# JACE

# Teacher Art-maker Project

# Contents

# Guest Editorial: Artist as Editor

Dion Tuckwell | Monash University
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This special edition of JACE on the Teacher Art-maker Project (TAP) draws together a range of insightful contributions from accomplished teacher-artists spanning from 2012 – 2015. Its production has embodied the creative process, gradually emerging in an organic fashion that is indicative of the way artists work collaboratively. Despite the time elapsed between the inception and completion of this edition, all the articles remain poignant: each author revealing a deeply personal yet theoretically and artistically astute exploration of the complexities, conflicts and triumphs that accompany their navigations of the teacher-artist role.

This JACE TAP edition is different from other JACE publications in that the design of the journal is a deliberately iterative exploration of its own construction. The intent was to reveal a playful interaction with content, openly connecting ideas with loose graphic narratives, through constantly changing form. Approaching the content of this issue of JACE is purposefully artful. The usual conventions of academic publishing that often relies on a restrained vernacular, gives way to experimental interpretations of content.

The approach to this piece of visual communication immediately presented a paradox of an 'open brief'. That is, it did not prescribe the usual (and orientating) parameters of a visual communication need. The hidden scripture of a formal design brief often belies the 'play' necessary during the creative process. In this case, the brief focused on play as driving the graphic appearance of each individual article. The openness of the brief allowed the journal to develop organically with the designers working as visual authors responding to the articles with the language of visual communication. The culmination was a final piece of visual communication discovered in the design response to each individual article.

This approach resurrects debates in visual communication pertinent to teaching and learning in this field. If we are teaching the 'elements and principles' of design, the language (lexicon and grammar) of the discipline, then surely we must encounter issues of criticality. How does the form (the visual language) assembled by the designer position the content? And is content important to good design? These questions must become part of the critical equipment for students of visual communication. Visual communication education requires a degree of critical engagement with the notion of design authorship. Not so much designers and authors (wearing of both hats), rather designers as authors (giving form to another's content).

It was back in 1996 that Michael Rock articulated this idea in "The designer as author: What does it really mean to call for a graphic designer to be an author?". In this seminal essay, Rock suggests that there is a deep insecurity underpinning much of what graphic designers do. They are not the authors of the content they are paid to handle, leading to a degree of crisis evident in the ensuing designed artifact. Rock (1996) asserts the importance of recognising that the designer's job is to shape, not to write, but that shaping itself is a profoundly affecting form. Rock (2012) has more recently pleaded that his *Designer as Author* essay was an attempt to recuperate the act of design itself as essentially linguistic—a vibrant, evocative language: a salve for the anxiety of many designers who lament the lack of content in their work.

The commercial or corporate nature of much graphic design usually necessitates visual consistency. Consistency becomes a dictum that is taught in high schools, and reinforced in undergraduate study, as it is nearly always demanded by clients seeking to communicate a coherent message. However, as the JACE TAP designers, we approached each article on an individual basis, deliberately exploring unconventional design strategies. The result was disparate design 'pieces' that required a curatorial process to make the edition an aesthetically cohesive whole. The end product is a collection of diverse responses under the TAP 'umbrella', collected and presented as one project. In this scenario JACE is closest to an artist's book, which offers a form of design authorship from which function has been fully exorcised (Rock, 2006). There is a long tradition of artists' books through the historical avant-garde, the situationists, fluxus and experimental publishing in the 1960s and 1970s. The artist's book, in general, is concrete, self-referential and allows for a range of visual experiments without the burden of fulfilling mundane commercial tasks.

Working without a prescribed brief presented the challenge of wearing multiple 'hats' during the designing of JACE. This forced a critical engagement with the process of its making. To achieve a suitable outcome we designers, as principal shapers of the visual language, had to develop a critical language to frame our iteration of this project. Regardless of whether or not we were 'Designers as Authors', 'Curators', or indeed artists creating an 'Artist Book', the process of building this edition has contributed to the overall aim of critical engagement with practice, and succeeds in remaining an open ended expression of ideas, aligning closely with the exploratory nature of the burgeoning field of teacher art-maker research.

The teacher-artists that have authored the content of the JACE TAP provide a timely reminder of the benefits that come from reflexive teaching and artistic practice. The diverse autobiographical explorations of what it means to be an artist / teacher / learner / researcher / parent / spouse mirrors the demanding and ongoing identity work involved in becoming a teacher art-maker.

To begin, Jacqui Pierce delves into history to inform her reflection on her journey as an artist and teacher in two seemingly conflicting traditions: the expressive and the objective. From this she concludes that creating the conditions for freedom of artistic expression is an important part of being a technique focused, discipline based art educator.

Kristy Bovil's contribution then explores the notion of solitude and its power to unlock creative potential as an artist. While providing a valuable perspective on the importance of solitude and attending to the rhythms of the creative process, Bovil's article also demonstrates how the development of her own artistic practice and identity will have a transformative impact on her future teaching practice.

Helen Martin examines another aspect of the creative process, exploring the link between creative confidence and identity. At the same time she questions the assumption that the teacher-artist is a dual role by asking "What happens to the roles of artist and teacher when there is a third roles to be performed?" (Martin, this issue). Her aptly titled piece Teacher, Artist, Mother expands our understandings of the teacher art-maker while suggesting the conflict inherent in taking on multiple roles is a necessary part of being a teacher-artist.

Cindy Ahearn continues with this theme by bringing to our attention the complexities of being an artist/researcher/teacher. Positioning herself as an artistic educator undertaking an auto-ethnography, Ahearn draws upon a range of literature to reflect on how the development of artistic identity informs teacher identity and pedagogy. An unexpected outcome of her personal Teacher Art-maker Project was that it allowed Ahearn to take on a teacher-as-student identity, raising her awareness of factors influencing her students' artistic learning experiences.

Sharryn Marshall provides a performative perspective to the collection, writing a reflexive account of the dramatic process behind the development of her solo performance of "The Modern Day Fairy Godmother." In so doing she further explores the concept of the teacher-becoming-student, putting herself in her students' shoes by aligning her performance with the requirements of the VCE Drama and Theatre Studies curriculum.

Cassie Linley concludes the artist-teacher contributions with "Down the Yellow Brick Road." As the title indicates, Linely takes us to the realm of OZ in the hope of locating "that mysterious and mythical artist teacher" (Linely, this issue). She uses Dorothy's journey back to Kansas as an analogy for the development of an artist-teacher identity. The tin man, scarecrow, cowardly lion and the munchkins all feature along with key struggles such as "artistic freedom versus curriculum" (Linely, this issue). Linely provides practical advice on overcoming obstacles, highlighting the importance of living spherically and embracing the reciprocity in teacher-student relationships. Linley's contribution is an artful end to the artist-teacher collection of articles that, along with the unique design approach of the JACE TAP makes this special edition an artistic collaboration.

Finally, Wesley Imms and Sarah Healy draw these artist produced articles together by reporting on qualitative findings for a much wider range of teacher artists. The Teacher Art-maker Project, which has now run for six years, is producing quantitative and qualitative data on 'early career' art teachers' experiences, in particular issues concerning their artistic output as they teach, their perceptions of how artmaking practice improves or detracts from the quality of their teaching, and their expectation of retention in teaching. These data have not been collated before across such a wide sample and in a longitudinal manner. Imms & Ruanglerbutr focus on qualitative aspects of this study, bringing to the fore the data issues raised by the previous artist-teachers.

We now invite you to engage with the diverse offEmmags of this special edition of JACE and hope you enjoy the creative feast that has been artfully shaped for you to enjoy.

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# THE EXPRESSIVE AND OBJECTIVE TRADITION: REFLECTING ON MY TEACHING AND PRACTICE OF VISUAL ART

**Jacqui Pierce**
Elwood Primary School,
Victoria, Australia
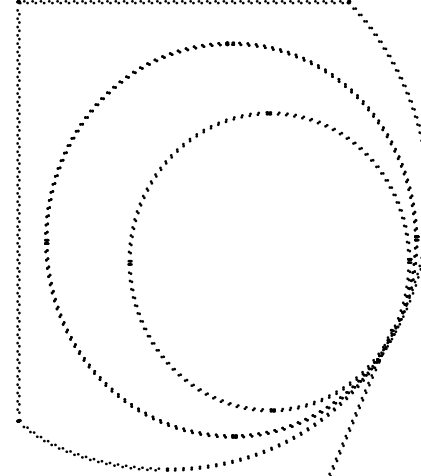
It is a wise man who allowed the reflection of our practice and teaching of visual art to be explored by actually making art. This opportunity was granted by Dr. Wesley Imms in a course entitled Teaching and Art Making. I used the time to create two artworks; an illustrated book without words and a large acrylic canvas utilising stencil art.

Adulthood doesn't arrive without a certain amount of battle scars and medals. The forces that have kept you out of danger, kept you fed and watered are also those which have moulded attitudes. The world around us, our inspirers, our leaders, our philosophers prod and poke our minds, continually asking us to form and reform our ideas. This essay has afforded me the opportunity to isolate and reflect on some of the forces that have influenced the person I am; an artist and a teacher. Arthur Efland eloquently writes about the history of art education and it is his division of four clusters of art education traditions that has been used as the starting point for my reflection. Two traditions have been selected for analysis; the expressive tradition for its links to how I make art and the objective tradition because it is how I teach art. Instead of looking forward to contemporary literature, I have returned to the past to uncover the major writings, ideas and artistic practices that inspired two such different methods of teaching art.

# INTRODUCTION

T h e
artist teacher is a diarchal role,
challenging to even the most experienced
teacher or artist. The teacher who races to beat the bell,
and who is asked to produced masses of paperwork outlining
goals, objectives, resources and assessment on the one hand, fights
with the whimsical artist, who loses time when engrossed in a particular
piece, who may revel in spontaneity and often waits until after the realisation
of the piece to reflect upon or judge its merits (Ball, 1990; Graham & Zwirn, 2010;
Szekely, 1978). Artist teachers "are constantly confronted by an identity crisis in which
their artist and teacher roles, identities and practices are in conflict" (Thornton, 2005, p.171).

It was only through the opportunity to make two art pieces that I realised just how far down one
road I had travelled, and in that journey had completely forgotten the other. The path I stand on is
that of a teacher, a discipline based art educator who is very good at teaching kids the tricks of art
(see Eisner, 1965; Eisner, 2002). The path that I have forgotten is that of the artist; the mad artist who
uses the visual image as a way to say things that can't often be said in words (Edel, 1975; Karkabi &
Cohen Castel, 2007).

Reading Efland (1979), I saw a clear distinction between the way that I make art and the way that
I teach art.  Efland provides the reader with four 'clusters' of art education, their corresponding
psychological ideas, and the learning and the teaching that would prevail.  Two of the traditions
were used as a starting point to understand the disparity between how I make art and how
I teach art. To better appreciate the nature of these two traditions i returned to the period
between 1900 and 1950 where I can clearly see the division between Efland's expressive
tradition, seen in Expressionist Art Education (EAE) initiated by Franz Cizek at the Vienna
Academy of Fine Art, and continued in psychological and educational theory by Viktor
Lowenfeld and Herbert Read; and Efland's objectivist tradition, historically linked
to Arthur Wesley Dow and the Bauhaus methodology, and later to Disciplined
Based Art Education (DBAE) and its writers Manuel Barkan, W. Dwaine
Greer and Elliot Eisner. It is between these two mountains that I
humbly stand.
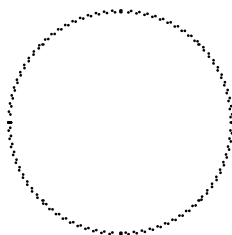
**Arthur Efland** is a well known
figure in the world of art education. He has
written an outstanding historical account of the changing
nature of art education, which he matched with social, psychological
and philosophical events and writings of the time (Efland, 1990).  In 1979
he put his hand to an overview of art education which drew parallels only
to psychology. He writes of four clusters of art education, which are entitled
Mimetic, Pragmatic, Expressive and Objective. Whilst all are worth discussion,
the latter two will be in more detail as they are particular inspiration for me.

Mimetic: The major premise of the mimetic tradition is its imitation of nature.
Highly prized and taught with authority during the Renaissance, this tradition is
steeped in the relationship between the master and apprentice. Art is an imitation
of life, heralded for its exacting nature, and based on a sound understanding
and correct utilization of the elements and principles of visual art.  Whilst both
Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci sought to break with the guilds, and make
art drawn from personal intention, rather than commercial value, it is to these
masters that this method can be traced.

Pragmatic: It is the audience, and their response to the work that is important in
this tradition. The audience has always been important, or mandated by way of the
Patrons, for the artists that preceded the 20th Century, but Efland cites the societal
flux of the 1920s as the time when art was highly interactive. Art was used as a tool,
one through which children, or artists, could solve the problems of the time or lift the
spirits of a generation.

Expressive: The use of art to express the artist's emotions is of primary importance
in this tradition. Born in the Romantic period during the 19th Century, this tradition
resisted the rules and techniques that governed art preceding this era. The expressive
artist uses art to interpret the object, shrouding it in personal opinion, idea or metaphor.
This tradition draws inspiration from the psychoanalytical theories of Freud and Jung,
and users of this method find that the understandings of the artwork are closely linked
to the personality of the artist.

Objective: The objective tradition is based upon the assumption that a work of art is a self
contained entity; one that can speak for itself without the audience needing to understand
neither the artist's motivation nor the historical context it was made. This tradition takes us
back to the teachings of Dow, and is highly influenced by the methods and instruction of the
Bauhaus group and the Gestalt psychologists, whose notion of perception allowed art to be
viewed as independent from its cultural origins and artist intention.

The artworks that I realised, quite coincidentally, rest neatly in the latter two of Efland's
traditions. I first developed a book of 12 etching prints, seen together as a sequential text
without words. It is in the making of this book, the want for it to stand alone as its own entity
that I see the objective tradition. It was the stringent development of my technical abilities
that was of utmost importance, and the production of a piece of art that although conceived
by the artist, is to be viewed without understanding my intentions.

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[1] The words 'elements' and 'principles' are used throughout this essay. The word element pertains to colour, line, shape and texture; and principles include, but are not limited to tone, layEmmag, perspective and space. These are used with reference only to technical skills in visual art, and are not discussed with reference to artist intention.

J. Pierce

Do you know the enemy 2010

However, it was through the large painting that I reconnected with the original reasons I began making art a decade ago. My images are cloaked with personal meaning, they are not devoid of intention, rather they are an extension of my mind, and can be interpreted using psycho-analytical theory. The process of making art, particularly my earlier art, allows me to reflect upon my own world and gives me a medium through which I can manifest some of my shadows. The Expressive tradition allows the artist the space to delve into personal ideas, and the psychology that influences this method provides a framework from which to decipher it.



J. Pierce

Untitled 2010
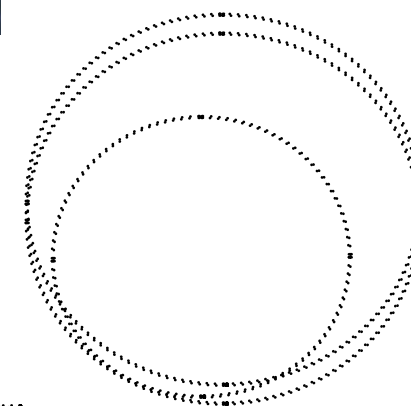
[2] It is interesting to note that the premise of this book speaks directly to the expressionist tradition. Whilst I want the viewer to take from this book what they will, my intention was to show that if given the opportunity to express oneself through art (seen in the large figures giving the girl a large piece of paper), you may find the answer to a problem, in this case who is the enemy. The result of this opportunity is that she finds that it is herself who is the problem (seen in the image on the poster). It seems that my original intentions in art, to expel some of the things (shadows, ideas held in the id) that trouble me is still very dear to me, even though I would posit myself as a technical artist and a discipline based art educator.

