Researching Disturbed, Disturbing Art: Using Typography to Re/Present Educational Research

Douglas J. Loveless

James Madison University

Kakali Bhattacharya

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

Bryant Griffith

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

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Abstract

This paper argues that typography can be an affective re/presentational strategy when used as a medium within the research framework of arts-based inquiry. Grounded in a larger comparative case study exploring the experiences of two elementary teachers in south Texas, the purpose of this paper is to (1) situate typography within the field of arts-based inquiry, (2) explore typography as a research process and product, (3) examine interpretive aspects of typography as representations of research data, and (4) present a rationale for the use of typography in educational research. Purposeful and criterion sampling enabled the selection of teachers who were able to provide insight on the topic being investigated. Data includes open-ended interviews and typographies created by the researchers and participants in a collaborative process. As a nexus of both literary and visual art, typography conceives of an object by manipulating the visual form of language. This juxtaposition of language with art is appropriate and important in educational research, enabling the author/artist to communicate in a manner that provides insights into participants' experiences with space for emotion, interpretation, and reflection. (Contains 4 figures and 2 tables)

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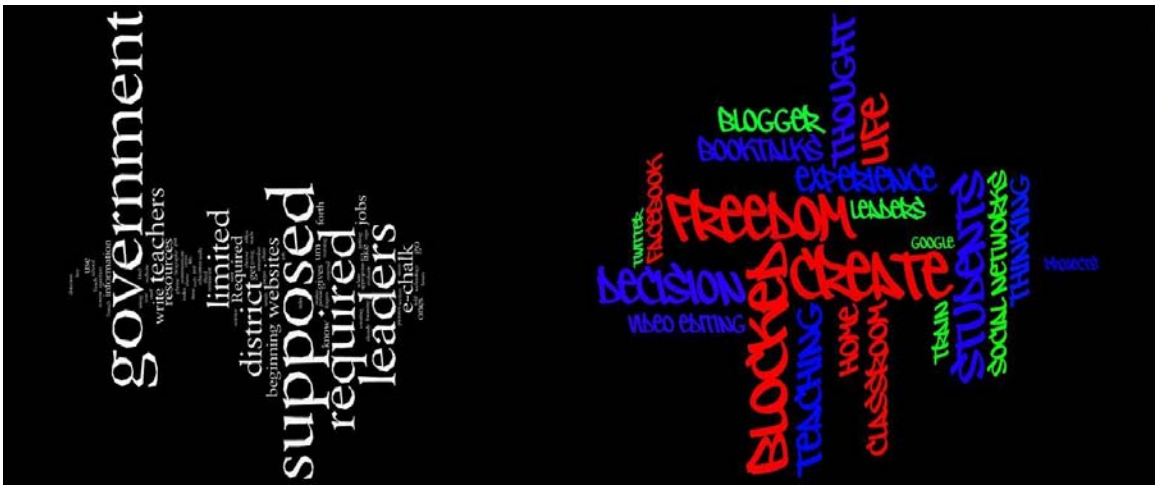

Figure 1. Cyborg and Cyberpunk.

A note to the reader:

We begin this article by giving you a task. In texts such as the one presented here, the construction of knowledge is collaborative (Spivey, 1997), and you, the reader, have a role in the process. In fact, as readers and interpreters of the words and images on the following pages, social constructivists (e.g., Bartlett, 1932; Fish, 1980; Spivey, 1997), reader response theorist (e.g., Rosenblatt, 1978; Holland, 1992), and new literacies theorists (e.g., Street, 2003; Gee, 2005) suggest readers have the essential role in consuming text. You bring diverse stances and schema situated in varied cultural, historical, and sociopolitical contexts to this article.

As to our collaborative efforts, let us begin by interacting with the art provided in figure 1. We purposefully do not provide any context, background information, methodology, or research data here; that will come later. For now, solely view the typographies as abstract or modern art, sans research. Then, reflect upon your

interactions, asking yourself the following questions: What do you think as you look at the typographies? How do they make you feel? What do they mean to you?

Our goal in providing the typographies and the time for reflection at the beginning of this article is to enable you to (1) interact with the typographies as art before research, and (2) form your own interpretations of the typographies without the influence of a research agenda and others' articulated interpretations. This space for interaction and reflection with typographies as art will inform discussions of typography as both research and art presented below.

