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Between Signification and Illumination: Unfolding Understandings of an A/r/tographical Turn on Practicum

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Abstract

School associates (SA's), or cooperating teachers (CT's), have arguably been one of the most powerful influences on the teacher candidate's (TC) pre-service experience. For this reason, most studies about the practicum have focused on this relationship. However, while observing one visual art student's practicum as her Faculty Advisor (FA) for the University of British Columbia (UBC), the significance and impact of art making on the SA and TC's relationship was observed. Creating art was what emerged as the pivot that the practicum was focused on, rather than the traditional "Apprenticeship" or "Mentor" formula (Graham, 2006). This hybrid relationship underscored how a/r/tographic inquiry provided the opportunity for the SA and TC to create art, to discuss teaching philosophies and pedagogical practices, and to change the practicum 'performance' into an extra-out-of-the-ordinary event. This paper explores how art making, living

inquiry and the condition of relationality affected the relationship between a teacher candidate and her cooperating teacher on practicum. Systematic questioning, observation and the collection of data through interviews, reflective narrative writing and art making were methods used for understanding the a/r/tographical relationship that developed between the two participants. An analysis of the critical incidents that depicted how inquiry in the form of art making and collegial conversations strengthened this particular relationship and created reciprocity was then considered. In this way, we acknowledge how the practicum is an a/r/tographical event in which pedagogical and aesthetic relationality and inquiry initiate a long-term commitment to becoming as artists, teachers and researchers. Theoretically, this sense of becoming is understood and discussed through Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's (2007) interpretations and extensions of Antonin Artaud's (1975) *Body without Organs (BwO)* conceptualization into what they call poles that swing between moments of immanence and signification. What is argued in this paper is that becoming an arts-teacher is a complex process that requires a continual shift and acceptance of multiple identities that may move between moments of signification and illumination. In this study, the shift from discussing the movement between signification and immanence (in Deleuze and Guattari) to signification and illumination is made because the authors felt that a greater understanding of ones teaching practice, art making and collegiality was understood during this research project but they did not feel as though it was possible to measure the participants metaphysical and immanent experiences. Rather, it is the movement between being and becoming an artist and an educator that brings deeper satisfaction to the TC's understandings of becoming pedagogical that is being explored.

An Overview

In this article, we explore the relationship between a teacher candidate (TC) and the cooperating teacher (CT) during a visual arts practicum. The observed features of this relationship led to a/r/tographical questioning and questing through living inquiry as an aesthetic embodied encounter (Springgay, Irwin, Leggo & Gouzouasis, 2008) that strengthened this relationship. Since designing classroom learning environments that promote inquiry requires knowledge of both content and discourse of subject area, curriculum, and pedagogy, the TC's coordinating teacher and faculty advisor were consulted in regard to the development of the TC's ability to engage in living inquiry. Unexpected to the investigators was the emerging reality that the greatest teacher of inquiry for the TC was her own engagement in art making. Coupled with the cooperating teacher's commitment in and through time to creating art in the classroom, with and alongside the secondary students and

her TC, emerged the concept of relationality (Carter, Beare, Belliveau & Irwin, 2011) as a means and method for pedagogically and aesthetically grounding the teacher candidate's learning. In addition to creating art, the commitment to discussing educational philosophies and improving one's professional practice witnessed between the TC and CT led to questions about a/r/tography (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Springgay et. al., 2008) as a lens through which theoretically and methodologically this relationship could be explained and understood. As a result, the study contributes to an underrepresented area of research about a/r/tographic mentorship in teacher education.

