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Bodily Writing and Performative Inquiry: Inviting an Arts-Based Research Methodology into Collaborative Doctoral Research Vocabularies

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Abstract

In this article, the authors (then two doctoral students) describe their methodology of engaging in an interdisciplinary, collaborative doctoral arts-based research (ABR) project. Education and the arts were integrated utilizing dance methods of bodily writing and performative inquiry to strengthen the analysis of dissertation findings in the field of teacher education. We share our theoretical stance based on somatics, embodiment, and rhizomatics, followed by a thick description of our rhizomatic actions of becoming collaborative arts-based researchers. We advocate, argue, and fight for the right to introduce and encourage interdisciplinary and collaborative research with the arts in doctoral students' studies and highlight the implications our

project had on accessibility to research and engagement with broader audiences as well as our entrant-audience. We argue that ultimately, combining efforts to bring collaborative interdisciplinary ABR into doctoral students' work will foster benefits for both doctoral students and the research produced.

Vignette: Charles' Perspective

She was no longer my collaborator up there. She had transformed into my participant. Everyone else in the room had melted away and she moved and gestured and danced in front of only me. It was like I was watching a condensed version of all of my observation recordings; through this performative inquiry I could see everything Tiffany¹ had experienced throughout the semester. I was able to see the times she was frustrated and the points over the semester that helped her grow. I could see the implicit and explicit obstacles she overcame; I could see how she grew. I could finally see Tiffany.

Background

Educational institutions in the US are in the beginning stages of evolving research methodologies in graduate research programs. Conventional notions of a written component paired with an oral defense only, for example, are largely considered the only option for doctoral students' work, whether it be dissertation or other research projects (Ravelli, Paltridge, & Starfield, 2014). US higher educational institutions are considered to have 'fallen-behind' other countries (i.e., Australia, Japan, and the UK) where blending creative and performative methods/practice with traditional notions of research has taken place for decades (Ravelli, Paltridge, & Starfield, 2014). Such graduate programs have been adapting and accommodating doctoral work in the creative and performing arts since the late 1980s for students who feel a need to blend creative and/or performative practices with traditional modes of research (Elkins, 2014; Ravelli, Paltridge, Starfield, 2014).

Transgressive and/or grassroots collegiate educators in the US have been attempting to initiate such adaptations to the conventional models of graduate programs and graduate research (Lester & Gabriel, 2016; Kuby, et al., 2016). Lester and Gabriel (2016) have introduced arts-based research (ABR) approaches, specifically performance ethnography, into their methods and education courses. This move toward alternative, performative approaches for data (re)presentation in doctoral work influenced the trajectory of doctoral students' development as qualitative educational researchers (Lester & Gabriel, 2016). Similarly, Candace Kuby

¹ A pseudonym

facilitated a grassroots research consortium in her university to offer a transgressive, post-qualitative inquiry course to doctoral students (Kuby, et al., 2016).

Both Kuby and Lester and Gabriel's efforts are admirable and inspiring—considering ABR remains largely marginalized within higher educational institutions in the US—but their research consists solely on individual ABR work. We are attempting to advocate, argue, and fight for the right to introduce and encourage interdisciplinary and collaborative research with the arts in doctoral students' studies. Such collaborative ABR projects, outside of doctoral course work, exist primarily in the repertoire of veteran researchers.

One such veteran researcher is Carl Bagley. In 1998 at the Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association, Bagley and Mary Beth Cancienne found themselves rushing to stage and perform a (re)presentation of an ethnographic data set as part of a session at the conference (Bagley & Cancienne, 2001). The collaborators learned that having enough time to dedicate to data (re)presentation, would better honor the data and the mode used to (re)present that data. Dance, in this case, was as important as the data itself (Bagley & Cancienne, 2001).

After this learning experience, Bagley attempted another collaborative ABR project a few years later. He collaborated with a community-based performance arts group to create an ethnographic-based performance art piece of his (re)presented educational research data (Bagley, 2008). Bagley (2008) described his drive to do collaborative ABR projects as a result of “the potential power of arts-based processes and forms to infuse more organic, holistic elements and perspectives into educational research” (Bagley, 2008, p. 57). In hopes of generating our own embodied methodology, we argue that combining efforts to bring collaborative interdisciplinary ABR into doctoral students' work may foster far greater benefits for both doctoral students and ABR in the long run.