# WE DON'T TEACH 'PURE ART', WE TRAIN ART ENGINEERS …. IF OUR STUDENTS BECOME ARTISTS, THIS IS THEIR OWN JOB. (LASZOLO MOHOLY-NAGY IN MOHOLY-NAGY, 1950, P. 150)

As an educator, I thought that it was my job to break down the astoundingly large subject of visual art into pieces that could be taught. For me that was to pare down the visual art world to the fundamentals, and structure a continuum that started at the basic elements (ie. mixing colours) and moved to principles that I deemed more difficult (ie. drawing with perspective) (Dow, 1908-1912; Itten, 1963). This structure was built on my admiration of the master artists, and it is these artists that I believe have laboured to perfect their craft, have learnt and mastered the elements and principles of art, and have found the limits and potentials of their mediums to create artworks that stand the test of time.

I agree with Eisner;

# IT TAKES CONTROL TO USE AN ART MEDIUM AESTHETICALLY. CONTROL TAKES DISCIPLINE AND DISCIPLINE TAKES TIME. (EISNER, 1965, P. 11)

Whilst these seem like art pieces emulating from a freedom of ideas, they have been born from a rigorous study of tone, to differentiate the fish from the water; of skeletal structures, to ensure that the penguin replicated life; and of perspective and illusion, to create space using size and tone.



Marcus
Pen and watercolour
Prep



Mia
Plaster sculpture
Grade 2



Tom
Acrylic painting on canvas
Grade 5

Dow would be inspired by these artworks, as would Eisner. They would be relieved that I taught fundamental elements before allowing the children to embark on a final work. They would hold these examples up to their peers pointing out that the colours don't, indeed, fight with each other (Dow, 1904-1906). In discussions with Piaget, these children, particularly Tom, would please him with their ability to match their technical abilities with the image in their mind. Piaget would express joy in Tom's confidence, and feel satisfied that he could navigate his way through his adolescent phase confident in his own abilities (Gardner in Eisner, 1976, p. 105), These children would eventually be accepted into the Bauhaus school where their knowledge of elements and principles used to create such works would inspire Laszolo Moholy-Nagy to echo the enthusiastic statements he made in a lecture in Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum;

> ... free work is a priceless privilege and it carries with it a tremendous obligation toward honesty and effort.
>
> (Laszolo Maholoy-Nagy in Moholy-Nagy, 1950, p. 110)

Is it not my job to educate the student in how better to match the image to his mind? Or to expose the children to some of the tricks and techniques that the great masters utilise effortlessly so that they too can feel the gratification of an audience who understands, or responds to their image? Do I not need to model the dedication, hard work and intellectual plight of the artist, that which has enabled my many skills and empowered me to write this book?

The student's artwork is wonderful, delighting our eyes with childish interpretations. They do stand alone. The audience is not asked to understand the reason why Tom's landscape is so far away, or why Marcus's shark is so dangerously big, yet seemingly so harmless. Just like my book, these images are just there, they exist in their beauty. I am content with my teaching and realisation of the book because I, like my students are released from this project confident. We are now all willing to take risks within the discipline. As an artist I metaphorically take a step away from my book, and think it of a stepping stone to now pursue more challenging pieces. As an educator I rest easy knowing that I have imparted some of the basic skills of art to my students, and we can now discuss, with confidence and knowing, why Jeffery Smart's landscapes are so powerful, or why Fred Williams uses so many shades of brown in a single work, or how the characters of *Finding Nemo* make us laugh and make us cry because these artists have used these same tricks as we do to create artworks that stand upon the world stage.

# EXPRESSIVE CHILDREN, EXPRESSIVE ART

Somewhere along the path of education I have completely forgotten the original reasons why I turned to art. I don't think that I was ever a person born to be an artist, nor do I believe that I have much natural talent. But, I was born into a family of artists. My upbringing was rich with artistic discussion, and we were all encouraged to dabble in all fields of visual art. It was only natural that I would turn to art at some stage, but I originally believed that it would be in the world of academia. During my 20s I was faced with tumultuous times. I turned to art, not because I had previously, but because of arts empowEmmag and enabling qualities (Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles, 1999; Fiske, 1999). The visual image allows you to say something, without saying it (Karkabi & Cohen Castel, 2007) It provides a language to explore our own world, and grow according to this exploration (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1947; Read, 1936). The process of drawing some of my thoughts out proved to be very successful in allowing me to let them go (see Freud, 1949; Karkou & Glasman, 2004; Mattoon, 2005).

Freud and Jung's notion of the id and the shadow have always been influential. As someone who has used art as a means to overcome life's challenges, the notion of the unconscious, and the use of the image to expunge the shadow have been an interest since I wrote an honours thesis on the subject. Read's analysis of Freud's notion of the artist (edited) left a smirk;

**The artist is always to be regarded as psychotic. The artist has also an introverted disposition and has not far to go to become neurotic. He longs to attain riches, fame and love, but lacks the means to achieve such things. So like any other with an unsatisfied longing he turns away from reality and transfers all his interests onto phantasy. An artist can elaborate on these personal phantasies, so that they lose their personal note, which is grating upon strangers ears, and become enjoyable to others. His images open out to others the way back to comfort and consolation of their own unconscious sources of pleasure, and so he reaps gratitude and admiration then he won, through his phantasy, what before he could only win in phantasy** (Read, 1936, p. 85)**.**
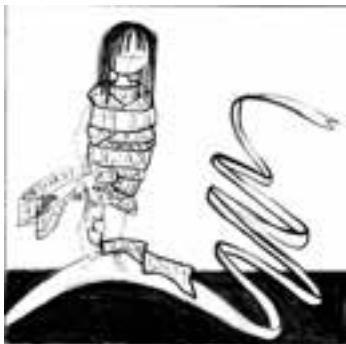
J. Pierce
Fragile
Pen and Ink



J. Pierce
Trapped
Etching 2008

Art is a language. It is a lasting personal comment that is deeply woven into the fabric of the makers mind. How can I deny my students the opportunity to explore their own ideas and thoughts through this magical medium we call art? Have I become such an educator that I have forgotten that the art room is a unique space, one in which ideas flow freely with metaphors that can be used to quietly say that which needs to be said? How can I place such stringent rules upon them, lest they become disenchanted by the very idea of art, and loose what to some may be their only avenue to expel their own demons? Whilst my troubles may have been overcome, I wonder if I could say the same for my students. It is not until we are a little older and a little wiser that we can look to our teaching and reflect on the opportunities I am giving my students in our studio. It was in reflection of my own art making that I realise that the studio is not only a place of learning, but is also a space in which one can go on a personal journey.

# CONCLUSION

The title of this section is misleading. Far from forming a conclusion, this paper has allowed me insight into my own journey as an artist teacher, and exposed the rich tradition and the multitude of influences in my art education, art practice and career path, all of which have me standing where I stand today. In retrospect it is absolutely no surprise that I find myself here, at the end of this chapter of discovery, a discipline based art teacher, and an artist heavily influenced by technique. What does surprise me is that I have completely forgotten the original reasons that I turned to art; a medium through which to communicate or to express certain things that couldn't be expressed in words. Whilst I will always herald technique and knowledge of the elements and principles of art as the most important content in my studio, I will try to also create a space where the unseen virtues of art can be explored.



J. Pierce
This is a smile for you
Drypoint 2006

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Solitude

as a key to unlocking creative potential in an artist- teacher.

Kristy Bovill

Warragul Primary School,
Victoria, Australia

Kristy Bovill has been a Visual Arts Teacher at Warragul Primary School in Gippsland, Victoria since 2007. In her role as Visual Arts Teacher, she is passionate about students expressing their individual identity through their artworks, and in being able to display their artworks to the wider school community. In 2007, she instigated an art exhibition held at the school entitled "Little Artists, Big Impressions", which is now held annually. In 2008, Kristy involved her students in a community art project, to design and then paint a mural on a children's train in the Civic Park in Warragul.

As a practicing artist, Kristy's art is mainly concerned with portraiture, in a variety of mediums including oil and acylic paint, pen and ink. Her paintings and drawings are inspired by literature, music, film and the fascinating nature of the human condition. She has exhibited her work locally and hopes to show her work to a wider audience in the coming years.

Kristy is currently completing a Master of Education degree at the University of Melbourne
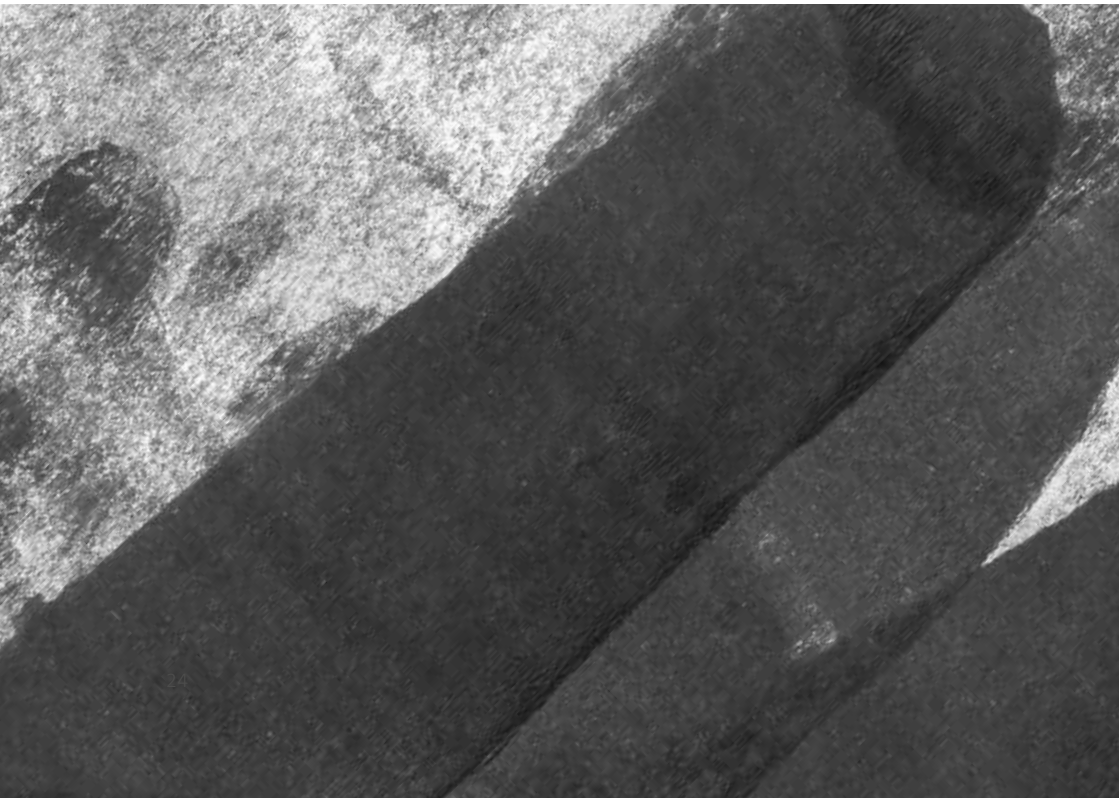
## Abstract

The dual-role of teacher-artist can be demanding and consuming, leaving the individual minimal time and energy to invest in personal art-making. As an art teacher and practicing artist, I have found this to be my personal experience. The art-teaching role, although rewarding, can take precedence over any personal creative endeavours, and can leave the individual lamenting over half-finished artworks. In an attempt to rekindle my individual artistic spark, during a period of leave from my art-teaching role, I gave myself the time and space to focus solely on the creation of my own artworks. These artworks would become part of my assessment for a Master of Education subject entitled, 'Teaching and Artmaking' at the University of Melbourne. During this three month period, I spent a great deal of time in my home environment- a farm in Gippsland, Victoria. I was particularly interested in the impact of solitude and the creation of art. This article will detail how a refrain from the complex role of full-time art teaching, enabled me the freedom to find inspiration, develop a self-reflective state and to produce a series of self-portraits. Furthermore,  this re-acquaintance with my own art practice, has enabled me to become a more contented and knowing art teacher, who is more aware of certain individual's need to have space, time and solitude in order to engage without inhibition in the creative process.

## My project

As part of my Master's studies, I completed a subject entitled 'Teaching and Artmaking.' A major component of my assessment in this subject was to complete an art project of my choice over the semester. As I had been afforded some leave from my art teaching position at a local primary school, I decided to explore the notion of the impact of solitude on the art-making process, and in particular on the creation of artworks associated with self-identity. Over a period of around three months, I explored the idea of self-identity, through self-portraiture. With the aid of a photographer, I was able to capture photographs of myself at various locations on the farm where I live in Gippsland, Victoria. I then translated these images into a series of pen and ink self-portraits. Throughout this period of time, which remained relatively undisturbed by the frenetic demands of an art-teaching role or outside world, I paid particular attention to the benefits of spending time alone in one's own environment and how this influences the creative process. In particular, I explored the impact that solitude has on artistic thought processes and on the incubation of ideas which culminate in the creation of an artwork.

## Introduction

Sidney Nolan once said, "Art was always to me a means of getting in contact with another world...you could never see that other world and were never told about it, but art seemed to be always kind of touching it." (Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2007, p 2). At times, this 'world' that Nolan refers to seems out of reach from the everyday, the mundane, the ordinary. To be able to tap into this world, the creative realm, it seems that it is necessary to remove oneself from the limitations and concerns of the everyday. It is from this creative realm that the art making journey or process begins, stemming from the obscure phenomenon known as creativity. For an art teacher who is also a practicing artist it is evident that the notion of creativity is particularly bilateral. On the one hand, the art teacher is concerned with inspiring and sparking creativity in their students and outpouring their energies into devising, planning, organising artistic activities, and through their teaching, imparting their knowledge about artistic techniques and processes. The various duties and responsibilities of an art teacher can be demanding, consuming, colossal. On the other hand, the practicing artist who dwells within the art teacher needs opportunities to be unleashed, to pour what is left of their time and creative energies into their own artistic endeavours. It seems that the roles of teacher and artist can at times be conflicting in nature, resulting in reduced functioning in one or both roles.

This paper will examine the importance of art in my life and the benefits of solitude in awakening feelings of freedom, and in bringing forth the conditions necessary for the development of creative activity. Drawing upon my own recent experience with artistic solitude and reverie I will discuss the notion of how being alone reignited my artistic spark and enabled me the freedom to indulge my own thoughts, reflections, imaginings and turn them into some of my most self-empowEmmag artworks to date. In particular, I was able to create a series of self-portraits - a process that I genuinely feel was inspired by a self-reflective state of mind developed in conditions of solitude and the departure from busy, frenetic environments. In light of this discussion, I will discuss the implications of the demands of an art teacher's role, and how this impacts her or his ability to enter into that 'other world' and generate art works. To be able to inspire students and aid them in their own personal creative journeys, I will argue that an art teacher needs to understand the creative process, and to have experienced it. Furthermore, I will argue that this understanding will enable an art teacher to inspire students, helping them unleash their creative potential and free their own metaphorical creative 'genie' in the bottle.

## The importance of art in my world

For myself, art is not just a pastime; it is a way of life. I imbue my art with reading, observing, experiencing, and reflecting on life in general and take inspiration from musicians, poets and artists who have lived their life creating passionate and considered works. I constantly notice art in my surroundings - the view from my verandah, a starlit night, the way the dirt road vanishes into the horizon, the sounds of the birds, the texture of an animal's fur, the sweetness of chocolate, the smell of the jasmine that I planted on the arch in my garden, the song on the radio. Art is sight, taste, sound and touch to me. Art is an appreciation of life itself. Art is as much about beauty as it is darkness. "Just as goodness cannot be trusted unless it has breathed the same air as evil," (Cave, 1998), I believe art should be concerned with not only capturing beauty but with representing more perilous aspects of the human experience. I count Goya, Gauguin and Dore amongst my favourite artists, for their uncanny knack of capturing the terrifying, the biblical, and the darkest of moral fables in their works. In my own artworks, which consist predominately of sketches and paintings, I aim to capture elements of life, to capture feelings, both light and dark and to move and intrigue the viewer. I have a particular interest in people and identity, and it is for this reason that I have spent almost 10 years focussing on portraiture.