A/r/tography is considered a practice-based form of research because of its commitment to inquiry individually and collectively. In this case, the uniqueness of this study is captured in the multiple layers of engagement amongst artists, teachers and researchers on a teacher candidate's practicum and the continual commitment to shared inquiry between TC and CT as a consequence and result of the nature of this relationship. In this way, the relational inquiry between art making, teaching and learning continually unfolds and enfolds practical and theoretical conceptions of pedagogical and artistic development. This particular project is a part of an on-going collaboration in a four-year Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada funded research study and known as *Becoming Pedagogical*¹. While the overall project was designed to combine and investigate practices in visual art, music, creative writing and drama education, this article focuses on one teacher candidate named Kim and one cooperating teacher, Williams, at one site. This particular site is located in Surrey, British Columbia at a Secondary School in which Carter was also the Faculty Advisor (FA). A piece of narrative writing about the participants and environment in which this study takes place will then lead to a discussion about the a/r/tographical features of this particular CT and TC relationship. This discussion hints at the potential for a new approach or focus for practica in the arts. Narrative inquiry, as used in this paper, is associated with the concept of personal, practical knowledge developed by Connelly & Clandinin (Clandinin, 1985; Connelly & Clandinin, 2000). This form of qualitative research is used as a means of conveying observations and findings. As a way to understand the notion of becoming pedagogical for the artist-teacher candidate, Antonin Artaud's concept of the Body without Organs (BwO) as delineated by Deleuze and Guattari (1987/2007), is used to frame the understandings about identity and subjectification.

¹ Rita Irwin wishes to thank her co-investigators for their contribution to the many facets of the larger *Becoming Pedagogical* SSHRC funded research project: George Belliveau, Peter Gouzouasis, Kit Grauer, Carl Leggo, Donal O'Donoghue and Stephanie Springgay.

Contextualizing the Research: A/r/tography, Identity, Subjectivities, Teacher Retention & The Body without Organs

A/r/tography

A/r/tography is an arts and education practice based research methodology that emphasizes living inquiry and an examination of the spaces between arts-making/researching/teaching (a/r/t). Artist/researcher/teachers, through multiple identities, give attention to the in-between “where meanings reside in the simultaneous use of language, images, materials, situations, space and time...[and create] the circumstances that produce knowledge and understanding through artistic and educational inquiry laden processes” (Springgay et. al., 2008, p. xix & xxvi).

Negotiating these multiple identities is further complicated by being in-between the identities of student and teacher. This creates a constant state of flux that is difficult to embrace in a teacher education program. Using a/r/tography as a focus for inquiry, teacher candidates begin to recognize that they are connected to, not separate from, all of these identities and their practices, and thus, need to be engaged in researching, teaching, and art making processes.

A/r/tography borrows from the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987/2007) who describe how ‘rhizomes’ metaphorically relate to a network of connected identities, ideas and concepts. Rhizomes are horizontal stems of plants that grow longer roots underground and send out shoots for new plants to grow above ground. The roots grow in all directions, with one root connecting/over-lapping another root. Like a mesh of lines on a road map, there are no beginnings or middles, merely in-between connections. In this sense if one visualizes a series of strong roots connecting the artist’s work to that of the writer, teacher and researcher the spaces in-between these seemingly separate identities disappear, instead strengthening each identity by allowing for new directions/approaches/ideas to emerge. Teacher candidate, Kim, received an introduction to the methodology of a/r/tography during her teacher education program at The University of British Columbia in some of her visual arts education courses.

The Power of Identity & Subjectivities

The multiplicity of identities that a/r/tographic approaches allow for presupposes that an individual views identity as something other than fixed. This means that we “... categorize ourselves in a range of ways and these (ways) may have conflicting and/or diverse ideologies and/or positions—for instance, a teacher might (be) a feminist, environmental activist, wife and mother and identify herself within all these groupings” (Wales, 2009, p. 263). In this way, identity can be seen as multiple, constantly shifting, realigning and reforming (Gergen & Gergen, 1997).

Since identity can be thought of as evolving, questions about how one thinks about themselves, categorizes who they are or the way that they react emotionally or physically to various experiences, links subjectivity to identity. Subjectivity means that although a group of people such as teachers may link a part of their identity to “being a teacher,” each individual will have a different emotional or physical reaction to various life experiences. Ellis & Flaherty (1992) suggest that subjectivities are the “human lived experience and the physical, political, and historical context of that experience” (p. 75). According to Wales (2009) “...thoughts, feelings, opinions and reactions are subjective (and) subjectivities can be regarded as the ways in which we perceive, feel and express ourselves” (p. 264).

