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JACE is a peer-reviewed journal published twice each year that explores issues of artistry and creativity in contemporary research and teaching, and the interface between them. The journal seeks to promote praxis, to provide an evidence-based bridge between arts and artistic practice, creative practices in educational contexts, and learning research and theory in all these areas.

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REFLECTIONS FROM THE INTERSECTION OF THE PERSONAL AND THE PROFESSIONAL: HOW POETRY, ART OF THE EVERYDAY, AND ART FOR SOCIAL ACTIVISM INFORM THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM.

Wesley Imms

University of Melbourne

Wesley Imms is Senior Lecturer and Head of Visual Art Education at the University of Melbourne, Australia. While primarily a curriculum theorist, his multi-disciplinary research conflates issues concerning gender, teacher education, the utilization of new generation learning spaces, trans-disciplinary pedagogy, architecture, applied design, and teacher/artist issues.

This issue of JACE has no single focus. It does, however, own a repeating theme through the five articles concerning how curriculum is (and should) be impacted by 'the personal'. This is an important topic; in the arts we are aware that a disjuncture often exists between documented curriculum and actual practice. What we are asked to do and what transpires in the classroom can vary widely, often because formal curriculum does not meet the needs of individuals –students and teachers. As a result, in the arts teachers often resort to hybrid curricula and ignore approaches dictated by professional bodies (Gray & MacGregor, 1991). Each article in this issue in some way challenges the notion of curriculum being a rational structure of learning, instead being a journey where personal values and beliefs dictate how it is reified in classrooms.

Two papers explore this from a curriculum design perspective, and a further three from the perspective of teaching practice. Of the latter, the common question being explored is; how do teachers use their own artistic practise to inform, develop or analyse their professional practise? The articles present the compelling case that a teacher cannot remove her or himself from the reality of how curriculum converts to actual lived experience for arts participants. Our teaching practice becomes an integral part of our own 'being'; to be an educator is, in part, to accept that education shapes our life in ways not dissimilar to how, we hope, some of our students are enriched through our teaching.

Leggo addresses this theme in a succinct and reflective way. For him, being 'in love with language' is a way of explaining and exploring the life we experience as we teach. As with love, we encounter self-doubt, frustration, and unrealised possibilities. But we also are blessed with magic moments, accomplishments that come from the rare bond between our entities as educators and artists. When these are combined, our thoughts and actions can shape and enrich lives. Each poem in his article can be read as a phase in Leggo's development, from reluctant teacher to passionate educator, and each presents a window to experiences that have shaped his life and his teaching. In the process, Leggo explores some important concepts; poetry can be a first language; the educational conventions that we all encounter can certainly regulate, but they also facilitate questioning and searching; academe has the capacity to permit us to hide 'ourselves' behind abstractions,

robbing the world of our powerful personal stories; the practise of poetry is skill, craft, and art form combined; poetry must be lived, actualised; and that, eventually, being alive is to accept the frustration of unrealised ambition. Leggo does not want us to forget that teaching is about lived experience, and when embraced with passion and honesty, teaching 'will not let us go'.

Lipszyc continues Leggo's conversation in relation to the way poetry can inform self-evaluation of teaching practice. Hers is a complex and fascinating picture of the intertwining of writing and teaching, and leaves the reader with a clear sense that for Lipszyc, the two cannot be separated. This message is poignant when considered in tandem with Leggo's article, and those to follow, but where Leggo mostly writes reflectively about past experience, Lipszyc looks to the future to explore the possibility of poetry as a tool for professional and personal development. Through her beautifully crafted poems and insightful analysis of their meaning she acutely demonstrates the power of the written word and the magic of the poem. In the process, Lipszyc demonstrates a method for using artistic practice to examine, interrogate, and eventually link art and teaching.

Imms continues this theme from a visual art perspective. He reflects on the nature of his own artistic practice, and how this informs his beliefs about curriculum. To him, curriculum is simply a document, one that describes a structure; it is through the inhabitation, or lived experience of that structure that art curriculum actually comes into being. The reality of schools, Imms says, is that students pick and choose what and how they learn and in the process create for themselves a highly individualised educational 'space' that meets powerful personal needs. This is, he claims, not unlike the way we create, modify and inhabit our own dwellings. Curriculum is a formalised structure, but has no value unless inhabited, and it is within the nuances of that occupation that the nature of curriculum is realised. Likewise, lived environments are no more than a shell until occupied and inhabited, at which stage they become significant contributors to our well being and dreams of future happiness. In a manner reminiscent of Leggo's journey through teaching, and Lipszyc's self-interrogation, Imms describes how skills learned through his own art studies re-emerged years later to engage him in questioning the very nature and operation of 'curriculum'.

If these papers explore the intersection of the personal and the professional in terms of teacher-focused inquiry, the next two papers look to the practical, how curriculum is or should be implemented. Duncum's argument for a curriculum modelled on characteristics inherent to visual culture makes this point strongly. He reiterates the commanding argument that we live in a period of such acute change that we must match this with a wholesale reconceptualisation of curriculum. The quickly evolving, technologically charged cultures within which students live are creating a widening chasm between students' lives and the modernist principles imbedded in conventional curriculum. He argues that curriculum must be more flexible, personally relevant, and reflective of the types of lived experiences described so well by Leggo. His suggestions for future curriculum include principles touched on by Lipszyc; curriculum must be relational in that it links daily existence with learning experiences – and Imms; curriculum is only real when negotiated and inhabited by individuals.

Finally, Vamos describes a modest yet important foray into implementing curriculum under trying circumstances, the result of which was a significant reconceptualising of what art education is and should be. Austrian pre-service teachers designed and implemented a professional development exercise with teachers in a poverty-stricken region of Bangladesh. Theirs was an exercise in bringing what, to Western eyes, is fundamental practice to a part of our world where all resources (even down to rocks) are rare and valued, and where the notion of collaborative, student-directed learning is an unheard-of concept. Vamos describes succinctly and with great effect how this project had a three-way impact on how people view arts education curriculum. For the pre-service teachers, it was a sombre awakening to the realities of the massive differences in experience students around the world can have in education. For the teachers in Bangladesh it was a workshop of immense value, as it lifted their expectations beyond what had been previously seen as the norm. Finally, for the students, most of who rely on education as the only avenue out of abject poverty, the simple art activities opened doors to individualised learning within flexible curriculum. Vamos' article highlights the way teachers cannot be removed from the impact of what they teach, and they cannot really teach until they intersect with 'the edges' of our profession.

I would like to thank all the contributors to this issue of JACE for their professional, prompt and attentive work on the manuscripts, and to the JACE editorial team for their work under difficult circumstances as we try to simultaneously publish new issues and transfer the journal to its new home, jaceonline.com.au

Gray, J. & MacGregor, R. (1991). Studies of art teaching: Simple facts about complex activities. *Journal of Art & Design Education, 10*(3), 281-291.

DETOURS AND DISTRACTIONS:

Carl Leggo
University of British Columbia

Dr. Carl Leggo is a poet and professor at the University of British Columbia. His books include: Come-by-chance; Lifewriting as literary metissage and an ethos for our times (co-authored with Erika Hasebe-Ludt and Cynthia Chambers); Being with A/r/tography (co-edited with Stephanie Springgay, Rita L. Irwin, and Peter Gouzouasis); Creative expression, Creative education (co-edited with Robert Kelly); and Poetic inquiry: Vibrant voices in the social sciences (co-edited with Monica Prendergast and Pauline Sameshima).

IN LOVE WITH LANGUAGE

Abstract

I write about lived and living experiences. Much life writing is about seeking the themes and threads that hold our complex and tangled lives with some kind of textual integrity. What is perhaps most important is that we need to question and challenge the stories we tell in order to remain open to new stories. When I speak, even with regret about life and vocational decisions, I am not so much wishing I had made other decisions as acknowledging that the decisions I made were the ones I made. My whole teaching life has been devoted to living with integrity, hope, and creativity. I pursue wisdom in poetry, knowing daily that poetry must be practiced, embodied, contextualized, lived, and written in the places where I linger. I live in the world graphically, writing and written, perhaps sometimes more effectively and efficaciously than other times, but always in love with language.

Detours and distractions: In love with language

But what is it to have lived a life?
What does a life mean, lived?
(Moure, 2009, p. 249)

A Whiter Shade of Pale

while eating spaghetti and meatballs
with Rita, in the Bossa Restaurant
in Rovaniemi, Lapland, Finland,
talking about faculty politics
like a pile of tricks, I heard

A Whiter Shade of Pale

my life haunted by the tale
of a miller and a ghost conjured
in a dazed Procol Harum 60s anthem
I have heard countless times without ever
knowing how the lyrics defy interpretation

... the voice of play in the midst of things—
a playful singing in the midst of life...

(Aoki, 2005, p. 282)

I begin with a poem because poetry is my first language, not the only language I know or use to declare, interrogate, understand, and communicate experiences, emotions, and ideas, but definitely the language that flows with blood, and teases the imagination, and resonates with the hearts of others, and guides the spirit. I begin with a poem because poetry is like a faithful companion who journeys with me, full of wonder and hope, like the paraclete who comes alongside and stays close. I begin with a poem because like Barthes (1975), I am always seeking "a text where we can hear the grain of the throat, the patina of consonants, the voluptuousness of vowels, a whole carnal stereophony: the articulation of the body, of the tongue, not that of meaning, of language" (pp. 66-67). I begin with a poem because poetry is my best teacher. I begin with a poem because poetry teaches me to live and love.

Babble and Doodle

words as a perpetual pursuit
Italo Calvino

stretch words tight and taut so they twang
words wait between the lines to be called
these words, your words, more words, words

throw words in the air, seek shapes
words never let you go, always let you go
the world woven in the shadows of words

write the earth, one word after another
words open up expanding worlds
words, spoken here and there, for you

care about words, offered with care
words seek their way, light offered
the way into the haunted words

lay down words, linear and labyrinthine
words wind through the blood, no end
a parade of words, glad to be alive

laugh with wild words, dangers everywhere
words remember what can't be forgotten
words with the heart's beat, full of breath

host a surprise party for words
words don't always need punctuation
words, the hermeneut's heresy, a long quest

seek words that give you goose-bumps
words whisper secrets in shopping malls
scribbled words in gusts of wind

hold words tentatively, not with tentacles
words challenge grammar with glamour
words as a perpetual pursuit, full of yearning

We do not love, or look for love,
in a world of our own.
(Evans, 2003, p. 142)

In Traces, a collection of fragments, anecdotes, aphorisms, essays, and stories, which invite attention to traces as a mode of philosophy, Bloch (2006) notes that "life is a sorry tailor" (p. 22). And he asks, "how do we ever know who we are"? (p. 27) In turn, Bloch honours the way of detours and distractions: "To the dull, of course, every detour—in life as in scholarship—seems useless and foolish; they get only distraction from it. The mind that truly seeks treasures will go to the furthest place to hear the magic word that leads to them, and to find the key to what awaits him back home" (p. 107). Like Freire (1993), "I have lived my life with love" (p. 88). At least, that is my claim. I haven't really been very successful, but though I am growing old (seemingly faster and faster), I am still in process, still hopeful, still full of possibilities.

When I read Maguire's (1995) novel, Wicked: The life and times of the Wicked Witch of the West, I readily identified with Elphaba, the main character. An unnamed dwarf says about Elphaba: You "'are neither this nor that—or shall I say both this and that? Both of Oz and of the other world.... You are a half-breed, you are a new breed, you are a grafted limb, you are a dangerous anomaly. Always you were drawn to the composite creatures, the broken and reassembled, for that is what you are'" (p. 374). Like Elphaba, I never seem to belong.

English Teachers

ask questions without answers
breathe into the haunted word
care about words like a gift
dispel the dark that lingers outside
enthuse the alphabet with possibilities
find meaning like water in a desert
grip tentatively instead of with tentacles
host a surprise party for words
inscribe circles in the air for jumping through
join the parts of speech so there is speech

kiss language with tireless desire
laugh with wild scribbled words
meander in semantic geographies
nourish words that give you goose-bumps
organize a parade of words, glad to be alive
pry open words concealed in the lines
question everything and everyone
remember what cannot be forgotten
stretch words, tight and taut, till they twang
throw lines of letters in the air to seek shapes
utter the unspoken hopes that defy silence
verbalize the nuances that cling to grammar
write the earth in light and shadow
x the spot where singing begins
yearn to hear whispers in the blood
zip amidst the words that never let you go

Strange how you look back
and the journey makes sense
in hindsight.
(Mariani, 2002, p. 244)

I did not choose to be a teacher. In 1970 (grade 11, Herdman Collegiate, Corner Brook, Newfoundland) my school principal suggested that I ought to become a teacher, and I told him: NO WAY! The last thing in the world I wanted to be was a teacher. I wanted to be an astronomer, or a lawyer, or a politician, anything but a teacher. I only decided to take the Bachelor of Education degree after completing a Bachelor of Arts and four semesters of a Master of Arts in English literature. While studying for the MA, I experienced a personal spiritual revolution that opened up new adventures. I started thinking that I would like to be a Christian pastor. But by now I was financially broke. I had been married for almost two years. I no longer cared about the MA thesis I was writing. I needed a job and some money in order to make plans for the future. So, I completed the BEd from January to August, 1976. It wasn't easy to squeeze all the courses into the eight month period, but I succeeded.

The degree was fun. I began teaching in Robert's Arm, Newfoundland in September, 1976. My wife Lana started teaching in the same school, too. In my first year I taught forty-eight students in grade seven. I don't think I was a very good teacher. The first month was hellish. I felt like I was lost in a strange world. I was. But the strangeness of my new world was not only the strangeness of the classroom world. I was teaching in a school operated by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Newfoundland—fundamentalist and rule-governed and strict. I was twenty-three years old. I felt like I had parachuted into an alien world. But in some ways it did not matter because I planned to go back to university and train for the ministry. Lana and I saved our money and left Robert's Arm after two years. I was never at home in Robert's Arm. I was eager to leave. I recall on the second last day in Robert's Arm, I said to Lana, I am so glad to be leaving. I don't ever want to come back. She replied, Oh, our time here has been good. Later that evening my grade seven students surprised me with a party in the school gymnasium. I was reminded that though I was running away from teaching (or at least felt like I was), I had made an impact in my students' lives that I did not really know or understand. I had moved through their lives with a certain kind of eagerness to please them, to serve them, to be good for them (I do not know where that motivation comes from), and I had been good for them (for some of them at least) without even knowing how.