In all this, I have found that I create more prolifically when I am granted time, space and solitude. I must stress that the term solitude is not referred to within this discussion in a negative manner, as in forced isolation or imprisonment, nor is it referred to as situation brought about by a psychological condition as in the solitude sought by a recluse who is fearful of society at large. It is referred to as a self-imposed, desired choice and can be abandoned at any stage. Later, I will discuss how solitude was undertaken as an experiment to test its impact on the creative self.

Thornton (2005) offers the following definition of the artist teacher: "An artist teacher is an individual who both makes and teaches art and is dedicated to both activities as a practitioner" (p 167). Many researchers have spoken of the tensions that exist for a person who decides to take on the dual-role as artist teacher. The demands of the art teaching role are often at odds with the 'artist' side of the individual, and can impact heavily on the artist-teacher's ability to engage in their own artistic production. Suggestions have been made by recent research that "the artist's outlook and way of being is often quite different from the teacher's... artist teachers are constantly confronted by an identity crisis in which their artist and teacher roles, identities and practices are in conflict" (Thornton, 2005, p 171). It seems the freedom that is afforded to one when engaged in personal art production is vastly different from the structured, ordered business of education. There is evidence to suggest that "making art is a necessary manifestation of the artist teacher's creativity that provides meaning and purpose for them" (Thornton, 2005, p 173).  One particularly real struggle that is echoed in many artist teacher sentiments, is the desire to engage in personal art production, but the disappointing lack of time and energy that they experience due to the demands of their teacher role. This generally leaves their own creative projects in 'limbo,' so to speak, waiting in the shadows, in the darkness, to be realised.

Although my occupation as an art teacher affords me many rewards, I find that free time, space and solitude to create my own work is limited and at times, non-existent. As I have an almost palpable need to create, I still create when I can, but my art creation is limited to weekends and holidays. This leaves a great gaping void in my soul, an impatience and frustration, that diminishes my enthusiasm for my role as art teacher.

The Oxford Dictionary (Simpson & Weiner, 1991) defines solitude as "the state of being or living alone, loneliness, seclusion". Long and Averill (2003) describe the concept of solitude as "a state characterised by disengagement from the immediate demands of other people - a state of reduced social inhibition and increased freedom to select one's mental or physical activities" (Long & Averill, 2003, p 22). For centuries, artists, musicians, poets and writers have spoken about the benefits of solitude as a means of inspiring and giving a free rein to their creative potential.

 "The spiritual, religious, creative and artistic gains resulting from solitary experiences have impacted countless social movements and practices, and solitaries and hermits have long played influential parts in human societies. For example, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed and the Buddha all sought solitude and then returned to share it with others they had discovered. Likewise, many writers such as Thoreau, Dickinson, Kipling and Kafka, have been noted for the role solitude played in their creative processes." (Long & Averill, 2003, p 22).

Nick Cave, the iconic Australian musician and writer, who is not afraid to reach into the dark abyss of his mind and retrieve strange imaginings, has often spoken of "the metaphorical desk - the place of quiet, solitary reflection and creative labour" (Barrand, 2007, p 103). It is from this mysterious space that his work emerges, a place where he is free to indulge in his inner world, an inner world that is preoccupied with beauty and darkness.

Many people engage in solitary experiences and meditation to bring themselves to a mental state of deep reflection. At its core, the ancient movement of monasticism is concerned with isolating oneself and listening for god's voice. Leonard Cohen, the Canadian poet and musician,  has also lived the experience of solitude to enable such introspection.  In 1993, Leonard moved into the Zen Center on Mount Baldy, located in the San Gabriel Mountains, 40 miles east of Los Angeles, where he spent several months with zen master and zen monk Roshi, living the life of a zen monk. In reflecting on this period of time, Cohen

recalls a feeling of relinquishing his past, his identity and a resulting feeling of self-discovery and self-enlightenment. Cohen quotes a statement Roshi made to him; "Other versions of ourselves might arise that are more interesting" (Cohen, in Lunson & Gibson, 2005). If song and poetry writing is a means of expressing one's inner most thoughts, it could be said that through the monastic, or zen-monk experience, Cohen was looking to access the inner workings of his mind to bring forth words that are truly a representation of himself and his true identity, without the distraction of the world or his personal history. The Edge, guitarist in successful pop band U2, speaks of Cohen as a kind of prophet, whose music is occupied with the mysterious presence known as god; "He's the man, for me, who has come down from the mountaintop with the tablets of stone, you know, having been up there, talking to the angels" (The Edge, in Lunson & Gibson, 2005). The metaphorical mountain top that the Edge references, is actually more concrete for Cohen, the mountains of San Gabriel, the place where he found his solace, his contemplative sanctuary.

There are many forms of creative art, and song writing is just one them. If the writer is honest, he or she is willing into existence and expressing their inner most thoughts, their inner world, just as painting can be a representation of one's internal landscape (Eisner, 2002). Just as Cohen spoke of his sanctuary and meditative place, the visual artist must have a sanctuary, a place within which to escape the distractions of the world and release their creative energies.

## Benefits and effects of solitude

Freedom: "Solitude provides opportunities not offered by our usual social environment to engage in activities or thoughts we find intrinsically interesting" (Koch, 1994, p 24). In other words, solitude enables one the freedom of choice to indulge in activities of one's most ardent desire. Freedom from the demands, expectations and influence of society is another benefit of solitude. "The mere presence of other people obliges us to coordinate our experience with theirs, thereby diminishing the scope of our actions.... solitude can minimise intrusive self-consciousness by reducing the immediate demands of experiencing ourselves as the object of another person's thoughts and actions" (Koch, 1994, p 24). Without the need to coordinate our actions with others in our environment, or fit in with their expectations or demands, one is at liberty to make choices about their own actions and can invest adequate time and mental energy into their chosen tasks.

Creativity: For musician Nick Cave, the creative act of writing is an opportunity to "…decrease the distance between the temporal and the divine" (Cave, 1998). Similarly, for poet and musician Leonard Cohen, solitude through a zen-monk lifestyle enabled him to engage in a meditative state and gave prospect for him to be in reach of his own divine self. For visual artist Sidney Nolan, art provided him the occasion of entEmmag into an 'otherworldly' place. These artists found it necessary to describe the connection between creative acts and the summoning of spiritual or unearthly presence, describing the concept of creativity, which by its very nature is somewhat indefinable and its origins difficult to pinpoint, can be a futile business. Long and Averill (2003) assert that solitude is a positive condition that can invoke creative production through allowing its participant to use their imagination and to be liberated and unrestrained in their actions (p 22-25).

Freedom is often considered a prerequisite for creative activity. If solitude affords freedom, it should also facilitate creativity. Creativity consists of forming associations between previously unrelated ideas and giving expression to those associations in ways that are useful or valuable to self or others. We consider here two ways in which solitude can facilitate creativity- first by stimulating imaginative involvement in multiple realities and second by "trying on" alternative identities, leading, perhaps to self transformation" (Long & Averill, 2003, p 25).

The notion of self transformation is of particular interest, as it indicates that through one's own actions a change in the state of one's own self-perception may occur, indicating that both solitude and the creative process can lead to a feeling of autonomy in an individual.

## Attempting to define the creative process

Much research has attempted to define the stages of the creative process. Based on introspective evidence, Wallas (1926) formalized the four-stage model. Despite recent criticism of its definition as being limited in its capacity to define the thinking processes involved, Wallas' four stage explanation remains a useful tool for comprehending the components of creativity. Wallas divided the process of creativity into four phases; preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. "Preparation involves a preliminary analysis of a problem, defining and setting up the problem. Preparation involves conscious work and draws on one's education, analytical skills, and problem-relevant knowledge" (Lubart, 2000-2001, p 296). In research regarding the creative process, the inspiration stage often follows the preparation stage. Kohut, (cited in Shaddock, 2006, p 423) sees inspiration as a process of incorporating an idealized part of the world into the self. Inspiration

can capture the artist's attention in many different ways, and can manifest itself in countless forms including music, literature, the artist's immediate environment (i.e. a pleasant view from a window), a daydream).

The incubation phase is often characterized by solutions occurring almost subconsciously, as one works on a quite different issue or activity. Interestingly, at the stage of incubation, creators often temporarily shift their attention away from the main problem and seek relaxation; through silent and solitary activities such as walking, meditating etc. (Wang & Chern, 2008, p 203). They let their internal thoughts flow in order to effect a kind of unconscious problem solving (Kirschenbaum, cited in Wang & Chern, 2008, p 203). During the incubation phase the mind continues to unconsciously work on the problem, forming trains of associations. The unconscious mind rejects most of these combinations as useless but occasionally finds a promising idea.

The third phase, illumination, occurs when the promising idea breaks through to conscious awareness. Illumination can be characterised by a "flash," a sudden enlightenment (Lubart, 2000, p 296). Wallas suggested that illumination often began with an intuitive feeling that an idea was coming. He called this "intimation," which occurs at the "fringe" of consciousness . The illumination phase is said to be easily disturbed by outside interruptions or by trying to rush the emerging idea. Following illumination there is a phase of conscious work called verification, which involves evaluating, refining, and developing one's idea. Wallas (1926) noted that during creative problem solving a person could return to earlier phases in the process.  For example, if an idea proves to be flawed during verification, one may incubate on how to resolve this difficulty.

In much creativity research, the notion of musing, dreaming and engaging in introspective thought is seen as a solitary process in which the artist is inattentive to the demands of the world surrounding them.  Hungarian psychology professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi "…discusses the notion of the 'flow' as when a person becomes deeply immersed in a creative task and disassociated from their surroundings and awareness of time" (Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, cited in Brown & Chilianis, 2010). This deep absorption in activity can occur frequently during the creative process.  Following this train of thought, it is evident that the creative process involves much imagination and inspiration, which is usually fostered through periods of solitude, visitation of muse and 'flow' experiences (Wang & Chern, 2008, pp 203-204). Other researchers have linked the creative

process to conditions of solitude and removing oneself from the reality of everyday life, entEmmag into state of deep contemplation and reverie. "In preparing to create, the artist must go into his or her solitude, a solitude so deep that even his or her usual sense of self is absent" (Shaddock, 2006, p 423).  Ehrenzweig (1953) discusses the notion of removing oneself from reality. The creative self must have enough flexibility to let go of its focus on the daily concerns of living, as well as any attendant intrusive worries, and let the imagination take flight / take over? (Shaddock, 2006, p 423).

The creative process: A personal journey
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I felt very strongly during my own 'solitary period' that while I moved through these phases of creativity, each did not always occur in linear succession.  For example, inspiration could arrive either sporadically or continuously, depending on the music I listened to, the books that I read or the view that I was appreciating. Likewise, for me the incubation period occurred frequently, where internal thoughts and daydreams moved me closer to decision-making about my sketches and paintings, as I allowed myself much relaxation and periods of meditative thought by going on long walks or listening to favourite pieces of music.

Preparation and Inspiration: I had recently visited the historic establishment known as 'Heide', located in the Melbourne suburb of Bulleen.  Heidi was established by John and Sunday Reed in 1934, and was a place "…where creative people could come together to discuss the philosophy of modern art and social issues, share ideas and produce creative work" (Hart, 2007, pp 4-5). The passionate artists who inhabited Heide included Albert Tucker, Joy Hester, Sidney Nolan, John Perceval, Arthur Boyd and Danila Vassilieff. This group became known as the 'Angry Penguins', and the works they produced changed art in Australia forever (Hart, 2007, p 5). The homestead where these progressive artists collaborated is still open to the public, as is a gallery space (Heide Museum of Modern Art) that exhibits their work and that of like-minded contemporary artists. The entire Heide space is stirringly evocative for me, calling to mind the need to have an appropriate, inspiring place within which to create art.

I am in a fortunate position of currently residing on a relatively large farm in the Strzelecki ranges in South Gippsland. It is a place of spectacular beauty.  My husband and I dwell in a very old cottage that we have furnished with practical

and decorative objects that inspire us. While I feel very inspired by the landscape of the farm and the secluded nature of its location, lack of time and energy is an interfEmmag force, preventing me having enough time to fully appreciate the beauty of this environment, or from taking pen or brush to paper. Working full time as an art teacher at a local primary school is a vibrant, hands-on occupation that elicited feelings of satisfaction and creativity in me. However, once at home, at the end of a long working day, the inspiration that the job provides me is rarely something that I can put into artistic projects due to limited hours and general tiredness. The demands of my role as an art teacher, means my own art-making remains tightly bottled. At the beginning of this project I was at a crossroad; I dearly wanted to see my creative visions achieve fruition but felt that my art teaching role was precluding my ability to enter my own creative world. My teaching was diminishing my desire to create personal art works.

I decided to take leave from my job and spend time reacquainting myself with the landscape and the studio at my Strzelecki home.  During the day I was alone, but had company at night when my husband returned home from work. On most days my art practice began at around 9:00am, unless of course, I had spent the previous night working after midnight, in which case, my art practice began a little later in the morning!

Incubation: I spent three months enabling my very own incubation period through long walks, photography, drawing and painting images from the sources of inspiration that I found in the natural and man-made elements of my home environment. I also read texts about Albert Tucker, Joy Hester and Sidney Nolan and the iconic portraits they created of themselves and of each other. These inspiring identities became like a muse to me, and I often retreated into their stories about their own creative struggles and journeys to find encouragement.

Further inspiration: On one rather wintry and bleak Sunday morning, I decided to visit the shearing shed on our farm in Strzelecki. The shed is now seldom used for shearing, but the distinct aroma of wool lingers in the air. Long hardwood tables and  sinister looking equipment (one piece of equipment resembles a gallows), lie dormant.  There is a sense of abandonment and desertion in this space. It is a mysterious, uneasily quiet, evocative and surprisingly transcendent place.

Initially, when planning on completing an artwork based on the shearing shed I had vague plans of painting its contents using sepia tones to capture the historic charm that the space radiates. After studying the work of English/Australian artist Tom Roberts who captured the atmosphere and charm of such places in his 1890s oil paintings, I began to consider a series of self-portraits in the shearing shed. As I wanted these self-portraits to have a rather nostalgic feel, I decided that I wanted my final artworks to be produced in black and white shades.  In order to sketch realistic self-portraits, my photographer husband took a series of black and white and sepia photographs of me, sitting on a simple step ladder and wearing black from head to toe. Black for me is a shade that is strong, empowEmmag and evokes intrigue. I wanted the photographs to look old and not contain and modern items. I am naturally a shy person, and avoided facing the camera in order to capture this element of my personality. I wanted the photographs to call to mind feelings of sadness, longing for the past, reminiscence. For this reason, I didn't want to smile in many photos, and have tried to remain expressionless.

Illumination and verification: When the photographs were developed, and after careful selection of the three that I would work from to create artworks, I decided to use artist's felt tip pens to create three drawings on three small canvasses. During a long walk on the farm (perhaps another incubation period) I decided to not paint the contents of the shearing shed. Instead, I decided to simply draw myself as a seated figure, and in these drawings, try to emulate the lines of the figure, the details of the hair, the face and the textures of the clothing.  I found this experience of trying to represent my external being, quite confronting, but at the same time transformational. By simply drawing myself and not the shearing shed my aim was to capture the feelings of solitude and contemplation that I feel each time I enter the space.

Another location on the farm that I escape to frequently is the cypress trees that are visible from my verandah.  They stand ominously like two giant dark mythical beings with several long arms and long-fingered hands, reminiscent of fairy tale trees in the dark fables of the Brothers Grimm. During my art-making period I often sat under their shadow reading, sketching, or just thinking. I realised they would be the perfect backdrop for a second series of self-portraits.  After contemplating how I would attempt these self-portraits, I returned to the notion of removing the background as a means of enticing the viewer to focus only on the

human figure in the artwork. I asked my husband to take some photographs of me underneath these trees. By using the photographs as a reference, I then created a series of black and white portraits that omitted any other detail apart from the figure. I felt that without the distraction of background objects, the self-portraits encouraged the viewer to focus on the emotions that I was feeling at the time the photograph was taken. The idea of capturing transient emotions in artistic form by paying close attention to the lines that represent the shape of one's mouth, the direction that one's eyes are looking in or the body language of a subject is what I was particularly aiming for in these portraits.