Numerous pedagogical studies highlight the link between how teachers see themselves and present their personalities in the classroom to the ways they have been influenced by past experiences and practices (Pendergast & McWilliam, 1999; Klein, 1998). Results of such studies suggest that teachers need to look at their experiences and subjectivities in order to then exercise agency in their teaching and lives. It is only once teachers develop this ability (to exercise and act upon their own thoughts in particular situations) or agency, that they can empower their students to do the same.

This sentiment, that we must care or make positive personal changes before trying to improve the lives of others, speaks to some teacher education research that question placing students at the center of all learning situations. However, other research suggests placing teachers at the core of teacher education studies as a way of examining their subjectivities and abilities to resist, subvert and change the very discourses that they may hold about themselves (Pendergast & McWilliam, 1999; Wales, 2009). Part of the importance of examining teachers’ experiences in teacher education (with teachers at the center of the discourse) is that teachers’ feelings are an important aspect of their work because much of the work of teachers is about how they express their identities and personalities in the classroom (Wales, 2009). The reason that discussions about the identity shift from artist to artist-teacher are so important is that the 2004 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report points to arts teachers possibly being at the greatest risk for leaving the teaching profession (Luekens, Lyter, Fox & Chandler, 2004) because of the difficulty that transitioning from an artist to a teacher is for these individuals.

Arts Teacher Retention

Since the 2004 National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) report was released, additional research on arts teacher retention and job satisfaction has identified that: arts teachers, perhaps more so than other subject area teachers, are especially prone to alienation and isolation due in no small part to the specialized nature of their subject area that

results in fewer (if any) colleagues with matching backgrounds, experiences and interests. (Scheib, 2006, p. 6)

While initially many fine arts teachers may come to teaching through their active involvement with their subject matter and an interest in creating and sharing this art with students the support for these new artist-teachers who have in part constructed their identities during their undergraduate fine arts training as ‘performers,’ find that their artist identities are not supported in the school system (Roberts, 1991). This identity conflict leads to what research has named ‘role stress’ (Beehr, 1987 & Scheib, 2003). This role stress: occurs as a result of conflicting, overwhelming, or unsatisfactory expectations identified by the person holding an occupational role within an organization...occupations that hold positions between organizations or systems (are called) *boundary positions* and are even more susceptible to role stress. (Scheib, 2006, pp. 6-7)

Role stress, boundary positions and identity socialization are, as one might infer, factors that lead many teachers to leave the profession within the first few years of teaching. Because artist-teachers often have roles as artists in various organizations outside of the school setting, they can be classified as holding the boundary positions that research indicates contribute to higher than normal attrition rates for this subset of teachers. The term boundary positions that Scheib used to describe the artist-teacher in his research, also brings to mind the multiple identities in conceptualizations about a/r/tography.

Particular to a/r/tography is its attention and commitment to embracing the liminal spaces between identities. In a/r/tography, this attention to the in-between allows one to consider how various identities impact the others through processes of inquiry and self-awareness. This approach is different than viewing the shift from being an artist to becoming a teacher as represented by the term boundary position because while the artist-teacher in a boundary position struggles with their new identity as “this” (an artist- teacher) and not “this and that” (an artist and a teacher and an artist-teacher), a/r/tography embraces the multiplicity and complexity of an individuals experiences, subjectivities and evolving identities.

Thus, finding ways to support new artist-teachers who can view their identities as multiple, in order to help them to develop agency and a sense of subjectification (that allows them to exercise their agency) is at the heart of this study. This work builds on John Scheib’s (2006) findings about retention and boundary identities for music and visual arts teachers by questioning the classification of “artist-teacher” and investigating his policy recommendations to provide music and visual arts teachers with professional development opportunities to make art and to support these teachers with mentors as early as possible in their careers. In relation to this study, making art while on practicum reinforces Scheib’s hypothesis that making art as

early as possible during one's transition to teaching may in fact help new arts-teachers adjust to teaching.