We are presenting an approach that was a novel idea for the members of our graduate school of education. At the time of our collaboration, we were both enrolled in a department of learning and instruction, with Alexia studying early childhood dance education and Charles studying teacher education and pre-service teachers (PST). Our individual research projects and interests in our areas of study, which occurred simultaneously at the time of this project, influenced our collaborative project. Alexia was conducting a pilot study on the implementation of a Mindfully Somatic Pedagogy in a preschool yoga classroom and how that intersected with a child's holistic development. This qualitative case-study had been methodologically designed to include traditional qualitative data collection and analysis; however, she was able to practice bodily writing and conduct a performative inquiry for this project due to her collaboration with Charles. His work took place in teacher education in order to discover the moves teacher candidates make to take culturally relevant and culturally

sustaining stances in their classrooms. Tiffany, as mentioned in the opening vignette, was the sole subject for this study. Tiffany was a participant in Charles' dissertation that was a semester long participant observation of an English Language Arts methods course.

In this article, we describe how we engaged in an ABR project of our own volition in hopes of encouraging more collaboration in doctoral work. By collaborating with Alexia, Charles hoped to gain a better understanding of Tiffany. Alexia hoped to gain practical knowledge on how to conduct ABR doctoral work through this project, as she had yet to fully incorporate it into her traditional methods courses. Our collaborative doctoral research project, presented at our department's annual research symposium, addresses Lester and Gabriel's (2016) call by utilizing dance methods in furthering Charles' dissertation findings, while also incorporating Alexia's extensive background, education, and experience with dance and somatic practices. Additionally, we hoped to answer Vannini's (2012) call for greater accessibility to research and engagement with broader audiences. In the next section we justify our use of dance methods in our ABR project.

Why dance methods in ABR methodology?

In ABR, dance-based research methods are emergent, innovative, and have roots in cultural ways of being (Leavy, 2009). Dance has been suggested as an effective multi-method research design, specifically in serving as both performative inquiry and creating representational forms of communication as part of ABR methodology (Leavy, 2009; Snowber, 2002). Thus, dance-based research methods of bodily writing and performative inquiry through Alexia's exploration in this project served the data and findings of this study. Alexia's intention was to honor Tiffany's voice through the abstract, embodied medium of dance (Leavy, 2009).

Our collaborative ABR exploration sought to broaden the narrow view of qualitative research methodologies our school of education and department held. As discussed previously, while ABR methodologies are not new, they are often not considered or valued in many qualitative research disciplines. At the time of our project, embodiment was considered a promising tool for curriculum and pedagogy, but had not yet entered the consciousness of our department as a research method. We hoped that, by exposing non-arts-based researchers to an embodied array of analytical approaches through dance methods, ABR would begin to be considered in doctoral courses and research in our department or university.

Why collaboration in doctoral work?

Collaborative inquiry is, "the notion of learning from experience through repeated cycles of reflection and action" (Löytönen, 2016, p. 8). We did not conduct all of our work together—we followed a recursive and generative practice, which allowed us to work independently and together. Each time we met we would get deeper and deeper into the process (and in turn the

data). Löytönen's collaborative inquiry model posits that this process creates "cultural attention, responsiveness, and sensitivity" and is often an essential aspect of what is produced through this practice (p. 32). It is vital for fostering practical and functional participation and fundamental to circumventing a "hierarchical and elitist approach to the inquiry enterprise" (p. 32). In line with Löytönen's model, our collaborative process allowed for rhizomatic actions through reflection and our own becomings as arts-based researchers.

Theoretical Framework

In this section we will explain the theoretical framework we created for our ABR project which we call *Rhizomatic Becomings* (Figure 1). This framework includes Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) notions of the rhizome and of becoming, as well as a somatic lens of embodiment in positioning.

Rather than working in a pre-set, linear and hierarchical structure, our process was based more on the heterogeneity and connection of our ideas to our own research and artistic practices that emerged, "constantly producing new shoots and rootlets" (Gregoriou, 2004, p. 240), as seen in Figure 1. We did not base our methodological process on what "would" or "should" look like; rather, we connected Bagley's (2008) model to our knowledge of our department's research culture, Alexia's somatic, dance, and improvisation practices, and Charles' dissertation. According to Deleuze & Guattari (1987), "...rhizomes are anomalous becomings produced by the formation of transversal alliances between different and coexisting terms within an open system" (p. 10). Our collaboration acted in a rhizomatic manner as our anomalous methods were invented as the project proceeded, resulting in experimentations that created newness in our doctoral methodological processes (Kuby, et al., 2016), shown as the roots and sprouts of the rhizome in Figure 1. Our *Rhizomatic Becoming* allowed us to embrace multiple pathways and encouraged newness in the emergence of our unfolding processes (Deleuze, 1995; 2001; Biehl & Locke, 2010; Deleuze, & Guattari, 1987; Kuby, et al., 2016). The use of the terms "became" and "becoming" in the Deleuzoguattarian sense emphasizes the value of our "present-becoming" (Semetsky, 2004), where a sense of welcome indeterminacy permeated the "here and now" of our collaboration.