Leonard Cohen once said: "You have to write down what you are going to abandon, you've got to see how it works in the whole thing and then throw it away....you abandon your masterpiece and you sink into the real masterpiece..." (Lunson & Gibson, 2007). Although I am under no illusion that my works constitute a masterpiece, these thoughts resonated with me as I actually created some initial sketches including the details of the shearing shed, and the cypress trees. But upon completion of these sketches, I came to the realisation that what I was hoping to capture was not the landscape, but the fleeting emotions of a human being.

These three months of personal art-making was a period of great reflection and artistic production, made possible I believe by having adequate incubation time, space and freedom to select my own activities throughout each day and night. As there was no need to prepare lessons or go to bed early in preparation for a day of teaching art, it is interesting to note that the night (particularly the hours between midnight and three am) became a time of creative inspiration and production.

## Circadian rhythms and creativity

Research has confirmed that the human body has its own internal timing and each person's body rhythm may vary significantly from the average pattern (Callan, cited in Wang & Chern, 2008). It has been recognised that the human body has its own internal timings and knowing the 'time' pattern is important for creativity-related productivity (Wang & Chern, 2008, p 202). Wang and Chern (2008) believe that understanding one's own most productive timing for creativity is an important factor to consider when scheduling creativity-related tasks. Upon reflecting on my own hiatus from teaching, the concepts of 'solitude', and 'flexible creative times' were defining force that maximised my flow of expression. I felt a definite refrain



Figure 1: Bovill, 2010. The shearing shed portraits



Figure 2: Bovill, 2010. The Cypress trees portraits

from inhibition, time constraints and concern about the outside world, which enabled sufficient 'space' in mental functioning to allow for left-brain capacities to be triggered.  This resulted in the manifestation of original, less-restricted thoughts.  Much of my artistic work was achieved in the hours after midnight, signalling that my creative self is very much a 'night owl.'

## The benefits of solitude and self-reflection in the creation of self-portraits

When creating my own self-portraits I found that I was investigating my external appearance, and in doing so I was calling on my inner self, accessing deep emotions that I was feeling at the time and transforming them into an art work that would give the viewer an indication of not only my outer self but my inner thoughts/emotions at the time of creation.  An Australian artist that delved into the confronting nature of self-portraiture in the 1940s was Albert Tucker. Tucker "maintained that the artist should present a complete picture of the individual, a conflation of personality and likeness and a synthesis of past and present experiences" (Harding and Short, 2007, p 14).  Tucker used the self portrait as a mechanism of investigating his internal world.

Solitude provided me the time and space for introspective thoughts about my feelings and identity to emerge without intrusion from others.  As Sullivan and McCarthy (2007) point out, "…art in many cultures is seen as an archetypal activity in which practitioners both deeply invest themselves in the activity emotionally, cognitively....and set out to know and transform themselves through this very activity" (p 238). The act of creating a self-portrait, I believe, is a worthwhile transformative process that can reconnect the artist with herself and enable her to come to a deeper self-understanding.

## The impact of this transformative experience on my future art teaching practice

Whilst my period of solitude gave me a unique opportunity to be inspired by my own surroundings, it also enabled me to reflect on what I value and how I see myself as an inhabitant of my own complex environment which includes significant instances of 'non-solitude'.  I feel that this time has bestowed me with a powerful sense of autonomy and independence. In addition to these valuable insights into my own identity, I also learnt many truths about the creative process that I can

infiltrate into my future art teaching practice. In terms of art skills, techniques and processes, I learnt that photography is a valuable means of capturing details in subject matter, and that photographs can be studied, referenced and returned to throughout the creation of an artwork. I will encourage my students to take and study photographs as a part of their own art making practice. The rather archaic saying, "less is more," rang true to me whilst drawing my self-portraits. By removing objects from the background of my self-portrait sketches, I was able to simplify the portrait and focus the viewer's attention to the figure in the portrait. Using simple felt-tip black pens, I was able to focus on shape, line and form with the aim of capturing a fleeting feeling or emotion passing across my face.

As an art teacher, I now have a greater understanding of the personal creative process and realise that this process will differ for each individual. Internal factors such as circadian rhythms will influence an artist's output and times of heightened artistic production. The creative processes are not often linear, and one may revisit one or all of the stages during their creative journey.  The inspiration period can bless the artist at various stages of their creative journey and the artwork can evolve and become very different in response to the inspirational stimulus. The incubation period is quite indefinable, difficult to measure and generally occurs unconsciously. I will now be more sensitive to the fact that students need time away from their creative project, to incubate their ideas, to reflect and to meditate on what might be, or what they may do next.

On a more personal level, my period of solitary art making reiterated the importance of generating my own art works. In order to be a more enthused, inspired art teacher, I now realise that personal art making is a necessity, if I am to maintain the dual role of artist-teacher. This may sound indulgent, but as arts education researcher Maxine Greene asserts, it is not sufficient for an art teacher to be a mere facilitator of art activities for students. The art teacher must have opportunities to be engaged in the process of creating, to understand how it feels, and then to know how to express through language the experiential and the ephemeral.  She argues that an art teacher who also creates becomes a 'knowing' practitioner who is better equipped to help students understand and articulate their own creative experiences (Greene in Diaz & McKenna, 2004, p 26). In addition to this, it is my concluding belief that artists need time and the privacy to connect with their space and to allow the stream of creativity to flow. In essence, creativity needs a 'room of it's own' (Woolf, 1928). For me, solitude can be a source of inspiration that enables my inhibitions to be eliminated.  It is this state of being that can coax the metaphorical creative genie out of the bottle, give it air and space to breathe and then encourage the artist that dwells within the art teacher, the art student, or the individual, to create.

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TEACHER
ARTIST
MOTHER

# How Art Practice

# Informs Teaching

## Abstract

This subject has provided me with an invaluable opportunity to reflect on my own developing pedagogy and the role of art making in that. I have always felt that making art is an important part of teaching it; through this subject I have been able to explore this assumption further. The literature review that I have conducted has provided me with a theoretical understanding of the issues surrounding teaching and making. The practical component of the subject has allowed me to engage first hand with the issues surrounding teaching and making and I have consciously used this component as an experimental and reflective space.

This paper will address the question 'How might art practice inform teaching practice?' in two sections. Section one will look at the personal, creative component of this subject. Section two will look at two key issues raised during the creative component; 'lack of creative confidence' and 'the creative process'. These issues will be examined in a broader theoretical context and their impact on artist, teacher, and student will be considered. I will also consider the implications of a third role, that of mother. In my conclusion I will raise directions for further research.

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## The project

I began this subject with a creative project in mind, a visual investigation into the life of bushranger Maryanne Bugg, 1834- 1867. For some time I have wanted to create a 'missing archive' for this woman constructed of paintings, drawings, stencils, photographs, poems, embroidery, and sound recordings about her 'missing' life. This subject gave me the opportunity to begin this collection and complete at least one painting, a collection of drawings, and some stencil work.

## The early stages

I started with great enthusiasm (my background is in painting and so I decided to begin in this medium) but quickly encountered the following issues; my work space was not as it needed to be, my painting didn't look how I wanted it, I hated my work, and I felt I was a rubbish artist and a pretender.

These problems are as familiar to me as my own hand. Every project I've undertaken has involved initial periods of doubt, frustration and procrastination. I slowly move beyond this by moving things physically. I re-arrange my workspace, or even abandon it, visiting a gallery, a book shop, a library, a public sphere. I search for inspiration in articles, images, conversations and move through the day with my project germinating at the forefront of my mind. Ultimately I find this process often results in a spark, a burst, a bloom; something I see or hear during these expeditions tells me to try this, look at that, make something in particular. That is when I return to the studio and try again, often with a very different idea or method.

I allow myself a couple of weeks to absorb or develop new directions for my body of work. During this particular project, it was in this period of transition that I encountered the work of printmaker Charlotte Whitney through the Open Studio Scheme at the Nicholas Building, Swanston St. Her beautiful etchings of birds connected with my own interest in native and non-native fauna. I found books at the local market on Australian birds, and equally exciting, early colonial artworks of Australia. This theme of native/non-native, belonging/displaced is not new to me, and was the approach I intended to use on my 'Maryanne' project. But the idea of using birds rather than images of an indigenous woman was a break though, as was the idea of printmaking.

When I returned to the studio I made a conscious effort to 'play', to muck about with what was for me the new medium of printmaking, and not take it too seriously. This was really liberating. I suspect that my long and tumultuous relationship with painting has rendered it a serious business; I struggle to 'play' with paint, because for me it is a critical activity. If I don't create up to my own expectations then I feel I am the lowest of the low. If I create an average painting then I must be an average person, an imposter, a looser. In comparison, I have almost never made prints, so felt invigorated and liberated by the whole process. It was a steep learning curve, but once the creative ball started rolling, I found that things unfolded naturally. Every session left me with more ideas and more things to research. This is also a familiar pattern for me. Once the initial hurdle is passed the work grows naturally from itself.

From this period of art-making a number of quite eclectic issues became important; the creative process, printmaking as a medium, the notion of 'vagrant' birds inspired by Hill (1961), Maryanne's arrest as a 'vagrant citizen' and the debate about her status; the notion of 'savages' versus 'civilised', and maps of various sorts including traditional western styles compared to colonial compared to Indigenous compared to tidal, song lines.

# Theorising the creative component

Lack of creative confidence/identity issues. My identity as an artist is a concern raised consistently in this paper so far. I describe my displeasure at the earliest painting attempts and my subsequent feelings of self-doubt. This refers to my own art practice, not my teaching practice, but I know with absolute certainty that my sense of self as artist affects my performance in the classroom. The doubt that I attribute to myself as an artist is logically transferred to myself as a teacher; if I can't do this then how can I teach it?

The issue of self-doubt occurs regularly in teacher/art maker literature. Many art teachers or 'artist teachers' question their own practice, their identity as an artist and subsequently their identity as a teacher (Deffenbaugh, Hatfield, & Montana, 2006) Deffenbaugh et al suggest that this dissatisfaction is frequently fuelled by the inability to reconcile the role of artist with the role of teacher. Zwirn (2005) suggests that the majority of individuals who become art teachers begin their training as artists. The move to art education is, apparently, often a secondary decision driven by the desire for financial security and the belief that it will be possible to maintain the artist self whilst working as an arts educator. Gibson & Murray (2009) argue that institutions that prepare arts students to become arts educators need to take great care to highlight the constraints that will be placed upon the artist teacher. They suggest that time constraints, administrative roles, lack of preparation and lack of support' will all impinge upon the artist teacher's ability to make work. He suggests we increase these students' chances of coping with the duality that is required of the artist teacher by better preparing them during the teacher training program.

I suggest that there is another important identity that comes into play for many people in every profession, that of mother. Working to maintain personal artistic practice whilst employed as a teacher may require a lot of an individual's 'free' time, making this a particularly pressing issue for artist teacher. What happens to the roles of artist and teacher when there is a third role to be performed? Stohs (1992) suggests that the majority of arts education graduates do not consider the significance of parenthood when they describe their desired professional artistic future. While the career projections of male and female graduates were comparable, each aiming to 'pursue careers in the arts', but in reality early to mid-career women were much less likely than their male counterparts to fulfil this ambition. Other commitments, most markedly child rearing and home making, frequently interrupted the professional development of female graduates (Stohs, 1992, p. 7).

As an artist, a student teacher and a mother, I suggest that this third role has a critical impact on the development of the other identities. I am aware that when I work creatively I am not completely immersed in the work as I once was. There is always a part of me held back, listening, waiting, watching for my little boy. Even when he is not there he occupies my thoughts. The result of this is less time for my artwork, which means less progress, less production, with less of 'me' in it. This in turn leads to a lack of confidence in my ability to 'do it', and a lot of guilt/anger because I don't achieve more. This, in turn affects my teaching. When I doubt my practice I doubt my ability/right to teach art; if I can't do it how can I teach it?

Deffenbaugh et al (2006) identify a number of ways that the arts educator may cope with the dual roles of artist and teacher. One way of coping, they argue, is to allow the role of teacher to overtake that of artist. For these educators the ups and downs of personal arts practice will not impinge on their teaching, such individuals may come to see their teaching as an art form in itself. This model is not supported by the majority of artist teachers interviewed by Graham and Zwirn (2010) who suggest that personal practice provides many benefits to teaching practice. These benefits include "an incentive to stay current and connect these types of experiences with the art classroom", "a basis from which to appreciate students work and orientate them towards significant contexts", "familiarity with the process of envisioning, imagining and conceiving ideas" and "involvement with ideas, media, issues, and expression (that) provided a catalyst for classroom exploration" (Graham & Zwirn, 2010, p.230).

I argue that for the many arts educators who train as artists prior to becoming teachers the prospect of becoming a teacher at the cost of their artistic endeavors may be an impossible choice. For those individuals who are not able or willing to abandon their own artistic practice, Deffenbaugh et al (2006) identify two further approaches; the integration of the two roles (artist/teacher) by "...becoming an artist/teacher in the classroom, viewing the two identities as one" (p. 47), or the separation of these two roles, developing each but in isolation to the other. The integration of the artist/teacher seems to present many advantages; the reconciliation of conflicting roles means reduced inner conflict, a more holistic approach to life and education and all of the advantages that students may experience (as listed above). Although Deffenbaugh et al do not consider the role of the mother, I suggest that this model may have scope for the artist/teacher/mother; if we can bring aspects of our artist 'self' to our teaching, then why not aspects of our parent self also? It seems likely that there may be connections between teaching and motherhood in terms of discipline and mentoring, I suggest further study could reveal more information on this and on the links between parenting and art making.

Despite the advantages described for the artist/teacher model, other quite different benefits may be attributed to the separation of these roles. Deffenbaugh et al (2006) refer to the conflict associated with this approach and the problems that this conflict may create. Ball (1990) suggests that crisis is an important aspect of both teaching and making art, that art in itself is based upon moments of crisis through such questions as 'what is art?' and 'why do I want to make art?' For this reason, she argues, "...it is my job as an art teacher to pose conflict" (p. 56). In this vein the conflict that the artist teacher may experience can be seen as a resource, something to draw on and share with the students. This position is supported by historian Bernard Smith. Smith (1988) argues that art is a way of reconciling, exploring and understanding something. Without that moment of crisis, he argues, it is born still, lifeless. With this in mind perhaps the conflict I describe through my creative component is acceptable? Perhaps this conflict, guilt and lack of confidence are actually issues that I can bring into the classroom? Many of the artist/teachers interviewed by Zwirn (2005) suggested that maintaining their creative output allowed them to become a role model as an artist). I suggest that becoming a 'role model as an artist' involves modeling the conflict, the doubt, the anxiety as well as the success. In this way I suggest we might help our students to embrace the conflict and use that to drive their own art practice.

# The Creative Process.

Reflection on the practical component of this project highlights two key points, 'lack of creative confidence/identity issues' and 'the creative processes'. The second of these, the creative process, is not a trouble-free activity. For me, initial confidence, direction and enthusiasm gives way to doubt and stagnation. But I as I described earlier, from this comes an obsession with physical space, the re-arrangement of the work space and my own movement out into the world to engage in open ended research, mindfulness, an ultimately, immersion in the project. The project accompanies me; at times I consciously attend to it by going to galleries, looking at books, magazines etc. At other times it is unconsciously attended to by simply being out in the world, listening to conversations, music, looking at people and places as the idea develops. This period of reception, when the ideas are germinating, is followed by a period of working when I play with materials, ideas, techniques. In this particular project I didn't get beyond this stage but the next stage would have been refinement and the execution of a final body of work.

There are a number of things in this process that I think are worth noting, the first being the significance of 'not knowing'. I began the process with clear goals and intentions, but was quickly frozen. In the previous section I discussed the self doubt that accompanies this stagnation and concluded that is something worth sharing with students. I think it is also important to recognize that the not knowing can be in itself an important part of the creative process. Uncertainty leads to questioning, and once questioned ideas morph, flourish or fade, they ultimately change. After all, if we begin and end with exactly the same idea then what have we learnt? Reflection of my own creative process has also revealed to me the importance of physical space. Re-arranging my work space and moving into new physical spaces has a big impact on my ability to move forward creatively.