Making Yourself a Body without Organs (BwO)

Near the end of his life, Antonin Artaud, a prolific theatre director, actor, writer and artist during the 1920s-30s avant-garde movement in Paris, worked on a radio drama called *To have done with the judgment of God* (1975). This radio drama was recorded on November 28th, 1947 with Maria Casares, Roger Blin and Paule Thevenin and was scheduled to air on February 2, 1948. Before the actual broadcast however, the drama was pulled on the grounds of it being obscene, anti-American and anti-religious. Artaud responded to this censorship by writing (in a letter) that creating this play (for which he had previously been given free creative reign) was to create a work that would appeal to certain organic points of life that would encourage the audience to participate in a new and unusual Epiphany. Numerous other individuals such as Rene Guilly supported the publication and airing of this work to no avail (Eshleman & Bador, 1995). Ironically with the invention of YouTube and the Internet current versions of this once banned recording are now available for the world to view and listen to at any time. Strange sounds, primal screams and 'made up sounds' combined with text about fecal matter and the death of God are just a portion of the experience that the listener would have (perhaps, providing a less-than shocking encounter for those who have listened to the Beatles' white album). At this time however, the actual radio play are not the main reason for introducing this particular text. Rather, it has been included in order to point out the term Artaud uses in this play that he calls the Body without Organs (BwO).

The description of a BwO is given at the very end of the play in the conclusion where Artaud is asked about the purpose of this piece of writing. Basically, Artaud suggests that he has created this particular radio show in order to denounce certain kinds of social filthiness such as the American people's occupation of indigenous lands and the way that man has used science to replace what is actually a God that is both destructive and rebuilding. Artaud says that for this reason, we must find new ways to get God to emerge from the puritanical consciousness that man² has attached to his identity in order to believe more in the possibilities of man. For this reason, Artaud suggests man must be emasculated by physically changing his anatomy since there is nothing more useless than an organ. He suggests that once an individual has been given a BwO, the person will have been delivered from all of their automatisms and resorted to their true liberty. Only once this physical act is complete can a man be retaught to dance from the inside out and this inside out is his true side out.

² Artaud refers to 'man' while we would prefer to refer to individuals, regardless of gender.

Though vivid and perhaps extreme, this description of a BwO suggests, in perhaps the most powerful way, what Artaud has continually said throughout the rest of his life's writings. Articulating once more that in order for any sort of societal change to occur, one must physically experience something that will strip him/her of their habitual ways of doing things. This physical transformation according to Artaud can then lead to internal shifts and changes that free the inner self, thus restoring one's liberty and freedom. This focus on ridding oneself of their habitual ways of doing things (in order to be more neutral) was a part of Artaud's life-long journey as an artist and perhaps a reason that he experienced living in a boundary position for most of his life. Thus, one of Deleuze & Guattari's (1987/2007) questions in *A thousand plateaus*, "How do you make yourself a body without organs?" might find resonance within Artaud's ideas for agency. Deleuze & Guattari explore their own answer to this and related questions by discussing how dismantling the organism (i.e. to become a BwO) is about opening up the organism to levels and thresholds, passages of intensities that help the unconscious significations that cling to the organism find release. This is discussed in relation to Artaud's radio play *To have done with the Judgment of God* in which the BwO (an organism) undergoes judgment that uproots the organism from a place of illumination, making it into a signification or subject.

In relation to this study, we would suggest that Kim and Williams experienced moments that shifted between illumination and signification on the practicum. This relates to the delineation of Artaud's BwO by Deleuze & Guattari in *A thousand plateaus* and means that the organism has an understanding of what it means to cease being an organism who experiences 'The judgment of God' (or signification). To explain how the BwO perpetually experiences swinging between the poles of pure immanence and signification, Deleuze & Guattari use the concept of a plane that the stratified BwO swings between. Since the BwO is a limit that one is forever attaining, there are always more strata that can be dismantled and explored.

Within an educational context, there is a strong pull from the educational institution to create a subject who identifies as 'teacher.' Thus, if this occurs, it may become more difficult to swing back to pure or absolute immanence (in which immanence is substance or a life unto itself and consistent with Artaud's ideas that life and art, body and mind should not be separated dualisms). However, we would suggest that one experiences signification (being/becoming a teacher) and illumination through the movement between illumination and signification that takes place in the liminal spaces between the two. In this study the shift from discussing the movement between signification and immanence in Deleuze and Guattari to signification and illumination is made because the authors felt that a greater understanding of one's teaching practice, art making and collegiality was understood during this research project, but they did not feel as though it was possible to measure the participants

metaphysical and immanent experiences. To be aware of choosing to move between poles suggests to us that individuals can experience and exercise their personal agency. If this movement can be fostered and developed on an art teacher's practicum, we would further suggest that they may be more likely to find it easier to transition into teaching and perhaps experience less difficulty within the first few years perhaps reducing the attrition rate for this subset of teacher.