Another Fairy Tale

Once upon a time in school
I was taught every sentence has
a subject and a predicate verb,
the backbone to which modifiers
are attached, and ever since
I have been on a journey.

I am
a subject seeking a predicate
a predicate seeking a subject.

I am
a simple subject seeking modifiers
a predicate verb seeking complements.

Carl writes.
The sentence expresses a complete thought.
Is a thought ever complete?

Sad happy gentle angry generous selfish
amorous cold honest deceitful wise stupid
Carl writes.

Carl writes the story of his life quickly,
eagerly, painfully, insightfully, slowly
with little attention to truth or fairness.

Carl the subject and Carl the predicate
are modified, complemented, expanded,
but no more complete than Carl writes.

I was taught that a nominative absolute
with a participle expressed or understood
has the force of an adverb modifier,
but has no grammatical connection
with the rest of the sentence.

I still don't know
what a nominative absolute is,
but I feel like one,
connected and not connected.

Is writing all about writing
myself to wholeness,
seeking others to write me
to wholeness, to modify me
to completeness, a complete thought
in a complete sentence?

Perhaps best to keep it simple:
Carl writes.

Things get rationalized. Forgotten,
if you're lucky. But never undone.
(Wangersky, 2008, p. 219)

I left Robert's Arm and went to Toronto to study for the ministry. Lana was pregnant. I didn't fit well in the conservative world of the seminary. I'm not sure what I mean by not fitting well. I tried to be like all the people I saw around me, but I always felt very uncomfortable. Once again I had arrived in an alien place. Once again I felt like I was not brave enough to speak in my own voices. I was not reckless enough to express unpopular views. After two months in the seminary, I knew I didn't want to be a pastor. I was afraid a pastor had to be pasteurized. I applied to my old school board for a teaching job. I was offered a position in Stephenville where I stayed for six years. They were some of the unhappiest years of my life. I spent those six years (willfully and willingly and wiltingly) caught in the vortex of religious fundamentalism. But, as hard as I tried, I could not or would not fit in, and I certainly did not fit. I worked with a principal that I tried to support, but he was an incompetent person, and I now wish I had fought every hare-brained decision and policy he arrogantly declared and defended. But that's another story ....

I did not choose to be a teacher. Teaching chose me. Not only did teaching choose me, but teaching would not let me go. In many ways I do not think I am a good teacher. I don't even know what teaching is. I just want to invite people to grow in ways that they can take pleasure in. I taught high school for nine years. Amazing! Especially considering that for no more than three of those years did I ever have any intention of staying in teaching. And now here I am, fifty-seven years old, and I have never done anything but teach, and I expect to be a teacher all my life. (Irony is at the heart of the universe!) I did not choose teaching; teaching chose me. I have not consciously called out to teaching, but the call of teaching has been like a Siren that cannot be denied.

Left Turns

Corner Brook 1970, 1989

My high school principal said,
"You ought to be a teacher."
I said, "No way." Almost two
decades faded away. I
circled back to my old school,
the principal was retired, long
gone. I was a teacher.

St. John's 1970-1976

I never wanted to be a teacher.
I wanted to be an astronomer
and watch the heavens, or
a poet and write the heavens.
I took a vocational interests inventory.
I learned I ought to be a farrier,
even though I am scared of horses.

Robert's Arm 1976-1978

Broke, I slipped into teaching.
My first year I taught grade seven
with forty-eight students.
I woke up in an alien world,
a small place where everybody
knew God's mind on everything.
I tried to fit in. I didn't fit. I left.

Toronto 1978-1979

For the big city, a world alone, where
I planned to be a pastor, but after
two months of the cemetery-like
seminary, the call passed. So I left,

sure a pastor had to be pasteurized,
when I wanted to be impure, rough,
germy, germinating.

Stephenville 1979-1985

For a little school in a town on the ocean,
a small farm perhaps, a vocation and an avocation,
where I was determined to fit in, where
I taught with fire in my eyes and heart
till the school committee called me dangerous.
I was. I left.

Fredericton 1985-1987

and left

Edmonton 1987-1989

and left

Corner Brook 1989-1990

and left

Vancouver 1990-present

Still teaching, I have turned
a circle, round and round,
to know I am a teacher,
a farrier who shoes students
in order to shoo them away
with warnings to look both ways
before making left turns.

Want a different ethic?
Tell a different story.
(King, 2003, p. 164)

About reading a poem silently, Lee (2002) observes, "you do hear its aural dimension with your inner ear; and you do feel its kinaesthetic rhythms with your body sense—what I call your kintuition" (p. 129). I have been so busy learning the rules of domestication, learning to smile at the dean, learning to roll over with a hopeful grin, that my body has lost its suppleness, its elasticity, its readiness to leap. I have grown paunchy and punchy, with a heavy head like a ten-pin bowling ball, failing to heed the body in vain adoration of the heavy hard head. Poetry reminds me to linger, to listen, to learn to hear with kintuition. Like Lilburn (2002), "what I do is look, is listen as long as I can, as carefully, engage in a kind of auricular seeing" (p. 176).

Like Cixous (1998), "I write before myself by apprehension, with noncomprehension, the night vibrates, I see with my ears, I advance into the bosom of the world, hands in front, capturing the music with my palms,

until something breathes under the pen's beak" (p. 21).

Palmer (2004) thinks that "in spaces ranging from congregations to classrooms, we preach and teach, assert and argue, claim and proclaim, admonish and advise, and generally behave in ways that drive everything original and wild into hiding" (p. 59). Consider how conventions control our compositions. Conventions are typically understood as rules that govern the way writing ought to be done. But the word "convene" also means "to call together." In a sense writers call to one another, a chorus of voices, calling out, calling together. This notion of convention suggests that writers determine together the rules and standards and patterns that will constrain different kinds of writing, but this notion of convention also suggests that the rules and standards and patterns can be changed if enough people decide to change them. Therefore, the conventions of writing are flexible and fluid, not fixed and fast. So, I call out my poetry, not with any arrogant claims but as part of a vital process of questioning and searching.

Phony Euphony

ambling in ample academic addiction
babbling bubbling bumptious boasts
cuddle coddle the challenge of change
dazzle with a double dabble dribble
epistemologies & pissing mythologies
fat flatulence filled with flat fraudulence
grumble with gregarious grubby greed
humour a hidden hegemonic tumour
idols of ideology & idle ideologues
jump the juvenile jumble of jouissance
keen kinetics knowing kissing kinetosis
language languishes imitation limitation
message a massage in a messy mass age
noxious notoriety with nervy nonsense
oblique obligations & obtuse openings
peddle in prepositions & propositions
querulous quest for a queer question
razzle rattle riddle ripple rubble rebel
sadistic statistics staked to mistakes
tooting tottering in a tattered toupee
unaccountable ubiquitous ululation
vandalized & analyzed & scandalized
writhing in writing & righting wrongs
xenogenetic xylophonic xerophyte
yearning for yackety-yak on a yacht
zealous zanies on the ziggurat zenith

The limits of my language
mean the limits of my world.
(Wittgenstein, 1974, p. 68)

Like Le Guin (2000), "I had the good luck to learn early on that one of the things poems do is tell stories, which kept me from being afraid of them; and to learn (bodily, not intellectually, of course) that it's the beat that tells the story" (p. 148). I am committed to story-telling, but professors far more successful than me have shaped much of the academy as a place where stories are not welcome. As one renowned scholar at the University of British Columbia recently told a new doctoral student who plans to write autobiographically for her dissertation: "That's boring! Who would want to read that?!" Palmer (2004) claims that "instead of telling our vulnerable stories, we seek safety in abstractions, speaking to each other about our opinions, ideas, and beliefs rather than about our lives" (p. 123). According to Palmer, "academic culture blesses this practice" (p. 123). Perhaps we live too assiduously in abstraction, constantly distracted, failing to acknowledge the attractions all around us.

A publisher recently rejected one of my manuscripts and expressed his concern about a lack of academic rigour. I have been playing for years with notions of rigour mortis and vigour and Tigger-like wonder. But when I received the publisher's comment, I read at the same time my daily barrage of e-mail messages re. Viagra, and I realized that a charge of lacking academic rigour seems eerily like a complaint about "erectile dysfunction." So, now I want to write a paper about erotic and erogenous writing that rejects the erroneous arrogance of phallic fallacies and flatulent protestations of architectural Ziggurats that will eventually invite me to hail God.

Freddie

with his carrot red hair
and asthma and nose
like a leaky faucet
Freddie wasn't pretty,
a rusty crusty mess,
and in grade eight
a thousand times
a day he twisted
his head a perfect
180 degrees to see
Paula in the back
in her short skirt
that covered nothing, and
a few times I turned, too,
to check out the color
of Paula's underwear,
and Paula always stared
back like she was counting,
and the room was always
hot and hard, and
I remember Mrs. White,
at the blackboard,
the back of her blouse,
a gap where a button
had been missed or burst,
a glimpse of cream skin
and a black bra strap,
and the air was filled
with the pungent scent
of Dustbain used by the janitor
to keep the dust down

What you don't control is the spirit,
the voices, coming through you.
(Di Prima, 2001, p. 224)

So often I find myself caught up in apologizing for poetry. And so I have engaged in apologetics, the kind of rational and logical defense that C.S. Lewis provides for Christianity, a wordy process of declaring, declaiming, and defending my practices as a poet and scholar and teacher in the academy. But poetry must be unapologetic. Like Cixous (1998) I need to be constantly ready to grab the pulsations "in the instant they pass" or they "are lost forever" (p. 146).

For a few years, I have been ruminating on Brueggemann's (2001) notion of "prophetic imagination." With an imaginative turn of vocabulary, Brueggemann claims that "poetic imagination is the last way left in which to challenge and conflict the dominant reality" (p. 40). For Brueggemann, "the evocation of an alternative reality consists at least in part in the battle for language and the legitimization of a new rhetoric. The language of the empire is surely the language of managed reality, of production and schedule and market" (p. 18). Barthes (1975) recommends that "the text is (should be) that uninhibited person who shows his behind to the Political Father" (p. 53).

Logical?

analogical
biological
chronological
dialogical
ecological
futurological
geological
horological
ideological
jumpological
kinological
logical
meteorological
neurological
ontological
phenomenological
quinological

radiological
sociological
tautological
ufological
virological
waxological
xenological
yesological
zoological

Teleology is always
a retroactive illusion.
(Žižek, 1991, p. 78)

In *The fragmentary demand: An introduction to the philosophy of Jean-Luc Nancy*, James (2006) claims that Nancy's philosophy "unfolds as a decision to respond to the demand imposed by the multiple and the fragmentary" (p. 3). I recognize my own fascination, infatuation even, with the multiple and fragmentary. My texts are always open, not because I can't write closed texts, but because I don't want to. In Concerning the inner life Underhill (1999), a noted writer on mysticism and the first woman to lecture on theology at Oxford, writes: "to be spiritually alive means to be growin g and changing; not to settle down among a series of systematized beliefs and duties, but to endure and go on enduring the strains, conflicts and difficulties incident to development" (p. 29). I am always questioning, never satisfied, always confused, never re-solved.

As a poet, I understand philosophy etymologically as "the love of wisdom." Kingwell (1998) refers to his "colleagues in professional philosophy" as "expert in the techniques of bloodless analytic precision now so much in favor in the academic world" (p. 9). I have no expertise in "bloodless analytic precision." The poet and philosopher Zwicky (2002) writes about the poet's gift "for ontological attention" (p. 120). She expresses her wish that ontological attention "translated into political conscience," but she doesn't "think it does" because "politics is the art of compromising our capacity for ontological attention by exercising our capacity for systematic (criterial, justification-supplying) thought" (p. 120). She further explains that

"not everybody who has the capacity for ontological attention has the capacity for systematic thought; not everybody who has both has the discipline to live the compromise" (p. 120). I don't think I have "the capacity for systematic thought" or "the discipline to live the compromise." I'm not even sure my poetry is very good (whatever "good" is—one of the perennial philosophical questions). I am a seeker, lingering in the alphabet.

Curriculum Vitae

I am growing old
and life is seeping away
like the plume of ocean
a BC ferry writes
on the Gulf of Georgia

I grew up with men
who worked with their hands,
big gnarled hands
intimate with the seasons

I am growing old
and the past is so much more
expansive than any future I hope for,
and I'm not sad, just
wondering where
I have come from,
how I have arrived here

I grew up with men
like my father who could
pour concrete, wire a house,
install storm windows on winter's eve

I am growing old
and remembering how
in a cottage in York Harbour
for a year's sabbatical leave,
all my extensive curriculum vitae

of degrees, publications, awards,
a circle of long life,
could not fix the sump pump

I grew up with men
like Walter who always knew
what to do when the artesian well,
oil furnace, oven, refrigerator
all broke down

I am growing old
and my father is dead
and I linger on the bridge
between a rejected past
that might have been mine
and a future I sought
with manic obstinacy,
still wishing I knew
how to repair
a blocked septic tank

I look for resolution
and find none.
(Didion, 2006, p. 225)

So many teachers and students seek ways of being written into the world of schools as already written. They see their relations with school as established for them. They do not see themselves as writing the world of schools. Instead of looking for prediscursive selves that have already been determined for them, they need to write their subject positions in the over-determined discursive contexts of school. This is not an easy task, but I know no one who has ever claimed that dwelling in the pedagogic world of students and teachers is easy.

I write a lot about lived and living experiences. Much life writing is about seeking the themes and threads that hold our complex and tangled lives with some kind of textual integrity. What is perhaps most important is that we need to question and challenge the stories we tell in order to remain open to new stories. When I speak, even with regret about life and vocational decisions, I am not so much wishing I had made other decisions as acknowledging that the decisions I made were the ones I made. My whole teaching life has been devoted to living with integrity and hope and creativity. Arrien (2005) offers the kind of wisdom I seek to pursue:

> To become fully developed human beings, we must confront both our demons and our angels. If we can do this successfully, we free ourselves from the illusion of who we think we are. We are delivered into the mystery of our true, essential being and are able to generate a new domain of freedom that is anchored in wisdom, love, and faith. (p. 13)

I pursue wisdom in poetry, knowing daily that poetry must be practiced, actualized, embodied, incarnated, enfleshed, contextualized, lived, and written in the places where I linger. I live in the world graphically, writing and written, perhaps sometimes more effectively and efficaciously than other times, but always in love with language.