These observations have direct implications for my students. I recognize in my teacher self a desire for accountability, logical progress and visible development. Through reflection on my own creative process I have become more attuned to 'not knowing', with the lack of logic, any visible progress, and accountability that may accompany this. Based on my observations I intend to be sensitive to my students needs in this period, to provide them with the resources and support that they might need to develop through the searching period and into the making, exploring and refining stages. I also want to think creatively about how students use the physical space. Where possible (for senior students) I would like to provide them a personal space that they can arrange and re arrange as they wish. I would also encourage them in periods of stagnation to get out of the classroom. Senior students may be permitted to leave school, go for a walk, catch a tram, sit under a tree, go to a gallery etc. based on my own experiences progress is rarely made staring at a blank page.
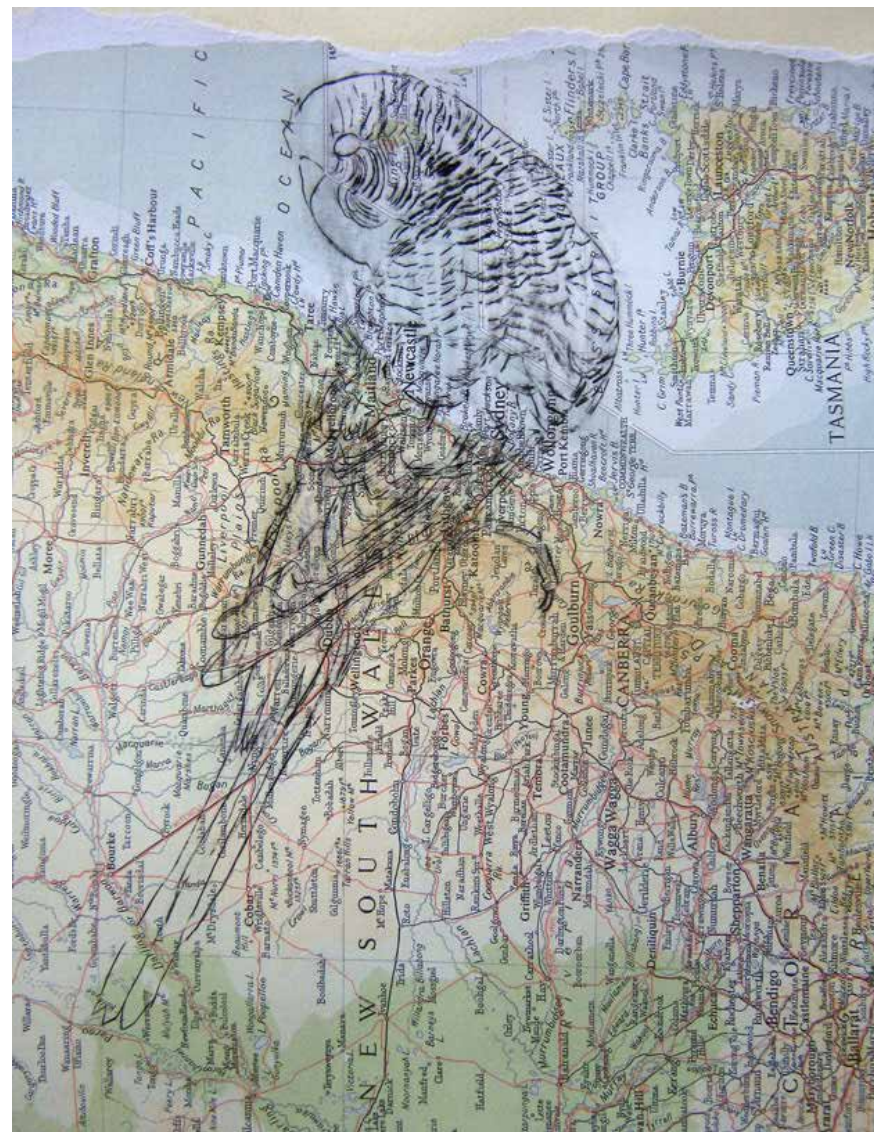
# Conclusion

Earlier in this paper I described my process as I worked through the creative component of this project. From this reflection I have drawn out two key issues, 'lack of creative confidence/identity issues' and 'creative process'. Reflection on my own creative component is littered with self doubt as I encounter my own limitations. I then argued that the self doubt encountered in practice infiltrates teaching practice, resulting in an artist teacher who is at odds with the duality of their position. I also suggested the role of mother may add to these concerns as a third and significant role. Based on Deffenbaugh et al (2006) I outline three approaches that the artist/teacher/mother may adopt to cope with role conflict. I argue that the first of these, allowing one role to overtake at the cost of the others, is not an acceptable option for many artist teachers. The second approach involves the integration of roles to create one role that is informed by all the parts. This approach, I argue, may alleviate role conflict and therefore some of the doubt/guilt/anxiety experienced by the arts educator. Despite the advantages of this approach I use Ball (1990) and Smith (1988) to argue that conflict may actually be an important part of making and teaching art.

I also considered how doing this project informed these thoughts; the process that unfolded as I began Maryannes 'missing archive' suggested the period of not knowing is an important aspect of creative practice. I also considered the impact of physical space on my creativity. The research and reflection undertaken throughout this project has inspired me to aim for an integrated identity that draws on my roles as artist, teacher and mother to reduce my experience of role conflict. Although this may reduce the conflict, I doubt it will eliminate it. I plan to share this remaining conflict with my students as I demonstrate that some conflict and the 'not knowing' encountered in art making can be an important part of the creative process.

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# Educator as artist to shape artistic 'Being'.
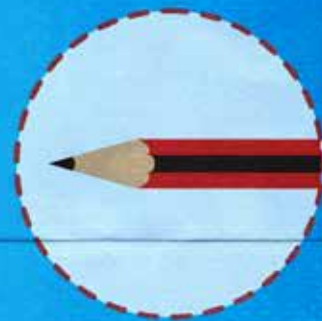
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Ms Cindy Ahearn is currently a teacher and VCE Co-ordinator at Eltham High School. She teaches in the senior school in English, Literature and Drama faculties. Prior to her current senior position, Cindy spent 15 years teaching in primary and secondary schools in the Northern Territory and Victoria. She is currently enrolling in a Research Thesis of Education at The University of Melbourne focusing on art rich children's picturebooks and their affordances for provoking thinking, inquiry and social identity in the teacher/student/art-maker process.

Cindy's qualifications include a B.Ed; Graduate Diploma in Teaching Shakespeare and Master of Education (The University of Melbourne). She is interested in theoretical conversation of curriculum inquiry, particularly through the use of teacher/art-making process.

Cindy's major research interests are children's and young adult literature, particularly Australian fiction, and its reception. Her special interest is in the history of Australian children's literature and the processes of constructing an ethnographic storytelling.

## ABSTRACT

*This paper is concerned primarily with the issue of the relationship between personal and professional identity with reference to the role of artist and that of teacher. In particular, the development of artistic identity and how it might inform professional identity and pedagogy. This issue is considered through personal artistic pursuit; an attempt at illustrating my own children's book. I have found it to be of great importance for the student to begin to self discover the relationship between artist-self and teacher-self. Some consideration is given to discussion into the value of 'teacher as art maker' and as a method for collecting inferential data about teacher and student social identity.*

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Over a long teaching career I have acquired a personal talent for storytelling. I have tried to open the hearts and minds of students from all walks of life, inspiring them to read deeper, search further, and explore their own creative gifts. This paper reflects on events in my educational and artistic life that may have contributed to my sense of identity as an artistic educator. Whether or not it is labeled as 'auto-ethnographic' (Jones, 2005), this paper aims to clarify issues surrounding professional identity and the integral part played by creative practice when that practice informs pedagogy.

As part of my graduate studies, this paper is the result of an attempt to illustrate my own children's book characters. Illustrating a children's book from start to finish is a complex procedure and involved a lot of conversation with practising artists about the entire process. I initially wrote the book with pictures of the characters in mind. One of the major difficulties in children's story book writing is the translation of 'author-image' to the illustrator to capture the inner nature of the character perceived by the author. As I penned them into life, I already had a bond with the characters and they themselves seemed to have a 'being' about them. After much professional discussion, I set myself the task of bringing forth the characters into an artistic form for a specific audience.

## CONTEXT

Professional identity amongst art educators (particularly practising teachers) is an issue in past literature (see for example Huddleston, 1981). How such research is undertaken is of interest here; Alexenberg (2008) for example employs an auto-ethnographic approach in examining "episodes in the life of an artist/researcher/teacher that have special significance for art education" (p. 231), identifying a number of 'interweaving realms' of learning ('playful exploration and interdisciplinary imagination'). The appropriateness of auto-ethnography as a research tool is discussed later in this paper.

As a practising teacher and always on the verge of wanting to explore the multi-layered juncture between teacher and art maker, in my teaching practice I have always challenged assumptions, including my own; I now find myself needing to review even more fully the ideas, notions and assumptions that I bring to inform both my role as an educator and my identity as an artist. I cannot emphatically say that I am either an artist or a teacher, but I am a combination of both – an artistic educator. This identity was in part due to my recognising that being both an artist and being a teacher have their own epistemological statuses, summarised by Victor Lanier and others decades earlier (Lanier, 1959; Allison, 1997), which for me now creates confusion between the two identities.

I enjoyed my own schooling experience very much as a student and learner, but my exploration into the arts as a practice stemmed from a love of nature. Teachers who stood out were the ones who invited me into the 'invisible' world, both in nature and of learning to co-create with invisible space. My artistic task for this unit was to illustrate my own children's book, a story board concept using an art strategy called 'overlapping', where one object partly covers another, creating an illusion of distance and depth. A second technique included was positioning to make objects look closer or more

distant. For example, if you paint an object up toward the top of the page it will usually look farther away.

Our exhibition day was wonderful and I believe that I was successful in presenting my above outcomes. Given that it is not the task of this piece to recant the day, I will briefly mention that the process itself was joyful as was the reminder that reconnection with my own students at the learner level is an imperative ingredient in the teacher-art maker process. Dialogue with students, particularly those who were struggling, continued to pertain to issues of one's identity as student-artist. It is almost as strong as one's ethnicity or religious affiliation. Evident and suprising outcomes were student validity as art makers and their intrinsic emotional struggle with the task. Is showing one's art work to others, particularly critical others, an essential part of art making?

This art unit has been very important, in terms of my identity as an artist, to place my story/art work into the public-student/tertiary student domain. However, the really important thing is the desire to write and create in response to what I see and feel and imagine for my characters, and now I can empathise with those who work on the periphery of the art world (such as art teachers) and consider themselves to be artists: it is a question of essential identity; art is not only a way of knowing, but for my teaching also a way of 'Being'.

Until we partook as both teachers and students of art in this unit, I had not realised the importance of asking questions about student identity. The process of creating the illustrations and drawings which were produced for this task were an opportunity of reflecting on my own self-images and a range of influences and concerns. Moreover, they had some parallels with my artistic identity. Conscious reflection on the 'being' of the art making process with a contemporary learner was something that found its own unforeseen emotional passage into those kinds of artistic and aesthetic production, from the hand, through the head facilitated by the heart of the student. Learners were particularly poised and receptive to its moods – the ever-changing art making process.

Student artistic activity seemed at times to impel them toward a place of creative diversity, wherein the student, artist, the artwork, and the receiver enacted themselves in the full contemplation of their artistic self-abandonment. I venture to hope that the space or the 'being' in the process of art making opens up our sense of questioning as educators, and hopefully potential research areas will yield new and surprising discoveries, and harness the rich pedagogical potential available to us in our experience of the teacher as artist and in aesthetic reflection.

Reflecting on the task was my conscious choice of colour for characters and settings the book. The premise of chosen images for inclusion in the final story board concept was an archetypal shape and form and a desire to create a space where children could be transported and unite with the inner nature of the character as part of the story journey. Dark colour and a foreboding mood were avoided because it was not suited for the children as the audience; the 'being' of the character and the purity of child's imagination were to be guarded at all times.

Identity is complex and the individual is always associated with a group or groups and a variety of roles (teacher/ artist for example). In arguing for a merging of what is known as social identity theory (associated with self-categorisation within a group having similar attitudes) or associated with having a particular role and its attendant values, Stets and Burke (2000) put forward the idea that analysing the relationship between the person, the group and the role will help inform our understanding of what motivates us to adopt certain identities. For example, Stets and Burke suggest that people tend to feel good about themselves when they are associated with particular groups (such as art educators) while confidence is associated with specific roles (e.g. the classroom teacher); authenticity however - when individuals feel 'real' or true to themselves (perhaps as an artist) is when "personal identities are verified" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 234).

Accidental outcomes of this task were moments when students 'hit a creative wall' and of particular interest, the importance attached to the (re)alignment of their self identity. The personal process of illustration for this task was also a forum for deep analysis with students when they were ready to disband their task and even in writing this piece, the realisation that I was gaining insights and new understandings - that I was 'writing myself through pictures into some form of understanding' (not necessarily cognitive). This opens up a whole new area for examination and analysis that is beyond the scope of this paper- one in which I hope to continue to investigate further. However, at this point, I should reiterate that this paper is not an attempt at an extensive auto-ethnographic account; I have in general used references to social and cultural context and focused on a personal recount that I consider relevant to the teacher and art maker issue. The development of artistic identity and how it might inform pedagogy and professional identity were not clear at the time and a surprising research worthy outcome(s).

It allows us to pose the question of what drives teacher's motivation to teach, an artist's motivation to make art or a student's motivation to learn - are they strongly associated with both self-esteem and self-worth? Self-esteem is regarded within social identity theory as a person's overall evaluation of themselves in comparison with the working group. Self-worth

is regarded in identity theory as a person's belief in his or her ability to succeed in a particular situation: the belief in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce a given attainment (Bandura, 1997). Hawkins (1995) argues that self-worth is a cause of behaviour, not merely a predictor. One's identity (for example, as an artist or a teacher) therefore can be seen to be dependent on a number of interrelated factors; I am in agreement with Stets and Burke (2002) who see group identity, role identity and personal identity as overlapping.

Atkinson (2006), in referring to art objects, asserts that the viewer is not an a-historical 'disembodied spectator' and that the relationship between the artist, the art object and the spectator is affected by, for example, class, race and gender (p. 108). In relation to this project, this type of exploration into the 'teacher as art maker' debate, such as those presented here will provoke a range of responses and interpretations from different readers; each might, on their own merit may be applicable.

The teacher-art maker discussion area with auto-ethnographic consideration should be engaging and scholarly. Duncan (2004) also refers to the importance of making explicit "the relationship between personal experience and broader theoretical concepts" (p. 36). This should create a platform into a consideration of the teacher-art maker as valid researcher as well. The researcher needs to take a pragmatic stance on this, and should consider the value of any artistic enterprise of this type of nature, ensuring that it rises above the 'self-indulgence' (see Mykhalovskiy, 1996) associated with it.

## CONCLUSION

Attempts have been made to find the way between concepts of the self as artist and the self as teacher and in so doing have realised and articulated the complexity of both. An unexpected outcome has been my greater awareness of social class (particularly student identity) as an emerging student issue. A learner's response to the art making process is as complex as it is personal at times. There is much to consider in the backgrounds of the student learning group, at least more than first imagined. The value of the art making process in this unit was revealed to some extent by the fact that social class and its relation to art and identity was identified as an area of need for current artist-teachers and excitingly, for future research into arts education.

What is clear is that identity is a complex unrefined phenomenon, and education can play a crucial part in identity forming and transforming. Martin (2007) offers interesting accounts reflecting on identity and culture, drawing attention to the power of artistic education (in its broadest sense) to transform identities, drawing upon life histories to illustrate education's transforming potential. As a practising teacher, this has raised awareness of the pedagogical implications of acknowledging the complicated identity of the teacher-practitioner: artistic thinking and knowing can inform teaching.