The Study, Participants and Research Site

The Study

This study was conceived after Carter (acting as faculty advisor) was so positively affected by the observations of the practicum months after it had finished. She was fascinated with understanding what made this practicum unique among her supervisory experiences. Through conversations about this research study, Carter and Irwin came to the realization that art was the emergent pivot that led to artistic and pedagogical growth within this particular practicum. It was with this understanding that the study began. Two separate interviews with each of the participants and one interview with both of the participants took place over a four-month period. Some questions asked included:

- What does 'living inquiry' mean to you in relation to teaching and art making?
- Given that *a/r/tography* seeks an on-going commitment to art and pedagogy, discuss how your teaching philosophies and pedagogical practices may be understood as *a/r/tographical*.
- Was this a typical 'practicum' in your opinion? Why? Why Not?
- How might you use some of your own art work to speak about your experience as a cooperating teacher and teacher candidate?

Carter also collected images of various pieces of art that both participants had created and used to discuss the relational engagement they had with one another. One of the interviews took place in the visual art room that Kim did her practicum in and the other two took place online via Skype.

Grace Kim and Mary-Lou Williams

The two participants in this project are Grace Kim (teacher candidate) and Mary-Lou Williams (cooperating teacher). At the time of the study Kim was in her late twenties and attending the University of British Columbia's B.Ed. program with a specialization in teaching secondary Visual Arts. Kim moved to Vancouver, B.C. from Korea for High School and afterwards attended the Emily Carr Institute for Art and Design for her B.F.A. in Visual Arts. After her B.F.A. degree Kim married and stayed in Canada permanently while she

worked as a tutor and artist before applying to study education. When asked about her reasons for teaching, Kim spoke about always wanting to be a teacher. This response is quite different than that of many other artist-turned-teachers who oftentimes report that they decide to pursue education degrees as a means to supplement their artistic endeavors. Prior to Kim's long practicum Carter (faculty advisor) noted that she was extremely well prepared for the practicum. In fact, she had taken the initiative on her own time before her long placement to meet with her CT and find out what she would be responsible for teaching, and when she would take over particular percentages of units and lessons. Although this is not an uncommon occurrence; Kim proceeded to spend her winter break preparing in minute detail each unit and lesson for which she was responsible. Images, exemplars, rationale, objectives, curricular strains and provincial standards were all outlined within her preparatory materials. This meant that although she still had some organizational work to do when she arrived for her practicum Kim was more than sufficiently prepared to begin teaching, allowing her the time to take on additional classroom responsibilities such as instructing an after-school yoga program and concentrating on other things such as classroom management, building relationships with students and becoming engaged in the school culture. This exemplary level of preparedness perhaps made it easier for Williams and Kim to concentrate on additional aspects of the teaching profession such as educational philosophies and art making that made this a unique situation.

Williams is an artist and educator currently in her last two years of teaching before retirement. During her thirty plus years as an arts teacher in British Columbia Williams has been recognized provincially by the B.C. Teacher's Federation for her commitment and contribution to arts education as well as for her commitment to making her own art for regional competitions and programs. She has been the department head for visual arts numerous times and when a new school in Surrey, B.C. was being built as a place that would bring together students from various feeder schools, Williams was asked to envision the arts space for this new building. Williams's art room was indeed a reflection of her own interests in nature, horseback riding, social justice outreach programs and efficient organization. Although forty plus students could be in her room working on up to three or four different projects (that included murals, photography and clay making) at one time, there was never a sense of chaos. Williams has a relaxed yet professional demeanor that is both calm and commanding. Students that entered into the room seemed to absorb the 'I can do it' attitude that Williams infused in the room. This was reflected in the students dispositions and consequently with Kim's as well. As a way of further understanding this environment, Carter's observations recorded in narrative form are now included.

