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What Matters: Using Arts-Based Methods to Sculpt Preservice Teachers' Philosophical Beliefs

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Abstract

This article outlines an activity that uses sculpture with pre-service teachers to facilitate the creation and articulation of their educational philosophies. The author describes the purpose and added benefits of this activity. A short review of relevant literature embeds arts based practices in historical foundations as well as in a growing current research base that encompasses depth psychology and holistic learning. A description of the activity and prompt are provided and the article concludes with thoughts on the benefits of using the arts in pre-service teacher classrooms.

Introduction

Twenty three college sophomores and juniors sit in a circle with me. They are education majors – elementary, middle level, high school, all content areas, and come from a wide range of personal backgrounds. Their attention is focused on a number of small clay sculptures in the middle of the circle. The mood is reverent.



Figure 1. Z's egg. Digital photograph by Jennifer Groman.

Joe: You are really quiet in class, Zane, but I think that you are coming out of your shell a little bit. You are going to be good at getting kids to come out of their shell, too.

Kate: This makes me think of knowledge as an egg that is getting ready to hatch.

Greg: My cousins raise chickens for FFA. I know that you can't really force a chick to come out of the egg. It has to come out in its own time, and I think that you are going to be good at keeping little kids safe until they are ready to become who they are going to become.

This scene is the high point of an arts based activity that I do with pre-service teachers in an Introduction to Education course. The little sculptures represent each student's individual philosophy of education, and the conversation is one of the deepest we will have the entire semester. One student, Alice, stated it well in her reflection. (Note: All student names are pseudonyms):

This week of class I have felt like it was the most emotional week we have had yet. It has been so nice looking at our clay creations and actually opening up and really showing our feelings about teaching. When I was making my clay piece I didn't realize how significant it was until I got into the classroom and really started to think

about what it meant and where I am going to do in my life. After listening to other people's ideas it has not only given me a lot of insight on them but made me think a lot about myself and how I connect to the people that are also in our class. (Alice)

This article details an arts-informed philosophy sculpture activity as used in my Introduction to Education undergraduate classes. I begin by describing the overall purpose of the activity as it fits into the larger picture of growing the beliefs and values of pre-service teachers, including the added benefits of the activity to the individual and to the class as a collective. I offer a brief review of literature that supports and gives an anchor to this way of using art with students, which I follow with a detailed plan of the sculpture activity itself. To end the article I share conclusions and thoughts on using arts to provide opportunities for deeper conversations in the training of teachers.

The art activity I describe here has two foundational purposes: to draw out of pre-service teachers an image of their personal and professional beliefs about what is important in teaching; and to allow them the opportunity to see and articulate their place within the profession. As an added benefit of the work, this activity also supports other points of growth for students. As students begin to converse about their own beliefs and listen to others they begin to form and model collegial relationships with one another based on the premise that as teachers we can, indeed, speak deeply about what is important to us. They form bonds with classmates and fellow future teachers that model the types of conversations and relationships vital to supporting 21st century teachers in their work. We also build up a beautiful sort of collective consciousness with one another that includes group trust and risk taking that resonates in them long after the semester is over. This type of deep conversation about values, beliefs, and selfhood also models conversations and relationships that are possible in the classroom, showing how, as teachers, they can converse with their own future students in classrooms yet to come.

Literature Review

Integrating arts in the classroom is well established in the education field. Many teachers combine visual and performing arts activities to enhance the work done by students in reading (draw a picture from the story), mathematics (create a tessellation) and social studies (create a map or dramatize an historical event). These are fun curriculum extensions and draw in the talents of creative and nontraditionally talented students. The activity described here uses arts at a deeper level – to draw out from students' hidden and emerging thoughts, beliefs and feelings about teaching and learning. Eisner (2008) said that the “radical idea that the life of feeling is best revealed through those forms of feeling we call the arts” (p. 7). In fact he thought that this is what the arts do best. He went on to state that if we wish to express scientific concepts, for example, then the forms of discursive expression are the most useful. However, if we wish to engage students' emotions and feelings, artistic expression is best

suited to provide a remarkable springboard to our own selves.