Thin Skin

I just wrote a good poem,
not this poem, another,
and called out to Lana,
I just wrote a good poem, I said,
but a nagging niggling voice,
(not Lana's, always supportive)
resounded, your poems aren't any good,
and while I don't really believe
my poems aren't any good,

I've been thinking a lot lately
I can't just simply ignore
the dismissive judgements of others
(even though I want to and suspect I will)
as I have for a long long time, decades even,
by insisting my poems are good,
at least according to me (their value
to be known one distant day like
Gertrude Stein knew the new poetry is
never appreciated for a long long time,
even a lifetime sometimes, even long
after the poet's death), and Mother A
said, you will never be a writer
and Lou said, your poems aren't very good
with the kind of fundamentalist authority
and eagerness for strict categorization,
even hubris, only a teacher can muster,
and an external reviewer for my promotion
said, his poems aren't very good,
and I have been rejected by all
the pre-eminent literary journals
in Canada, and most of the less
eminent ones too, and my last
royalty cheque still wasn't enough
for a big pizza at Sorrento's,
and I can't find my poems
in any bookstore in Corner Brook,
and even in Deer Lake airport
where I was sure my poetry was safe
from commentary and critique,
Joe Mercer said, the first book is better
than the second (I should
be glad Joe read both)
and I feel doomed that each
subsequent publication (if ever
there are any more, so uncertain)

will be worse than the last,
and certainly never as good as the first,
but in this cacophony of voices,
I wonder how my poems are being
judged (perhaps compared to Keats
and company, or perhaps compared
to an impressed gold standard of poetry
as if some king somewhere
has measured the distance
from his nose to his toes and knows
irrefutably a poem's goodness)
and all I know is I must not
lose confidence in my poems
any more than I will lose faith
in my heart beaten but beating still
with hope and humour, held close, knowing
well any poem, even mine, is better than none

Who have been the teachers of our hearts?
What are we learning about love?
What do we know about love?
(Arrien, 2005, p. 92)

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CHANGING ART EDUCATION TOWARD VISUAL CULTURE:

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THEORY AND PRACTICE

Abstract

Art education needs to change because today there exists a powerful symbiosis between technological innovations, new economic realities, and new social formations that are driving the production and consumption of an unprecedented number of largely commercial images. The author advocates the concept of visual culture because it offers the possibility of engaging with these developments in a way that the narrowly focused concept of fine art is not. Observing that visual culture had a rhizomic structure, the author further advocates classroom content conceived as rhizomic, as well as a dialogic pedagogy that combines play, social critique, and dialogue.

Rampley (2005) writes, "Art long ago ceased to be the most important visual expression of cultural identity" (p. 1). Instead, we are now living with the social affects of an unprecedented proliferation of commercial imagery. The way we live now -- especially the lives of our electronically connected students -- is very different from the world reflected by mainstream art educational practices, practices that continue to design curriculum on the basis of modernist elements and principles and the particular qualities of traditional media. Art education needs to change by adopting the concept of visual culture so that it is able to engage with a society where, for example, painting is no longer a socially significant cultural form. It needs to acknowledge changed social circumstances, especially the radically changed visual landscape of our students.

In this paper however, I can do no more than offer a glimpse of the way forward. The paper is an attempt to contribute to a conversation. My primary focus is a reconceptualiastion of both art curriculum structure and pedagogy commensurate with the experience and expectations of today's students whose lived experience is that of a proliferation of primarily popular imagery.

Why Change Now?

The Digital Revolution

In a 1995 book, Being Digital, its author Negroponte predicted it was shortly going to be possible to send high-resolution images, accompanied by sound, from any site on the Internet to any other site, to do so instantaneously, and moreover to be able to immediately modify and interact with such imagery. He even predicted the ability to watch moving images in real time sent from any other part of the globe. I read Negroponte's predictions in 1997 and at the time I had no idea what he was writing about; at the time most computers were still text only, and his predictions seemed utterly fanciful, to be no more than science fiction. How wrong I was. Now we all know that he foresaw the almost instantaneous interactivity of web 2.0, a development that is now a ubiquitous backdrop to the everyday lives of millions of people -- especially the young -- around the planet.

Negroponte went on to describe what would enable the developments he predicted. They are worth revisiting because they underscore just how much our world has changed in the past decade and a half. He outlined how, starting in the last years of the 20th century and over the span of five or so years, a number of countries were planning to send up five times the number of information satellites than had previously circled the globe. Presumably this meant the United States, Russia, China, India, and the European Union, and countries like Australia, without a space program, would have other countries send theirs up. At the same time, the coaxial cables that had for a hundred years lain across the beds of the world's oceans were to be replaced by fiber optic cables. Negroponte noted that the copper, coaxial cables that had enabled international telephone calls, later faxes, and then later still emails and other text based communication, were far less powerful than fiber optics. He informed his readers that a fiber optic the width of a human hair could carry the full load of an 8 foot wide copper coaxial cable; they would expand bandwidth 100,000 times. He confidently predicted that the integration of fiber optics combined with the greatly expanded capacity of satellite communications would enable a revolution in global communication through imagery, a revolution that would inaugurate a wholly new way of human relatedness. Negroponte wasn't fooling.

At no time in human history has it been possible to communicate instantaneously, with high-resolution images over the entire globe. In short, this technology has enabled an unprecedented proliferation of imagery that has, seemingly within the blink of an eye, completely revolutionized our visual landscape.

However, technology alone does not account for the kind of image revolution that we are experiencing; in the past, all kinds of inherently interesting technological innovations were never widely adopted (Featherstone & Burrows, 1994). Technology enables; it does not explain. Technological marvels fascinate us, but there needs to exist a need for them to be taken up and used widely.

Economic Imperatives

Although Marx overstated the determining power of the economy, the economy appears a highly significant factor (Williams, 1977), and the current phase of capitalism, namely fast and consumer capitalism (Agger, 2004), is a significant factor in considering the proliferation of imagery. For a capitalist economy to survive it must continually expand, and it can do so in only three broad ways. It can penetrate areas of social life that were previously uncommodified; for example, by turning schools into outlets for soft drinks and fast food. Or it can speed up the turnover time between the production, distribution, and use of goods. Or it can move from an economy based on the manufacture of long-lasting goods to one based on the provision of services and short-lived goods. Whether based on goods or services what is critical for continual expansion, and thus its survival, is that the goods and services are relatively ephemeral. Turnover time needs to be fast. Consider a television set. Normally one would expect it to last for at least 10 years and hopefully much longer, which nowadays is a very slow turnover time. But the life of a television program is often just one night. Capitalism now demands the production and consumption of ephemeral goods like electronic imagery, and thus the proliferation of such imagery is a godsend for capitalism.

If Marx overstated the determinative nature of the economy, he was nevertheless right in viewing capitalism as revolutionary, forever creating new ways of life in the process of destroying existing ways of life (Williams, 1977). The capitalism with which he was familiar, one based on the manufacture of goods, required above all else the internalization of thrift and sobriety and the internalization of personal identity as that of a worker. But today, in developed countries, as well as the middle class of developing countries, capitalism is founded on consumption, and an identity as a consumer has replaced that of the worker (jagodzinki, 2004). Their economies demand more and more ephemeral goods like electronic imagery. Having outsourced production to developing countries, the economies of developed nations no longer requires sobriety and thrift so much; instead, they rely upon hedonism to motivate hedonism. And thus does economic necessity dovetail with new social expectations and needs.

Social Expectations and Needs

Consumption has become a way of life; the good life is now the goods life. In the past the symbolic value of goods often trumped both their exchange value and their use value (Duncum, 2007). People often bought items irrespective of their price or how well they operated because they associated goods with the cultural and social capital with which they identified. This continues apace, but now something else has been added. In fully embracing a hedonistic, consumer identity, many people, loaded with disposable income, now consume for the sake of consumption. So habituated to consuming, symbolic value has been replaced simply by the drive to consume (jagodzinki, 2004). More is simply better. We expect more stuff, more and more. As a society, we demand it. Part of this demand is due to having been habituated to the ever new, but another major factor is that commercial culture increasingly supplies our reference points for living. It is not only that we increasingly see ourselves as consumers; it is that we increasingly look to the media to find out how to live. Thus we not only have expectations of the media, but also we have a real need for it.

Reliance on commercial culture goes hand in hand with the erosion and/or breakdown of more traditional sources of authority such as the church, governments, unions, class, and the family. Where once we looked to these institutions and formations to provide a sense of ourselves, increasingly we turn to the media. With globalization, even a sense of nationality has eroded. Now, in what is in many ways post-traditional societies, the self has become a project to be constantly remade (Giddens, 1991). We now make ourselves in the way we have thought of art being made. The self has become one's own, life-long project, and as part of our daily existence commercial media is always there to inform us what others believe about what is good and evil, who is good and who is evil, who to trust and who not to trust, how it is possible to be happy, and so on. Commercial media offers us a buffet of beliefs and values from which to cobble together whatever works for us.

The proliferation of imagery and the embrace of a consumer culture are each highly problematic. The mass media offer both the values of the market place and of mainstream social beliefs. Televison's principle message is to consume; happiness is achieved through the acquisitions of goods and the use of commercial services. Marx would not have been surprised that the primary message of major forms of communication media today echo the primary need of a consumer economy; that is, that happiness can be purchased through uninterrupted consumption. Thus the hedonistic identity of an individual consumer is pitted against the broader social necessity of collective responsibility. (This is not even to mention the ultimate futility of finding happiness in the acquisition of material goods.) And intertwined with the message of consumption are representations that reinforce existing social positions that are often sexist, racist, xenophobic, homophobic, that marginalize and objectify the mentally ill and the physically challenged, and so on. Visual images wrap these ideologies in humor and appeal to our senses in ways that makes it difficult to reject them because that would be to reject the pleasure they offer (Walker & Chaplin, 1997). Aesthetic appeals, whether they are made through beauty, the sublime, or even the ugly chic, are employed to candy coat ideas that might otherwise be questioned. Aesthetics as sensory lure plays the role it always has -- serving the inculcation of ideology -- though now on an unprecedented scale (Duncum, 2008).

In summary, while the proliferation of imagery is enabled by the emerging technologies, it is also being driven by a combination of economic necessity and human needs that are grounded in new social arrangements. The new technologies have enabled an unprecedented saturation of imagery, a capitalist economy demands such ephemeral goods for its very survival, and we as humans, set adrift without the reference points that served our parents and grandparents, increasingly reply upon images to develop normative values by which to live. This powerful symbiosis means that even in developing countries with an affluent middle class, many people now live in a vastly changed world from 50 or even 15 years ago.

In Practice

Curriculum Content

Given the changed circumstances in which we now all live many art educators have argued that the content of art education should more properly be that of visual culture. This includes art educators in the United States (e.g., Duncum, 2002; Freedman, 2003; Tavin, 2003), Europe (e. g., Illeris, 2008; Vidiella & Hernandez, 2006), Asia (e. g., Park, 2006), Africa (e.g., Lauwrens, 2005), and Latin America (e.g., Dias, 2006). The field of Visual Culture Studies (e. g., Barnard, 1998; Sturken & Cartwright, 2009; Walker & Chaplin, 1997) from which these art educators are borrowing, is informed by critical theory (e.g., Rush, 2001), which, in turn, is comprised of various fields of study. In addition to art history and philosophical aesthetics, the field of Visual Culture Studies includes, for example, post-colonial studies, race studies, queer studies, and feminist studies. Despite the breath of this coalition, a common thread running through all critical theory is that all forms of representation are always a major contributing factor to social struggles. Images are viewed as tactics of power employed by competing social factions in their struggle over the legitimacy of values and beliefs. In a hierarchical and pluralistic society, these contestations are not only important to the decisions a society takes, but are also almost always richly complex and often they are contradictory. Always images play a part in struggles over meaning, legitimating existing views and the power structures they support, contesting those views, or embodying ambivalence and contradiction. Moreover, in appealing to the senses and the emotions, images have profound influence. At the same time, viewers have the power to negotiate and/or resist preferred meanings and create their own.

This approach differs from traditional humanistic approaches that understood art to be an expression of an essentialized, unproblematic humanity, so that the subject matter differs from a modernist art

education that focuses almost exclusively on fine art. Visual culture is very inclusive. It embraces the fine arts alongside the plethora of vernacular and mass media imagery, contemporary electronic imagery as well as the entire history of imagery produced and employed by human cultures.

Moreover, images are understood to influence one another, to be intertextual. Following Deleuze and Guattari (1989), Brent Wilson (2000) points to the rhizomic structure of visual culture insofar as it both lacks a core and is endlessly expandable. It has the structure of grass. With visual culture, an image is connected to another image, which, in turn, is connected to another, and images are connected to literature, poems, song lyrics, and philosophies of life. Like the Internet -- itself a rhizome -- visual culture lacks both a centre and a linear structure. One does not travel through visual culture so much as wander about amongst it. This is quite unlike the modernist understanding of the elements and principles that need to be introduced before attempting to study art history or the issues with which art deals. Instead, visual culture spreads from one idea, image, issue, text, and so on to another by association. One thing leads to another and then another.

Curriculum Structure

It follows that curriculum should be based on the nature of visual culture. Whereas the modernist curriculum was based on a linear structure of simple to complex, including from elements and principles to history and issues, a curriculum that reflects the rhizomic structure of visual culture will start anywhere, with an image or genre, the representation of a theme, a controversy, or a question.

Marjorie Wilson (2000) was perhaps the first person in art education to experiment with the possibilities of rhizomic structures. During the mid 1990s in her graduate class at Pennsylvania State University, she introduced graduate students to the computer program StorySpace. The program employed an exceptionally flexible use of hyperlinking, which enabled a complex web of associations to be made, first by the maker and then rearranged by each user in his or her own way. By

combining and juxtaposing images, text, sound effects, music, and so on, students were able to make one association after another, and, in turn, every user was able to make their own combinations and so create ever new meanings. She writes of one student:

> Dave was concerned with the cultural influence of the machine and technology in the work of artists from Rube Goldberg and Jean Tinguely and the more contemporary Rebecca Horn to representations of the power of the machine in popular media from William Gibson's Neuromancer in fiction to film: Fritz Lang's Metropolis and Ridley Scott's Blade Runner to television's Max Headroom. (pp. 93-94)

Many of Wilson's students were neophyte artists and so they also included their own work-in-progress, which was simultaneously influenced by and a further inspiration for their hypertext.