Our experiences as qualitative educational researchers formed by our doctoral program intersected with transgressive ideas from ABR literature and with Alexia's identity as a dancer. Thus, our collaborative project occurred within an open system we created based on our past experiences and identities and our becoming arts-based researchers. We do not consider our experience with this project nor our identities as arts-based researchers to have had a set beginning nor an ending. Rather, our becoming is "made of rhizomatic lines going in multiple directions" (Semetsky, 2004, p. 230). Our collaborative process was open to the

shape and form of our emergent ideas for how to collaborate, how to conduct the bodily writing, and how to curate a performative inquiry.

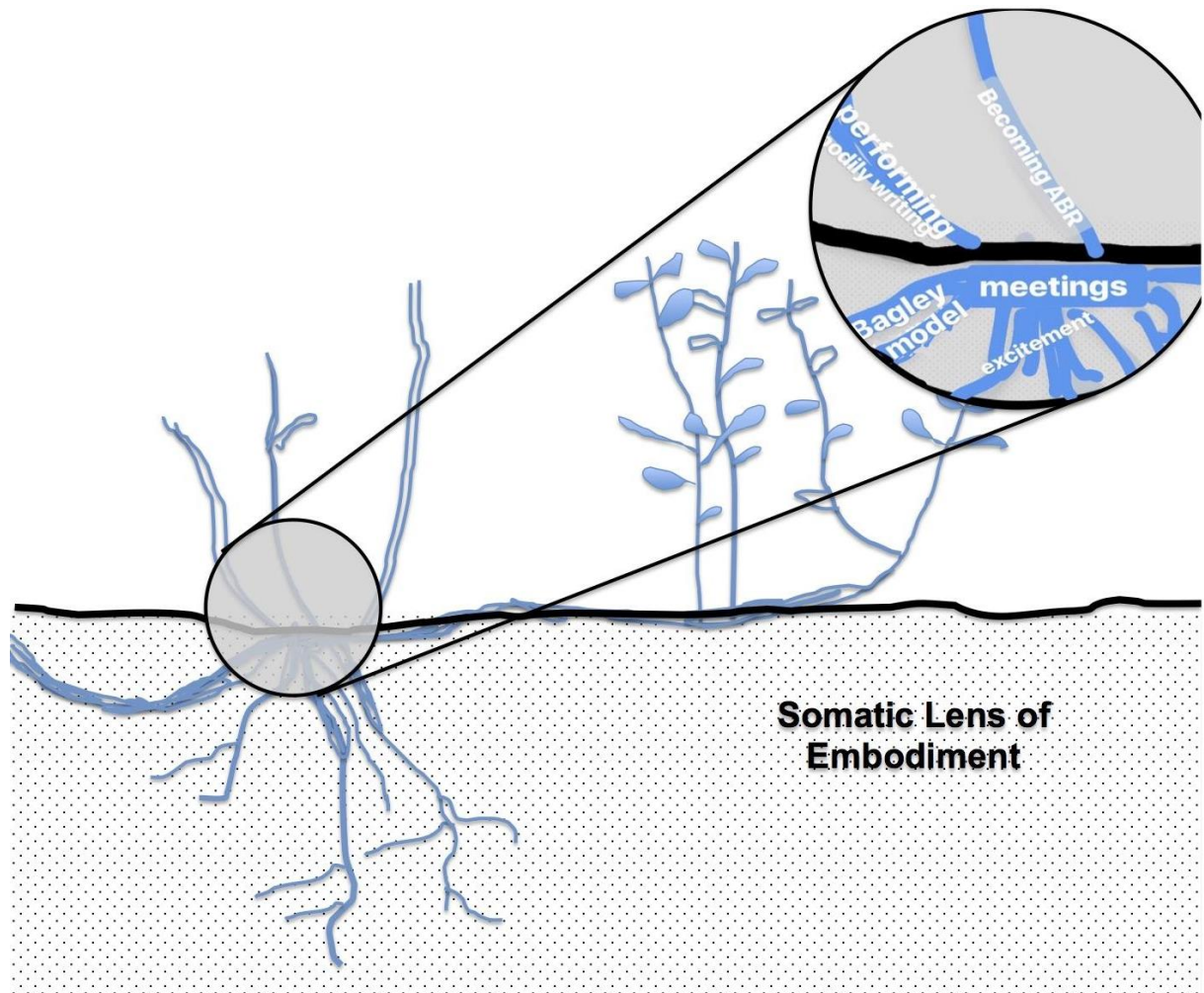


Figure 1. Our Framework of Rhizomatic Becomings

Theories from somatics and embodiment acted as the earth surrounding the rhizome, nourishing our continually emergent ideas and experiences of our unfolding methodology. A somatic lens of embodiment established the lived and central nature of dance and body in our ABR. Somatics, a term coined by Hanna (1986), considers the soma (Greek for ‘living body’) as integral in attuning oneself to inner sensations and external information from the environment. A somatic lens of embodiment considers the lived body (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/1962) and dance to be a communicative language (Bresler, 2004), a site of meaning making and learning (Stinson, 2004), and a way of knowing, perceiving, and being (Burnidge, 2012). Somatics holds immediate relevance for scholarship regarding body-centered endeavors (Foster, 1995), such as our own. Underlying principles of somatic feminist pedagogy, such as empowerment, building community, respecting the diversity of subjective experiences, and challenging tradition (Webb, Allen, & Walker, 2002) rhizomatically surfaced

in our ABR methodology. We hoped to empower ourselves in creating the feeling of “I can be(come) an arts-based researcher” as we were the first in our department to attempt such a non-traditional project. We felt as though a community of doctoral students interested in the arts and/or ABR was growing due to our collaborative project. Through these feelings of empowerment and community, the diverse methodological ideas and experiences that sprouted were able to take root from a place of safe-openness in our emergent becoming.

Embodied resonance with somatic and corporeal information in ABR methodology can allow a researcher to attune to such information with clear focus (Gómez & Bolster, 1988) and restructure meaning and understandings of the research (Foster, 1995). Thus, somatic embodiment within our danced ABR allowed our ardent belief in the validity of body and embodiment in research methodology to be liberated. Grounding our ABR in somatic principles and embodiment allowed Alexia to immerse her embodied self and researcher-self in Tiffany’s experiences to better honor Tiffany’s voice. In doing so, our research was better able to engage an entrant-audience in evocative ways (Lester & Gabriel, 2016), encouraging them to share their insights after viewing the performative inquiry. We use the term entrant-audience to describe those individuals who took part in our performative inquiry because we feel these people were more than just a traditional audience. “Entrant” because these individuals were joining and taking part in