Szekely (1987) states, 'the closer to the sources of inspiration, the nearer one feels to the art world, the deeper one's insights will reach into the teaching of the art process of others (p 18)'. I support this notion and he reminds us that the teacher who is a working artist can address himself to his students as he would to other arts practitioners and be sympathetic to all problems inherent in creativity. In relevance to our current classrooms and practice, the rise in postmodernist pedagogies in art has added complexity in terms of how creativity is assessed because the concept of creativity in students' art making has been redefined. Less value is placed on inspiration, originality and organic form, as was previously the case in the modernist model of art education. The effect of post-modern perspectives upon art making practices in art education is obvious with many art educators encouraging students to borrow ideas from other artists and appropriate images, ideas and compositions from diverse cultural sources (Bates, 2000). As a result creativity is more closely associated with the process of production, not the 'truth' of the form or the process.

Our project and subsequent exhibition day reminded me of the daily struggles of students own creative works, and to continue in my teaching practice to offer those qualities which will be important in their artistic efforts, (e.g. curiosity, humility, patience). It is in becoming an artist-teacher and inviting the student to become part of one's creative world that the most significant aspects of art teaching occurs. As the artist-teacher recognises that we are not merely relaying subject matter in class, but are sharing as well as giving our creative self as a model to others, the artist-teacher comes into its own 'Being'.

Davis (2005) refers to 'artful teaching'. 'Artful' teachers mould and operate within the classroom, manipulating different techniques and materials, in a way that parallels the artist's manipulation of visual elements. The diversity of artistic practice and ways of solving problems is suited to the complexity of teaching - from unstructured and intuitive ways of teaching to organised and considered pedagogical approaches.

Conant (1973) stated, "It is time to put back the art into art education." Subject areas themselves can be seen as organic; the blurring of teacher/art maker subject boundaries echoes the blurring between the subject practitioner and subject teacher. To identify the implications of personal teacher-art making supporting a developing artistry of students in the educational teaching context is not an easy task. Reflexivity and personal awareness, which are crucial aspects of teacher as art maker in process, can inform professional reflective practice and ultimately can help one become a better teacher; to harness and shape our own artistic 'Being'.

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# Teacher as Art Maker
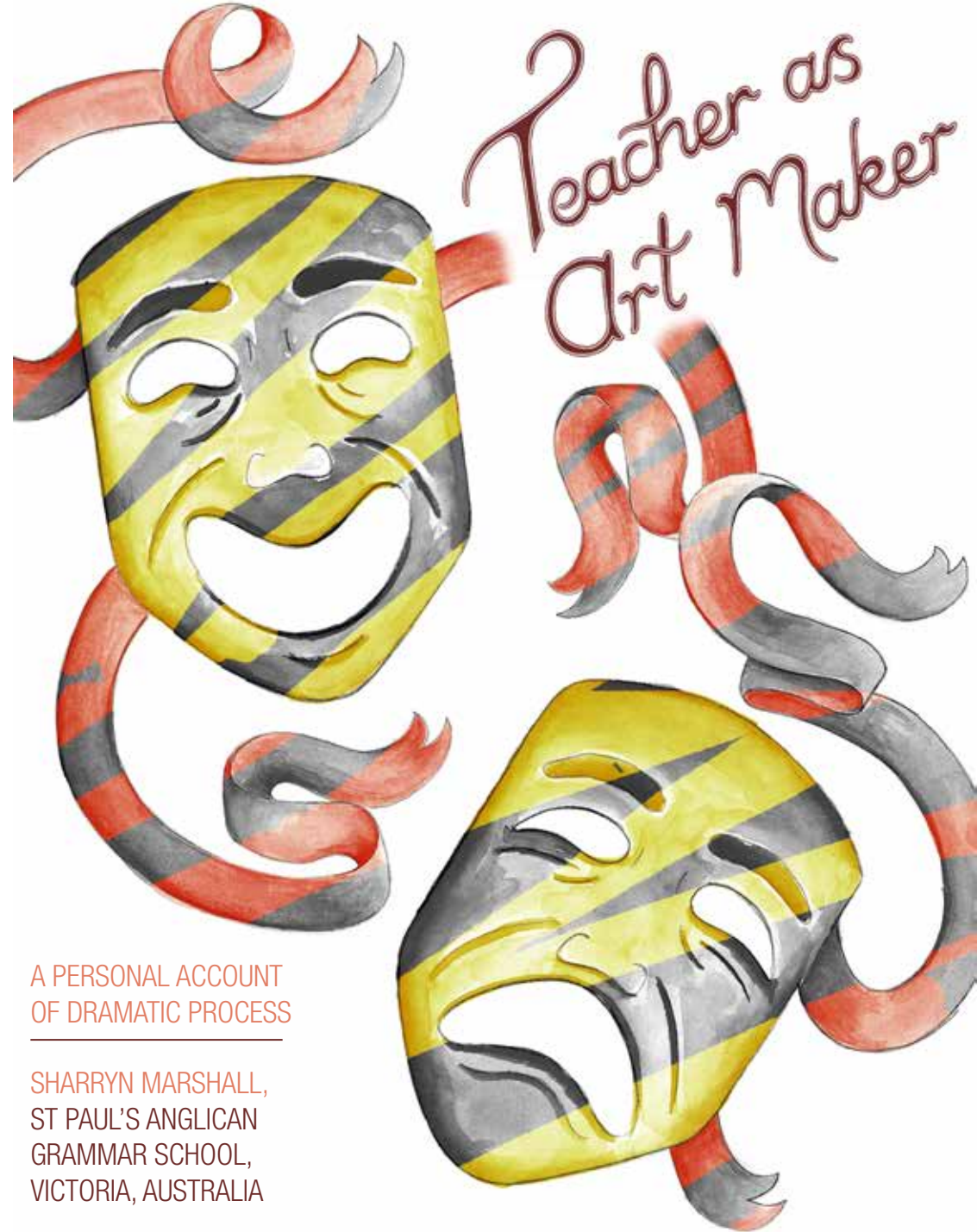
A PERSONAL ACCOUNT
OF DRAMATIC PROCESS

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## AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Ms Sharryn Marshall
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Ms Sharryn Marshall is currently a senior VCE teacher in english and drama education at St. Paul's Anglican Grammar School. Sharryn is the co-author of the VCE student textbook series for english. She has an ongoing relationship with the VCAA in various roles, from assessing student performances for VCE Drama and Theatre Studies to examining the written exam for VCE Drama. Sharryn has taught in a range of secondary schools both government and independent and has also taught drama and english in the international arena.

Ms Sharryn Marshall has been teaching for 18 years and has extensively coordinated the drama syllabus. Her academic work focuses on drama and arts education in schools, arts education with young people at risk, drama and intercultural education and qualitative research methods in arts education. Her qualifications include a B. Ed; Graduate Diploma in Teaching Shakespeare;. M Ed (Melbourne University) and she is currently enrolling in a Master's Research Thesis. Sharryn's research interests include the focus on role playing for life situations, and a creative avenue for students to express themselves in today's contrasting world. A particular focus for 'at risk' students being given a voice and platform in which to express themselves is central to the ever-changing role of Drama in today's

education curriculum. Underpinning her research is also the relevance of Drama as a subject to allow personal exploration and reflection for both teacher and student in the artmaking process.

## ABSTRACT

*This paper focuses on the personal artmaking journey undertaken in a Master of Education, Teaching and Art Making unit at The University of Melbourne. Through the investigation, research and practical application in relation to the artistry of a solo performance, an educational context was established by the teacher becoming the student. This paper follows and identifies a personal reflection of both the implications and connections associated with performance based artwork. To create the character of the 'Modern Day Fairy Godmother', the devising of situations through a physical framework as stipulated by dramatic elements, theatrical conventions, prescribed focus and audience were undertaken and explored. Reflections were recorded in a folio that incorporated research, ideas, feedback and editing assisted in the development and realisation of solo drama performance.*

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The task set was to present a solo performance to a peer audience. The art making process was not just the final outcome but rather the course of action that took the performance from idea to reality. A folio became a guiding principle of the teacher becoming the art maker as it recorded ideas, research, feedback and the decision making process. A prime objective was to become a student and how decisions were made in relation to a solo performance, a key outcome for senior drama syllabus. The folio also served a tangible testimony of the journey a performer undertakes when completing a solo performance.

## INTRODUCTION

The core of VCE Drama and Theatre Studies education is the skill of performing to mandated criterion of a character structure. To fully appreciate and understand this practical work students are required to complete and gain a pass in these subjects, I undertook the process of researching and performing work based on a solo character.

As a practicing Drama and Theatre Studies teacher and assessor for my home state's matriculation external examination in this subject, it is important to understand and appreciate the practical work of students, especially in regards to performance outcomes mandated by VCAA at VCE level of Years 11 and 12. It had been many years since I had actually performed to an audience and this subject allowed the opportunity to re-engage with personal art practice, writing and presenting a mini solo performance task. It was with some trepidation that I approached this task of performing to my university peers, many of whom were not drama trained or had limited appreciation of non-naturalistic dramatic principles. Bell contends that 'to be a teacher, one needs to be outgoing, analytical and confident (1990:54). Szekely (1978) acknowledges, 'the school system seldom encourages the art teacher to pursue [their] creative tasks' (1978:18) because, in the everyday world of teaching, there is very little time for a teacher to simply enjoy their teaching artistic practices in a personal manner.

## CONTEXT

Dooley (2004) presents the importance of university teachers being able to ensure that graduating students have strong understanding and thinking skills and this is the same for a secondary school teacher and their students. Bell's 'I wanted to teach' (1990: 57) resonates because of its intrinsic inspiration to be a teacher. Each year, there is a different cohort of students in my drama classes and it is imperative to be able to deliver a fresh approach to the necessary

skills and outcomes for students to complete and to complete well. Bell (1990) reinforces this educational, professional and personal challenge; teachers should have 'the ability to rise to challenges, and to overcome them results in a teacher who is confident enough to challenge students' (1990:57) but also to take this further by challenging themselves.

A goal of this graduate project was to become a student again and to utilise the processes which drama students apply when undertaking a solo performance topic. The mini-solo performance task is performed by a drama student to their peers and teacher, all of who have dramatic background and understanding of the processes involved and the criterion for the actual performance. This is a task that is set for my students early in semester two and is a precursor for the externally assessed solo performance exam. During the process of teacher as student solo performance, academic consultation was sought and received from peers and students of Theatre Studies and drama. As prescribed by the mandated outcome of VCE Drama curriculum, there is a selection of characters that students choose to perform. The solo performance topic undertaken for this project was 'The Modern Day Fairy Godmother'. Senior students make their own decisions in regards to the solo performance topic based on interest, available research and prescribed dramatic elements and theatrical conventions. It was the rationale of the teacher as student solo performance task that I put myself in the students' shoes. In exploring the complexity of teacher and art maker, a key focus was the interaction of teaching and the teacher of artistic pursuits.

## PROCEDURE

The actual selection of a performance topic was the first step of this art making process. Once the topic was decided upon, initial brain storming of ideas was recorded in the folio. This included pictures, words and images associated with the fairy godmother. Internet research of the stimulus of Cinderella was also integral in the shaping of the character. The myriad of collected ideas had to be streamlined in order of relevance to the actual task with images forming scenes and words becoming dialogue and action for

performance content. Artistic practice of elimination was a key factor and this was linked with actually practicing the performance – trial and error of what worked and what didn't through a recording of ideas and the gleaning of feedback. The adage of "show, don't just tell" was fruitful in the art making process in relation to teacher as student. It was imperative to make the intangible into form and this was the process of putting the performance all together in a non-linear timeline, a key concept of a non-naturalistic dramatic principle.

As a teacher of senior drama, students are instructed with advice, assisted with research and receive constructive criticism to help refine the solo performance. Stepping into the shoes of a student was an artistic learning curve for the teacher. Cox (1930) supports the notion of how the teacher is affected by those around him and this became an underpinning focus for the performance. Cox investigates how tension, action and passion provide the platform of artistic conscience. Bell (1990) endorses for the artist and art teacher to be able to limit the gap between art making and the understanding of how art functions. Guay (2010) reinforces with how the spectator becomes the actor and this was the course of action focused upon.

Gregory (2010) and Hartoutunian-Gordon (2009) endorse dialogue and interpretative discussion between teacher and student. Research students for the task were honest, critical and supportive. Feedback was recorded in a folio that was kept as part of the teacher-art making process. This folio was a chronicle that documented inception to performance. In reflecting upon the art-making journey, the folio was a visual representation of ideas, data and research. The folio served as a cognitive template of creative ideas that captured and highlighted the mixed tensions of performing a solo to an audience. Bell acknowledges the importance of 'tensions of experience' (1990:56) and that crisis of creativity must be addressed with a guiding hand from the teacher.

'Art teaching, through the creation of art works, involves a catalyst to elicit ideas and emotions from its maker as well as its viewer' Szekely (1978: 19) and this discovery highlighted the importance of developing artistry of the solo performance. During the developmental stage of a performance, critical reflection of performance content was necessary. Senior students were helpful in the development of the solo character. Practical and artistic workshops on voice, accent, pitch, tone and delivery formed the basis of class activities to establish the character's distinctive voice.

Performing to a non-drama based audience who may have limited experience with non-naturalistic drama was a tension that had to be addressed in steEmmag the content of the performance. Like a teacher who incorporates their own personal journey into their teaching, artistic drive is an art, be it written, performance or visual. Craig (2006) presents that there is more than one single perspective in relation to art teaching. Collaborative discussion on the fairy godmother was visually perceived and resulted in including copies of 1930s French paintings and drawings of women in the folio. While not all the paintings were true to the final vision, a pose in one of the paintings became a starting tableaux.

Everett (2008) employs how both the mind and body are instrumental in portraying character and commitment to role. This allowed a forum to revisit current personal classroom practice. Davis (2008) shared similar artistic visions and recognised how Hasseman and O'Toole's Dramawise (1987) provided a framework for dramatic appreciation and has become a catalyst for current drama teaching texts. Herein, a recognition that the arts have been a testing ground for new ideas and the subject of teacher and art making providing an avenue to explore and test this premise.

Everett (2008), through the pedagogy of Lecoq's notion of play, reiterates that play and games help a student learn life skills. Barkan argues that 'too many people perceive the study of art as child's play, hardly worth the time it takes (1962:13). Guay (2010:3) links the parallels 'with the games of children who recreate situations from their imaginations' and that improvisation and theatre sports can be recognised as play for adults. Craig

(2006) reaffirms how visual and performing art teachers are tellers of stories and this telling occurs through the visual stimulus. By researching online and gathEmmag a collection of pictures associated with traditional, modern and stereotypical pictures of fairy godmothers interpreted in modern media and society, this helped formulate how the modern day fairy godmother would be portrayed. The fairytale story of Cinderella is well known but a modern day non-naturalistic interpretation would be vastly different. A verbal introduction preceding the performance informed the audience of deliberate transformation of prop, character and place. It was pleasing to note that after the performance that the audience understood the non-naturalistic principles verbally explained and then visually presented.

Craig (2006) supports that art is a culmination of artistic and artful learning and thus is more than just testing; it is the emotional, intellectual and creative journey. Cox (1930) appreciates the work of artists in developing and perfecting their craft, and like a performance, is appreciated by an audience and a viewer observing a piece of art. Szekely (1978) acknowledges the importance of a student to discover the relationship and role between the artist-self and teacher-self. Through the work of Jacques Lecoq's movement principles, Everett (2008) notes how characters are explored by improvising them in a myriad of situations and contexts. This helped establish the fairy god mother character, especially in relation to the modern day aspect by including references to princes and princesses of a media controlled fairytale.

A blank canvas preceded the topic and was then filled with words and actions to give colour, depth and perspective. Transformation of being more than just a teacher but a productive and performance creator was evident. Everett (2008) recognises the importance of reappraising the traditional understanding of how teachers teach and how students learn and had an impact upon the performance task. Movement is an integral part of drama course content and teachers need to be comfortable with themselves in order to foster an appreciation for spatial movement and awareness of others in and around the physical space.