Wilson's exercise illustrates one of the principles characteristics of a Visual Culture Studies approach to art education, namely the implosion of contemporary art with contemporary popular culture. The following examples also illustrate other chief characteristics of the approach. They acknowledge that popular culture dominates student's lives, and that images are embedded in social issues and social justice.

Employing the same technology but starting with popular imagery rather than fine art work, her students - notably Tavin, Carpenter, and Taylor - developed their own hyperlinked sites, which in turn they introduced to their students. Tavin (2002) used an advertisement for Diesel Jeans which reworked an iconic photograph from the Yalta conference during World War 11. The black and white photograph of Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin had been photoshoped to include jean-clad, young female models provocatively draped over the allied leaders. Tavin was able to link the image to any number of historical events, the biography of the leaders, new technologies, documentary photography, and today's commercial culture. In turn, one of Tavin's undergraduate students produced a hypertext that began with a Nike advertisement and went on to explore many issues, including celebrities in sport, global trade, and sweatshop labor.

Taylor and Carpenter (2002) began not with an image but a theme: Sharing a place called home. Their undergraduate, preservice teachers developed webs that examined such questions as: What constitutes a home? Who lives there? What is homelessness? The students examined both historical and contemporary artists, popular references such as advertising commercials and movie clips, poems, and newspaper articles. Then students individually developed lesson plans using the class web as both a starting point and as a model for their own teaching. One student started with a sculpture of a human shrouded in a blanket and linked it to a man sleeping on a park bench as well as writings on invisibility. With the goal of putting a face on homelessness, the student linked to data on homelessness, photographs of displaced people, and a world map showing displaced people's camps. Another student linked Norman Rockwell's idealized illustrations of families to house pets and house pets to the value of animals in other cultures such as the sacredness of cows in Hinduism. The students then responded by the production of their own images in a variety of media.

In the above cases StorySpace enabled great flexibility, but the program is expensive and does not work well on all computers. So when I began this work I employed the less flexible, yet readily available PowerPoint program. Using this program to produce a rhizome is somewhat ironic because its primary structure is linear, but we learnt to fully exploit the hyperlink facility of the program. My class of art education pre-service, student teachers began with an image, popular or fine art, and made connections on the basis of three themes evoked by their chosen image. For example, one student chose an advertisement for watches that included a very young Marylyn Monroe in a swimsuit. She linked this to advertising; the history of watches; the history of pin ups; and the Caucasian ideal body image, which she compared with ideal bodies types in other cultures. This student, who often dressed like Monroe, appeared to be exploring her own identity. This example specifically illustrates the Visual Culture stress on the post-traditional search for identity among media representations.

However, it is not necessary to employ a computer to create an intertext. A low tech version is equally possible. Herrmann (2006) used string, tape and a large chalkboard to create an intertext based on the then current TV program The Swan. This was a so-called reality show where women chosen as "ugly ducklings" underwent a make-over involving plastic surgery, dentistry and life counseling, to emerge as beautiful swans. Having watched several programs both in and out of class, her students - undergraduate, primary generalist student teachers - made a list of the ideas and other aspects of popular culture they associated with the show. Their list included:

> MTV's Famous Face; history of beauty pageants; eating disorders; Michael Jackson's history of plastic surgery; liposuction; body image; diets... the influence of media stars on children; parental expectations; and childhood self-image. (pp. 145-146).

Herrmann taped the logo of the show in the centre of a pin board, and using string students linked their ideas to the logo and then linked their ideas to one another as they discovered conceptual, historical and/or geographic connections. As their teacher with some knowledge of contemporary art, Herrmann then made her own links to images by a range of artists who also addressed issues of beauty, the body, and self-image. Discussion ensued, justifying the links and raising questions: What is beauty? Is it universal? Who decides what is beautiful? And so on. The discussion led students to make their own artistic responses, which raised further questions about beauty. Again, this example exemplifies the dominant position of popular culture in student life, the intertextual nature of images, and a reflective, questioning approach to images.

Following Herrmann's lead, I have employed the same technology with a variety of starting points. I began by asking my foundation art education undergraduate students what was "hot", that is, what was the most recent thing grabbling their attention. One class chose the television program Gossip Girls. Then, like Herrmann's class, we made a list of the associations students had with the program. The list included: Celebrity, the paparazzi, portraits, diets, beauty, bizarre body shapes, advertising, family, and social class. Students were

assigned to bring in pictures of each subject along with definitions and commentary. Using push pins on a large pin board, I attached a print-out of the Gossip Girls homepage website, and the students pinned up their material, linking it with one colored woolen yarn to my picture, and with another colored yarn they linked their issues to each other. The students who had gathered images of social class had labeled homeless people as low class and this lead to a discussion on the adequacy of this pre-conception. Students swapped stories and laughed about their own ideas. The students who had pinned up pictures of girls had labeled them good and bad; young girls smiling and eating ice cream were understood as good, but teenage girls drinking and smoking were seen as bad. This too led to a discussion on the normative values we each carry around in our heads and do not normally examine unless they are visually manifest in the way this exercised allowed. And again, discussion ensued that was as humorous as it was serious. The students then responded to the discussion by making their own short movies.

This final example again illustrates key components of a Visual Culture Studies art education: the current proliferation of popular imagery; the central importance of popular imagery in informing and helping to form student values and beliefs; images as intertexually, rhizomically connected; and the need for students to reflect critically upon their otherwise taken for granted assumptions.

Classroom Pedagogy

Humor was important because pleasure is an essential part of the appeal of popular culture. Consequently, something of the fun and even the transgressive pleasure that students derive from popular culture must be included as an ingredient of pedagogy. Otherwise a major feature of why mass, commercial culture is popular is denied. For this reason Buckingham (2003) advocates "playful forms of pedagogy that engage directly with young people's emotional investments in the media and with their sense of agency" (p. 5). This means offering some license to student's own transgression (Duncum, 2009).

Equally, as in the examples above, it is crucial to establish a critical stance towards popular culture. Otherwise teachers would merely

acquiesce in the face of the hedonism of the market place and fail to address the antisocial values and beliefs of much mass culture. On the one hand, a teacher cannot in clear conscience submit to an-everything-goes policy where serious social issues such as sexism, racism, homophobia, classism, and so on, go unaddressed. On the other hand, an unrelieved critical approach will send students' pleasure-taking underground. Studying popular imagery will backfire if students perceive it as a purely academic exercise; it will certainly fail to influence either their beliefs or behavior beyond the classroom. Students will learn the language of critical critique and regurgitate it in order to please and pass, but they will never allow it to touch their lives.

Maintaining this difficult balance between these competing concerns -- between critique and play -- can only be achieved through dialogue in open discussion between students and teachers (Duncum, 2009). With a dialogic pedagogy ideas bounce around in search of coherence and where teachers learn as much as their students. A safe space needs to be opened up so that students will feel able to express themselves while respecting their teachers' views. The goal of a dialogic pedagogy that incorporates fun and critique is not to provide definitive answers but to raise questions, to uncover dilemmas, and continue a conversation. It rests on a belief in the agency of students and faith in their capacity ultimately to make ethical decisions.

Not a Conclusion

To use a metaphor from the technology of a bygone era, in this paper I have attempted no more than a pencil sketch. I have not offered a blueprint, only guidelines and examples for consideration. Yet, however sketchy, one thing should be perfectly clear to any observer today: Marx was right to consider capitalism revolutionary. For good and/or ill capitalism incessantly creates new ways of life, and in its wake it leaves behind older ways of living. It leaves them behind in ruins, leaving it up to us whether it destroys art education. Certainly, art education cannot hope to survive as it does today. To survive it must adapt to our vastly changed social circumstances. It can do this first by acknowledging the proliferation of commercial imagery that

increasingly people turn to for references for living; secondly, by embracing the rhizomic nature of imagery; and thirdly, by adopting a pedagogy of dialogue that seeks to balance pleasure with critique.

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THE RELATIONAL SELF

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STUDENT/TEACHER MOTIF IN THREE SELF-PENNED POEMS

Abstract

In this article, I examine how teaching and writing intersect imaginatively in the production of lyrical poems. As my personal and professional knowledge converges, the teacher informs the writer as the writer informs the teacher. Teaching has become not only a source of livelihood for me but a source of writing about the experience I share with students, an experience whose context of power I question. I take the reader to three sites of teaching and learning in this inquiry, presenting an arc of experience upon which I base the subject of three corresponding poems. What I observe, hear, demonstrate and learn in the classroom constitutes what Nadine Gordimer calls "the stuff of my life". I, then, empathically and imaginatively transform the experience, find and recreate through symbol and imagery. Composing the poems from felt and lived experience in the classroom, I uncover teaching values, glean multiple meanings, and gain an empathic connectedness to students. The mode of knowing, born of the imagination, is essential to my development as teacher, writer and relational self.

We do not choose themes because they are topical or timely, they choose us because they are the very stuff of our lives (Gordimer, qtd in Berman 2004, p.30).

Overview: The Double Helix of Writing and Teaching

My teaching and writing practices have led me to inquiry, to seek an understanding of how these two complex practices and vital themes of my life coalesce. Since I will be working with the language of poetry in this inquiry, I begin with an image to represent these two strands, namely, Pamela Grossman's "double helix", whose two praxis "play off each other, spiralling toward an integrated whole" (1990, p.120). I conduct this double-braided self-study, then, of the poet I have become through the social act of teaching, and the teacher I am and aspire to become through writing poems.

In essence, I teach, write about teaching in a poetic mode, explore interactions with students to make more explicit and clarify how I practice. Then, I go back to teaching, informed by the insights the writing imparts, insights I hope to share in this inquiry. The ongoing dual practice cultivates my writing voice too, which shapes and is shaped by my social interaction with students. I work, then, with the oscillating pattern of the helix in this inquiry, putting into play a rhythmic motion between the two practices whose elements impact one another. In bridging these two personal and professional practices, the overarching questions of the inquiry read as follows: **What is the educative value of writing poems about my teaching practice? What insights can I glean for the betterment of my students and my self?**

I invite my readers into this inquiry by grounding them in the "milieu" of the writer (Merriam 1990, p.109). To that end, I will provide context to the poems with narrative vignettes that situate the reader in the scenes where particular teaching and learning events occurred; I will evoke those scenes using imagery, metaphor, tone shifts and dramatic recall in the poems I compose (Richardson 2000; Bochner & Ellis 2000); and I will reflect on and interpret the learning conditions

I created and facilitated as illustrated in the poems. By giving readers a glimpse into "subjective pieces of my life" (Barone 2000, ix), I ask them to recognize truths about their own teaching practices.

Three Poems and their Genesis

As a poet, my palette is the page, my material, "the pluck and string of words that rebound." Composing, I "mount lines/ like weight-bearing beams across the roof/of verses" (Lipszyc 2010, p.86).[1] And the verses highlighted in the three poems of this inquiry emanate from my former classrooms. In the first and second self-penned poems, "Teaching ESL" and "Little Red Riding Hood in the Writing Classroom," my readers view images and co-participate vicariously in two past classes: the first, an adult ESL/Literacy, non-credit class from my early teaching career; the second, a Grade 12 creative writing class situated some ten years later. In the opening autobiographical poem, I am uncertain about the pedagogy I practice and the power I wield over new immigrant students. In the second poem, which involves an adolescent native English class in expressive writing, I am a more experienced teacher who struggles with a rebellious and disengaged learner. Reviving moments through poetic memory in both these poems, I question if I am indeed building a community of shared values, one where my students and I engage in respectful dialogue to meet joint needs (Noddings 2002; Britzman, 1991).

In the third poem, "Brooke on Her Birthday," the reader shifts his or her eyes to a refracted light, away from me as the practicing teacher. In place of assuming first-person voice, I am an observer who witnesses an adolescent, a member of my extended family, role play teaching to an imagined classroom of students. Unknowingly, she played to me, the arts-based practitioner and writer, who came upon the resonant scene and reconstructed it.

Analyzing the poems, I will locate and distil values that were integral to my evolving teaching philosophy as a doctoral student of education, and which I currently apply in my university teaching life as an assistant professor of teacher education.

[1] These phrases come from the poem" Pursuit" in a collection entitled Singing Me Home, published by Inanna Publications, 2010. All three poems quoted in this inquiry were published in this, my book of poetry.

In Search of the Relational Self

At the epicentre of my teaching philosophy is the facet of self which surfaces prominently across these converging disciplines: the relational self. Multifaceted, the relational self lives firstly in a teacher's desire to be and engage with students. **The relational model is interactive and reciprocal, embodied in the chain reaction of a classroom's questions and answers, in teachers and students learning from one another, and in the connections teachers make and the rapport they build with students** (Berman 2004). When writing about this interaction, I listen explicitly for the cadence and texture of my students' voices, my participant's, and my own, in order to convey an authenticity of sound and meaning in the poems (Lawrence-Lightfoot 1997). The relational self is enriched, as well, by my ability as a teacher to observe, reflect upon and critically examine my pedagogy and interaction with students. Clandinin & Connelly (1995) further propose that writing poetry is a relational act in and of itself since the active construction of a poem is educative.

Framing the Inquiry: Researcher's Challenges

In creating and analyzing the poems, and reflecting on the practice they embody, I will look through a wider lens that incorporates a range of perspectives. Through that vista, I may potentially perceive and know some of the apprehension, the crisis and the spontaneity that comes with teaching.

What truth I glean in this research will be dependent upon my capacity to "notice, understand and appraise" what happened in the different language arts classrooms I re enact (Barone & Eisner, 1988, 1997, p.85). The meaning I make as I engage in these recursive and interconnected processes will not be unitary (Britzman 1991; Clark 1995). Reflecting on and writing about my classroom practice will be a dynamic and multi-dimensional act if I am to re-conceptualize my knowledge and make new sense of some of the uncertainties, conflicts, and novelties I experience (Beattie 1995; Schon 1987, 1985).

Translating my personal reflection in an evocative written form is a challenge I embrace. As Britzman (1991) informs, teaching like

writing narrative or poetry can be a "struggle for voice" (p.23). For the benefit of self and students, I must choose significant causes and conditions of classroom learning as the subject of the poems, find the best choice of words and tone to communicate the meaning I make about those lived experiences in the classroom, (in other words, make aesthetic judgments about the quality of the poems), and lastly, I must estimate the relative degree of success of learning when reflecting on the meaning the poems make (Clark 1995; Dewey, qtd by Schon 1987, p.312).