something and “audience” because they were also assembled spectators. The hyphen between the two terms represents a relationship; they have a combined meaning. By providing written and verbal feedback and engaging in conversations with us immediately following the session, they became part of our work in progress. The entrant-audience was made up of members of our education community: graduate and undergraduate students, professors, and pre-service teachers. In the following section we will describe the actions we took (individually and together) as well as explain our meetings, which were both successive and re-iterative.

Vignette: Alexia’s Perspective



With a grounding into the floor behind the back with the flat palm came the beginnings of a recursive movement theme.

Fingers of the left hand bound in a protective claw at the belly, elbow engaged in a lift. Eyes...seeing the students in the future...concern about them, concern about the self.

Torso moves forward atop the knees, palms lightly atop thighs, concern atop the learning.

A pause.

Hesitant reaching out, staring out over the hand...the hand that reaches for the students.

This reach does not fully realize extension.

Too quickly does the interrupted hand return protectively to the belly.

Returning to the self...there is an uncertainty.

The hand reaches out again...then returns.

Reach out and return.

Reach out return reach out return reach out return.

The escalating movement theme, punctuated with knowing, with realizations, with small becomings, brings about a long pause in a direct reach, and a soft gaze.



Our Rhizomatic Actions of Becoming

Just after the New Year, the quiet atmosphere in the adjunct professor office was full of doctoral students, including Charles and Alexia, who were persistently participating in a

winter intensive writing retreat. Charles was mid-way through a self-questioning period in relation to analyzing his data, when Alexia jumped out of her seat, enthusiastically waving an article she had been reading. The writing group turned toward her as she began explaining how this article on educational ethnography performance-art by Bagley (2008) epitomized her emerging beliefs about what educational research could be, which was arts-based and collaborative.

Of the most exciting ideas for Alexia was understanding data through bodily knowing, organic and holistic outlooks on educational research, artist-researcher collaborations, and self-reflexive practice (Bagley, 2008). Alexia voiced her newly inspired questions of “As a researcher-dancer, could I engage in this kind of research with my friends and their data?; Would this be a way for me to (a) explore performative research methods and (b) allow my educational colleagues and professors to find meaning from such methods?; Is this a way to bridge the fields of education and dance?” Reading how Bagley had thoroughly described his collaborative experience made ABR seem like a real possibility in Alexia’s mind. Charles was immediately drawn in, and his mind too was spinning with all the possibilities. “We could all collaborate and use the ABR Alexia is telling us about to see our data in a much different way!” Charles’ mindset had shifted from self-questioning to collaborative thinking. One such thought was an idea of creating individual descriptions of each member of his study—or participant portraits—using ABR. He then took some brainstorming notes that he would use to speak with Alexia later.