Researching Disturbed

Traditional educational research often privileges written discourse in print texts. Writing is the conventional method used by researchers to share information and communicate fundamental distinctions, discoveries, and transformations (Becher, 1989; Spivey, 1997). Becher (1989) further contends that "professional language and literature of a disciplinary group play a key role in establishing cultural identity" (p. 24). Because concepts authored in texts align researchers with schools of thought and provide foundations for further construction of knowledge by others, written language has become a dominant currency within educational research and academia. Even though conceptions of texts have expanded to include multimodal forms such as performance, music, visual art, and hypertext in cyberspace (Landow, 2006), academic *tribes*, as described by Becher in 1989, recurrently validate words inked by scholars in academic publications and vocalized in conference presentations.

This reliance on written words to convey meanings of research empowers such discourse and situates authors within an academic hierarchy often based on how

concisely one writes, as defined by gatekeepers and stakeholders within the academic establishment (Giroux, 1995; Apple, 2004). In thinking about the power of written language, Bulwer-Lytton's (1839) adage "the pen is mightier than the sword" (p. 52) comes to mind. There is no denying that the written word has power, we do not attempt to suggest otherwise. In fact, we appreciate the power of language on a page, and we rely heavily on its capacity to communicate, as in this article.

However, in addition to power embedded in written words, there are other spaces within educational research for meaningful and affective forms of expression beyond conventional, linguistic representations of data in print texts (Denzin, 2000, 2003; Cahnmann, 2003; Saldaña, 2003). Aesthetic, visual, audio, and dramatic texts are consumed/read differently, enabling different explorations of multidimensional human experiences (Cahnmann, 2003). These texts provide insights into emotional and perceived realities of the individuals involved in research processes. For this reason, arts-based discourses are important tools for educational researchers to consider.

We argue typography is a significant re/presentational strategy to be included within the research framework and media of arts-based inquiry. Figure 1 is an example of two typographies created a part of the research process. Fittingly, a typography is a nexus, created as both literary and visual art to conceive an object by manipulating the visual form of language (Drucker, 1996). This juxtaposition of language with art is appropriate in educational research, enabling the author/artist to communicate in a manner that also provides much space for emotion, interpretation, and reflection.

In this article, we seek to (1) situate typography within the field of arts-based inquiry, (2) explore typography as a research process and product, (3) examine

interpretive aspects of typography as representations of research data, and (4) present a rationale for the use of typography in educational research. To facilitate, these discussions are grounded in a larger comparative case study conducted by Loveless (2011) that used typography to represent the experiences of two elementary teachers. Specifically, we describe relevant aspects of the comparative case study and its methodology. We also discuss how the creation of typographies informed that study.

Arts-Based Inquiry and Typography

Arts-based inquiry is the systematic, action-oriented study of phenomena to advance human understanding (Finley, 2008) that opens the possibility for critique and transformation (Barone, 2001). Aesthetic forms used in arts-based inquiry recast the contents of experience promoting interpretation, emotion, and transformative action. Cahnmann (2003) posits that arts-based inquiries enable researchers to explore diverse themes in human experience. The various modalities and forms of arts-based inquiry enable interpretations of complex issues in educational settings from varied perspectives. Rather than searching for certainty and truth, the aim of art-based inquiry is to view educational phenomena in new ways to create questions that might have otherwise been left unasked (Barone & Eisner, 2006). By communicating feelings, thoughts, and images through forms other than the traditional language of academics, researchers create new perspectives upon which to reflect, act, and, paradoxly, write.

Individuals socially construct multiple ways of knowing and the diversity achieved in arts-based inquiry creates spaces for researchers, participants, and audiences to interact in a variety of roles. By focusing on the vernacular (Denzin, 2000) and capturing “the visceral ephemeral moments in daily life” (Finley, 2008, p. 103), arts-

based inquiry promotes empathy and care by drawing people into dialogue. The aesthetics of arts-based inquiry**,** resulting in dialogue and critique, can "recast the contents of experience into a form with the potential for challenging beliefs and values" (Barone, 2001, p. 26). Artistic representations of data changes how data is experienced and perceived by participants and researchers.

The forms and media, used to represent the world, influence not only what can be said, but also what is likely to be experienced (Eisner, 1998). As McLuhan and Fiore (1967) succinctly state, "the medium is the massage" (p. 27). By *massaging* perception, media transform thinking and alter environments. In this way, societies and individuals are shaped more by the nature of the media than by media's content (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967, p. 8). Because forms of communication simultaneously represent the world and create it, communicating in diverse ways creates new dialogues leading to varied possibilities.