The methodology of this autobiographical inquiry mirrors the personalized nature of this text, bonding the personal to the cultural (Ellis & Bochner 2000; Diamond & Mullen 1999). With one exception, I am the primary instrument for data collection, analysis, and creation of the data which includes reflection, writing stories as context and poems. Only the last poem and analysis expands into auto ethnography. Included in that latter part of the inquiry is the voice of the participant, my niece, who responds to post-writing questions I raise on-line about the meaning she now makes of the poem. In this reflection, the subject of the poem speaks, thinks and writes back with her own agency and sensibility, "cast[ing] her story in her own terms" (Charmaz 2000, p.525). Her answers provide a glance into both her real and imagined adolescent life, into long-term goals she has set, and values she carries as a young woman.

I draw from a repository of arts-based teacher inquiry, researchers who value that research which must be evocative to persuade, and which openly shares the personal through multi-formed texts of narrative, reflective writing, and poetry (Barone 2000; Barone & Eisner 1988; 1997; Richardson 2000; Lawrence-Lightfoot 1997; Britzman 1991; Clandinin & Connelly 1995).

To build a learning community with shared values is central to the relational teacher (Noddings 2002) who must negotiate and developinterpersonal knowledge (Fairclough 1995). And when the social and political relationships between individuals in the classroom invariably hurt rather than help (Lemke Intro, 1995), I hope to uncover how activating poetic memory and writing poems mediates that tension and deepens my understanding of teaching. In

alliance with Freeman's work on hindsight (2010), and his belief in the potential of poetry to provide alternative meanings and to bring to light "the potential that experience bears within it" (p.65), I will evaluate my capacity as a teacher and a learner to modify my future teaching environment for the better.

Booth (1994) and Green (2009) encourage teachers like my self to create a potential space via the arts with which to see the 'other' through a clearer, more expansive lens, in other words, to see as a relational self. Through the reflective and imaginative writing in this inquiry, I explore the relational facets of self in the poems for their moral and educational implications about the practice and art of teaching.

An Interactive Profile of Myself and Literacy/ESL Learners

Teaching ESL (at a Branch of Shopper's World)

I greet the faces of my students
on the ice tip of the 21st century,
in a tower of Babel
(a branch of Shopper's World
in Northern Etobicoke)
within walking distance of high-rise
ghettoes for the dislocated.

Outside classrooms,
young and old men huddle
in brotherhoods of leisure,
backs against obsolete storefronts.

I venture into the phonetic den,
tongue and teeth tripping over
consonant clusters, spattering
surnames like melon seeds.

On the seventh day,
I recreate phonemes on black boards
as my students retrieve meaning like a bone
and bring-it-back-Rover.

I attach a finder's fee
in the form of a word
and chain it to a tree.
Because they must later recover the word
in order to call it learning.

Occasionally, I drip dry
the color from our lives
With my white chalk pellets,
pull out the arsenal:
the yes-no questions
the infamous 'do' prong,
and flashing a gallery of visual aids -
mug shots, I prod and cue.

Until their eyes
flash in recognition — a moonbeam
across thin lifeless walls.

Until their mouths
curve in satisfaction,
and they shout out,
and their arms bob up,
like winners at a local Bingo game.

Pirates, we dig up gold - the stem of words
and barter in lingua franca.

Surgeons of syntax,
we repair language
with needle and thread.

And when we conjugate
past and present, we sense
how our lives move one tense to another,
turning over and back again like a coda
around this undefeated planet

(Lipszyc 2010, pp.59-61)

During my first full-time and contractual teaching position, I was employed by the federally-funded LINC program.[2] The continuing education program was situated in a densely populated, economically challenged northern suburb of Toronto. Early in the poem, I refer to social, material and political conditions of the Literacy/ESL community I teach (Lemke 1995) as "a tower of Babel/ a branch of Shopper's World/ in Northern Etobicoke/ within walking distance of high-rise/ghettoes for the dislocated" (Lipszyc 2010, p.59). At the start of a day, I watch from a somewhat critical distance as unemployed young and old men huddle against the outdated storefronts of a suburban mall. The poem situates me in a vicinity of Toronto teeming with newly-arrived immigrants who have brought few resources with which to start a new life in a new tongue.

Classrooms were painted enamel white, and our makeshift walls transported a cacophony of sound, bouncing voices back and forth in a stream of potential miscommunication. I felt both empowered and overwhelmed by the responsibility I was given. With minimal training in special needs, I was hired to teach adult students literacy skills in a second language. A clear inequity existed; I spoke the language of means in the province to which my students had recently immigrated as illiterate refugees.

In the poem, I articulate and question the context of my power in concert with the socio-cultural process, relations and change in the classroom (Fairclough 1995). In the excerpt below, my students' vulnerability is implicit in the social space that exists between us, a space I recreate figuratively in an effort to narrow the distance. I aim to equalize that power in small measure by acknowledging my mispronunciation of students' foreign names, surnames that come from languages I cannot speak.

I venture into the phonetic den,
tongue and teeth tripping over
consonant clusters - spattering
surnames like melon seeds.

(Lipszyc 2010, p. 59)

[2] acronym for Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada

Accessing the poetic mode as a means of reflective practice, I question the element of rote in my pedagogy as I cue students to form syntactic structures and reinforce learning of vocabulary in Rover-like fashion. Unable to read in their native tongues, students possessed few learning strategies with which to negotiate the acquisition of a second language.

As the poem moves to its final stanzas, the relational facets of self sound more prominently. Students animate the benign physical surroundings when learning strikes hot, when "their eyes flash in recognition - a moonbeam across thin lifeless walls" (Lipszyc 2010, p.60). This contrasting imagery "animates the heart" (Green 2009, p.116) transforming what was less tolerable to something meaningful. Via the imaginative act of writing the poem and "interpersonal reasoning" which Nel Noddings refers to as the "rationality of caring" (1991, p.165), I come to value my relationship with students who, along with me, "dig up the stem of words" (Lipszyc 2010, p.60). As the poem comes to a close, I inject a dose of playfulness about my vocation and move to the inclusive 'we' pronoun which denotes partnership and reciprocity. Students learn in a classroom community, trading and sharing their language bits so that they can communicate with one another. The alliterative phrase "surgeons of syntax" emphasizes our joint effort to learn through a careful stitching of the spoken and written word (Lipszyc 2010, p.61).

At the poem's closing stanza, I respond to the whole ESL/Literacy student and connect in a responsive way, not merely abstracting about cultural practices that are foreign to me or about the linguistic needs of my students. My image of a second language literacy teacher extends beyond meeting L2 literacy learning outcomes. The time line between past, present and future is connected insofar as my students' identities and my identity are reconstructed. The poem ends on what we share in common and on our collective resilience. In a paradox central to teaching, the process of being a more thoughtful, autonomous ESL Literacy teacher/writer could only be achieved with my students (Clark 1995).

And when we conjugate
past and present, we sense
how our lives move one tense to another,
turning over and back again like a coda
around this undefeated planet.

(Lipszyc 2010, p. 61).

I discovered on my first full-time teaching position what Martin Buber wrote, that growth in the self is accomplished in the relational between the one and the other... in the knowledge that one is made present in his own self by the other – together with the mutuality of acceptance and confirmation" (qtd in Witherell 1991, p.86).

Watching my ESL students, who were respectful of the learning process, I apprehended their expectations of me. I was the teacher who would shed light on the tongue-twisting and mystifying English language. While I was eager to share what expertise I had in English, I reflect on our shared experience no less respectfully because I inject humour in the telling. In reading the poem now, I am reminded of how both fragile and rich the relational aspects of teaching are.

Relational Self in Crisis: Poem born from a Fairy-Tale Unit

What happens when our capacity as teachers to talk appreciatively with students is stunted, when students and teacher don't build on each other's confidence and self-esteem, or jointly discover a common interest that can lead to balanced agreement? (Noddings 1991). In the next poem, "Little Red Riding Hood in the Writing Classroom", I re-enact a Grade 12 Writers' Craft class where a tension exists between a student and me. Teaching doesn't come with guarantees; in a creative writing classroom which fuses "soul and matter", McEady argues that unexpected moments of "relational mistakes" or dissonances can likely surface (2009, p.61).

Specifically, the class at-hand was critically examining the fairy tale "Cinderella" across generations, with a focus on the gender roles and identities Cinderella assumed. I hoped students would reflect upon and confront gender assumptions that may have been embedded or culturally absorbed by them (Jehlen 1990; Greenblatt 1990). One of

the pre-writing models alluded to in the following poem is Perrault's version of the tale, written during Louis XIV's reign in France and popularized by Disney. Perrault's is the portrayal of an archetypal patient and beautiful girl redeemed by marriage, a girl who adheres to upper-class French societal standards. Students then contrasted that popular take with the less civilized Grimms Brothers' version, "Aschenputtel," published in Berlin in 1857, where they uncovered the mythical element of the twig and the graphic punishment of the step-sisters. After reading a number of models, students reconstructed their own modern fairy tales as cultural spokespersons of their generation.

I first approached the writing of this poem about the class with unease. If I was going to be honest with the reader, which I necessarily had to be, I needed to disclose what Deborah Britzman calls a more "private aspect of pedagogy," where I concede to the vulnerability and lack of credibility I sometimes feel as a teacher, and where I grapple with "competing definitions of success and failure" (1991, pp.4-5). My interactions with the student, whom I named Natalie, seemed always to exist in a context of her resistance to me. Natalie was a gifted writer and visual artist, whom I now think, in hindsight, divulged parts of herself through her writing she may not have been comfortable sharing in the context of the classroom.

Writing reveals our interests, our obsessions and, as such, they surface in the texts we write. At the very outset of my teaching career, how I perceived and managed power intrigued me. I was never fully comfortable with authority when shaping my teacher image, and I suspect, Natalie tested this hesitancy in me. I have long sought a non-traditional mode of leadership and have aimed to build self-confidence, a quality important to adolescents who look for consistency and safety in adult models. Why did I lack belief in myself, in the guiding principles that propelled me to teach creative writing at the time? Having since completed my doctoral studies in education, I have become more adept at articulating the philosophy upon which I base my teaching. I am intent on fostering a sense of agency in my undergraduate students, in liberating their writing voices. In turn, I offer them my experience as an informed writer who has developed strategic knowledge, but who remains, nonetheless, all

too aware of the enigmatic nature of creative writing to purport to be an 'expert' in the field. That understanding has evolved for me from a tacit, intuitive kind of knowing to a more explicit knowing that I embody in my current classroom presence (Polanyi 1962).

Now, I reread the poem, along its circumference and at its centre, for possible multiple meanings. As the knower who is intimately connected to the poem, I grasp the import of the subject to me - the struggle for power that works through people and which is for Britzman relational (1991). I don't claim as Faigley (1992) cautions against doing, that my present reading will reveal a complete, transparent account of self or of my consciousness. Neither will my answers categorically provide a kind of summing up. In composing the poems and reflecting on the meaning I make from them, however, I may more fully realize how complex an epistemology teaching really is (Clark 1995).

Within this complex paradigm, therefore, the self-reflexive, imaginative act of revisiting the events that afternoon, of writing the poem, has led me to consider alternatives, a potential that seemed absent in the circumstances of the classroom (Heaney, qtd in Freeman 2010). I will bring you now into the physically constraining computer classroom where the scene played out.

Little Red Riding Hood in the Writing Classroom

Computers marooned against the plaster wall.
Desks lined in gridlock rows.
Learners stare ahead,
train commuters
passing through a tunnel.

At the first sign of white,
eyes dart up at the blackboard.
In the left-hand column:
Perrault's 16th century guide on courtly manners.
In the right-hand column:
the Brothers' Grimm code of morals.

Leaping across the Franco-Prussian border
(and centuries in between),
the heroine/émigré of the fairy tale keeps her invincible red cap.

We empty our basket of symbols and archetypes,
when Natalie dives into her backpack
on a private expedition.

Her cheeks and ears burn flamingo.

Snatching a little red book from out of the wolf's
lair, she disappears, her blonde head cropped
behind the cover.

Today, I think, her defiance flashes in the family of red;
Natalie taunts with the muleta[3] *of the rebel schoolgirl.*

Days before, her weapon was a pair of scissors:
snip cut-ting the handout in 2/4 time.

Her small white hands steal authority;
paint a blush of shame on my cheeks.

I cut her forbidden journey short, this impersonator
of the fairy tale character, and demand
obedience in Brothers Grimm fashion.

All the while wondering
which character I've become.

The voice of the wolf goads me: The way she turns the pages
of her little red book. What lovely hands she has...

I frame her image - that axis of self
and text in my picture book of poems. And note
how unkind a symmetry we three make:
storybook heroine, classroom rebel.....me.

(Lipszyc 2010, pp. 62-64)

[3] small red cape

From the outset, the tone is conciliatory in its understanding of the other. The physicality of the classroom with its "gridlock rows" is a place the persona of the poet (etched from my teaching experience) acknowledges is "charged with the lived lives of those who are forced to be there" (Britzman 1991, p.179). The color red weaves in and out of the poem as a motif that unifies and foreshadows disequilibrium. Red appears as a concrete color in the book cover, the wardrobe cape for the fairy tale heroine, and as the color and symbol of shame, which the student herself displays in her act of rebellion, and which she elicits in me as she intentionally disrupts the lesson. And yet, something revelatory unfolds, the revelatory power Freeman asserts hindsight can bring (2010) as I interpret the past from the present.

Years after, I remember the scene and embellish fictively, thus, turning Natalie into the female fairy tale heroine, Little Red Riding Hood, who chose to walk the path she was warned against taking by her protective grandmother. Texts intertwine, I believe, to good effect. In my aesthetic response to the teaching/learning event, I cast Natalie in the role of the heroine, mythologizing her. And while I describe her actions in the classroom as intrusive to the other students and diminishing to me and herself, I secretly find "symmetry" between us in her rebellion. Am I simply resolving what was unpleasant? To some extent, I am adjusting a darker moment and shedding light upon it. But there is another back story I can provide which the poem intimates. I recall that I withdrew emotionally and/or physically from both undergraduate and graduate programs that did not seem immediately relevant to me. Over the years, I have also resisted writing on cue in classrooms because that writing heuristic did not fit my process. There is a part of me, then, that relates to my rebellious student. The constructive act of writing years after the teaching event transforms my image of a self as a teacher and learner into a dynamic rather than static image. The validity of this experience, as reconstructed in the poem, is truth in the postmodernist sense of qualitative research - not a single truth but a "deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic" (Richardson 1997, p.92).