WEEK ONE: Soon after the writing retreat, Charles asked Alexia if she might be interested in using the ABR method she described at the writing retreat with some of his dissertation data. She eagerly agreed and informal meetings ensued. Figure 2 illustrates the meeting processes. These meetings were, as Spivak (1996) writes, “a process of scattering thoughts, scrambling terms, concepts and practices, forging linkages, becoming a form of action” (p. 126). The successive and re-iterative linkages formed a through line, as seen in Figure 2, of our inspired endeavor. The forms of action reminded us of a whirlwind, with centripetal and centrifugal movements that seemed to merge our interdisciplinary backgrounds and experiences together in the formation of the ABR project.

WEEK TWO THROUGH FIVE: During these informal meetings, we discussed how we could adapt Bagley’s (2008) methods in order to approach Charles’ data in a collaborative innovative fashion, rather than attempting to exactly imitate Bagley. We also discussed Charles’ choice of focal participant, Tiffany. During his data focused on the collection of 12 pre-service teachers, Tiffany stood out from the rest because of the way she positioned herself in the classroom; she was very quiet and kept to herself most of the time, which was quite different from her classmates. Tiffany shared with Charles during an impromptu conversation

before class one day that she struggled with “looking the part” of a teacher because of her small physique. Charles felt Tiffany was the participant he knew the least yet was data-rich, and he wanted to clarify his understanding of her self-positioning and teacherly becoming.

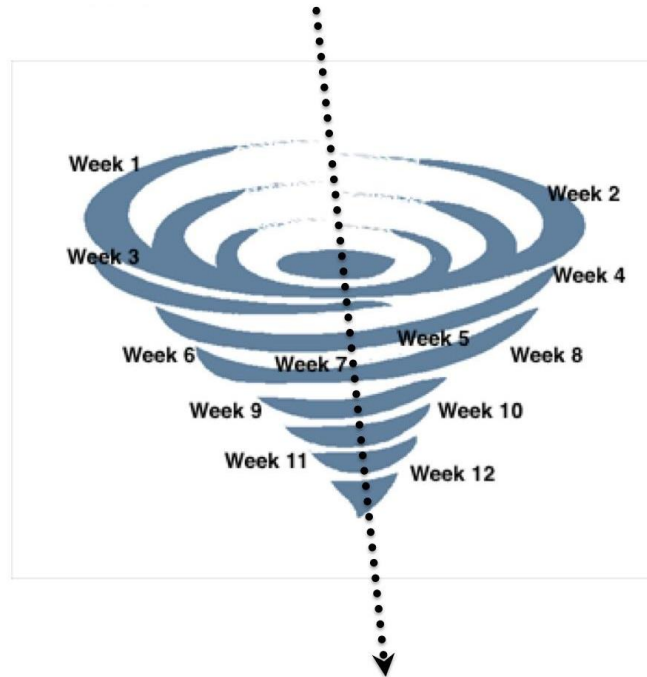


Figure 2. The process of our informal Bagley-inspired meetings.

Charles compiled transcripts of Tiffany’s words—both written and spoken—from his 15 weeks of data collection, and gave them to Alexia. She read through and briefly annotated the transcripts prior to dancing the data. Based off this initial read-through, she created movement vocabulary ideas to explore and include in the bodily writing. These ideas were written in Alexia’s research journal. She found significant statements (Creswell, 2013), which then combined to create movement themes in her ensuing bodily writing (Foster, 1995). For example, the statement “...my biggest fear is having a really great lesson plan and then it just not working” from Week 1 of Tiffany’s transcript was combined with “...they find a text to be irrelevant to their personal lives and therefore perceive the text as meaningless” from Week 5. This combination of significant statements helped create the movement theme: *Tiffany’s fear and anxiety over her own capacity to become a “good teacher”*.

WEEK SIX: Eventually, Alexia began her danced analysis of Tiffany through bodily writing. Bodily writing is a term coined by Foster (1995) to describe how dance can cultivate bodies that initiate, respond to, and playfully probe the development of novel concepts, relationships, and reflections. Foster used a discursive framework for viewing “the body as capable of generating ideas” (Foster, 1995, p. 15) based on her philosophy that the invention of meanings

could be cultivated physically. Foster found this philosophy to hold potential for fostering “a bodily writing” when one composes a dance and participates in rehearsals and performances. It is through such a process that Foster (1995) argues that bodies could partake meaningfully in moved queries through bodily writing.