According to Parry (2007), the western narrative views art as being solely representative of reality, illustrating the world through artistic embodiments. Such art has a "uniquely instructive role" (p. 210) as it recasts the world in narrative and aesthetic forms. Thus, the world and how it is experienced are unchanging and can be singularly represented. Contradicting this stance, *defamiliarization* (Shklovsky, 1965) views art as presentations of the world in new forms to perceive it differently from previous assumptions of reality. New perceptions cause the viewer to interact differently with the world, changing lived experiences as well as the world itself.

As research within the framework of arts-based inquiry, art straddles both notions of art as instruction and art as defamiliarization. This apparent paradox provides

opportunities for varied interpretations, new questions, and deepened understandings. The arts expand meaning-making potential and the ability to make sense of the world (Albers, Holbrook, & Harste, 2010), adding new points of knowledge that enable the transmediation of experience and repositioning of selves. The stimulation of critical questioning through art can lead to transformative action, thus making it a vital part of education research. Because research is not merely a fact-finding expedition, the arts framed within arts-based inquiry becomes a viable option for researchers who endeavor to create knowledge with the audiences for intellectual and emotional affect (Furman, Lietz, & Langer, 2006).

The field of arts-based inquiry is broad, incorporating a wide range of media and forms. Performance (e.g., Denzin, 2000, 2003; Saldaña, 2003; Markula, 2011), poetry (e.g., Poindexter, 1997; Cahnmann, 2003; Langer & Furman, 2004), and visual arts including photography and painting (e.g., Bhattacharya, 2009; Loveless, 2011; Pineau, 2011) are some examples of the forms/media that have been established with in arts-based inquiry's canon. These researchers and others (e.g., Eisner, 1981; Richardson, 1995; Finley & Knowles, 2001; Stein, 2003;) use a variety of expressive arts in research to expand on their participants' experiences, providing more context and emotional depth. Being able to interact with complex experiences, that include the shifting emotions an individual has in the world, deepens understandings of human phenomena and possibilities.

The conception of art can be vague, and in the context of research perhaps misleading. Percer (2002) warns that "the craft of art must be studied critically before the art can be executed effectively" (p. 8). Yet, when considering visual art like typography

in arts-based inquiry, one must consider an alternative view. The 20th century proliferation of visual technologies made craft skills redundant, and art shifted from being craft work to being the intellectual work of conceiving it (Cottington, 2005). As Duve (1991) reflects, idea replaced craft as artists such as Duchamp, Matisse, and Picasso exposed technical and intellectual conventions of art. However, art is not defined solely by artists' ideas; it is also a product of social discourse and custom (Cottington, 2005). Appropriating these social aspects of art, street artists like Banksy and Fairey (McCormick, 2010) coopt ideas and images to subversively question authority and rebel against assumptions that take precedence over self-expression.

Regardless of one's view towards what makes art, affective authors/artists within arts-based inquiry explore and studiously develop their potential as artists with the same commitment they extend to their respective fields. In either case, art-based inquiry abandons art as art in favor of putting aesthetics to work questioning and critiquing experiences. Still, readers can enjoy the aesthetics of art, as they acknowledge, critique, and discuss what is possible in human experience.

The Art of Research Typography

As literary and visual art, typography communicates with both written language and the aesthetics of art. The words in a typography appear as visual phenomena, yet they retain their linguistic value. This visual transformation of language in typography is a political act in which aesthetic forms argue for possibilities (Drucker, 1996). The authority of language shifts from its capacity to signify to its volatility. In typography, the artist/researcher releases the illusion of wielding complete control of language's power, becoming immersed with the audience in interpretive realms more closely associated

with modern and street art. Typography fuses expression and content, engaging in pictorial analogy, emotional expression, and formal iconic imagery as space and silences take active roles within the text (Drucker, 1996). Visual aspects and linguistic features of typography communicate equally, while voids and spaces assume meaning in their silence.

Recall your first viewing of the typographies in Figure 1 at the onset of this article and your reaction to that art. Not only were the individual words meaningful, but the words' spacings, directions, fonts, and colors communicated as well. On closer inspection, both typographies have some of the same words, yet the experience and emotion of those words are different. For instance, the word *leader* appears in each typography with varying visual and linguist contexts that shift the meanings and feelings associated with the term.