Writing in a poetic genre opens me up to "quantum shifts of awareness" (Green 2009, p.119), jolting me out of a linear way of looking at causes and effects in that classroom dynamic and awakening in me, instead,

new, unpredictable meanings and possibilities. The experience of writing the poem, of attending to its demands, draws my attention away from my self and the emotional burdens I felt; in my new stance, the "I" voice, my contingent self becomes more tolerant of contradictions in the classroom (Aleshire, 2001; Williamson, 2001). Paradoxically, this reconstructed poetic account presents a flesh-and-blood representation of a teacher in a real classroom who works, contemplates, revisits the site in order to develop into a more reflective and understanding professional. In writing this poem, in reengaging with the event with poetic awareness, I maintain that I have come to know with the heart (Green 2009). This is to know empathically, as a relational self, who understands the other and participates imaginatively and vicariously in a shared reality with my student (Barone & Eisner, 1998, 1997; Barone, 2000).

Playacting the Role of Teacher - Poet Stepping onto a Scene

> Why do you never find anything written about that idiosyncratic thought you advert to...You were made and set here to give voice to this, to your own astonishment (Dillard 1989, 68).

Annie Dillard speaks here of the genesis of writing, the perception and sensing of the potential of an image that will become a piece of writing. At times, the event is random, a coincidence that works in a writer's favour. Robert Frost (1964) wrote in his letters of the high regard he had for coincidence, recalling how, in the winter, he had come upon a man like himself on a lonely cross-road. I remember his classic poem "The Road Not Taken" which I was taught as a student and which I now teach to a new generation of students.

In my small way, I too treasure the unplanned image that resonates for me, the kernel of an idea that proposes the way for a poem, and that I sense intuitively I can flesh out. I draw here from a Jungian (2003) function of intuition and intuitive consciousness that accepts the random with an "attitude of expectancy", and transmits images that can imbue insights (qtd by Hague, p.44). The scene of the last poem I accidentally came upon was resonant to me because I looked purposively and perceived imaginatively, and what I saw mirrored a spiritual part of my professional life as a teacher (Hillman 1996).

My niece, at the time, an adolescent, was a gifted middle-school student in a French Immersion program in Richmond Hill, Ontario. I happened to be visiting my sister and wandered into the front hall adjacent to the living room without my niece noticing. Standing quietly in shadow, I watched, listened, attending to detail, as this young girl spontaneously played the role of teacher to her imaginary students. In role play, Booth (1994) clarifies that the self takes on the other; in this dual juxtaposition, the learner views internally but from a new viewpoint. There was in Brooke's reading aloud, a desire to share the meaning she made from the text with enthusiasm and a genuine sense of drama. Brooke illuminated the words, presenting the text as "earprint," as if she was creating a paragon of a teachable moment in text that had to be read aloud (Booth 1994, p.128). I shared the completed poem with my niece on her coming birthday, which she, along with my sister, framed with pride on her wall.

Brooke on Her Birthday

Dusk, a dull opaque grey.
Kitchen light spills across the oak wood floor
and is suspended at her feet.

Snug on a couch, legs folded,
she is a Buddha of the living room,
littered with stripped dolls, a three-wheeler
and the gutted remains of a computer.

In her left hand, she holds a soft-covered book
pour une jeune fille
its spine bent,
its pages dog-eared,
her fingers, firm and suppliant.

With her right hand,
she choreographs
the plot. Pour expliquer.
Her voice is steady, suffused
with feeling, wiser
than the heroine will be.

The Anglo r's roll like a trilling bird.

This is recitation, a public reading
to expectant students,
to a younger
sister, to no one at all
in the grey room.

Hush...Listen...
c'a lui fait plaisir.

(Lipszyc 2010, p.75)

When I first considered integrating this poem into the study, I contacted my niece, asking her to reread the poem, and to compose an on-line response to questions as a guide. I provided context about the draft stage of the article, informing her that I was collecting data on teaching and writing poems about teaching. I asked her, therefore, five years after the event, to re-examine the episode which I had transformed into a poetic/portrait of her. I hoped that in responding, Brooke might identify values she holds and understand particular meanings she attaches to her actions (Anderson, Armitage, Jack and Wittner 2004). In the ensuing brief on-line interview, my niece locates, interprets and records subjective experience as it has changed through time (Hitchcock & Hughes 1995, p.185, p. 201).

As a researcher, I was concerned that the validity of her response might be compromised by my relationship to her, that she might falsely compliment me as a member of her family. I recall when first composing and framing the poem as a birthday gift to her, my niece thanked me with a polite if quick gesture adolescents can deliver to gift-bearing adults. She blushed a little at the attention heaped upon her and acknowledged that reading poetry did not come quite as naturally to her as reading prose. Her recent and authentic response to my questions for this inquiry, however, point to growth. In the paragraph on the following page, she differentiates between her former and present response, reading herself into the text in her evolution as a reader and young woman. Whereas she was earlier working at understanding the text, she moved from that efferent

process to an aesthetic process, transacting personally with the poem and making meaning of it based on her lived experience (Rosenblatt, 1978; 1995). Reciprocally, as I transacted with the poem again, after reading her response, I could now see the experience through her eyes and not solely my own. Here are the questions posed on-line:

> Tell me, if you can, what the poem means to you now - how you see yourself then and now and what your impulse might have been at the time? Were you modeling a teacher you had? Were you envisioning yourself as a teacher? Was there anything about French and your learning of it that you could speak to?

I present her on-line response which conveys autobiographical detail:

I do remember this poem. When I first received the poem years ago, I wasn't sure what the "big deal"[4] was about reading a French book out loud in an empty room. Reading aloud was such a minor detail. However, I see it now - it demonstrates my love for the French language and my desire to teach others. I recall always playing "school" alone in my room - I would line up my stuffed animals as if they were students, bring out my mini chalkboard or a pad of paper with markers, type up activities and tests, and correct them. I loved modeling the teacher I had, as well as educating others and being a "grown-up". As of now, my hope to be a teacher of sorts still stands. Whether I become a doctor or not, essentially I hope to teach others ....the path towards my goal is challenging, however, that is what makes it appealing!! I also plan to continue my French. French is such a beautifully sounding language and can open a lot of doors in the future (Unpublished On-Line Participant Response, July, 2010).

How innately Brooke grasped the potential value of the relational self in teaching, something I came to gradually know, to know

[4] My niece places quotes around the noun phrase "big deal". She was aiming, I interpret, to be honest via her colloquial choice of diction, and to signify the import of the change in her new understanding of the poem. She later places quotes on the phrasal noun "grown-up" as well, again highlighting that her response covers a time span in her life and that her perception of self changed over that time.

explicitly, after a number of years in the profession. That afternoon, I was a witness to an adolescent's wishful, dramatic enactment of teaching, which stemmed from her love of the French language and her desire to impart that knowledge to others. That afternoon, she connected to her French language curriculum at school, building on the centrality of her prior life experiences, and her desire to communicate and impart knowledge as a social being (Dewey 1900). Brooke embodied the words of Williams who urges teachers to "reproduce sympathetically in their imagination, the mental life of their pupils as the sort of active unity which [she herself] feels it to be" (qtd in Berman 2004, p.34).

I am reminded, over the timeline and continuity of this experience, how important it is to give students opportunities to move from the private world of their imaginations to the world of the story, and to explore plural, potential identities through role play. The poem and this structured questionnaire open up self-understanding for Brooke, a site where she can interpret and restore the past from the standpoint of the present (Freeman 2010). Note how she writes that she sees now with the truth that could only be made available through hindsight, how her past contributed to and connects to this moment, to the future steps she may take. For Freeman, hindsight provides not only a "measure of insight but a direction, small as it may be, in moral growth" (p.5). Brooke engaged her imagination, her emotions, creativity, and intellect that day and has continued along this path in multiple capacities: as a dancing teacher, a volunteer with terminally ill children, and as a lover of the natural sciences, who is now setting her goals on a future career in medicine. As Dewey proposes, art in the guise of a poem creates for Brooke a "unity of experience" in that the "past expands and deepens the content of the present and presses forward to the future" (1938, p.19, p.24).

Through the arts, Brooke gleaned significance from past experience and responded to the poem with new-found maturity, thereby expanding both her knowledge and mine. The poem provides a common cultural context for the two of us, a system of shared values and beliefs upon which we build our identities (Capra, 2004; 1996). Notwithstanding this vital component, however, my knowledge in

this inquiry is "approximate" and not definitive (Capra 1996, p.4). Unable to share the first and second poems with participants, I can not hear back what the poems currently signify to them, or read how they reflect on my reflections of our classroom. The meaning derived from such transactions would have been negotiated between researcher and participants in a constructivist mode of qualitative research (Charmaz 2000). As happened in the third poem, meanings might well have been enriched by co-contributors who had a stake in the learning experience and who could look back with hindsight at their former selves.

Educational Implications

I have etched three teacher portraits, each positioned slightly differently in my relationship to students. In the first self-portrait, I model language, access direct instruction, all the while wary of my teacher-centered pedagogy and the foreignness of my students who I feel apart from culturally and linguistically. As the poem progresses in its condensed timeline, I recognize core values we share and celebrate my students' learning curve. In the second poem, the distance between my adolescent student, Natalie, and I is wide, without the pretence of civility that adult learners might concede. Only in rewriting the scene in a poetic mode and reflecting on its meaning, do I find commonalities with my student; only with the time and distance so necessary to writing, can I recast my student in the role of the inquisitive fairy-tale heroine who does not abide by her elders' wishes. My persona in both these poems as a reflective teacher is omnipresent. I "sit beside myself" and assess myself as a teacher who is learning to teach others well and to negotiate relationships I build in the classroom (Goodwin 2009, p.144).

In the third and final poem, I stand at the wings, a practicing teacher and researcher, watching in secret delight as my niece creates imagined learning conditions. In this drama scene, the teacher in me relinquishes authority, making way for the learner's self-expression and autonomy. My niece's imagined teaching scenario was triggered by her desire to share knowledge with another, and the scene, in turn, triggered the poem. In her role play of teacher, in those resonant

moments I happened upon, she aspires to be a relational self, just as I do in my professional practice.

The three poems and their reflections together present the plural roles I play as a teacher in my growing awareness of self and the complexity of my practice. And in distinct ways, the three poems reveal the primacy of relationships we build and negotiate with our students, affirming that personal and professional teacher growth comes in our connection with students.

Writing and reflecting on poetry about my teaching experience illuminates some of the uncertainties, conflicts and ultimate rewards of teaching and learning. The poems do not resolve tensions conclusively; however, as I craft the poems and mediate with language, the poems present alternative ways of knowing my self in relation to my students. I think it unlikely that I would have presented the challenging student in the expressive writing class in as imaginative and understanding a light had I not composed a poem. It is through the artful composition of the poem that I build empathy for the student, empathy that was difficult to register while in the flux of reality that is the classroom. Composing and crafting the poem with heart and imagination, I re-read the scene with new and unpredictable perspectives, which extend beyond my self and the injured pride I disclose, to include the student in a tripartite of: "storybook heroine, classroom rebel....me" (p.64). That phrase points to a non-hierarchical mode of leadership, one where responsibility in bringing the fairy tale text to life is shared. The poem and reflection combine into a valuable self-study, I argue, reminding me to be more patient with myself and tolerant of the ambiguities that will necessarily arise in a learning environment like an expressive writing classroom (Schon, 1985; Elbaz, 1983; Attard, 2008).

What knowledge I have gained by writing poems about teaching, I presently share with my undergraduate students in a form of this arts-based inquiry. Over the past four years, I have asked pre-service English language arts education majors to write poems about miseducative or teachable moments they have experienced in college or high school. The miseductive events provide opportunities for them to learn what not to imitate, while the teachable moments

signify students' growth, their meaning-making as a collaborative community. These seemingly magical moments when students come alive in a classroom tend to arise in conditions the teacher has created (Intrator 2003). My goal is to heighten students' awareness of how teachers, who are attuned to students' needs, build communities of learning in the classroom. In the first fundamentals class students take in the BA and BA/MST English Language Arts Programs at SUNY Plattsburgh, we read Edwin Romond's "Dream Teaching" poem, where in the "sweet maze of his dreams" he sees "thousands of his students "stretching like dominoes into the night" (2008, p.484). Sometimes, I share my "Teaching ESL" poem as well. We read the poems closely to note figurative devices, authentic detail, voice, and we consider the educational implications. I then ask students to write their own free verse poems about an experience they have encountered as students and reflect in a following section on what the poem has clarified for them about the reciprocal acts of learning and teaching. While few students have had experience writing free-verse poetry, they do good work, running risks with figurative language, and developing in their critical awareness of sound practice through this arts-based activity.

Concluding Note

With this self-study, I have presented a profile of the teacher I have been and hope to be through the vital interconnectedness between writing and teaching. Writing with poetic awareness enriches my ability to teach, to interact with a full-bodied, self-reflexive knowing, with empathy, perceptivity, and patient resolve. I have traveled and inhabited these two networks of knowledge to discover the reciprocal, relational self who listens, interacts and writes in a learning continuum I hope to channel in both my students and myself.

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HOLISTIC LEARNING FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN BANGLADESH AS AN ART EDUCATION PROJECT 2009 - 2011

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Abstract

During their art education classes, pre-service teaching students from the Kindergarten Teachers Training College in Vöcklabruck, Austria created learning materials for a primary school in the Satarkul slum area of Dhaka, Bangladesh. While their focus was on exploring a holistic learning approach, as compared to the didactic model more typical in this program, a significant outcome was a teaching package that was subsequently delivered by a selection of these students to Bangladeshi teachers as an in-service professional development program. In describing this program, this paper illustrates the power of visual art to engage disadvantaged students in meaningful learning exercises, while also exploring how both cohorts of teachers learned how important visualisation, playing and interaction in the classroom were for successful learning.