Postmodern theorist Patrick Slattery (2006), in his book *Curriculum Development in the Postmodern Era* devoted an entire chapter to aesthetic inquiry and arts-based research. Slattery related a life-altering experience about a time when his teenage self stood before Jackson Pollack's painting *Autumn Rhythm* (1950) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York City. He relates the experience as a time of aesthetic arrest that speaks of suddenly becoming wide awake. He used this experience to illustrate "a central dimension of qualitative aesthetic inquiry in the postmodern curriculum" as "...synthetical moments [that] will inspire students to read, to research, to explore, to learn, to meditate and to expand their understanding of the initial experience. It can also ignite a passion for justice and compassion" (p. 246).

My own personal and professional creative work is embedded in the research and practice of Reynolds (2005), Piirto (Piirto, 2011; Reynolds & Piirto, 2005; 2007), and McElfresh (2008) whose work can be embedded further into that of Jung (1969), Hillman (1996), Dewey (1934), Eisner (2008 and McNiff (1998), among others. The work of Reynolds, Piirto, and McElfresh referred to concepts in the branch of transpersonal psychology called depth psychology as it uses care of the soul to describe the process and purpose of education. This means that within the work I do – as an educator of educators – not only am I in the business of showing my students how to care for their own souls (something I suspect they did not receive in their own education) but also to care for the souls of those students they will teach in the future. "With soul as the central factor, education returns to its deepest root, *educare*, a leading out from lesser meanings to deeper ones, from lesser connectedness to greater connectedness" (Reynolds & Piirto, 2005, p. 167).

In the middle of this soul work is the idea of transformation. The goal of the art activity, with my students, is to offer insight into their own beliefs so that they can transform from the role of student into the role of teacher, in the true *educare* sense of the word. Jung spoke of the personality as "enlarging" over time – especially over the first half of life. Transformation is possible through "new vital contents finding their way into the personality from outside and being assimilated" (Jung, 1969, p. 120). This type of transformation, coming from the outside, is neither the only nor the most powerful agent of change. When these "new vital contents" come from deep within the self they can announce themselves through images and their power is much more profound. These images are often captured in dreams and in art; as an example, Jung often used mandala drawings in his therapeutic work. This firsthand experience with art follows Dewey's (1934) belief that it is our engagement, with the creation of art, that connects it to our lives. "Experience in the degree in which it *is* experience is heightened vitality" [emphasis his] (p. 18).

Traditional psychopathology would most likely place the images and experiences emerging from such transformational activities in purely positive terms such as “creativity, joy, meaningful relationships, play, and peaks” (Hillman, 1997, p. 65). Depth psychology insists upon including the shadow, the presence of death and the darker perceptions that Freud and Jung plumbed in their work. By including the psyche in its whole sense, (the dark and the light) and by facing the daimon embedded within our own mortality, we are able to open up the path to true transformation. The darker images are our symptoms, and symptoms are the way to the soul. While the sculpture work often draws out many encouraging, affirming ideals and awarenesses, the true transformative work comes with those images that are painful and make us face our own fears and transience.

Jung (1969) found that working with emerging and transformational images has “considerable psychic effects, which would be sufficient in themselves to make any thoughtful person ask himself what really happened to him” (p. 130). McNiff (1998) used the idea of the “decisive moment” (p. 25) to describe the moment in the artistic process when transformation occurs. Reynolds and Piirto (2008) supported this when they stated:

Learning is an encounter between the teacher and the taught that is erotic (not necessarily sexual, but fraught with love and regard; love being the exposure of one’s vulnerability to the other’s, and regard being the gaze of recognition, of feeling “seen” by the other). The encounter is mutual. The teacher becomes the taught and the taught becomes the teacher when this happens in the relationship. The class may be large or small, but each, the teacher and the taught, feels a thunderbolt, a prickling, a physical sensation that this moment of educate is made tangible in the physical response of the body to the encounter. This happens to all teachers and to all students when true learning takes place. (p. 196).