Perloff (2010) offers an important caveat when considering typography, pointing out that despite arguments of the transformative power, changing the sign system of language does not necessarily mean modifying the political system within language. However, remembering the discussion of McLuhan and Fiore (1967), if the medium shapes what we say, then having more flexible systems of communication enable more ideas to be communicated. Such political transformation is a self-reflexive moment within practice performed by the audience (Watten, 2006); typography can only spark possibility through the readers' interpretation and acknowledgement.

Research Design of a Study Using Typography

To illustrate the affect of typography in educational research, we examine a piece of a larger qualitative study (Loveless, 2011) in which typographies were created to

represent participants' experiences. The original, comparative case study aimed to develop a deep understanding (Crotty, 2003) of two teachers' experiences in cyberspace as they created online educational content.

Purposeful and criterion sampling ensured that participating teachers were able to provide insight on the topic being investigated (Duke & Mallette, 2004; Nash & Bhattacharya, 2009). The participants, Valerie and Donna (pseudonyms), were elementary teachers. Valerie was a 5th grade science teacher; Donna, a PreKindergarten-4 bilingual teacher. They both had been creating educational content accessible in cyberspace prior to the study, and their shifting histories, subject positions, and teaching practices shaped the way they negotiated their experiences in cyberspace. As part of the study, the researcher and participants created typographies that represent reciprocated aspects of experiences.

The Process of Creating Research Typographies

Research typographies are a collaboration of researchers, participants, and data analysis. An example of this process from the aforementioned, qualitative study is detailed below. Creation of typographies involved collecting data through interviews, analyzing data of teachers individually and as a group, and employing the linguistic and visual aspects of typography to represent this data.

Data collection. Five open-ended interviews with both participants over the course of an academic school year provided insight into the teachers' experiences (Patton, 1990; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). All interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded. During interviews, researcher notes detailed aspects of the interview unable to be recorded such as visual cues, reasons for probes and follow-ups. To determine the

accuracy of interpretations, participants reviewed interview transcripts and coding in the form of member checks. For the larger study and triangulation, other data sources included observations, artifacts and researcher journals.

Data analysis. The researcher analyzed interview data from both participants individually and concurrently, using a combination of the constant comparative method and arts-based inquiry. This intuitive, yet systematic, analysis involved "inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison" (Goetz and LeCompte, 1981, p. 58) to derive themes in the participants' experiences by grouping similarities and seeking patterns within the data (Merriam, 1998). Coding meant breaking down data into units of meaning and classifying the segments with similar meanings into named, coded categories (Charmaz, 2006). According to Merriam (1998), these units of meaning can be as small as a word or several pages of notes describing phenomena. *In vivo coding* identifies the categories with descriptive labels. As Creswell (2007) explains, *in vivo coding* refers to using the exact words of participants as the name/code of the categories.

This process had a number of non-linear and iterative steps. The researcher listened to the interview recordings closely to pick out not only the content but also the feelings of statements, making notes on tacit understandings developed. Repeated readings of interview transcripts followed. Then the coding began by identifying and classifying units of data. Inductive and deductive coding provided more nuanced insights regarding the research focus (Duke & Mallette, 2004). Issues, perceived during the coding process, informed continuing research and further interviews. These steps were repeated for all interviews. Table 1 provides a coded sample of an interview with Valerie.

Table 1

A Coded and Categorized Interview Sample

Coded Interview Excerpt with Valerie	In Vivo Codes
V: Uh, I use the calendar[3]. It not only keeps me in track of what I am doing and my information, the good thing about it is you can attach documents. It allows you to create content that is private only to use certain users, group users and public. But as a teacher I use it for that, and like I said the homework drop box[3].	3. Applications
Communication[1], the homework drop box. Because in elementary its normally restricted[2]. You don't have a lot of elementary students blogging, but middle school, high school I hear some teachers doing that kind of stuff. Its communication, using social networking sites and stuff like that to communicate with students[1] and to somehow integrate that into the classroom. But in elementary you have a little bit less to go with (Valerie chuckles), more restrictions because the district blocks a lot of sites, social networking sites and that of stuff the kids are used to using[2]. But really communication[1].	3. Applications 1. Communicate 2. Restricted 1. Communicate 2. Restricted 1. Communicate

In this short interview excerpt, units of meaning are underlined and categorized into groups of similar meaning. Numbers and in vivo codes, selected from language used by the teacher, identify each category. In the example above, the in vivo codes for categories are (1) communicate, (2) restricted, and (3) application. Multiple readings and member-checks with participants verified units of meaning and labels.

