:

All names have been changed with the exception of the researchers in the project.

Participation in the program was not contingent on participation in the study, thus there were other adults who participated in the program but not the study.

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About the Author

Rachel Heydon is Professor and Program Chair, Curriculum Studies and Studies in Applied Linguistics at the Faculty of Education, Western University, Canada. Her research concerns expanding the literacy and identity options of young and old with particular concern for early childhood curriculum, multimodal literacy, and intergenerational learning. Her books include *Learning at the Ends of Life: Children, Elders, and Literacies in Intergenerational Curriculum* and the forthcoming *Constructing Meaning: Teaching Language and Literacy K-*

8 (6th ed.) (with Joyce Bainbridge) and *Negotiating Spaces for Literacy Learning* (edited with Mary Hamilton, Rosamund Stooke, and Kathryn Hibbert). Her articles have appeared in journals such as the *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, the *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, and the *Journal of Early Childhood Research*. Heydon can be reached at: 1137 Western Road, London, Ontario, Canada, N6G 1G7, Tel: (519) 661-2111 x 81244, email: rheydon@uwo.ca;

Susan O'Neill is Associate Professor at Simon Fraser University, Canada and Director of MODAL Research Group (Multimodal Opportunities, Diversity and Artistic Learning). Her visiting fellowships include the University of Michigan, University of Melbourne, and Trinity College Dublin. Her international collaborative projects explore young people's musical and artistic engagement in ways that contribute to expansive learning opportunities, positive values, self-identities, learning relationships and cultural understandings. She is a Research Commissioner for the *International Society for Music Education* and Senior Editor of the book series *Research to Practice* (CMEA) and has published widely in the fields of music psychology and education. O'Neill can be reached at: 8888 University Drive, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada, V5A 1S6, Tel: (778) 782-4348, email: sao@sfu.ca.

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