

**A Self Study of Changing Art Education Pedagogy in Mid-Career: Possibilities,  
Impediments and Insights**

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## **Abstract**

### **A Self Study of Changing Art Education Pedagogy in Mid-Career: Possibilities, Impediments and Insights**

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When art teachers are asked to adopt a different teaching pedagogy, often little thought is given to the impact that those changes have on the lives of those teachers. This thesis answers the question: What are the possibilities and impediments of an experienced art teacher choosing to change art education pedagogy in mid-career? The author, a mid-career art educator investigates the experience of making a fundamental change to her teaching pedagogy. Drawing from the literature of holistic art education, pre-service elementary generalists in art methods courses, self-study methodology and grounded theory methods of analysis, this thesis documents the author's transition between teaching styles.

Having successfully taught in a teacher-centered/authoritarian style for nearly 15 years, she rewrote her pedagogy based on the literature of holistic art education, emphasizing a more student-centered teaching method. She then attempted to apply this new pedagogy while teaching an art methods course for pre-service elementary generalist teachers. The structure of this study is based on weekly, audio-recorded self-interviews she conducted after each class. These audio-recordings were used to track her emotional and cognitive responses as she worked toward integrating her new teaching pedagogy into practice.

This study uncovers the feelings of vulnerability, stress and mental and physical fatigue the author experienced as a result from making these changes. Yet opportunities for growth are revealed as well. She gained new insights into the experiences of her students, a better understanding of how to navigate change in the classroom and a renewed sense of purpose to her teaching practice.

Drawing from these findings, the author presents a model for self-directed, holistic change to art education pedagogy that can help art teachers embrace and navigate change in their own classrooms.

This dissertation concludes with suggestions for future research in the following areas: the lives of mid-to-late career art educators whose voices are absent from the literature of art education; the notion of vulnerability in the lives of pre-service and early-career art teachers; and a longitudinal study on the long-term impact of holistic/student-centered art education pedagogy and elementary generalist teachers.

This thesis is dedicated with love, gratitude, friendship, and respect to

Sally Altenburg,  
retired elementary art teacher and my co-operating teacher during student teaching.

and

Georgette Griffith,  
retired high school art teacher and my former high school art teacher.

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## PROLOGUE

The stirrings of this thesis began six years ago. I was teaching art in a small K-8 school in the Midwestern United States. One afternoon I had a particularly moving experience during a sixth grade painting lesson. I have often told the story of that painting class and framed it as the pivotal moment that turned me towards doctoral work. I described the events of that class like this:

*It was a beautiful day in late winter and the sky was blue with the promise of springtime and warmth and change. My art room had an entire wall of windows that provided enough natural light to work comfortably without using the overhead florescent lightings. And it was on this beautiful day that I was teaching a painting lesson based on the work of Caspar Friedrich to my sixth grade. The lesson began in the usual way: I showed the students a PowerPoint presentation of Friedrich's art, I presented the major characteristics of Friedrich's work and aspects of German Romanticism, and then we began studio work.*

*But on a whim, instead of presenting the students with how to plan their paintings and giving them the list of criteria for their grade; I sat down and showed them how to play in paint. We talked about the 'doing' and the 'making'. I shared with them my own experiences of learning to paint, how much I enjoyed it, how it frustrated me, how it relaxed me, how it amazed me. I asked them what they thought they would like to know in order to start painting. I gave them the option of several different shades of heavy gray paper; plastic plates to use as*

*palettes, as opposed to the styro-foam egg cartons we generally used. I asked them to experiment with the paint a little while to see if any questions came up that we had not addressed. Then I got out of the way.*

*I remember exactly where I was in the room when it happened – near the front, off to the side by the sink. There was a glint off of a passing car that shot across the ceiling. And my students, my sweet sixth graders, transformed that day. I do not know how it happened, but they were not with me. They were hushed. They spoke of their work with reverence and with care and with awe. They layered paint, scraped it away, turned their paper at odd angles to get a closer look at what they were doing. Their posture changed, they held themselves taller, more relaxed more in their own space. The quality of their work compared to previous work was incredible but how they related to the work, how they viewed themselves as artists was the most potent and poignant shift.*