For cross-case analysis of both teachers, the researcher classified the individually coded categories for each teacher into groups containing similar units of meaning from both teachers. Metaphorical titles, pulled from reflective writings and conversations with the participants, identified these cross-case groups. Member checks verified these groupings.

Then, key words and phrases within each group were identified and their frequency noted. Table 2 provides an example of a category titled *communicate.*

Table 2

Example of Coded Category and Frequency of Key Terms

Sample Units of Meaning from Both Teachers in a Coded Category: Communicate	Key Terms	Frequency of Key Terms
V: "…we put our information, just regular information, to communicate to parents and students, I guess we used it more as communication."	Communication/communicate	5
	Students	4
	Information	3
	Attach (variations)	3
V: "Students could log in and attach, it makes it easier for students to attach and send to teachers."	Teachers	2
	Parents	2
V: "…one way to communicate out to the community, to the parents, and also it allows students to log in and send their homework or any attachments to the teacher."	Community	1
	Homework	1
	Social Networking	1
D: "Share information with each other"		
D: "It's communication, using social networking sites to communicate with each other"		

In table 2, the units of meaning pertaining to communication come from both participants. Furthermore, the participants' verified that these words were key to understanding their experiences.

Creating research typographies. The researcher and participating teachers collaborated to create typographies representing each coded category by manipulating language's visual features and spatial distribution. This collaboration included dialogue

about interpretations of data, and how to vividly portray those interpretations using visual aspects inherent to typography. An online program, www.wordle.net, generated the typographies. In new media and digital environments like the Internet that facilitates creation and dispersal, Perloff (2010) states that typography flourishes.

Key terms provided the language within the typography. It is important to remember that the language in each typography is the participants' language. Frequency of key terms used by participants determined word size. Therefore, larger words represent the language used most often by participants.

The visual format of text in typography is particularly flexible. Interpretations of participants' experiences determined text font, color and direction. These visual aspects of language become symbols representing perceptions of data, expressing "the abstract in concrete terms" (Bartel, 1983, p. 61). Linguistic and visual aspects of the research typographies were created with the consensus of participants.

Figure 2 is an example of a typography created by the researcher and participants in the study. The word "communication" is the largest due to its frequency, as illustrated in the coded category provided in table 2.