Carter's Narrative Description of the Research Site

It has been a long day. I am 7 months pregnant, not sleeping through the nights

and the 45 minute drive from The University of British Columbia (UBC) where I live, to Surrey, BC . It takes over 2 hours due to construction and traffic. I have just left the first school where I am a faculty advisor (FA) and reached the second one to observe and give feedback to one of my visual arts teacher candidates. Luckily, I pull into the parking lot and find a spot right away. It is just a few minutes shy of the time I am scheduled to arrive so, I grab my purse and head as quickly as a pregnant woman can into the school. As I enter the building a bell signals the end of class and the halls are immediately filled with pubescent boys in ball caps and girls in shorts that reveal more skin than I do when at the beach. No one appears to be going in the same direction as I am and I soon find myself feeling like a salmon swimming upstream; battling elbows rather than currents and the smell of perspiration rather than predators. Then as quickly as the wave of bodies emerged they are gone and I find myself outside of the art room. I tentatively further open the ajar door and peer inside because I don't hear a sound. How could 25 art students that were just moments ago fighting through the hallways be settled already? Maybe I have the wrong room.... or the wrong day.... I decide to go inside just in case there is a note on the board, before heading to the office to see if the class has been moved. And this is when I see all of the students crammed around a desk in the front of the large sunlit filled art room gazing intently and not making a sound as teacher candidate Kim slowly and mindfully paints while describing a particular art technique to the students she is with.

Like a flame, I feel drawn to this moment and so I slowly move closer not wanting to disrupt this calm and ethereal moment. I feel Kim glance up at me in acknowledgement of my presence and notice her eyes smile without missing a beat of her lesson. Her cooperating teacher (CT) Williams is also observing Kim while simultaneously working on her own 30 foot high art piece destined for a city wide display on literacy with two senior students. As I put down my papers and coat on a chair, I notice my breathing has deepened, my shoulders have relaxed and a sense of peace has come over me - something I normally assume in a yoga class.

Once Kim has finished her lesson and the students are settled and working on their own art, Williams and Kim greet me with smiles and welcomes. I think I secretly come to this placement at the end of my day because it is so inspirational and ideal. For truly, how often in ones career do you observe a situation in which CT and TC respect one another as artists and seasoned/developing teacher with excitement, joy, admiration, enthusiasm, support and confidence? I don't think I could even have imagined the way that Williams as a mentor so naturally knows

how to both encourage and guide so that both her own students and Kim seem to thrive and bring their best forward with consistence. And while typical duties of a practicum placement exist (such as discussing and analyzing events, dialoguing about educational philosophies, observing teaching, delivering content, sharing units/curriculum guides) (Graham, 2006) they are anything but typical in the way that they are executed and received. And yet that is what I hope to begin to articulate in this paper, simply as a means to share with others the potential for what has up until the time been the most effective, creative, collegial, inspiring and transformative practicum I have ever observed.

Living Inquiry

While observing Kim as her FA for UBC (2009-2010) Carter realized early on that there was something unique about her practicum placement and cooperating teacher. Although Carter had a sense that something was different, she wasn't quite sure how to articulate the sense of calm she felt entering the art room or why the students were always so engaged in art making and both Kim and Williams so upbeat. How is it possible, I actually asked my cynical self, that they both seemed so happy and productive and empowered? Neither Williams nor Kim ever raised their voices, rushed students through examples or seemed to be preoccupied with the mechanics of teaching. In fact, despite being on top of both their teaching and administrative duties they found time to make their own art, talk about the philosophical underpinnings of their work and lead extra-curricular programs for the rest of the school such as yoga. They were in essence constantly inquiring about their teaching, art, students, selves and work in such a way that allowed them to connect with one another, themselves and the community within which they worked and because they had the opportunity to do this with one another they were all the more committed to doing so. In Carter's field notes she wrote: "That's it", I told myself. "Kim and Williams are engaged in living inquiry on the practicum. This is what is different about this situation and relationship and why the traditional apprenticeship or mentorship model of a practicum doesn't quite fit this situation...but in all honesty.... I'm not quite sure exactly what this means."