It was a powerful moment, the memory of which remains vivid. I am able to recall details such as the light in the room, where I was standing and how my students looked as they were making art. Through many retellings, I emphasized the notion that my students had a transformational experience. Yet now I believe I misunderstood the premise of this story. What I missed in the retelling of this story was that something was transforming inside of me of me. It is a story of me. Palmer (1998a) might say that I overlooked the big story because I was distracted by my many little stories. I can not confirm that my students had transformational experience that day; but I did. I believe what I experienced that day was the beginning of a shift in my perceptions about art

education and teaching art. While at the time I had no theoretical background to understand what was happening to my teaching, I felt something was changing. I knew that that day of teaching felt rewarding, connected, joyous and exhilarating. I knew I wanted to have more transformational moments like that while teaching art.

This thesis documents my exploration of changing my pedagogy in order to achieve that goal. But of equal importance are the unexpected changes that happened to my perceptions of teaching art and my vision of my place in the field of art education while collecting data and writing my thesis.

## INTRODUCTION

Being an art teacher was not my first love. As a child I painted and drew with great enthusiasm and was encouraged to do so by my parents. However, I believe they viewed my art making as strictly a hobby. For most of my childhood and early-adolescence I was interested in veterinary medicine and was the neighborhood pet-sitter, groomer and dog-walker. I began taking art classes in high school and it was those classes and my art teacher that inspired me to pursue art as a career. Though that decision nudged me on the trajectory to where I am now, it did not make my parents very happy. Bewildered and a bit worried, they did not see art as a viable career option, so they issued a mandate: If I wanted to study art I would also study education so that I would be employable. And so it was that I became an art teacher.

I began my education at Glenville State College, a small college in central West Virginia. Mid-way through my program my family moved to Ohio. I transferred to Ohio University where I earned a Bachelor of Science in Art Education with a studio emphasis in painting, drawing and printmaking. With the exception of the printmaking classes, my experiences in the fine arts studio were often quite discouraging. As an art education student my abilities and integrity as an artist were under constant scrutiny by my classmates and my professors. Art education students were perceived by our fine arts counterparts as being less serious about art practice because we were choosing to work as teachers rather than as artists. My professors generally dismissed my work as trite or

simply ignored it. However, on one occasion a painting professor took a brush full of cadmium red oil paint and painted over the background of a still life I had been working on because he felt it needed more color. I stood mortified by my easel. Had he chosen to speak with me about my use of color or asked my permission to paint on my work, the incident might not still linger in my mind as an ambush. My experiences in the painting and drawing classes eroded my artistic spirit and left me wary of working in the studio. The kindness and relative support I felt in my printmaking courses did little to soften the message that I had internalized, that art education students were not welcome in the fine arts. It was several years after graduating before I was able to paint with any sort of pleasure. Much later in my life, when I entered graduate school at Purdue University, I was required to choose a minor in either art history or a studio concentration. I opted for art history. I did not want to take the chance on having another painful experience as an art education student in a studio course.

These early studio experiences are important to note for the manner in which they informed several crucial areas of my life as an art educator. First, I became oriented towards teachers as a supportive peer group and developed a strong feeling of camaraderie with general education teachers. While I might have had to endure whispered judgments or jibes from the fine arts students and faculty, I felt accepted and respected by the education students and faculty. This is not to imply that there were no areas of tension navigating my position as an art teacher in elementary and middle-school culture. There was tension, but the way I found to ease it was to frame art education in a way that could more easily fit into the lexicon of generalist teachers: Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE). When I began my teaching career in the early 1990s, DBAE was



the major art education curriculum movement (Brandt, 1988; Efland, 1990; Eisner, 1987). DBAE imbued art education curriculum with rigor and continuity that emphasized the “systematic, sequential teaching” (Brandt, p. 7) of art production, art history, art criticism and aesthetics. Art was perceived as having a set of skills beyond making art, students needed to learn the vocabulary of art, and to think about, analyze and respond to works of art. The content of DBAE was measurable and easily assessed (Brandt, 1988; Eisner, 1987) and it helped me move my art classes to the academic fore with other subjects such as math and science.