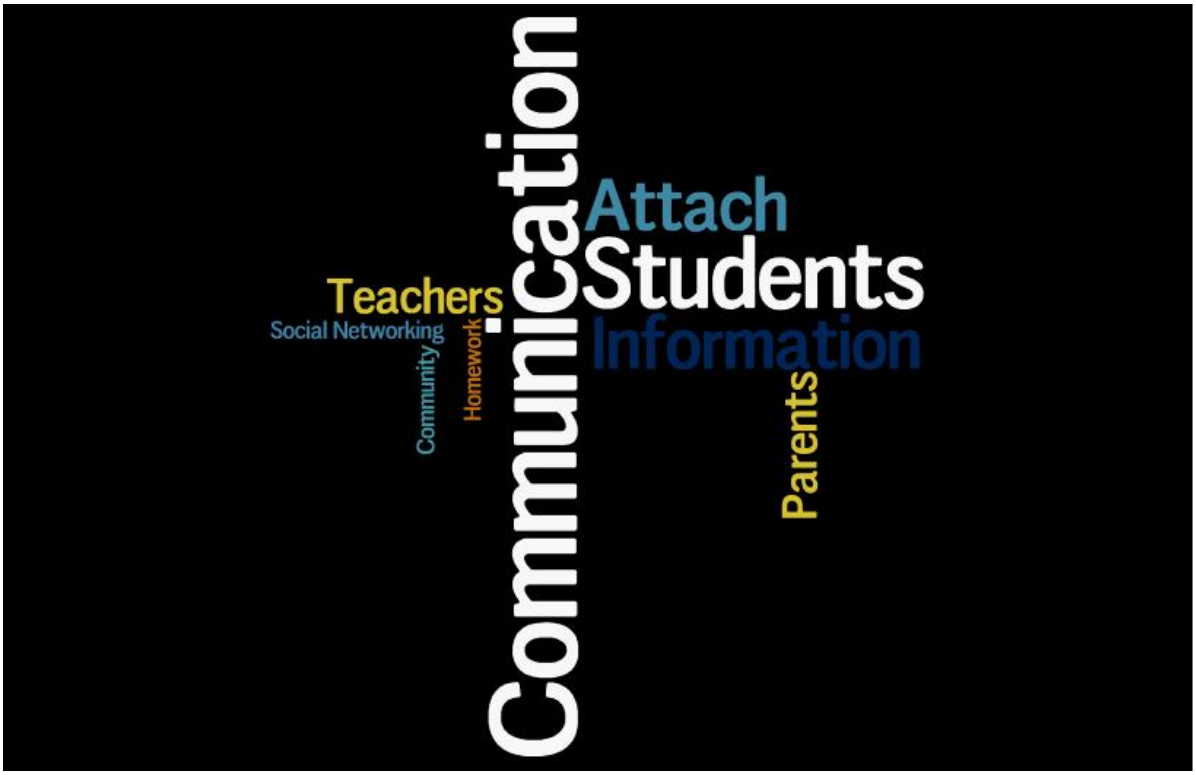

Figure 2. Communication. A typography representing one aspect of the teachers' teaching practices in cyberspace.

Bold, straight font represents the instructional clarity participants wished to achieve by communicating in cyberspace with parents and students. The vertical and horizontal text directions represent a myriad of interpretations as does the spacing and colors. Overall, analytic focus was loosely structured to explore how participants used cyberspace in teaching.

Presentation of the Research Typographies

In this section, we examine two research typographies entitled cyborg and cyberpunk created in the study described above. We started this article by reflecting upon the two typographies provided in figure 1. In this section, we discuss the researcher's and participants' interpretations of these typographies. Because such interpretive explanations limit typography (Perfloff, 2010), remember your first thoughts on the typographies. Such art is not intended for explanation because explanation shifts the reader's stance

away from artistic interpretation (Percer, 2002). Otherwise, the typographies merely become illustrations to academic writing.

Cyborg

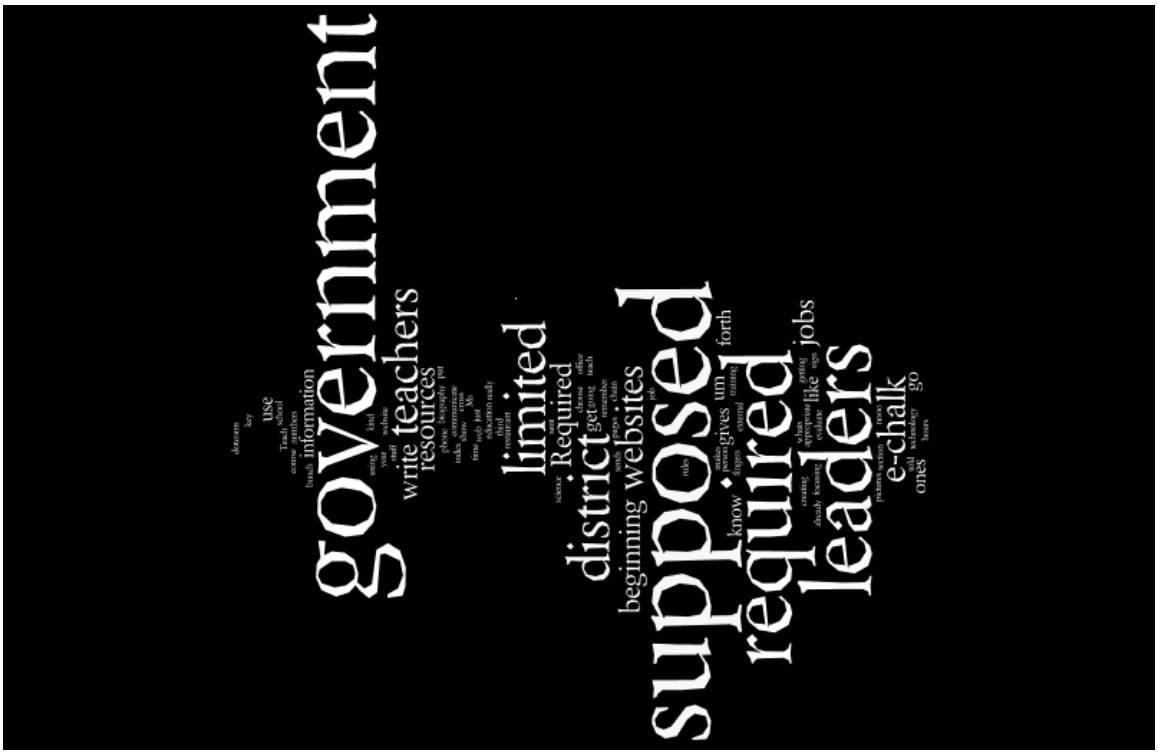

Figure 3. Cyborg. An interpretation of the trainee and expert positions authored by teachers in cyberspace.