Alexia customized Foster’s (1995) concept of bodily writing into a term to describe her studio-based research practice of interpreting Tiffany’s data in an embodied, artistic fashion, utilizing her somatic background in dance and choreography. Bodily writing was a four-stage process that took place in a dance studio. The four-stages of bodily writing are: kinesthetic empathy, embodied explorations, embodied reflections, and work-in-progress-showcases (WIPS), which are described below.

Kinesthetic empathy (Shapiro, 1985) included Alexia’s movement empathy with the feelings and themes found in the initial analysis of Tiffany’s data. She made her empathy with Tiffany embodied, and was aware of this empathy through her kinesthetic senses. Improvisation included Alexia playing with the movement themes using spontaneous and remembered movements in her own movement vocabulary. This improvised material would, once played with enough through cycles of being brought back to the original movement theme or data, would become the *stuff* of the performative inquiry, or the *set* choreography of Tiffany’s (re)presentation to be performed at the symposium. Performative inquiry is inclusive of the *set* choreography that (re)presented the findings of Tiffany’s journey (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008; Bagley & Cancienne, 2001) as well as the voice and experience of the entrant-audience in the research (Vannini, 2012). Images 3-6 are an example of how the movement theme *Tiffany’s fear and anxiety over her own capacity to become a “good teacher”* became a piece of the performative inquiry.





Images 3-6. Tiffany's fear and anxiety over her own capacity to become a "good teacher"
Embodied reflections were captured through Alexia's verbal and corporeal reflections on her process thus far, her analysis of Tiffany, and her awareness and consideration of the entrant-audience of this research.

WEEK SEVEN: Each bodily writing session was video and audio recorded and included in-process reflection, both verbal and embodied (Leigh, 2012). The embodied explorations paired with video/audio recorded embodied reflections allowed Alexia to be consciously aware of her understandings of Tiffany's becoming, of her own research experience, and how the dance could potentially "sustain a 'conversation'" (Foster, 1995, p. 15) with the entrant-audience during the ensuing performative inquiry.

During this initial analysis, Charles and Alexia met periodically to discuss questions Alexia had for Charles, and to determine if he could meet any of her research needs. Examples of the content of these meetings included Charles' explanation of what literature Tiffany was writing about in a particular week, or to give context to something in the transcript. Additionally, he provided Alexia with further data, including: transcripts of his one-on-one interview with Tiffany, the mid-semester micro-lesson Tiffany taught, and the unit plan she created as part of an end-of-the-year assignment.

WEEK EIGHT: Alexia provided Charles with initial dance methods and movement ideas. She would spend time describing the points of analysis that were exciting to her without giving too much away; she was still in the middle of analysis and did not want to speak about the findings she was discovering. Neither wanted Charles to see or hear too much about the analysis until it was complete so as to not ruin the newness of the danced data.

Around this time, our proposal to perform and present this ABR project at the Graduate School of Education's annual symposium was accepted. While Charles began composing the Work in Progress Showcase (WIPS) talking points, Alexia continued her bodily writing as well as her becoming as an arts-based researcher (Deleuze, 1995; 2001).

In her becoming (Deleuze, 1995; 2001), Alexia realized that, although the initial written coding she had engaged in seemingly placed her in the position of 'guiding authority', bodily writing transformed her role from leader to immersed participant. Dancing Tiffany's voice and experiences allowed the written data to become re-embodied in order to curate the ensuing performative inquiry.

WEEK NINE and TEN: Charles and Alexia's informal meetings continued throughout the springtime. They discussed Charles' progress on the WIPS talking points, which was

beginning to coalesce into a performance script, and Alexia shared her news of a change in rehearsal space: initially she had been conducting her embodied analysis in the open space of her kitchen. Fortunately, she had connected with faculty in the university's Department of Theatre and Dance and had procured the use of dance studio space.

It was in the dance studio where Alexia's role as researcher became clearer. An entry in her research journal during this time said, "I am showing [Tiffany's] shift, her journey, without hypothesizing why. That's for Charles and the entrant-audience to do, with the information [both verbal and embodied] they will receive." This reflective statement signifies how Alexia found that in order to embody Tiffany's becoming in a way that was true and unimposing, her role had to be one of understanding rather than one of inferring and judging. Alexia's experience as a dancer was shifting in an unexpected way.