The physical response to the images that emerge, as we share our deepest thoughts and ideas, is a mode of learning that many students have never experienced before. The work can literally be felt through the body in tingling sensations, chills up the spine and warmth throughout the face and hands. Jungian psychologist Sandra Dennis (2001) spoke to the “subtle body” (p. 19) as a connection place of mind and body that is perceived and understood intuitively. Although her mind/body work described a completely different, yet equally interesting direction than the work stated here, the concept of listening to the body’s messages as we work with images, is highly significant. Including the subtle body’s senses give us the capacity to draw out “finer distinctions and richer perceptions” (Dennis, 2001, p. 26) in the discussion. This is the mind/body/soul connection is the basis of holistic education, defined as the development of the whole person, including “the intellectual, emotional, physical, social, aesthetic and spiritual . . . Progressive and humanistic education deal(s) with the first five

factors but generally ignore(s) the spiritual dimension” (Miller, 2005, p. 2). The activity described here encourages beginning teachers to consider the inclusion of holistic practices to enrich their own work and deepen and expand student learning.

Transformation also occurs when teachers begin to see who they are and are seen by others for who they are. This great need and longing to be a teacher goes much deeper than content, strategies, standardization and legal issues. Those things are important – of course they are. But the fact of the matter is that young people come to the profession with dreams of being useful to mankind and making connections with their students in a deeper way. If all we do in teacher education programs is instruct them in strategies and standards we are creating orphans (Reynolds, 2005) or humans whose true gifts of the soul have no home. In teacher education programs we stress the importance of varied teaching strategies to differentiate for learners, we tout the idea of getting to know students on a deeper level, yet from student conversations before and after class I know that while we preach this kind of teaching, we do not practice it. Students talk about instructors who do not know their name or their major, or professors who teach by lecture, a slow death by Powerpoint. If we wish to have teachers who are going to transform the field of education we must let them experience what it is to be transformed by education.

McElfresh (2008) explored the issue of transformation through the arts. She not only addressed individual transformation but “transformation in the context of communities” (p. 201). The change that occurs within college sophomores and juniors to move them from students to preservice teachers may be subtle when looking from the outside, but the transformation that seems to occur within them is vast and has far-reaching consequences. This alteration occurs in how they view themselves, in their written communication, in the way they relate to peers as colleagues and in the way they relate to me as their instructor, in the way they enter school buildings and classrooms; all of these perspectives are shifting as they begin to place themselves in the field of education. Working with art can facilitate those changes, as we see during the class sessions where they create and read sculptures.

The Philosophy Sculpture Project

Before working in higher education, I was an elementary/middle grades educator for more than 20 years. I used creative arts as a part of my teaching for half of that time as a general educator, teacher of the gifted, and adjunct professor. I am now a doctoral student at a fairly large state university in Ohio and as part of my assistantship I teach two sections of Introduction to Education. At the time of this writing I have taught more than 15 Introduction to Education classes at two universities over a three year span. Students in this course are usually second or third year undergraduates who have recently been accepted into the College of Education: this is one of their very first education classes. Introduction to Education classes

contain education majors at all age levels and in all content areas, including special education, visual and performing arts, physical education and family and consumer sciences. This course provides a wide survey of the field of education, opportunities for guided field observations at urban school sites and directs students as they begin articulating their emerging philosophy of education.

From the first time I taught this course I found that undergraduate students are able to easily identify what brought them into the field of education, but they often cannot articulate what they believe about the profession and their place within it. This makes expressing their philosophy of education a challenge: they do not know where to begin. As the weeks progress we read and discuss works by educators, observe classrooms and talk about how teachers' beliefs are the foundation of how they teach and respond to students. Page (2005) stated in one of the assigned readings:

Without a grounded philosophy or theory, a new teacher will end up . . . doing whatever the administration or the state tells him to do. The teacher will not have a base for figuring out the problems in the classroom and will look to a power figure to handle the issue. If a teacher strongly believes in whatever the latest mandate for teaching and learning is and knows why he believes in it, that is one thing. On the other hand, if he doesn't know what his own beliefs are about teaching and learning, he shouldn't be teaching at all. (p. 211)

To those students who feel they are still too new to have a philosophy of education, this quote is an awakening. We discuss how vitally important it is to know yourself as a teacher yet to continue to be flexible and willing to grow and change.