As Valerie and Donna created online content, they conformed to school district policies. Illustrated by Figure 3, the participants authored subject positions in response to the flow of power. They both became trainees learning the system and adapting their teaching practices to the policies. Once these policies became internalized, the teachers took positions as experts on the school district's online system and requirements. After they learned how to use it, Valerie and Donna trained students and other teachers to follow the system's guidelines.

The vertical text represents the flow of power from top to bottom. The school district leadership set requirements followed by teachers. The sharp, severe font, as well

as the black and white colors, represents the rigidity of policy and the district's opposition to change regarding the restriction of websites. *Government* is the most prominent word, suggesting that it and the power it implies always rested in the participants' minds as they interacted with the school district.

In class, being an expert involved teaching students technical language and computer skills. The teachers taught their students the system requirements to gain access, as well as delineating online boundaries. They also used district-sanctioned equipment, avoiding smart phones and other hand held or portable devices like iPods and MP3 players. Though in Donna's case, she petitioned for a smart board and eventually got one. In planning, the participants followed guidelines for access and created activities using websites endorsed by the school district. Valerie used websites chosen by district leadership and emailed to her. She used her webpage primarily to email students and parents as well as communicate through an online class calendar describing daily class activities. Donna searched for websites on her own, but was still restricted to unblocked sites. She provided other teachers with links to these sites on her webpage. Professional development often involved training on correct use of the online system, and in Valerie's case she eventually became the expert trainer.

Reasons for the participants' conformity to the system was mainly due to requirements for gaining access. To work, communicate and collaborate in cyberspace, teachers had to use the school district's online system. Using other email accounts and social networks was forbidden. All communication and collaboration was funneled through the school district sites.

Cyberpunk

Figure 4. Cyberpunks. An interpretation of the skeptic and dissident positions authored by teachers in cyberspace.

Data suggest that both teacher participants began to engage in subversive behaviors as they created online content. Represented by figure 4, subversive subject positions were authored in response to the school district's policies regarding online content. Valerie and Donna became skeptics and dissidents as they attempted to use cyberspace in new ways that often conflicted with the school district's policies.

The juxtaposition of vertical and horizontal texts represents the opposition teachers exhibited towards school district requirements. Both participants wanted more freedom to create activities using a variety of blocked websites like Facebook. The font and bold, distinct colors represent the subversive action and speech of teachers. Because a majority of these actions and speech were done secretly, the text is difficult to read representing the desire of teachers for their subversive behaviors to remain concealed.

Though they expressed their skepticism differently, Valerie and Donna were both skeptical of the school district's system. In professional development, both participants were excited about new websites and technologies. Valerie looked upon these as something that might develop one day whereas Donna strived to enact change immediately. Valerie's skepticism revealed itself in her speech. She discussed her frustration with the system and described how she wished things were different, but she remained entrenched in district policy. Valerie continued to use school district endorsed websites. Donna acted on her skepticism striving to get new software and equipment. Frustrated with the lack of collaboration inspired by the district, Donna also searched for ways to improve professional development by establishing pre-kindergarten meetings in cyberspace. Donna changed the system using research, fundraising and meetings with campus administration to acquire new technical equipment.

There are a number of reasons Valerie and Donna responded differently to their skepticism. Valerie and her school administration worked under enormous pressure to prepare students for 5th grade standardized tests. This focus on state standardized assessments and the school's accountability rating based on these assessments made her and her campus administration less likely to take risks. There was safety in remaining within the status quo. However, Donna worked in a lower, non-tested grade. Therefore, the price of failure was not as great for Donna or her school. The Texas Education Agency was not going to examine the achievement of Donna's students and rate the campus accordingly. This made school administrations more flexible. She also had the time during instructional planning to focus on change, instead of being overwhelmed by standardized-test preparation.

Education might have played a role in the different responses to the participants' skepticism as well. At the time of the study, Valerie had a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and she was studying for a Master's degree in Education Technology. Donna had Master's degree in Educational Administration. Valerie seemed to be uncomfortable dealing with school leadership, whereas Donna exhibited confidence in dealing with her school's administration and school district leadership. Donna used tools at her disposal, namely research and fundraising, to convince school leadership to allow changes in her teaching practices.