Education and Economic Status

Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, had in 2010 an estimated population of 17.6 million people. It was also estimated that 3.4 million of those people lived in some 5000 slums within Dhaka (Podymow, Junghare, Thakare, & Dharaskar, 2010). Most of these slum inhabitants came from rural areas of Bangladesh seeking employment and a more prosperous life. However, the reality was that most people in the slums had, at this time, an income of less than 1 US dollar per day (Cameron, 2011). Socio-economic status still widely determines educational accessibility in this area, and levels of education greatly determines a person's well-being (Van der Berg, 2008). Here, as in many parts of the world, education and poverty are very closely linked, but in Bangladesh there are perhaps greater negative outcomes for the less fortunate. Without access to a higher standard of education it is unlikely that children in slums will ever leave that standard of living. Of all children in these 5000 slums, only 18% are enrolled in primary schools (Podymow, et. al., 2010). This low figure is in part due to the absence of public providers of education; there are few schools that children can attend. Consequently 27% of slum areas in this country have an NGO operated school (The World Bank, 2007, p.46). A NGO (non-governmental organization) is a non-profit organization that works in association with the United Nations. They may be organised around certain issues, such as education or health matters, or attempt to work politically to bring the concerns of peoples to their governments. It is in one such school that this project, 'Happy Learning', took place.

Schooling for the poor can raise their income earning potential. In general, education levels in Dhaka are far better than in the rest of the country. Nevertheless the average level of education remains low. Literacy rates for poor male workers (15 years and older) are only 52%, and are even lower at 33% for poor female workers (Cameron, 2011).

Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of

learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society" (UNESCO, 2004, p.13).

Education is a key factor in finding a viable place in society. Without the skills a basic education provides, and where children are not taught in a way that encourages learning, people are severely limited in participation in society beyond the slums. To promote social integration and economic success through education for children from the slums in Dhaka, especially for girls who are most disadvantaged, the 'Happy Learning' project was created. Its aim was to sample a high quality basic education project for children, and in the process, re-orient existing educational programmes and provide educational training for local teachers.

Education and Holistic Learning

Set out by the United Nations, the goals of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) focus on "improving access to quality basic education", "reorienting existing education programmes" and "providing (in-service) training" (UNESCO, 2005, p.7). UNESCO is the lead agency for this project, set to span from 2005-2014. The project places education at the centre of global sustainability. "Education is a human right and the primary agent of transformation towards sustainable development by increasing people's capacities to transform their visions for society into reality" (UNESCO, 2011).

The mission statement for DESD encourages Holistic Learning methods, critical thinking, problem solving, and participatory decision-making as educational strategies. They also utilise locally and globally relevant issues that are personally relevant to the students in order to engage students in experiential learning (UNESCO, 2010). These goals call for a combination of practical and theoretical innovation, with an outcome being an education that "encourages changes in behaviour that will create a more sustainable future in terms of environmental integrity, economic viability, and adjust society for present and future generations" (UNESCO, 2005, p.6).

Holistic Learning is a much-used, and sometimes falsely attributed term. Miller (2007) defines Holistic Learning as an involvement in

> ...exploring and making connections as it attempts to move from fragmentation to connectedness. The focus of holistic education is on relationships: the relationship between linear thinking and intuition, the relationship between mind and body, the relationship among various domains of knowledge, the relationship between the individual and community, the relationship to the earth, and our relationship to our souls (p. 13).

Therefore, Holistic Learning is a concept that helps people to learn more efficiently through incorporating different learning styles. It is a process whereby elements such as hearing, seeing, and doing are combined. In the case of the 'Happy Learning' project, the goal was to use holistic learning techniques to help children from the slum areas of Dhaka to achieve higher educational outcomes, specifically, improved mathematics abilities and quick apprehension of the English alphabet and vocabulary that are utilised during teaching sessions. Improved educational outcomes would, in turn, promote the student's chances of future economic success.

Primary school children in Bangladesh have the tradition of learning by sitting still on the carpet all day and being read to, or reading out of a book. The Holistic Learning project 'Happy Learning' showed the Bangladeshi teachers how important visualization and playing are for learning success. For the Bangladeshi teachers the concept of Holistic Learning as well as learning while playing was unknown. During this project they witnessed that with the visualisation of learning content and the playing of games, children were able to learn with more enjoyment and had much higher educational outcomes within a shorter period of time than they would otherwise expect. Children who were thought to be not very adept at learning suddenly were able to remember and learn. The teachers also discovered that children were eager to learn if they hadn't been discouraged, and when the learning style was appropriate to them.

The role of the teacher in holistic education is not one of a teacher who controls or is a person of authority, it is rather "...a friend, a mentor, a facilitator, or an experienced travelling companion" (Forbes, 1996, p.8). This

concept of a teacher being a friend or a mentor was completely new to the Bangladeshi teachers as they were traditionally a person of authority.

Visualization

The term visualization conveys more than just seeing though the eyes. It is also understood to be seeing though touch, through tactile feedback and through kinesthetic movement.

> Visualization is traditionally associated with what we see, grounded in images we perceive. Yet recent research reveals that one can generate an image without seeing (visuals), mainly through touch. This suggests that visualization processes can be enhanced by adding or replacing visual information with other sensory modalities (Gilbert, Reiner, & Nakhleh, 2008, p.73).

Visualization of learning content played a key role in this project. Research supports the concept that visual data is easier to understand than non-visual data. "Images and analogies are used to visualize a clear picture of complex concepts and processes in learning. Visual images are generally more powerful than verbal images" (Junghare, Thakare, & Dharaskar, 2011, p.7). Many people, especially children, learn and retain information that is presented to them visually much better than that which is only provided verbally.

The Happy Learning Project

During the 2008 and 2009 school year, a class of 17 year old students from the Don Bosco School, a Kindergarten Teachers Training College, in Vöcklabruck, Austria, created and developed in their art education classes learning materials in English for a primary school in the slum area of Dhaka, Bangladesh. From September 2008 until February 2009 the pre-service teachers developed their learning materials in class, conceptualising, drawing, painting and cutting their resources, working intensively on several games during this period. As one example, a student created a game called Colour Twister, where children could learn about mixing colours. Another student drew a whole picture book with the aim of teaching English vocabulary.

Figure 1. Sample of learning resources

In February 2009 this learning material was introduced in a school for girls in the Satarkul slum in the Badda district of Dhaka. At this time this school looked after 80 girls from the surrounding slum areas. The girls who attended could not afford books or a uniform, but as well as providing these items and their education, the school also provided two meals per day. The school was administrated by a Christian church, with the costs covered by a foreign organisation. As a matter of note, in 2011 the school moved to a new house, built for them by a Finnish businessman, and now has approximately 180 pupils, both girls and boys.

During the time of this project, children were taught in English, using learning materials created by the Austrian art education students. The games and activities were also demonstrated to the children. Although the children could not speak English and there was no translator, all the rules for the games were understood by the children and they followed the lessons without problem. This comprehension was indicated by their success at playing the games and following the rules. It was very impressive how the children were able to learn, in spite of their fact they did not speak the language in which a subject was taught.

Figure 2. Students participating in the activities

Teacher Training

During the project in Dhaka in 2009 the idea of a teachers' training project arose. The school board wanted a training course for their teachers to show them how important visualisation, playing and active participation of students are for successful learning. The method of Holistic Learning was a totally new concept for these teachers. As a continuation of the 2009 project, pre-service teachers from the Kindergarten Teachers Training College in Austria were tasked during the 2010 and 2011 school year with producing Holistic Learning packages and self-created learning materials of selected topics and themes for the Bangladeshi teachers training project which took place in February 2011. To prepare for the teachers training course in Bangladesh the Austrian students worked on learning packages about different themes and subjects such as time, geography, mathematics and English.

In Bangladesh a person who has attended school for 8 years is allowed to be a teacher. Due to this lack of secondary education teachers often knew little more than the pupils they were teaching, and they had never heard about any didactic or pedagogical strategies. The aim of this teacher training project was to teach implementation of Holistic Learning for children and to put the focus on how these teachers could create learning materials and to visualise learning content for themselves.

Due to a lack of resources in Bangladesh, the problem arose of feasibility of these teachers creating their own teaching materials. Copied work sheets and materials in general were not affordable for the school. Even material such as old newspapers had to be bought. Many items that were worthless to us in the west, such as stones, were not available in Bangladesh. Stones had to be produced there: they first burn clay and then split it up in pieces. Beans are a food item that cannot be used for learning, especially in a country where children starve. Solutions to these supply problems had to be found. For example, as copying worksheets for each individual child is too expensive, the idea arose to use plastic covers to put a work sheet in and to then write on it with an erasable or washable pen.

A real difficulty for the Bangladeshi teachers turned out to be creating learning sheets by themselves. Thus far their teaching method had been to read from a book. They had not created work sheets before. These teachers could not copy an existing resource, as the learning level was inappropriate for their students. Therefore they had to learn how to decide for themselves how to offer practice and to work on specific difficulties that their own school children were facing.

To understand why creating learning sheets was a significant challenge, it is important to understand that Bangladesh is a hierarchical society where people do not question those in authority. People are told what to do by the person above them. Personal or critical thinking is, for the most part, not welcomed by the person of authority, and tends to cause problems. This is especially true in this society in the case of women questioning men.

A second challenge was creating teaching materials to a certain aesthetic standard. It was difficult for the Bangladeshi teachers to understand why learning cards should all be the same size and cut

at right angles, or that items should be given a certain order on paper. They also could not understand why aesthetic standards or working in a structured manner should be important when helping children to learn. They had never had to consider such things. It was interesting to observe that even the Bangladeshi school books were irregular in shape, and that the printed lines were not often at right angles to the format of the book. Even the windows in the buildings were constructed without a level. This problem of a lack of accuracy was not isolated to teachers, and in fact was prevalent in many other areas of Bangladeshi society.

The 18 Bangladeshi teachers from various primary schools in Dhaka who took part in the course faced many challenges during their training. One main focus of the programme was how to work with different learning types in a classroom setting. At the beginning it was very difficult for them to understand why they should learn to incorporate different learning styles while teaching, because they themselves had learnt by only listening and repeating. The teachers were taught that

> ...If a particular approach to learning is encouraged by a teacher, there is a possibility that some pupils will work and learn less effectively than others in the class. For this reason, an awareness of learning styles is important for teachers. Learning style awareness should make an impact on pedagogy – the ways in which teachers choose to teach – and should help teachers to a better understanding of the needs of learners, as well as an awareness of the need to differentiate materials, not only by level of difficulty but also by learning style (Pritchard, 2009, p. 42).

Teachers also discovered that even they learnt best with one learning style over another. Some found they learned best by listening, while others learned best by doing or by watching. Feedback from teachers attending the training was very promising. Teachers have already asked for more training and have suggested that that it is vital that all of their teaching colleagues would need this training too.

Figure 3. In-service sessions with teachers

Conclusion

Bangladesh is one of many hierarchical countries where traditional education means that pupils sit and listen without being allowed to question or interact with their teacher. The success of the Happy Learning project and its subsequent teacher training program can be used as examples of how education can be revolutionized in other countries which, like Bangladesh, follow very tradition lines in education. This educational success would consequently bring greater economic and employment opportunities to students and teachers alike.

This project showed how art education naturally facilitates the training of teachers as well as the teaching of children. Each image, viewed in combination with learning content, supported a greater educational outcome, because the eye reinforces active thinking and memorizing.

It also could be seen that learning content was remembered more quickly when it was visualized by teachers or children through the interactive processes of creating, drawing, cutting, and other activities. Through creating, drawing, painting and cutting, an intensive connection between the learning content and the learner evolved. This affected the learning in a very positive way.

Especially for weak learners, the visualized learning material helped to take away the fear of failure. Children were able to learn in a relaxed environment, helping them to overcome learning difficulties and to experience learning success.

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ARCHITECTURE, CRAFTMANSHIP, AND THE ART OF INHABITATION

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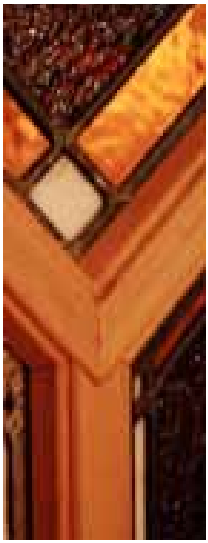

Abstract

This paper uses a range of images from the author's own architectural craftsmanship to illustrate sociological, creative and emotional aspects central to peoples' attempts to create a sense of inhabitation within their private world. It relates this to art curriculum, referencing the philosophies of de Botton (2006), Foucault (1984), Banchelard (1958/1994) and others concerned with the interplay of space, place and architecture, to explore how students use their 'everyday' creative skills to occupy curriculum in a manner that is engaging and relevant to their daily existence.

Introduction

During the late 1990s I wrote a great deal about boys and their experiences with art education. Over time I came to understand that a tenuous relationship existed between many young males and the art curriculum; good results occurred when classroom activities synched with the boy-culture within which they lived (Imms, 2003). Looking back I see that my writing described issues of inhabitation of educational space; it was to do with lived experiences within curriculum, and described the way that people occupied that structure. Within this research inhabitation occurred at that (sometimes) happy juncture between art curriculum and boys' developmental needs. But the phenomenon has resonance well beyond gender concerns. In every classroom males and females occupy art curriculum in a way that allows them to address issues and needs relevant to their personal daily experiences. This was not an original observation; for many years art educators have been contributing to a renaissance in curriculum, the 're-conceptualisation' of what and how we teach, where the experiences of the participant takes precedence over formalized content (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995). We have examined how its structure can personalize curriculum and allow the viewer an equal foothold in the artwork (Efland, Freedman, & Stuhr, 1996), and since the 1990s the visual culture phenomenon has emphasised making content of curriculum relevant to students' lived experiences (Duncum 1999).

However, what elude us still are the practical realities of such personalized curriculum, the nitty-gritty of how people engage art education on a daily basis. Because each school, each teacher, each classroom, each student and each day is unique, it is impossible to craft into a curriculum the structural principles that guide us through this complex set of variables. Despite recognising the importance of making art education individualised, such *inhabitation* of curriculum remains largely unexplained within our literature. This paper enters this void. It does so in a rather oblique manner, using the metaphor of building as a means to an end. It embraces topics such as the art/craft debate, the teacher-as-artist discourse, and architectural philosophies on 'space and place' to explore this point. But its central thesis is that students are active participants in the delivery of curriculum, they are

selective in *what* they do, and often are highly skilled at negotiating *how* they participate, suggesting that 21st century art curriculum is evolving towards one of inhabitation; that is, students occupying, inhabiting and manipulating the art curriculum to address highly personalized needs.