Thus, in order to understand for myself what a/r/tographical inquiry meant in relation to this practicum experience, I decided to ask the participants what they thought the rendering of inquiry meant to them. Kim responded as follows:

Living inquiry is like my whole process of becoming an artist and an art teacher where I always practice inquiry by seeking newness, truth, originality, improvement, and finding myself in daily life through art. It is so easy to get dismayed or stressed trying to make new ideas work, but with trial and error, I believe I am becoming a unique artist and teacher who can constantly challenge

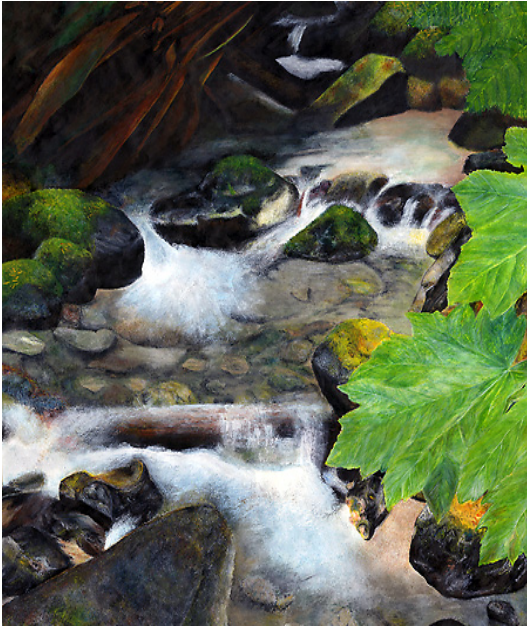
and inspire students. (Kim, Reflection Journal, 2010)

This excerpt suggests that for Kim living inquiry is about living in the moment she is in rather than (for example) being wrapped up in the other ‘business’ of teaching such as marking or planning that often seem to take on greater significance than sharing information or ideas with students. In choosing to seek newness and truth in daily life through art Kim is also suggesting that her inquiry begins anew each day and is contingent upon her art making. In this same way, Williams’s art making was a part of her own daily inquiry into being and teaching because she discussed during interviews the importance for her to create and co-create her own art with or in front of her students. This decision is discussed as relationality.

Relationality

Art making was one of the best ways to connect with my sponsor teacher. We were both into creating art by keeping sketchbooks and making prototypes for new projects. Also, as she taught me her skills and techniques on ceramics and printmaking, I could improve and respect her even more as an artist and this led us into more conversations that deepened our relationship. (Kim, Reflection Journal, 2010)

At the start of Kim’s B.Ed. program, she was very focused on making a particular ‘realistic’ kind of art. This was her personal preference and is exemplified in the image of the stream in the first image below. However, as Kim attended classes at UBC and prepared for her practicum she began to realize that if she wanted to become a teacher she also had to change as an artist. This attitude is reflected in the second image (of the same subject matter as the first) below and implies that Kim felt that she had to explore different art techniques in order to teach students who were different than her.



“Stream 1” painted Pre- B.Ed. program
by Grace Kim



Stream 2” painted during B.Ed. program
by Grace Kim

This second image shows how Kim uses the same subject matter, materials and color scheme as she does in the first picture in a more abstract way. This exemplifies how she is becoming pedagogical because she is realizing that her identity as an artist is in relation to her identity as a teacher. Williams was also affected by this idea of artistic and pedagogical relationality when she discusses the third image:



Mary-Lou Williams's Photo transfer

The Acrylic Painting with photo transfer is a piece that directly relates to my a/r/tographical relationship with Kim. It allowed me an opportunity to apply a lesson that Kim taught my Sr. students.... Photo transfer... My time spent with Kim throughout the practicum was one of mentoring and sharing, she learned from me, I learned from her, I had to let go of my role as teacher, and become learner as well, and this was invigorating and enlightening, as we should all remain lifelong learners. The text in this piece is: "Artistic challenges lead to Creative Growth and creative growth is about a chance to experiment, play, create, and take a chance, what the hell, there is more where that came from" (Williams, 2010)

Williams's reflections on creating this photo transfer express her openness to learning new art techniques from Kim during the practicum. This speaks to the inter-relationship between making art and teaching for the CT and SA relationship because it exemplifies how Williams's art making was affected by Kim's teaching. This is an extremely exciting occurrence because it shows how perhaps unexpectedly the "teacher" is the "learner" when art making and inquiry are the focus of a practicum.