## CONCLUSION

A drama performance is fleeting with no two performances ever the same. Recording and even photos of a performance are unable to capture the real essence of experience for the actor or the audience. While in visual art the picture / painting / sculpture is finite and able to revisited, this is not the same for a dramatic performance piece of work. Months of research, development, feedback, trial and error were literally over in a matter of minutes. Long after the applause and recognition were over, only the memory was etched in the mind of the performer and audience. The transitory nature of a solo performance is ephemeral. However, the folio served as a tangible documentation of the teacher as art maker. It was more than just the performance to my peers, this unit was the artistic and personal journey of performing the Modern Day Fairy Godmother and the driving role of teacher as student that underpinned my objective.

'Our students deserve a good education, and that includes the opportunity to gain a more complete understanding of themselves as well as an understanding of the images and symbols of their culture' (Bell,1990:59) and this became the hallmark of the performance presentation. On the basis of the findings presented in this paper, it is clear that the solo performance is a demanding task and further research opportunities into the student perspectives of the processes rather than just the graded result is recommended. The task set was not easy but allowed greater insight to the expectations of students studying a year 12 drama course.

The performance journey enabled an artistic and artist self to be showcased in a piece of work that was creatively constructed and has fostered a greater appreciation of the teacher and art-making process.

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# Down the Yellow brick road

CASSIE LINLEY

## BIO

Cassie Linley completed a Bachelor of Creative Arts at the University of Melbourne in 2007, with a double major in Visual Media and Theatre Studies, and has recently graduated with a Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching from the Melbourne Graduate School of Education. Ms Linley has participated in numerous group art exhibitions in Melbourne over the past few years, and staged her first solo exhibition at Limerence Gallery, Melbourne, in November 2012. This year, Ms Linley has also worked in the U.S. as the Head Arts and Crafts Counsellor for an all boys summer camp program.

## ABSTRACT

I watched her making art in the classroom, I was so inspired... a little bit jealous too. I had finally laid eyes on one of those mysterious mythical creatures. An artist teacher. So how can I become one of these artist teachers I thought to myself. Is it just like Dorothy asking the Wizard of Oz? Ask and you shall receive? All I need is a magic spell and I will miraculously transform?! I closed my eyes, tapped my feet three times and wished away! ...nothing. Hmmm. This was going to be harder than I thought. Well, I suppose Dorothy did have a long journey before she reached the Wizard of Oz. She built her confidence in order to help others, and unknowingly, they also helped her. It wasn't always easy; there were lions and tigers and bears. Oh My! However, with persistence, passion and support, she made it to Kansas.

## SO OFF I HEADED, DOWN THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD...

Who is this mysterious and powerful Oz? That mysterious mythical artist teacher was in fact, my pre-service teaching mentor, and what an appropriate role model for the adventure I was embarking on. But what exactly makes an artist teacher? Are there pre-requisites one must fulfill to be awarded the ruby slippers and prestigious title?

Much of the literature around this concept refers to the struggles faced by artist teachers in coming to terms with their dual identity. As educator Alan Thornton states:

There are teachers of art who feel uncomfortable because they are not making art. There are artist teachers who feel uncomfortable for not devoting themselves more to teaching. There are artist teachers who believe they can only function in both roles if they keep them separate. There are artist teachers who are concerned not to impose their own ideas as artists on their students. There are artists who work in residencies who are not sure whether to act as teachers or artists when working with students. There are artists who are determined never to teach for fear of loosing their identities as artists (2011, p. 35).

Evidently, it is no wonder the role of artist teacher holds such contention. Not only does being an artist teacher involve juggling the act of the dual role itself – an artist versus a teacher – but there is uncertainty and polarity in its very definition. Doubt runs rampant through the minds of artist teachers, who question what they really are – an artist, teacher, or both? They question their practice and validity, warily standing on the shaky ground of a culture that hunts for definition, control and hierarchy.

Part of the artist teachers' struggle lies in the tension between their artistic freedoms and the rigorous educational curriculum, as they are required to "migrate between cultures and territorial spaces" (Hall, 2010, p. 105). Research by Rena Upitis into education

development programs, describes the movement between the two territories, as felt by participants, as a clash of "individual artistic endeavors and processes with the philosophies and teaching approaches of the educational settings" (2005, p. 2). As Upitis' discusses, artist teachers are constantly amidst a tug-o-war, experiencing difficulties to cope with differences between their freedom of artistic expression, and rigid school curriculum and timetables. Variations on their dual identity are infinite, depending on time and place and where one's allegiance lies between the tensions at any given juncture. The service that artist teachers are to provide to schools is established from the outset – whether it is determined by the educational system, individual schools or teachers themselves. However, the support required for artist teachers to meet these expectations must be addressed, as currently this is lacking considerably.

So it appeared there were no clear road signs or instruction manuals on 'how to be an artist teacher for dummies' for me to follow. I discovered no magical spell to conjure the transformation. I had to find and create this creature myself.

## LIONS AND TIGERS AND BEARS, OH MY!

Along Dorothy's travels there were, of course, road blocks and dangers interfEmmag with her journey. She

had her struggles, and the key one here was: artistic freedom versus curriculum. Out in the wilderness of the schooling system are curriculum and assessments and educational standards, oh my!

With my ruby slippers on I was expected to give students an 'authentic experience' of being a creative, working artist, but only within the space and time allotted to my art classroom. It wasn't enough. Art takes time to produce, requires creative energy and that spark of inspiration. The process cannot be forced nor can it be expected of myself as the teacher, or the students, to just be able to turn on that creative energy at the allotted time slot and produce satisfying art. As research documenting programs involving artist teachers' experiences in the classroom often reveals, art can become misused "as a 'motivational gimmick' to engage children" (Upitis, 2005, p. 5). Curriculums' demand for clear outlines and assessable tasks destroyed authenticity and potential learning within the classroom, as the creative process cannot necessarily work to such a linear timeline. Without support from schools and the education department, to provide more time and space for myself and students, the artist teacher process was difficult. If I wanted to create an authentic experience for students through my identity as an artist teacher, I needed something more. With the pressures of curriculum and pending assessments, there had to be something driving me to create art. Making it for my own sake, to satisfy my own creative desires, was not enough with the pressures

weighing down on me from both teaching and my university commitments. I had assignments with approaching deadlines, two classes to teach tomorrow and a date with my partner whom I hadn't spent quality time with, unstressed, for months. Where was I supposed to fit in art making? It had to have a purpose, other than pure enjoyment, to get a spot on my top 10 priority list. So I forced myself. I signed up for an art making elective as part of my university studies, envisioning this would provide me an ideal purpose, situation and opportunity to create art. I threw myself in the deep end. No turning back now, art making just debuted at #1 on my to-do list.

Deciding to enroll in the elective, which focused on creating a space for art making amongst teaching and reflecting upon the process, was based on my perception that making art would enhance my confidence as a teacher, sustain my passion and enjoyment for art, and with this, benefit the students' learning and engagement in my classroom. Throughout the duration of the elective, I struggled, like other students did, with the pressures of time and resources, but still I managed to discover the benefits through the battle.

Yet, it was a catch 22 situation. When I began to practice my own art making, my confidence in the classroom improved, as I no longer simply felt like an actor - pretending. This enabled me to spend less time on lesson planning, as I was more equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to deliver art lessons. By spending less time on lesson preparation, I was able to become more active and involved in my own art making that further developed my technical skills and enhanced my confidence in the classroom.

The only catch was finding that initial time to start the art making process. And round and round it goes!

Enrolling in the art making elective pushed me to make that time, be organised and make art on whatever scale I could afford the time and resources for. However, now that my university art making commitment is over, even the knowledge and experience that art making helped inform my teaching, won't always win the battle when time becomes a precious resource. Support needs to continue, whether it be exhibitions to drive artists' practice, professional development that teaches how to further one's artistic practice, or provisions of increased communication network opportunities between artist teachers, who can act as a support group. Such initiatives are being implemented through programs such as the Artist Teacher Scheme (ATS) (Hall, 2010), which seeks to strengthen teachers' artistic practices. I need that motivation provided by such schemes, to encourage me to keep making art, by providing a structure that necessitates time and resources for this. More programs need to recognise the importance of a teacher's art practice and provide support for teachers in continuing their artistic endeavours.

## MUNCHKINS

In the original *The Wizard of Oz*, we see Dorothy rescue the tiny residents of Munchkin Land from the Wicked Witch of the East. To reward her good deeds, the munchkins helped Dorothy



on her journey, directing her down the magical yellow brick road. In my own version of *The Wizard of Oz* the munchkins, to my Dorothy, were the students. They inspired me and took me on journeys down many roads, of all different colours and textures. The relationship between myself as the teacher, and the students, has been an important driver during my time in the classroom. Through dialogue with students, in whatever form that takes, I have adopted the role of both teacher and student, personally and artistically developing through the process. As educator and theorist Paulo Friere states, students and teachers are interchangeably teachers and students, "becom[ing] jointly responsible for a process in which all grow" (cited by Thornton, 2011, p. 32). Educational researcher, James Hall, develops upon the notion of dialogic interchange in the classroom through the conceptual framework of 'reflexivity', which he describes as;

the freedom and learning power to create knowledge, to question what we know and how we come to know it; that is, maintaining a self-conscious and self-critical stance to our attempts to construct meaning for ourselves. (2010, p. 108)

Hall emphasizes that one is continually making and remaking meaning, in a cycle, without ever arriving at a complete conclusion. The world is constantly changing and our interpretations with it. We do not live in solitude nor are we static. Our paths cross others and lives are intermingled. Through many dialogic forms (between people, artists and their creation/ materials, artists and themselves) in my

own art making and within the classroom, I was making and remaking meaning, with my most important dialogue taking place with the students. They inspired me. My artistic practice expanded immensely as I was inspired to experiment with different mediums and concepts by the multitude of artists in my classroom, all with different styles and techniques. As Picasso once said, "it took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child" (cited by Scigliano, 2005, p. 296). There is a beautiful natural naivity that comes from students that cannot be forged or faked. This special essence in students' art evoked new thoughts, meanings and interpretations within my own artworks that I had previously not discovered myself or had lost over time. Librarian and museum director, John Cotton Dana, reinforces this reciprical relationship between teacher and student, stating "who dares to teach must never cease to learn" (Snowman et al., 2009, p. 1). How can one aim to best teach students in a changing world without continuing to develop their own skills? Although it should not be exclusively stated that you have to be a practicing artist to be a good teacher, I personally found and believed this through my experience. Once I gained the knowledge, I could share it with enthusiasm and passion, and watch as the students were drawn in; the presence of a practicing artist improving students' engagement and respect towards the arts (Upitis, 2005). As practicing artist and educator Melissa Smith stated, "we are role models" (University lecture, 26 September 2011). Just as Dorothy was a pillar of strength to the munchkins, I was a role model to my students, as for them, the idea of "seeing is believing" (Park, 1995, p. 5) can often be their strongest teacher.

# THE SCARECROW, TIN MAN AND THE COWARDLY LION

Let us not forget, Dorothy didn't make the journey alone. Along the way, she met the Scarecrow, the Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion, who travelled alongside her. The group I needed traveling with me were not too dissimilar. Standing in for the Scarecrow was knowledge, replacing the Tin Man was passion, and stepping up for the Cowardly Lion was courage. As I travelled along my own yellow brick road, and these characters came into my life, I gradually transformed into the artist teacher I was searching to be. No longer was I like an actor practicing my lines the night before, fretting about the 'what and how' I was to teach the next day. I now had confidence in my capabilities, arising through my own artistic practice. I built knowledge that strengthened my confidence in teaching and engaging students, no matter what came along. I had renewed passion for art, and with this, an intrinsic enthusiasm that informed my teaching. And finally, I found courage. Courage that, with my knowledge and passion, I could navigate the troublesome roadblocks of curriculum, assessments and the educational system that once disrupted my path, enabling me to best teach and learn with my students.

# GETTING TO KANSAS

My journey to becoming an artist teacher will never cease. Undoubtedly, there will be battles along the way, however, this first leg of the journey has taught me valuable lessons.

So what would be Dorothy's advice? Firstly, artist teachers need to be opportunists. Whilst there will be ebbs and flows in the opportunities we have to make art, make art whenever you can. It's not a perfect system, and until curriculum and educational departments recognise the need for support, we may not always be able to make art in the way we want. However, keep trying - big or small, even if it is just making art to inspire students' projects and giving it that double purpose. I needed something more than just the pure pleasures that art making brings, more than just my own desires, because this wasn't enough motivation when deadlines are imminent. I needed a greater purpose, and I found that in the classroom. I found my artistic practice improved my teaching and thus student learning through the experience. Whilst art making does not guarantee that one will become a more successful art teacher, given we all have our own individualities, this was the result for me.

I practiced my belief to 'live spherically', being open to the influence of students and their different ideas flowing through the classroom. Living spherically allowed me to maintain energy and enthusiasm; when one idea doesn't work out, there is always another project on the run to keep the momentum and maintain the flow of creative ideas.

Evidently, being an artist teacher has its benefits, however, such benefits arise from overcoming tough battles. Validation of our worth, as both artist and teacher, amongst the school community needs to be provided, along with support through programs such as the ATS. As time and resources are precious, artist teachers need assistance to source them.

Such a reflection on my journey compliments an artists' search for making and remaking meaning. Artist teachers do not find completion just because they have 'finished the artwork'. We do not stop being artists. There are many chapters, journeys and artworks to flourish in our continual story of growth. As practicing artist and educator, Christy S. Park reinforces, "perhaps the most alluring aspect of the artist as a model for teaching is that this approach provides not only a role-model for teachers to emulate, but for students to emulate as well" (1992, p. 57). Park further expresses that she has "never lost [her] early enthusiasm for art and it is a driving force in [her] teaching" (1995, p. 2). She may not have explicitly told us how she kept that passion alive, but I think through my own art making and relationships in the classroom environment, I may have just found the secret spell.

# SPREAD THE WORD

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# The Teacher Art-maker Project:

# Towards the phenomenon of the teacher as a practitioner

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This article takes four case studies from within the Teacher Art-maker Project1 (Imms & Ruanglertbutr, 2012) to look at the intersection between the closely related ideas of teacher-artist and teacher-practitioner. The Teacher Art-maker Project (TAP) itself is a longitudinal study involving over 150 early career art-trained secondary school teachers. An aim of the project is to investigate early career art teachers' experiences of becoming artist-teachers (or not) and their changing attitudes towards the relationship between their art practices and teaching practices. The TAP data comes from a number of quantitative and qualitative sources including annual surveys, interviews, exhibitions, artist statements and exhibition catalogues. Now entEmmag its seventh year, TAP has generated enough longitudinal data for emergent patterns to be identified. The inaugural TAP exhibition *Crossing Boundaries: The Journey from Teacher to Teaching Artist* (Ruanglertbutr & Imms, 2012) followed by *Sensations of Art-making: Triumphs, Torments and Risk-taking* (Ruanglertbutr & Imms, 2013), *Connections: Teaching, Art, Life* (Ruanglertbutr & Imms, 2014), and *Reciprocity: Learning From, Giving Back,* (Grant & Imms, 2015) can be seen to map the complexities belying artist-teachers' hybrid identities and professional practices. It is the evolution of these hybrid identities and professional practices that is the focus of this preliminary report.

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1    For more information on the longitudinal Teacher as Art-maker Project (TAP), visit www.teacherart-maker.com

By following the data generated by four early career art teachers over five years, it has been possible to map how perceptions of identity as a Teacher/Artist/Practitioner, perceptions of effectiveness as a teacher, and perceptions of retention in the teaching profession change over time. Together the cases tell an interesting story about the early career teacher's development of a professional teaching identity and the nurturing of their artist and/or practitioner identity. The initial analysis of survey data, artist statements and interviews suggests that it is how each participant comes to terms with often competing priorities and the way in which they negotiate any identity or role conflicts that has a direct influence on perceptions of retention in the teaching profession. In particular the data suggests that an early career teacher's adaptability and capacity to renegotiate the terms of their multiple roles to achieve a personally acceptable balance links with positive perceptions of long-term retention in the teaching profession. Somewhat surprisingly, analysis of the four case studies does not reveal a correlation with perceptions of achieving such a balance and perceptions of improved teacher effectiveness. Details from these findings can be found in Imms, Cameron & Ruanglertbutr, 2015.