The embodied kinesthetic empathy Alexia experienced through the dance allowed her to feel as though she *were* Tiffany. However, due to her researcher role that was shifting and becoming during this ABR process, Alexia decided she must shift her mindset from *being* Tiffany to *dancing* her understanding of Tiffany's becoming. She felt as though being Tiffany in the bodily writing would marginalize Tiffany's actual voice, given that Alexia's understanding of her was based on a few weeks of her pre-service teacher journey. A reflective statement from her journal states,

I am not going to do that, for that's, I'm discovering, not my qualitative ABR researcher approach. ...as a researcher I don't actually want to become the research. For both personal [reasons], [the] research approach, and moral reasons. I am not my participants...I am doing my best, and my most moral and ethical best to honor and respect their voice to be heard. This/which is so different than my 'normal' artistic 'only' choreographic and performative process.

It was important to note (and eventually share with Charles) how Alexia had discovered a different role when conducting embodied analyses as compared to her usual experience when choreographing or performing an artistic dance. It was a wonderful surprise for Alexia to find that ethics and morals came about as a natural part of her embodied analysis process.

WEEK ELEVEN: Slowly, Alexia began finalizing the bodily writing into sections based on emergent movement themes found within each week of the transcripts of Tiffany's classroom responses and lesson plans. Alexia would relay her progress to Charles so he could add more detail to the 'methods' section of the performance script. Towards the end of the bodily writing, we learned that Tiffany herself would be a member of the entrant-audience at the symposium. Alexia felt elated and realized this could add potential validity to the (re)presentation of her data. Shortly after this news, Alexia finalized and rehearsed the

performative inquiry to be showcased as the (re)presentation of Tiffany's data at the symposium. These rehearsals were also video and audio recorded.

WEEK TWELVE: Finally, the day of the symposium arrived. On April 21st, Charles and Alexia performed and presented their WIPS of the performative inquiry, making sure to audio and video record it in its entirety. As per Bagley's (2008) guidance, Charles and Alexia made it known to their entrant-audience prior to the performance that there would be extended time for a discussion led by the entrant-audience post-performative inquiry. The entrant-audience was given paper and writing utensils as they entered the room. Charles and Alexia briefly described their ABR process and rationale and then began the performative inquiry of Tiffany's data (re)presentation. The entrant-audience watched and "read" the choreography of the staged (re)presentation of the findings as Alexia danced (Lester & Gabriel, 2016). At the end of the performance, the entrant-audience was given five minutes to process and reflect, both in their heads and on the paper, on what they had experienced. This led to a discussion about ABR and this ABR project, which, along with their written feedback, now has the potential to be the next data source for further analysis and understanding of Tiffany and her journey of becoming.

Our Rhizomatic Becomings

As educational researchers, engaging in ABR profoundly influenced our orientation towards this methodology in our doctoral work and beyond (Lester & Gabriel, 2016). What accumulated over one month of exploratory rehearsals was condensed into one seven and a half minute performative inquiry. Alexia experienced an entrant-audience around her that included Tiffany herself. While performing dance was not a novel experience for Alexia, having practical experience with ABR allowed her to be more confident in herself as a burgeoning qualitative arts-based educational researcher. Such self-assurance allowed her to feel grounded in the validity and the scholarliness of her future ABR dissertation. Her conversation with Tiffany after the performance about the research was invaluable. Tiffany shared insights about herself that Alexia had already come to understand during the ABR process, which gave much credibility to this work. Tiffany told Alexia that although dancing in front of people is something she would have *never* done, this was the truest representation of her experience in this way. This statement, originating from the participant herself, acted as validation for Alexia and Charles as arts-based researchers and for the use of ABR in educational research.

Before Alexia's performance, Charles anticipated seeing Tiffany's trajectory of change—how her teacher self was shaped through the semester—but he really had no idea how Alexia would transform before his eyes. For Charles, it was as if Alexia actually was Tiffany. He could see her transition so clearly from teacher education candidate to pre-service teacher.

Tiffany's act of becoming was portrayed perfectly through Alexia's movements. As the performance completed, Charles wished he had such a data-rich display for each of his participants. He now knew Tiffany more fully and could write about her in a more accurate way. Each viewing of the performative inquiry gave him another layer of something he hadn't caught in the previous viewing, as if he were peeling back layers in order to reveal more and more about his participant.

Reception of our Rhizomatic Becomings

The questions the entrant-audience asked after the performance were both personal and meta-level, regarding their own research and research methodology. For instance, one entrant-audience member responded, "As a process, I think that what I just watched valued the narrative of Tiffany's journey, much more than traditional data analysis does...you could really *feel* all of these little points that usually go unnoticed." The insights the entrant-audience shared through the written feedback demonstrated they saw the choreography as a legitimate art form, as well as a representation of Charles' research findings. This conversation among researchers and entrant-audience also included methodological questions such as: "Does this type of research (ABR) *require* collaboration?; What would have happened had Charles danced the data?, and What role do aesthetics play?" Issues of subjectivity within dance were voiced in the initial feedback, ending with one entrant-audience member stating,

Throughout watching, I struggled epistemologically... How do we know that you're not just making it up? ...And then I went back to, well, how do we know that *we're* not just making it up because we're using 'text?' It actually made me question how rigid the traditional methods are.