And lastly, my early experiences in the studio informed how I feel about myself as an artist. I feel I do not have an art practice, per say. I make art sporadically, with long dry-spells in between flurries of painting or drawing. However, I have cultivated other creative practices that are powerful, satisfying, artistic expressions of my self. Gardening is my major source of creative joy. I plan my gardens not only with a thought to color, texture and proportion but also the meaning and symbolism associated with the plants; creating swaths of metaphor in the dirt. In the winters I sew, by machine and by hand. There is a sense of self-sufficiency in sewing that I enjoy; the forming of a piece of cloth into something else. When asked directly about having an art practice I will note that I work in watercolors and occasionally acrylics, but I do not volunteer that information. I do not self-identify as an artist. The claiming, or reclaiming, of an art practice is part of my future research and is discussed at the end of this thesis.

I chose to pursue a Ph.D. after working for 15 years as an art teacher in school and community programs; thus the experience I brought to my doctoral work was oriented towards teaching practice and the pragmatic issues of teaching art. As noted

above, my teaching was anchored in the methods of DBAE, which I perceived as a decidedly teacher-centered, transmission style pedagogy. Throughout my career I did not stray very far from this basic pedagogical structure.

While pursuing my Master's degree and earlier in my Doctoral work I was given the opportunity to teach several sections of an art education methods course for pre-service generalist teachers. I devised studio activities for these classes that were accessible, non-threatening, and utilized materials commonly found in an elementary classroom. I believed that if the art projects were straightforward and not too complicated or requiring highly developed artistic skills in drawing or painting, it would increase the chances of pre-service elementary teachers using these lessons once they entered the classroom. My lessons were strongly anchored in the elements of art and principles of design. Judging by my previous teaching evaluations, this approach was successful. The artwork the students produced was neat, carefully made, and attractive to look at. However, I have to admit that these studio projects bore no connection to the lives of my students or their future students.

As my career evolved, my beliefs about teaching art began to change. I became interested and active in community, environmental and spiritual issues. I wanted my life and my teaching to consist of more than the correct way to mix colors or memorizing the dates of famous paintings. The style in which I was teaching felt hollow. My work had lost heart and I was just going through the motions of being an art teacher. I wanted my teaching to reflect my search for meaning, joy, and a sense of understanding and connectedness in my life. This is what Palmer (1998a) calls an "undivided life" (p. 167), bringing personal identity and teacher identity into alignment. I began to contemplate my

place in the grander scheme of my classroom, my community and the field of art education. Holistic education piqued my interest as it purported to offer a way of teaching anchored in the recognition and inclusion of awe, joy, and a sense of connection and the mindful reflection on what is most meaningful for teachers and students. (Caranfa, 2006, 2007; London, 2006; Miller, J., 1990, 2011; Miller, R., 1990; Palmer, 1998).

The question at the core of my research, “What are the possibilities and impediments for an experienced art teacher to change pedagogies in mid-career?” evolved from the contemplation of these personal and professional changes. Because of the basic idea of changing from one thing to another, there may be a tendency to interpret my research as a condemnation of my previous teaching style. It is not. I want to be very clear that I am not condemning DBAE or any other art education curriculum model. My research is simply about changing my pedagogy, and my teacher centered approach to DBAE was the starting point for this transition.

This thesis is organized in three large sections. The literature review of holistic education and pre-service elementary generalist teachers and the methods chapter serve as the first movement. These chapters provide the preparation for entering into the second movement, the description of and reflection on the project. The description chapter provides a sense of momentum that directs the final movement, the analysis and discussion, and future work.

Chapter 1 is a discussion of the major themes of Holistic Education both in art education and general education practice. Holistic Education served as my reference for student-centered pedagogy. The chapter includes a discussion of what drew me to

Holistic Education and the major writers and ideas in the movement. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how the major ideas of Holistic Education informed how I developed my own student-centered pedagogy. Drawing from the work of writers including: Brown, 1998; Campbell, 2011, 2012; Caranfa, 2006, 2007; Greene, 1995; Halford, 1998; London, 2007; Palmer, 1998a, 1998b; Miller, J., 2006; Miller, R., 1990; and Zurmuhlen, 1990, I developed a student-centered pedagogical model infused with themes from Holistic Education. My model and its four pillars, Balance, Embracing, Making Space and Engaging, are presented and discussed at the end of the chapter along with examples of how the studio activities were rewritten to reflect my new pedagogy.