**Research Design**

*Overview*

The larger TAP research generates data from each graduating cohort of Visual Art teachers from an Australian university. It is a whole population study with the 'sample' being comprised of all students exiting the university's Diploma/Master of Teaching (secondary) program. Across time, recruitment for TAP averaged approximately 70% of the total cohort. All participants complete an annual online survey and are invited to contribute artwork to an annual TAP exhibition. Those participants who choose to take part in the TAP exhibition are considered to be engaging in an intervention and therefore are assigned to an experimental group. Those that choose to complete the online survey only are assigned to a control group. The four case studies selected for the purposes of this article follow the evolution of two early career art teachers from the experimental group (i.e. those who create artwork for the annual TAP exhibitions) and two early career teachers from the control group (i.e. those who did not take part in the TAP exhibitions).

*Case Study Participants*

The research project has now generated enough longitudinal data to enable single cases from the inaugural cohort of graduating teachers recruited for the study to be selected for more in depth analysis. We selected the case study participants from those who have consistently returned surveys every year and ensured the experimental group and control group were each comprised of one female and one male participant.

*Data generation*

The data for the case studies has arisen from five annual repeat measure surveys, interviews and four annual TAP exhibition research catalogues. The surveys (which include short answer responses) form the primary data sets because they are consistent across the experimental and control groups. The interview and documentary data are used to correlate findings from the survey data.

*Data analysis*

In order to guide the data selection and analysis three main questions were used:

- How did the participants ability to maintain artist identity and practice change over time? How was this made possible (or impossible?)

- How did perceptions of teacher effectiveness change in relation to the above?

- How did perceptions of retention in the teaching profession change over time and can we draw any connection between this and findings in Q.1 & Q.2?

**Findings: Experimental Group Case Studies**

*Experimental Group Case Study One: Charlotte*

Satisfaction from art-making has been consistently strong over the course of Charlotte's teaching career despite the difficulties of fitting art-making into a busy schedule. In the beginning Charlotte perceived herself as 'an artist that teaches' but found that in reality she was more a teacher that did art. Over time this apparent duality reduced with her perception of her professional roles and identities coming together. As a beginning teacher, she commented that although teaching financed her art-making and the costs of exhibiting it was also an inhibiting factor because it restricted time available to develop her arts practice. However, this became less of an issue as she moved from full-time employment to part-time employment and began to experience greater support for her artist identity and arts practice from her school community, while allowing for more time to be actively involved in the wider arts sector. Correspondingly, Charlotte's time spent art making has increased from 0-5 hours per week in her second year of teaching (when her reality was that of a teacher who does art) to 5-15 hours a week in her fifth year of teaching (where her reality is that of artist who teaches). Over time she has also become better at time management, finding she's "more able to 'make the most' of what time I have" becoming "less likely to faff about." She has reached a point where teaching inspires her to make art and she is able to see art-making and teaching as mutually supportive practices despite their sometimes conflicting priorities.

Charlotte's perceptions of teacher effectiveness have remained consistently positive throughout the duration of the study regardless of her feelings towards her identity as an artist- teacher or her ability to sustain her arts practice. For Charlotte participation in the TAP project does not directly impact her teaching however it has supported her development of her art practice and identity by providing a "great opportunity to be part of a regular exhibition". Maintaining her art practice is important to Charlotte because it is a separate endeavour that "balances out [her] classroom teaching". Charlotte's perceptions of how her own effectiveness as a teacher would positively impact on her long term retention in the teaching profession gradually became stronger over the first five years of teaching,

seeing herself as less and less likely to leave the profession. Charlotte negotiated the identities of teacher/art-maker and roles of teaching/art-making by securing part-time employment while becoming more efficient with her use of time available.

*Experimental Group Case Study Two: Anthony*

For Anthony satisfaction from art-making increased after his first year of teaching and has remained consistently strong. From the outset he has consistently identified himself as an artist who teaches and reports that his reality has matched this. He was able to secure full-time employment as a graduate and has continued teaching full-time throughout his teaching career to date. Anthony has not perceived teaching as a major inhibiting factor to art-making because, as he explains, he doesn't feel "'time' pressure" to make art because his "art activity is mostly personal." Over time Anthony has begun to receive some acknowledgement and support for his art-making, reporting on more than one occasion that this is a direct result of his participation in TAP. He notes, "I really enjoy the creative challenge of exhibiting with fellow [University] cohort Art teachers. It strengthens my desire to be an excellent teacher/art teacher." Over time teaching and art-making have become complimentary practices with Anthony coming to see his teaching as inspiration for his art-making. In return his art-making is an important reflective tool and "an opportunity to generate new ideas for curriculum" envisioning that this "could assist his students to reflect upon their own concept of identity and belonging in multicultural Australia".

Like Charlotte, Anthony's perceptions of his own teacher effectiveness have remained consistently strong throughout the duration of the study. Maintaining an artist identity and practice has enabled him to take a mentor approach to teaching art and helped develop multiple capacities for dealing with the range of intellectual, technical and emotional learning needs in his classroom. Again, like Charlotte, Anthony finds art-making balances teaching and believes there is value in helping art teachers find this balance by making part-time teaching loads more available and acceptable in schools.

Anthony has consistently envisaged a long-term commitment to the teaching profession. He notes that maintaining his identity of "a lifelong artist" and associated art practices improves his teaching practice. Anthony says he would be a teacher with or without the support from TAP but still appreciates that the TAP exhibitions provide opportunity and purpose to continue a professional art practice without the pressure and expense of committing to a solo show. Anthony negotiates his teacher/art-maker identities and teaching/art-making roles by not allowing time restrictions to inhibit the way he identifies as an artist or negatively impact his attitudes towards his art practice. He makes art for intrinsic reasons and is comfortable with spending relatively small amounts of time art-making. Anthony also found balance by integrating the purpose of his art-making with that of becoming an excellent teacher, using art-making as a reflective tool and a form of professional development.

## Findings: Control Group Case Studies

*Control Group Case Study One: Emma*

Unlike the Charlotte and Anthony from the Experimental Group, Emma's satisfaction from art-making has been inconsistent since the beginning of her teaching career. While she primarily identifies herself as an artist who teaches the reality is that she is often 'only' a teacher. She indicates that lack of time during busy periods like report writing inhibits her art-making but at one stage she did feel supported by her school to maintain her arts practice by being allowed to work 0.8 of a full-time load. She has since accepted a full-time teaching position and correspondingly begun to feel less supported by her school to make art. Despite these difficulties she has managed to sustain her art practice, however she is no longer sure if teaching inspires her to do so. Emma says that if she had participated in the TAP exhibitions "it would indicate that I was balancing my teaching practice with my art practice" which, like Charlotte, she sees as two separate arenas.

Emma's perceptions of teacher effectiveness have remained consistently positive throughout the study however she is no longer sure whether she will remain in the profession long-term. The negotiation between teacher/artist identities and teaching/art-making practices has, at times, been marked by turbulence. The ongoing conflict is reflected in the data with periods of balance reflecting greater optimism about retention in the profession and the current period of imbalance reflecting a less sure outlook.

Although Emma has not participated in any of the TAP exhibitions (therefore putting her in the control group) the data indicates she is continuing to make art and would in fact like to be involved in TAP exhibitions in the future. It may be that becoming involved in the intervention would provide the support she needs to successfully negotiate her competing teaching and art-making roles.

*Control Group Case Study Two: Sammuel*

Satisfaction from art-making has progressively decreased over time for Sammuel. He has not felt that his art-making has been of enough quality or quantity to participate in the TAP exhibitions hence his self-selection into the control group. Over the first five years of his career his identity has transitioned from a teacher that does art to a teacher that coaches basketball to "a coach that does teaching to pay the bills". He has never felt that his art-making has been supported by his school and, as he has moved from full-time employment to part-time employment to his current role as a casual relief teacher, Sammuel has not been able to find time to maintain his art practice. Yet, while he sees his teaching as inhibiting his art-making he has also consistently reported that teaching inspires him to make art. This paradox is also reflected in his commitment to TAP over many years despite his teaching and art-making identities becoming decreasingly significant to him over time.

Interestingly Sammuel has become less and less sure of his teacher effectiveness over time. As a graduate his perceptions of his teaching effectiveness were generally positive but this is no longer so. In addition, teaching now plays second fiddle to his passion for coaching sport. At the same time Sammuel has become more and more likely to leave the teaching profession, as a new graduate he foresaw a long-term commitment to the teaching profession but now thinks it is likely he will leave in the next three years.

## Discussion

An interesting finding from the four case studies was the general lack of correlation between the early career teachers' perceptions of their own teacher effectiveness and either their capacity to find balance between multiple roles or expectations of retention in the profession. From both experimental and control groups used in the sub-sample for this paper, Sammuel was the only early career teacher who gives the sense that he has lost heart in teaching and is also unsure of his effectiveness as a teacher. The other three participants have all sustained positive views of their teaching effectiveness regardless of their intentions to stay in the profession or their success at renegotiating the terms their different roles. Consequently the following discussion focuses on how the participants' ability to maintain teacher and artist identities and practices changed over time, and how this influenced perceptions of retention in the teaching profession.

At the start of the TAP study the issue of role and identity conflict was identified as a consistent theme in the literature (Gibson & Murray, 2009; Graham & Zwirn, 2010; Hatfield, Montana, & Deffenbaugh, 2006; Imms & Ruanglertbutr, 2012). However, it was noted that there had been little empirical evidence to support claims about the struggles involved in maintaining an art practice while embarking on a teaching career (Imms & Ruanglebutr, 2012). The emergence of role and identity conflict as a theme across the whole TAP group of participants and, to varying degrees, within the data sets of each case study provides evidence to further unpack this phenomenom. In the introduction of the 2012 Crossing Boundaries TAP exhibition catalogue, Ruanglebutr picks up on the recurring themes of role and identity conflict in the art and artist statements produced by teacher art-makers for the exhibition. She notes that teacher art-makers often communicate the opposing demands of the teacher-artist role when making the transition from artist to teacher, presenting experiences indicative of the process of reconciling the teacher-artist personas (Ruanglebutr, 2012, p. 8). The longitudinal data from the four case studies sheds further light on this, suggesting that it is not so much about integrating identity of teaching with that of art-maker but personally redefining the interrelated realms in order to establish a sustainable teacher-artist praxis. How this plays out depends on a number of overlapping factors such as collegial support, self-expectations of how much time should be spent maintaining a professional art practice and negotiation of the terms of a professional status as teacher-artist.

## Collegial Support

Both experimental and control group teacher artists reported an initial lack of support from their schools for their art-making practices however once involved in exhibiting artwork either in solo exhibitions or in group shows like the TAP annual exhibition they reported increased interest and support from schools and colleagues alike. This suggests that the act of exhibiting helps establish the professional identity of the artist that in turn garners collegial support that acts to reinforce the artist identity and practice. Such is the perceived value of maintaining an art practice amongst the research participants, there was a strong indication of personal support by TAP participants for other teachers who feel they need to reduce their teaching load to increase time spent making art, even if that was not a choice they would make for themselves.

## Time Spent Sustaining an Art Practice

The experimental group of teacher-artists accept that sustaining a teacher-artist identity is not decided by the volume of artwork produced or time spent teaching. As Anthony's experiences show the balance between teaching and artistic practice can be achieved without devoting equal time to both. He has achieved balance while teaching full-time and only spending 0-5 hours per week making art. What balance means is different for different teacher-artists and how it is achieved is equally different. Charlotte's move to part-time teaching and improved time management helped her sustain balance by freeing up time to devote to art-making and actively engaging in a professional arts community. On the other hand the control group teachers have struggled to sustain an artist identity and have not met their own expectations of quality or quantity in their artistic output. Emma's struggle to reconcile her competing priorities continues and Sammuel never did manage to establish an artist identity or ongoing practice while teaching.

## Professional Status as Teacher and Artist

A noticeable trend across the case studies is that the experimental group of teacher artists, Charlotte and Anthony, have experienced increased professional status of both teacher and artist alongside a strengthened desire to both teach and make art over time. While Charlotte and Anthony recognise early on that art-making gives a sense of purpose and meaning to their teaching practices and manage to find strategies to sustain both teaching and art-making, the control group cases, Emma and Sammuel, do not. In a sense, what Charlotte and Anthony have been able to do is elevate their teaching and art-making practices into a sustainable teacher-artist praxis. Their praxis' is different from 'practices' in that they involve conscious, self-aware, reflexive, philosophically and ethically imbued enactments (Kemmis & Smith, 2008) that lay the foundations for a sustainable kind of 'being-doing-teaching' (Bussey, 2008). While more evidence is required across further data sets to draw more generalisable conclusions, this is a significant line of inquiry to follow as the research progresses since it is arguably by developing sustainable teacher-artist praxis that teacher retention may be improved.

Interesting questions arise from this: Will early-career teachers such as Emma eventually find a sustainable teacher-artist practice or praxis? Is the development of a teacher-artist praxis essential? And what becomes of the early career teachers that have not maintained an art practice or artist identity over time? Sammuel is one example of such a teacher and, as such, becomes a fascinating case study of this particular phenomenon. That he was unable to maintain his professional artist identity and practice did not preclude him from finding a professional identity and practice as an athlete and basketball coach to give his teaching practice purpose and meaning yet the researchers would hesitate to suggest the data indicates he has elevated his teacher-coach-athlete practices to that of praxis. What it does hint at though is the potential for extending the TAP research to encompass the broader notion of Teacher As Practitioner.

## Teacher As Practitioner

The paper begins with a suggestion that the TAP data is leading its researchers to a wider field of exploration. This is being driven by our recognition of the link between active participation in professional art practice, and teacher retention. Preliminary analysis indicates it is the passion for an early-career teacher's discipline of study that feeds continued growth in and enthusiasm for teaching. In TAP's case, the actual practice of art-making, regardless of its quantity (or even quality) appears to feed ongoing professional growth. A once-a-year exhibition with minimal requirement for the amount of work exhibited appears to never-the-less act as a catalyst for sustained high levels of engagement in teaching for its participants.

Surely, this must be the case for teachers in other disciplines? The teacher of English, or chemistry, or ICT would presumably have had a similar passion for their subject that drove them to pass this on through education? TAP data is beginning to enter a space that is concerned with the professional practice of all teachers. What then could TAP do to inform this phenomenon? Teacher Art-maker Project (TAP) might also encompass the phenomenon of Teachers As Practitioners (TAP2). Bringing this dual meaning to the TAP acronym provides an entry point for analysing themes emerging from its longitudinal data. Is it possible TAP is providing evidence that may impact long-term retention of all teachers in schools? The TAP research team proposes to follow this trajectory further in the coming months and years by looking to explore how this may play out in other specialist areas.

## Conclusion

The data from the four TAP case studies highlights the realities of what Graham and Zwirn (2010) identify as the recurring problem of balancing an artist identity with an identity as a teacher (p. 226). Beyond this, TAP's emergent findings about the importance of the individual's capacity to personally renegotiate the terms of their teacher-artist identities and practices rather than trying to find balance between fixed categories reveals new lines of inquiry to follow. Another trend emerging from the four case studies is that those who manage to adapt their teacher/

artist identities and practices into a sustainable teacher-artist praxis also sustain positive perceptions towards long-term retention in the teaching profession. The value of promoting the teacher as artist or, indeed, the teacher as practitioner may therefore be about supporting teacher-practitioners to resolve competing priorities by redefining the interrelated roles with a view to developing a sustainable teacher-artist or teacher-practitioner praxis. This brings TAP into a new phase of Teacher As Practitioner that opens many exciting new possibilities for the project in terms of its reach, significance and impact.

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