To give students a tangible way to express their emerging philosophy of education I integrate an arts based inquiry that uses clay to allow students to physically sculpt their beliefs about what matters to them in teaching and in education. This process has allowed students to better listen to their true passion for the profession and to use what they hold to be true and important, to develop their beginning philosophy. It also gives their ideas form and structure, and in the process they find it easier to articulate these ideas and beliefs into the required philosophy paper as well as into their current resume.

The project is carried out close to the end of the semester, a few weeks before the final philosophy paper is due. Students have explored many facets of the profession, including diversity issues, legal and organizational structures, teacher conduct, social justice issues and standardization, to name a few. We spend at least three class periods discussing student-centered (Progressivism, Existentialism and Social Reconstructionism) and teacher-centered

(Essentialism and Perennialism) philosophies of education, including an informal quiz to determine their own philosophical leanings. This gives us a common vocabulary from which to speak and frames the sculpture work within a strong educational and philosophical foundation. We are ready to begin the deeper work. One of the students, Kate, commented:

While I was creating my sculpture I was not thinking about any certain teaching philosophy but my own beliefs and views. I think that a great teacher can take a little something from each philosophy and make it their own as far as what they believe and how it can affect their students. No one can tell you what you believe and who you want to be as a teacher. One must figure it out on their own, and through projects like this you are able to see yourself emerging as a teacher and where you stand. (Kate)

Sculpting “What Matters”

The sculpture activity comes directly from creativity work outlined in Reynolds and Piirto, (2007) and Reynolds (1990). The prompt I use is a variation of the “What matters/What’s the matter?” prompt (see Appendix A for a materials list, instructions on preparing for the lesson and baking the clay).

On the day students receive their clay, I run a slideshow of previous student sculptures behind me, while I speak to them about the project. I find that this can ease the fear that they often bring to the assignment. Many students are extremely anxious about trying arts-based work. They are so out of practice using art materials and playing (in creativity research this is more accurately called “improvisation”) that most of them view this activity as terribly threatening. Seeing the simple nature of previous sculptures can do wonders to alleviate this. I also tell students outright that their sculpture will receive full points regardless; I only ask that they give the assignment time and thought. I sometimes give students the clay and the prompt at the end of a class period have them bring the finished sculpture to the next class. If time permits, however, I like to have students sculpt in class.

I distribute clay, foil, and a paper plate to everyone. Students should be silent, close their eyes, breathe deeply and relax, and begin working the clay with their hands. Slowly I say things such as: “Warm up the clay with your hands. Begin to think about what brought you to this class, think about what brought you to education. What is it that brought you here? Begin to think about what it is that matters to you in education. What matters to you most in education? What do you want your teaching to be? What matters most to you in teaching? What matters? What really matters?” As they work with the clay ideas will usually begin to come to them, and they can begin sculpting when it does. They can also sculpt image after image until the right image comes to mind. This improvisational, playing, part is essential – it lets them enjoy the process of sculpting and creating, grounding themselves into the clay. It is also important

for them to understand that the sculpture does not have to be representational or recognizable, as long as it is meaningful to them.

In order for the activity to become transformative, there must be a prevailing atmosphere of respect and empathy for the participants (McNiff, 1998; Piirto, 2011). Piirto expanded on these concepts as two (“group trust” and “risk taking”) of the five core attitudes creative people seem to possess (Piirto, 2004; Piirto, 2011). The remaining attitudes are those of self-discipline tied to motivation, naiveté or openness to experience, and tolerance for ambiguity. An atmosphere of safety, respect and empathy that is essential to transformative learning relies on creating a sense of “group trust” among members. This may include a promise of confidentiality after the discussions or teaching methods of quality feedback to the group. In this way the core attitude of “risk taking” (for sharing and discussing creative works is always an exercise in vulnerability and courage) enables individuals to try new things and to share from their deeper selves.

Reynolds (1990) and Piirto (2011) provide a useful list of suggestions for reacting to student created work. I often list these before we begin talking about the sculptures to give students a beginning vocabulary for the discussion.