Artmaking as a life skill

In this sense, art curriculum is more to do with the development of life skills than just making art. My experience has certainly supported this notion. During the 1980s I studied many disciplines of visual art, including photography, ceramics, printmaking and drawing. Each drew me into its own world, ceramics and printmaking due to their technical challenges, drawing because of its immediacy and the way an idea could be explained to others, photography because of its capacity to investigate and be analytical. Each gave me ways to explore my creative capacity; the skills I knew I had within, as well as the sense of aesthetics that I wished to use to explore and define my world. Reality is often different, however. My artistic life story is common to many art teachers (Graham & Zwirn, 2010); as the years went by, professional duties and family life eroded opportunities that used to exist to make art, until I was faced the bleak reality that while I still had the capacity, I had lost the mandate to create – it was no longer a priority. My mindset at this time frequently caused me to apologise for my lack of

Figure 1

Figure 2

Montagu Bay project; furniture design, 1992. Images by the author

Figure 3

Bay window project, 1993.
Image and photograph by the author

artistic output, lamenting lost artistic opportunities due to professional priorities. Simultaneously, however, the very issues hindering my artistic practice – the pressures of building a teaching career, in addition to family duties - became the catalyst for a new kind of creative endeavour. Our home was inadequate and I had the desire, but not the finances, to improve it. If it were to be done, we would have to do the work ourselves. This period of time saw me revisit the very qualities of drawing, photography, ceramics and printmaking that I thought I had reluctantly abandoned and I began to design new spaces for occupation.

Utilizing skills given to me by my artistic practice I found I was comfortable with thinking spatially, often wandering through a 'virtual' place – something that did not exist except as some lines on my page – as if it had already been built (Figure 2). Through my drawing I could conceptualise a space and render it, as it would look. The problem solving skills built through technical subjects like ceramics and printmaking provided me the ability to unpack the structural qualities of a space and solve how to physically build it. I slowly entered the realm of the architect, the wood craftsman, the furniture maker, and the interior designer, substituting my lack of trade skills for artistic bravado. In time I became a bricklayer, a glazier, a cabinetmaker, a plasterer, a plumber and electrician. In short, I found that the very skills considered during my art school days to be elitist and of limited 'real world' application were in fact highly useful. They proved to be liberating, a portal to new activities that could improve the circumstances of my existence.

Art's perennial dilemma

It is only after a decade of such 'applied creativity' that I began to question if my activities constituted art production. In the past I had answered the question *'Do you do much art?'* with an answer like, *'Only a print now and then'*. Increasingly, I now found myself answering that I was a designer, a useful term, bridging as it did the worlds of fine and decorative arts. This was partly a result of how I was taught to view art, which I will describe later, and partly a growing recognition that differences within art making did exist. A designer does not function like a painter, whose judgment often comes from within; a designer has more utilitarian aims, but – as I was coming to realize in the early 1990s, a valid art making activity none the less. I created usable items, but unlike the tradesman who most frequently did this work, I focused on an extra element of effect. In keeping with the nature of the artist in me, my designs and projects were always more complex than was functionally needed.

Figure 4

Sunroom project (rear).
Photograph by the author

Figure 6

(left) Strauven, G (1900) Maison Saint-Cyr, Brussels; (right) Vallin, E. (1903-1906). JBE Corbin dining room

Figure 5

Sunroom project 1993 (East).
Photograph by the author

A set of windows became a glazier's nightmare; a simple pathway became something from the *Wizard of Oz* (Figures 4 & 5). Underlying this activity were three motivations; the desire to create a space that mirrored my beliefs concerning the ambiance of an inhabitation, the need to be creative, and a wish to refine and master new skills. What I found supportive in these activities were the basic artistic principles taught to me by my own primary, secondary and tertiary teachers: that at the heart of good artwork lay competent research, and that an artwork is often more to do with development than flashes of genius.

During this period I read copiously, finding in books on architecture and philosophy those qualities that I aspired to with my own creations. For the pure visual joy of architectural whimsy, Strauven was an inspiration and for the heights of what could be accomplished in sculptural joinery, Vallin was unparalleled (Figure 6). I found that within the experience of these masters lay endless avenues of exploration for me, both in practical terms – who would not wish to be able to design and create in this way – but also in the intellectual challenges they embodied. To me, blending the development of art making skills, while providing quite utilitarian outcomes (in the process engaging in academic exploration of one of art educations most underutilized discourses, architecture), has been a rich experience indeed. As time went by I acted more as an artist. Into the sketchbook went impressions of iconic masterpieces I was lucky to visit.

Lloyd Wright's *Fallingwater* was a delight, but an obscure detail from the servant's quarters was the element that stuck (Figure 7, upper left and right); a surround that has inspired a complex study door (Figure 7, bottom). And so too the minutiae of visual backgrounds in a city; details of public buildings in Stockholm and Paris collected during travel somehow evolved into the design for a feature door (Figure 8). As I apologized over the past decade for not making art, my real-life actions were causing the borders of my discipline to blur around me; my craftsmanship in building and modifying a home became an artistic practice of sorts, but it did not fit traditional definitions: I had been schooled to believe that real art involved creating and exhibiting. A curriculum guide from the 1980s defined art, craft and design in the following way. Art involved higher order thinking - the artist did not really know *what* it was that was being made, nor how it was to be made; in design, the practitioner knew the end result, but not the manner in which s/he would arrive at that solution; and in craft, both the outcome and the process were understood before the project even began (Education Department of South Australia, 1984). In this well ordered age, one obviously knew where one stood. Today, however, art education is infinitely more complex, with postmodern curriculum challenging modernist notions of originality and the artist as genius (Effland, et al, 1996).

This approach remains in art education to some degree and creates a perennial dilemma for it. A legacy has been the creation of an informal hierarchy between these three domains and this has seen craft all but eliminated from 'artistic' pedagogy in Australia. It is a perennial issue because it simply wont go away. A quick survey of popular student blog sites on 'craft' brings forward a wealth of comments like this;

> *It's hard to read article after article about how craft is just for 'grannies'. I love my grandmother who knits, she is kickass, but I'm also inspired daily by the way that punk rock influences my own brand of activism and craft. Craftivism, if you will ...*
> *I can never ignore how punk rock shaped my crafting.*
> *I owe my creativity to it.*

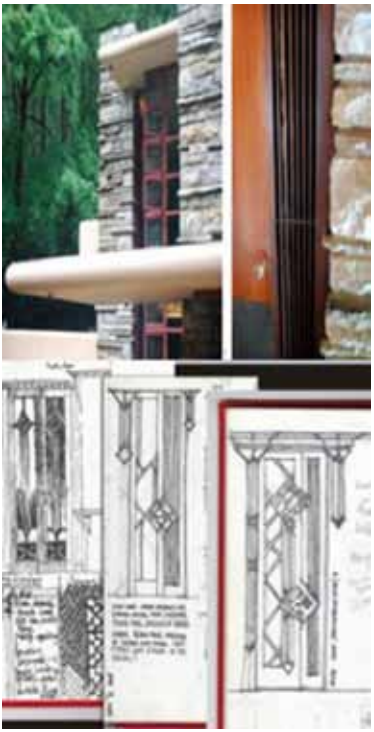

Figure 7

(top) Lloyd-Wright, F. (1935) Fallingwater, details of exterior and servant quarters;
(below) preparatory sketches for Door#18, October, 2008.
Images and photographs by the author.

Figure 8

(top) Details from public buildings, Stockholm and Paris;
(below) detail for Door#18, 2011.
Photographs and images by the author.

For years young people have turned to the crafts as an avenue for popular expression, to the extent that street art, subversive knitting and similar 'movements' arguably now have greater resonance with most young people that the art of galleries. And it is a dilemma because our subject simply cannot afford to maintain antiquated hierarchies within its practice; a recent study suggested that while art education enrolment in schools in the UK was in decline, student participation in out-of school crafts was exploding (Mason, 2005). Art education can't allow the gap between 'higher order' art practices and popular art making activities to widen any further.

What underlies this dilemma, however, is not a disjuncture of descriptions of its three components; art can still live with the 1980s definitions. But it cannot survive continued intellectual ostracism of students who elect to inhabit the popular, immediate, personally relevant aspects of creative activity. To some degree, these are the people who are taking what art education has taught them, to apply it within their daily existence. The dilemma we face is not caused by our defining of art making activities, it is to do with how we conceptualise curriculum in the first place. We continue to believe that curriculum is written, it is then taught, and consequently students learn by its doctrines. What we have been slow to understand goes back to the comments made earlier concerning my research into boys' education – the realization that they were not passive recipients but active owners of curriculum, actually negotiating a position within the its structure, and choosing those elements that suited their own needs. The students occupied, inhabited and manipulated the curriculum in a way that made it a servant to what happened in the classroom. Yet we art educators who debate curriculum continue to view it as the master. We are indeed continuing to encircle a perennial dilemma. If this is the case, how might my building metaphor enlighten us a little?

Inhabitation: craftsmanship and artistry?

How we occupy a space is a fascinating dichotomy. It must be created in the first place, but without habitation, that space lacks validity, meaning, purpose. Similarly, curriculum is meaningless until given credibility through the activities of its inhabitants. It is in the occupancy, the inhabitation of curriculum, that we glean the short and long-term value of our subject. What then is this 'inhabitation'?

The literature on inhabitation is varied and cross disciplinary, embracing geography (with its focus on place) architecture (space), and art (aesthetics). But common to each are three issues; inhabitation is concerned with the genus loci, the mystical place we seek to live within that is somehow greater than the sum of its parts; we consciously seek to make our lived environment more than just shelter and comfort. The second is the sanctum, the place of safety, a state of mind that embraces, protects, and envelops. Like a church, within the sanctum the realities of the outside world can be looked upon objectively, from a distance. It is a place to seek utopia. The third is the habitat, the actual physical place in which to find personal happiness, and which is occupied by the habitué, those who keep returning to such places.

These factors culminate into actual physical objects, such as my study project illustrated here (Figures 9 & 10). What drives us to manipulate our most personal environments in this way, when a simple desk and bookcase would suffice? It comes back to the tenets of inhabitation. Firstly, it has to do with the genus loci. We instinctively want to create something that is a special place, that is more than the sum of its parts. Banchelard (1958/1994) recognised this function of inhabitation in his Poetics of Space. He recognised that the house goes beyond being a *utilitarian place*. Its very being is an art form, a poem in the making. Banchelard argued that space is the beginning of creativity. We can simply walk past, into, or through a structure. Or we can engage in and with it. The former repudiates the poetry of our very existence – the latter is to embark into the creativity of living. Secondly, it has to do with the concept of sanctum. Foucault (1984) described this type of engagement with our living environment as the need to seek 'heterotopia'.

Figure 9 & 10

Imms, W. (2005) Study project: detail
Photographs by the author.

My existence in my home is physically real, but part is illusion – the dream of what this place might be and what it might be able to do for me. For Foucault, the second, illusionary reality is as real as the physically obvious space. The home is a model of this duality, and within that space we simultaneously live what is real and dream what can be, while experiencing both equally. Finally there is habitat. De Botton (2007) treats the home in a more pragmatic way. He adds a touch of reality to Foucault and Banchelard's more philosophical views. De Botton argues that we are inescapably linked to the places we inhabit. To some extent they control our emotions and feelings, and as a result impact our actions and thoughts. We are, hopefully in a most pleasant way, habitués, captive to the homes and spaces we inhabit.

Inhabiting curriculum

So too with curriculum. We have been speaking in metaphors. Curriculum is indeed a structure, perhaps like a building in that it houses us, and is created in a practical and functional way. And if done well it too should succour inhabitation, the state of mind and action that goes beyond the simplistic. Banchelard had it right – dwellings are very much an art form. If one is able to recognise the poetry of our surroundings, then one is immeasurably enriched. For this reason good curriculum must create a genus loci, the capacity to be more than a document, rather to facilitate evolve and adapt to each individual's needs, to become that special place for each student.

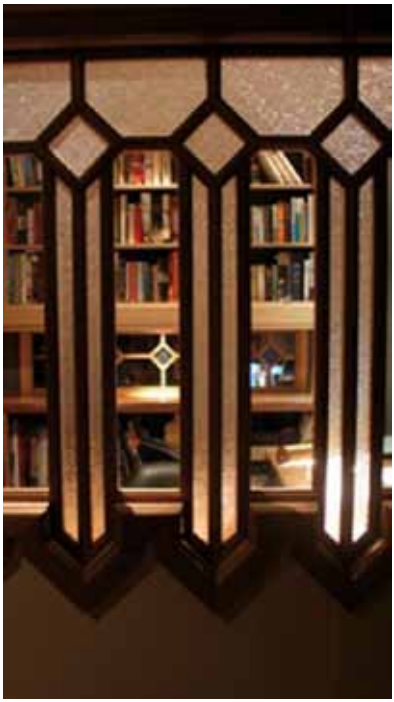

Figure 11

Imms, W. (2005) Study project: detail
Photographs by the author.

Good curriculum should also create a sanctum for students, a place where the highly personalised works produced by countless thousands of art students who have used the skills and knowledge imparted by art education curriculum in highly personalised ways allow then to build their own heterotopia.

Finally good curriculum it should have a very real presence. Its documents and practices must create a habitat. The students and the teachers are the inhabitants, the habitué, people with compelling and often differing needs from the curriculum, yet bonded by those elements of inhabitation, genius loci, sanctuary, and space for habitation. Visual Arts must have a life long impact on students, similar I suppose to my own case described in this paper.

Conclusion

This paper attempted to view art education curriculum as not only educating students, but giving them a suite of beliefs, skills and attitudes that enrich and give meaning to their whole life. It unashamedly drew on the author's own craftsmanship, using this as an example of the way that a good art education made possible the creation of spaces and places that were for him special, a sanctuary, and a place where he wished to be. Enmeshed throughout this was a discussion concerning what art education curriculum is, and should be. This central thread did not attempt to criticize past practices and advocate a fresh approach; rather, it lamented the way we as art teachers have perhaps ignored an existing and very powerful force within our subject – something hidden behind prejudices concerning definitions of art. Perhaps the greatest legacy our subject will give the vast majority of students is to allow them the skills to use art everyday to enrich and improve their existence. We need to re-think how we view 'successful' engagement with curriculum. Success at art shows, enrolments in tertiary art schools, successful careers in media and advertising – these are remarkable and obvious measures of success. But equally so are blogs by past students describing the joy of making a piece of craft, a young adult attempting an art work for pure enjoyment, a jaded aging art teacher finding significant rewards in creating space.

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