Research Typography as Art-Based Inquiry

There are a number of important implications in using typography to re/present research. Bhattacharya (2009) argues that both process and product of qualitative inquiry can be claimed as findings. This is similar to the artwork of Jackson Pollock, in that his art was not merely the final piece, but it was also the process of creating that piece. The energy with which a painting was created, the physicality of sweeping gestures and the performance of the *action-painting* event were integral parts of the art (Cottington, 2005). In other words, the art was the sum of all those parts, not only the painting hanging on the wall. Likewise, the final typographies as research products are not the whole story. The process of creating that typography must be included as well. The dialogues, questions and reflections that arose as part of the creative process changed perceptions maintained by the researcher and participants of ongoing educational experiences and research.

Furthermore, the story did not end with the product, but continues and transforms as new readers interact and interpret. One reader of the typographies for the study interpreted them both as "disturbing". The language within the art caused an emotional

response. Interestingly, this was the same emotional response of the participants concerning the situation they found themselves in as educators. The sharing of emotion between reader and participants occurred as the reader looked at the typography without any background information, like we asked you to do in the beginning of this article. This worry of how public educators interact with cyberspace was a central finding to the research. Across time and space, the typographies communicated this emotional response. The disturbing art indicated the participants concerns and interpretations of their own experience.

Rationale for Using Typography

The use of typography provided the researchers, participants and readers with possibilities for self-reflexive and interpretive moments leading to the creations of new meanings and questions. Arts-based inquiry's goal of participatory critical action (Finley, 2008) and the fusion of expression and content in typography fit neatly with the study's epistemological paradigm of critical theory. Typography represents experiences linguistically and pictorially, allowing the audience to perceive and potentially act in new ways.

Also, typography represents the words and worlds of participants a varied socially-constructed manner, intuitively capturing daily moments in their experiences (Denzin, 2000, 2003). Research typographies can express emotional, lived experiences of participants and represent multiple interpretations of the world. By using typography to analyze and represent data, we hoped to tap into this amalgamation of emotion, interpretation, and knowledge to better understand participants and ourselves.

Furthermore, the linguistic and poetic qualities of typography respected "the tone and movement of the original conversations and experiences" (Cahnmann, 2003, p. 31) in the study. The language used within the typographies was the participants' language shaped to visually represent, with authenticity and dimensionality (Edelsky, 1993), the participants' experiences as educators. This dimensionality enables representation of the complexities in human experience.

Yet, even as typographies reveal, they also conceal by hiding the verbatim words of participants behind a veneer of abstraction. This is an important consideration, particularly as the participating teachers transformed the status quo. In the current U.S. education climate, teachers work within a powerful culture of accountability making the participants of the study hesitant to reveal their actions through words. However, typography protected the participating teachers by situating them within words, images, and silences. As typography, research data ceased to be language spoken by participants. Instead, language and experience existed as art, not mere representations of tangible experiences in the world. Typography represents experiences, but it is also, conversely, an experience. It exists as art on its own to be interpreted by the viewer without any relation to the participants and research/artist.

Finally, the study's participants interacted with typographies more than other, traditional forms of data representations during member checks. As Furman et al. (2006) argue, traditional qualitative data are too impersonal and dense to be easily consumed, even by participants in the study. Collaborations between the researcher and participants during member checks to create research typographies became vibrant, meaningful

discussions of meaning and experience. Typographies communicated the contextual and affective experiences of the teachers in condensed, moving forms.

Conclusion

An essential step in arts-based inquiry is remembering to interact, and to provide time and space for others to interact with the art, not solely as process or product of research. Interacting with art merely as a function of research reduces the aesthetic essence that empowers arts-based research. The emotive affect of art is at the core of arts-based research, a principle not to be lost amid discussions of research methodology, data, and protocols.

We are not endorsing the abandonment of research considerations and academic writing. Rather, research and art should be used strategically as we reflect and interact with the experiences of others. Taking cues from street art and modernism's assault on status-quo assumptions, typography transforms normative research experiences to allow for a broader questioning of the way things are.

Let us return to the conversation started at the beginning on this article. Remember those first transactions with the typographies as art in figure 1. Now, adding new layers of research and the interpretations of researchers and participants, view the typographies again. What do you reflect upon now? Such dialogue is why we research.

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