Feeding back Prompts for Reacting to Work

1. This reminds me of
2. Give a descriptive adjective . . .
3. I thought of . . .
4. The work resembles . . .
5. I see . . .
6. awe— silence. (Piirto, 2011, p. 38)

Over the semester it is my goal to create a safe environment for students so that they are comfortable taking the risks necessary to share deeply from their beliefs. Each class begins with a sharing session that I call “Good News,” (after a student’s field notebook describing an activity she observed in a classroom). This is a time when we all have an opportunity to share something good or important that is happening in their lives. We have had announcements of pregnancies and weddings, new jobs, dance, sport, and debate competitions, vacations, and campus events. Students also share from their personal hardships such as family illness, friends deployed overseas, memorials, and funerals. A five minute investment at the beginning of every class has made the group a supportive entity in one another’s lives and has given us a sense of community that builds group trust so that we may be more able to take the risks necessary for true transformation. As Joanna, one of the students, said:

I learned a lot about my fellow classmates and I feel like I got to know them a little bit better on a “deeper” level. It was nice to feel comfortable enough to share what I

thought with the class. Even though I start shaking after I speak, it's slowly getting easier! (Joanna)

Within an atmosphere of trust, the students create their sculpture piece on foil and a paper plate. The plate stabilizes the piece and the foil allows the piece to be transferred to the oven easily. Clay pieces can be baked or left pliable. There is nice metaphor of the philosophy of teaching staying pliable, allowing it to grow and change as they grow and change as teachers. Allow students the option of baking it or keeping it malleable. The piece is brought to the next class, where we begin the process of "reading" them, which means commenting on them nonjudgmentally, using the feeding back prompts above. Here is what one student, Jevaun, said:

When creating my sculpture I wasn't really sure how to start. I knew in my heart how passionate I am when it comes to teaching but, I didn't know how to shape my feelings into clay. I started to just roll the clay around, making it soft and ready to morph. Then my hands kind of took control and started creating. I was left with two hands, a heart, and the world. I realized that these three simple symbols describe me and my personal philosophy exactly. (Jevaun)

Reading the sculptures: The emergence of philosophical foundations

On the day students bring in their sculptures, the students and the class dynamics change dramatically. As I near the classroom I hear happy noise, good chatter of people who are enjoying each other. When I enter the room their faces are like young children who can't wait for show and tell. I see tentative, nervous smiles, too. It is important to remember that this part of the process is an enormous risk for students to take. Sharing any work with your peers is difficult, but many students are completely out of practice with their creative selves, especially this kind of deep, soulful creativity. As with the "pliable clay/pliable self" mentioned above, there is a lesson here, too. When we have learners in our room of any age, every time they raise their hand, every time they share a thought, answer a question out loud or turn in a paper, they are vulnerable to our criticism and to the criticism of their peers. A teacher should always remember how this risk feels. It makes us human and it makes us humane with one another. One student, Amber, said:

On Tuesday walking to class I was proud of my sculpture, no matter the artistic level. I am no artist by any means so this was a big deal to me. I saw all the other sculptures and felt a little silly for being so proud, my peers had very creative figures all with very good explanations I found once we started examining them. However, once it was my turn to put my piece in the middle, my insecurities went away. Hearing my peers' compliments on how my personality is reflected in my sculpture was endearing. They could see my nurturing aspects and the leadership quality I have had and plan on having in the classroom. Everything I had hoped my peers would understand about my

philosophy was discussed. My friends also pointed out things about my figure that made it even better. The whole experience was very eye opening; becoming a teacher is really happening and this is what I believe in. (Amber)

As we begin class I acknowledge all of this: the nerves, the happy chatter as I entered the classroom, the body language of the group, the change in the collective culture of the group. I then have the group pair and share about the experience of sculpting, not about what their pieces mean yet. This acts as a warm-up and gives students a chance to open up a bit on a smaller scale before they share with the larger group. We then share out a few thoughts about the process itself, how it felt to sculpt rather than read or write for an assignment, how they came up with their ideas, how the clay felt and what memories it brought up from childhood.

At this point I have the group form a circle with a table or desk in the middle to hold four sculptures at a time. The circle is vital to the sharing of pieces – everyone is equidistant from the center, we can all see one another and we can all see the center. Everyone is encouraged to speak out as they wish as long as they follow good conversational etiquette.