In the second chapter I present a review of the literature on pre-service elementary generalists and their experiences in art education methods courses. As my research took place while I was teaching an art methods course for pre-service elementary generalists, it is important to include an overview of the experiences and findings of other researchers who have worked with this population. The nervousness and fear that pre-service elementary generalists feel when they take an art education method course has long been a subject for discussion and sometimes consternation in art education (Jeffers, 1993; Kowalchuk, and Stone, 2000; Lackey, Manifold, and Zimmerman, 2007; Miraglia, 2008; Mittler, 1974; Smith-Shank, 1992; Stokrocki, 1995). In general, this particular student population is reluctant to take an art class. They are afraid of making art because they do not want to be graded or judged based on what they perceive as their lack of artistic skill. Some put their art methods course off to the very end of their professional program. It is important to note that an art methods course may be the only art class these students have had since their own elementary school experience (Jeffers, 1993; Kowalchuk, and Stone,

2000; Lackey, Manifold, and Zimmerman, 2007; Miraglia, 2008; Mittler, 1974; Smith-Shank, 1992; Stokrocki, 1995). This chapter will describe the experiences of these authors and the ways they found best to teach pre-service generalists in art education methods courses.

In chapters three and four I present my research method and procedure for culling data during research. I chose Self Study (Pinnegar and Hamilton, 2009) as a research method because it emphasized the importance of teachers as researchers while they were immersed in the classroom environment. I determined this approach was best suited to map my journey through the process of changing pedagogies because I wanted to understand how I was changing within the context of the classroom while immersed in teaching.

What gave cohesion and a framework to my research were weekly self-interviews that I conducted immediately after each class. The self interview structure evolved from a photo-voice method used by Wang et al. (1998) and Wallerstein (1987). This method begins with making as clear and objective an observation as possible. I simply recorded what I recalled happening in the class. This was aided by my lessons plans which outlined the sequence of the class session. I then investigated the underlying motivations of what I observed. Proceeding from those motivations, I began to make assumptions about and interpretations of these observations. That is how I proceeded with the self-interview. Each self-interview interrogated my cognitive responses to the research, my emotional responses, what parts of my pedagogy were changing easily, where did I encounter resistance and what was I learning about that change through the process.

Over the course of the semester I tracked the evolution and changes in my responses. The self-interview was my primary data source.

A second source of data came from interviews I conducted with student volunteers after the course had ended. The participant interviews were intended to provide a counterbalance to the information in the self-interviews and offered insight into what was happening in the classroom beyond what I perceived as the teacher. These interviews were comprised of two parts: a semi-structured open-ended interview followed by an art elicitation interview (Weber, 2008) relying on the completed portfolio of student work. As another source of student feedback, I reviewed my instructor evaluations from the semester during which I conducted research and the semester immediately preceding and the semester immediately following the research.

I used Grounded Theory Methods (GTM) in the treatment of data. Authors such as Birks and Mills, (2011), Bryant and Charmaz (2007), and Stern and Porr (2011) note that GTM is most commonly used when there is no specific theory that is being tested during research, rather a set of theories emerge during the analysis of the data. More specifically, an agreed upon point in conducting GTM is that the researcher should not embrace a hard and fast set of preconceived notions before going into the research. Through rigorous and repeated mining of the data, core assumptions and theories are discovered.

Since Bryant and Charmaz (2007) maintain it is crucial for the researcher to keep an ongoing engagement with the data as theoretical analyses emerge, GTM dovetailed nicely with self-study. I was not testing a theory; rather I was trying to identify certain theoretical underpinnings of an experience. Through the use of grounded theory method

I had the flexibility to identify and analyze experiences that I had not anticipated would occur.