Because of the dialogic nature of this conversation, entrant-audience members bounced ideas off each other's notions, either adding to or stating a different experience with the data. It was evident that our dance methods allowed us to create new meanings by being in dialogue with the entrant-audience.

Conclusion

The collaborative inquiry we engaged in followed a recursive and generative practice, which is why it is represented by the *hurricane* visual (Figure 2). In our project, the fact that one of us didn't *feel* like an arts-based researcher benefited our process. Charles related to Löytönen's statement when she wrote that her "participation was not about sharing experiences but more about listening, discussing, commenting on, and questioning different phenomena related to dance" (Löytönen, 2016, p. 16). Charles was learning as much about Tiffany as he was about himself through working with Alexia. The collaborative process

allowed Charles to develop as a researcher, as a scholar, and as a human being over the course of this inquiry. Additionally through this collaborative practice, Alexia's arts-based ideas for her own doctoral work were heard, encouraged, and supported by Charles. This recursively discursive collaboration acted as a springboard for embodiment and dance become visible to the methodological eyes of our department.

At the time of our project, embodiment was considered a promising tool for curriculum and pedagogy, yet these topics had not entered the consciousness of our department as a research methodology. When we first met to discuss this project, our department was innovative in many areas of educational research such as multimodality (Miller & McVee, 2012), New Literacies (McVee, Bailey, & Shanahan, 2008), and composing with digital video (Bruce, 2010), but none of this was engaged with embodiment or ABR as methodologies. Arts integration was welcomed into classroom practices, but when it was suggested as a methodology for educational research, roadblocks were constructed. However, the more we engaged with faculty members and our classmates about it, the more our department began to stretch and change. We hoped that, by exposing non-arts-based researchers to an embodied array of analytical approaches, ABR would be considered for doctoral work in our department. Happily, the former chair of our department is now a committee member for Alexia's ABR dissertation endeavor. We do not believe this would have been possible a year or two ago. In addition, a cross-disciplinary embodiment research group emerged on campus allowing doctoral students to connect with faculty to consider ABR work.

Accessibility to ABR methodology to researchers outside the arts community is a must. Our department of education is becoming more innovative and oftentimes integrates collaboration within its scholarship. The faculty and students are beginning to incorporate transgressive methodologies as well. We hope more graduate programs continue to integrate and involve ABR characteristics into their curricula as partnerships with individuals from diverse backgrounds allow for research to be accessible to wider audiences. Davidson (2004) claims, "the embodied nature of knowing indicates...the permeability of the boundaries that we imagine between self and other" (p. 198). Our ABR project, grounded in theories of rhizomatics and somatic embodiment opened up our research experiences to a broader entrant-audience, who then become part of the research conversation, blurring boundaries between 'researcher', 'participant', and 'reader/audience'.

Just as we took Bagley's research (2008) and manipulated it to fit our study, so too can future students and researchers take our methodology and use it in new ways. Our methodology, created rhizomatically across time, is not a carved-in-stone idea. "The rhizome is perpetually in construction or collapsing, a process that is perpetually prolonging itself, breaking off and starting up again" (Gregoriou, 2004, p. 244). Our collaborative ABR project continues to

become in a rhizomatic manner. What will the next root and shoot be? Will Charles dance his data? Will our collaboration end with this project as we continue our individual research endeavors, only to come back together again? While bodily writing emerged and worked for our collaborative project, other arts-based techniques or processes may work better for other performative inquiry studies. The opportunities are as infinite as there are mediums of art.

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Alexia Buono teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in early childhood education, arts education, and psychology at the University at Buffalo. Her research focuses on the interactions between pedagogy, young children's embodied experiences, somatics, and mindfulness. She utilizes somatic dance practices and Laban Movement Analysis in her phenomenological and dance-based methodologies. Alexia performs and choreographs dance projects in Buffalo, NY with companies such as Anne Burnidge Dance and Torn Space Theatre.

Charles H Gonzalez has worked with diverse populations of public school students, out-of-school youth, and teacher candidates for over a decade. He currently serves as adjunct faculty at the University at Buffalo and Niagara University teaching writing, pedagogy, and other educational courses. His research focuses on discovering ways to support pre-service teachers in being or becoming culturally relevant and as they develop new culturally sustaining pedagogies. For the past year Charles has been one of the co-chairs of the Conference on English Education's Commission on Social Justice in English Education and has been a member of that organization since 2014.

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