Four pieces are placed in the middle of the circle, the sculptors are identified. Students stand up and walk around the pieces quietly, studying them closely. When all have had a chance to look at the pieces, we take our seats in the circle and begin to read them, one by one.

Reading the sculptures is a process of looking at art with the artist in mind and feeding back the artist by telling them what we see. We visit one piece of art at a time and give that piece and that artist our full attention. We take turns talking about what we see in the piece and tying it in with what we know about the sculptor, if we can. Use Piirto's Feedback Prompts as a starting place. At this point we don't ask the sculptor her intentions or what something means, we are simply feeding positive comments about the piece and about the sculptor to her. I encourage students to keep paper nearby for jotting down notes, as it often happens that they get great ideas about their piece through this discussion that never occurred before. The sculptor sits quietly and is fed these wonderful thoughts and comments about her piece and herself. I always make a point of commenting on each piece and tying it in to something I know about that student as a model for how students are to converse here. Most classes pick up on this deeper conversation right away and often there are students who are sensitive and intuitive about this kind of sharing and they step up and speak out. It never ceases to amaze me what happens when you open up the space for this kind of work, how students can surprise you with their depth of intuition and care for one another. This is a time to let the art work the room.



Figure 2. Sam's Mountain. Digital photograph by Jennifer Groman.

Here is a transcript of a dialogue during the Feeding Back session, on Sam's Mountain, Figure 2:

Dan: In Sam's sculpture I can see people working together for a common goal.

Jackie: I see that, too. And they are building this great strong shape.

Todd: I know that Sam likes a good challenge, so I think that as a teacher he will teach students to work together to meet the challenges in his classroom.

When the group is done feeding the artist, it is the artist's turn to speak. They often affirm classmates who have truly "seen" their intention with the art, and they often acknowledge classmates who have given them deep, unrealized, and unexpected insight into their art and their thoughts about teaching. The artist begins to tell the class what she thinks matters in teaching. Suddenly we are talking about the things that are most important to us. Students nod and smile, they whisper "Yes, I feel that way, too," and "Wow!" to themselves and to one another. It is truly beautiful.

Often the group, the sculptor or I will intuitively pick up on and share sadness, loss or themes of being invisible as a learner and as a person. One student shared deeply about the inspiration of her teacher grandfather. After his sudden death she opted to push away her dream of being a teacher because of the sorrow it brought her. After a couple of unfulfilling years pursuing a degree in a high level science, she decided to return to her dream, coming to terms with her true life's passion. Through tears and laughter we share not only the sweetness of the profession, but also the shadow of our choice, the fears, the darkness of not being truly 'seen' and appreciated as a child in the school system and the sorrow of lost teacher mentors. These are the moments that truly draw the soul into our learning.

I thank the artist for sharing. We move on to the next piece. We continue reading pieces, in rounds of four, until the group is finished. I have tried reading pieces one at a time, and it took too much time and was too much pressure on the artist to hold that space alone. I have tried modeling the reading with a group of four and having small groups of four then branch out and read one another's pieces separately. This saves time, of course, but we certainly do not connect as a whole class unless we each take time to look at and discuss each art piece and artist. The work takes time, but the learning is of the best kind and is infinitely worth it. Here is a comment from a student, Cody:

I had reservations about having people talking about my sculpture and what they thought it represented because I am such a quiet and reserved person. I was actually surprised how well some people got the idea of what I was trying to represent. I do not normally like things like this however I actually kind of enjoyed it. (Cody)

As we talk about the sculptures the circle begins to close in, moves in tighter. Students look one another in the eye, they respond and speak directly to one another rather than focusing their statements on me as the teacher. They feel a sense of community, or collective consciousness. This support of one another is vital to the work of teachers. Here is what Marianne said:

When I showcased mine, I was nervous – what are people going to think of mine? Well, it could not have been more reviving, because the class is filled with great people. I honestly believe that my future colleagues are some of the sweetest people I have met so far, and this little project really brought to life a sense of togetherness. (Marianne)

From these sculptures and the activity of reading them as a group, these students now have a solid image of what they believe to be important in teaching and they also have words with which to form their philosophy of education. Students who initially struggled putting their philosophical ideas to paper can now see a way to make their philosophy statement real. Bente commented thus:

The comments about my sculpture help me see something different about myself. Ms. ***** made a statement that the whole time I was looking for my philosophy I already had it. And from that statement things made a lot more sense. I have been using, showing and living my philosophy since I became a resident assistant for (my college). I really care for the individual. (Bente)

Conclusions

A student named Mirabelle said it well:

One thing that I want to share with you that I learned this week is that I finally am now seeing what my teaching philosophy is and understanding exactly who I am as a teacher. Once I started playing with the clay to form into something that represented me, I started really realizing who I am. (Mirabelle)

Education is meant to draw our own meaning out of ourselves and give us the ability to see that meaning, to see who we are. Mirabelle's statement proves to me that the activity I have described here is one that truly educates and informs students. Preservice teachers are given an anchor to themselves and to their beliefs so that in their future teaching lives they will be able to base their teaching on those beliefs as they navigate the tough eddies of standards, funding crises and political attacks on their schools and students.

The Philosophy Sculpture Project I outlined here is one of three major assignments in the Introduction to Education course that uses arts as inquiry. Students taking this course overwhelmingly approve of the creative work, not only as a nice alternative to writing papers, but also as a different way to bring out knowledge about themselves and the profession that is simply not possible using more traditional methods. I hope that this article works as a challenge to teacher preparation program to include more creative techniques in their coursework to draw out the deeper aspects of young teachers and model a style of teaching that adds a sense of joy to their joyless standardized world. Preservice teachers, as I far as I can see, are eager and willing to work in this way.

I am encouraged by my students' words, which is why I have included so many reflective comments in this paper. By listening to their thoughtful comments I can see the trajectory of the work I do with them, and I can see the places in the teacher education program that desperately need the transformative power of these kinds of activities. This is a call to meet the deeper needs of preservice teachers in a way that may require us, as teacher educators, to transform ourselves as well as the programs we serve within. As Jalan said, I think this project was PERFECT for our class! I will always carry my sculpture with me in my future. This sculpture will be a constant reminder of why I am where I am and why I am doing what I'm doing in life! (Jalan)

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About the Author

Jennifer (Allen) Groman is a teacher, singer and songwriter. As a teacher she has worked with students from two years old to the graduate level, in general education, gifted education, creativity studies and songwriting, reading and math intervention. She has worked at the state level as a gifted coordinator and teacher trainer, and at the local level in arts administration. As a singer she has performed music from big band jazz to rock to bluegrass to indie, and performs locally as a singer/songwriter with four self-produced albums of her own music. She is currently working on a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction and a master's degrees in Transpersonal Psychology, at the University of Akron and Sofia University, respectively. She lives in Wooster, Ohio.

Appendix A

Logistics: Preparing for the lesson and baking the clay

The teacher should use Original Sculpey clay in original terracotta and in original white and buy one 8 pound box for each class of 24 students. Each box has eight sections of four small slabs. One slab is usually enough for one person, but there is enough in a box for students to take a bit more if they like or to mix colors.

The teacher should break each section into slabs and put a slab into a baggie. This clay will stay pliable indefinitely until it is baked. Avoid extreme heat and extreme cold. Each student receives a baggie of clay, a paper plate and a piece of foil. Do not use Styrofoam plates, as Sculpey will disintegrate styrene. If they sculpt their piece directly on the foil, it is easier to transfer to and from the oven without the piece breaking. Fragile or intricate pieces can be supported with crushed foil to keep their shape while baking.

Baking instructions:

I purchased a secondhand toaster oven to use just for Sculpey projects. Students can bake them in their own ovens or toaster ovens at home or in the dorm, or bake them in mine. Bake at 275° F degrees for 15 minutes. Do not microwave and do not exceed 275° F. If the piece is thick, you can bake it again for 5 minutes at a time, checking on the piece every few minutes then to keep it from scorching. Allow to cool.

A reason for using Sculpey clay is that there is a strong metaphor to keeping the clay piece pliable, if the students wish to do so. It is important for students to realize that their philosophies will change over time with experience, new learning and the influence of students and colleagues. 'Staying pliable' in the face of change is a powerful part of the

learning here. With this said, most students bake their sculptures to make them easier to transport and keep.

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