An A/r/tographical Turn during Practicum

As a way to understand the uniqueness of this practicum in which inquiry and relationality emerged as the focus of interactions between Kim and Williams, we came to appreciate the following understandings:

- becoming pedagogical
- becoming through art making
- becoming an active inquirer
- becoming relational

Becoming Pedagogical

On what has come to be referred as an *A/r/tographical Practicum*, Kim's experiences as a teacher candidate illustrate how she is learning what it means to be committed to becoming pedagogical as she speaks with Williams about preparing lessons, discussing philosophies of teaching and trying out new approaches, such as incorporating multi-media images into her lessons. Just as she gained confidence as a teacher by getting up in front of various classes of students, Kim also learns what it means to be a part of a collaborative classroom community as she speaks about her practice, ideas and approaches with Williams and other teachers. As she continues to risk learning something new as both an artist and a teacher, Kim (and Williams) exemplify swinging between being signified as a teacher and being illuminated by their philosophical and creative practices. Thus, they are living in the world and in their classroom as 'more than' just 'teacher.'

Becoming an Artist

During this practicum, Kim and Williams's artist identities represented an opening and opportunity for them to both grow as visual arts teachers because they were both not only engaged in art making in the classroom, but also open to learning new techniques from one another. These new art practices were then taught to students disrupting the notion of teacher and learner in sometimes subtle but profound ways. As discussed earlier, it was by learning new art techniques from one another that both Williams and Kim felt they were becoming stronger artists and as they were becoming better teachers.

Becoming an Active Inquirer

Living inquiry is an a/r/tographical rendering that represents the way(s) that living a/r/tographically compels an individual to be in the world more deeply and thoughtfully. It acknowledges that taking the time to slow down and listen, see, touch, smell and think offers a luxurious relationship with the world and others that moves one towards

resonances and poetic ways of being that unfold levels of intensity that can be forgotten or ignored when one rushes through life, communications and experiences. Kim found that inquiry was a way of living during her practicum that compelled her to question, provoke and attend to herself, students and colleagues. By *living* inquiry, she was able to deepen her relationships with others, herself and her artistic and teaching practice(s).

Becoming Relational

Becoming relational emerged as our final understanding as we considered the conditions that made this particular a/r/tographical practicum possible. Relationality in this sense can be considered in response to the relationships between Kim and Williams, Williams and her students, Kim and her students, art making and the participants. Thus, becoming relational means being attentive and attuned to creative processes such as making art, conversations that emerge from teaching, as well as the relationships that one has on a personal level to others and the objects or tools that are used to create works of art. In this way, becoming relational suggests that one is aware of the elements of their teaching and art and can find a way to engage in a dynamic movement or dance between or with them all. This ever-evolving movement requires that the individual be continually engaged with others and themselves as a way to respond to and with their environment, pedagogical practice and selves.

Final Thoughts

The significance of exploring this particular visual arts practicum is two-fold. First, this study explores how art making affects a teacher candidate. In this study, where art making was a focus for both Kim and Williams, what is understood is that by learning new art practices both teacher candidate and cooperating teacher developed a relationship that benefited not only themselves but also the students they taught. This suggests that by viewing oneself as both a teacher and an artist, the art teacher candidate and art teacher find deeper satisfaction in their pedagogical practices.

Additionally, and in relation to the discussion about the BwO's, Kim and Williams exemplify a sense of agency as they dwell in the in-between poles of signification (arts-teacher) and illumination through their discussions about philosophical issues, the nature of creation etc.. This continual process of becoming artists and educators during the practicum suggests that the visual arts practicum can be a place of openness, discovery and excitement when CT and TC work reciprocally with one another and view not only themselves but also the 'other' as both learner and teacher. This understanding leads to the notion of an a/r/tographical practicum understood through its focus on becoming pedagogical, becoming an artist, becoming an active inquirer and becoming relational.

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