Because of this open-handedness when beginning the research, grounded theory researchers such as Dey (2007), Lempert (2007), and Stern and Poor (2011) suggest the use of a preliminary literature review to set up the study. They also recommend conducting an evolving literature review to establish how well the emergent theory is grounded empirically as well as conceptually within the established literature of the field. The evolving literature of my study developed as the major themes of the research emerged. As the large coarse-grained categories came to light, I would work back into the literature of a particular theme. Doing this allowed me to identify where my findings were mirrored within the literature or if more sifting needed to be done. As an example, vulnerability emerged as a major theme of the work. What I found about vulnerability aligned with literature from Kelchtermans (2005) about teacher vulnerability, such as feeling anxious and incompetent in response to incorporating a new pedagogical framework into my teaching. And sometimes I would find contradicting points of view in the evolving literature. I would then return to my data and determine if my findings lined up with one perspective or another, or possibly neither. This is what happened when sifting through the data on emotional identity; Kelchtermans' (2005) assertions are in opposition to those of J. Miller (2006) and Palmer (1998a) as I will elaborate below (p.185).

The method of GTM analysis I use for this data is described by Butler-Kisber (2010) as an “accordion” because it involves pulling data apart into large thematic categories and then pushing it back together again through making more specific

connections. This process involves carefully listening to and reading the interviews many times. The goal of this repeated looping of the data is to first and foremost become intimately familiar with the material. I created large categories based on what Maxwell and Miller (2008) refer to as the similarities in data, meaning these categories are based on “resemblances or common features” (p. 462). These are surface descriptions of the data and are part of the expanding accordion of Butler-Kisber (2010). During fine-grained analysis data is pulled together through the use of contextual relationships or what Maxwell and Miller (2008) call “relationships of contiguity”. For instance, should an experience elicit both a feeling of fear and a feeling of freedom, those two emotions are linked contextually in one experience, even though fear and freedom may not share similar descriptive qualities. The analysis of these contextual relationships illuminated the rich and complex nature of how I experienced the process of change in my teaching pedagogy.

Chapter Five presents a week-by-week description of the research project and a reflection on what happened during the semester. I highlight not only what happened from a curriculum and instruction standpoint but also some of the salient socio-cultural events that surrounded my research experience. The chapter functions as a lynch-pin for the thesis as it draws from the preliminary literature review and is reflected in the evolving literature review that is found in the analysis section.

Chapter Six brings the voices of some of my former students into the conversation. Four of my former students chose to participate in interviews to provide feedback about the course. These interviews serve as a counter balance to my perceptions of experience in the class. In addition the responses of the former students reinforce the



experience of other researchers who have worked with pre-service elementary generalists in art education methods courses.

The Analysis chapter, Chapter 7 is a discussion of my findings from this research project. The broad structure of this chapter is taken from the self interview questions and as such is broken into two broad categories: emotional responses to changing pedagogy and cognitive responses to changing pedagogy. I revisit my initial research question and through a reflection on impediments and possibilities arrive at the emergent themes of these two broad categories. These broad categories are then viewed through a fine grained analysis that illuminates the deeper, contextual connections within the experience of changing my pedagogy.

Chapter 8 is a discussion of how my work contributes to the field of art education. I pull the strands of my new understanding of changing pedagogy, student-centered teaching in art education, holistic education and the challenge of change itself into a model that I propose will help art educators better manage changes in art education pedagogy. My model for holistic, self-directed change in art education pedagogy offers a strategy for art teachers to take ownership of the process of pedagogical change in their teaching practice. Further, it offers a map for initiating change in teaching practice if they so choose. What has emerged from my research and subsequently informed the development of this model is that change in pedagogy must be taken deliberately and with careful planning to ensure the art teacher has adequate time and space to make the change.

My model is based on the four pillars of the pedagogy I developed for my research study: Balance, Embracing, Making Space and Engaging. It also informed by

aspects of a discussion I had with my students – who were themselves going through a shift in pedagogy while taking my art education methods course - about my desire to provide an opportunity for them to learn about art education in a way that is meaningful, applicable and sustainable. My model is also a response to discussions by researchers such as Day and Gu (2009), Fullan (2007), Guskey (2002), Kaniuka (2012), and Richardson (1998) who discuss how and why teachers change and the challenge of maintaining change over an extended period of time.

## CHAPTER 1: HOLISTIC EDUCATION

This chapter provides a foundation for how my research became anchored in Holistic Education. This educational model served as my reference for understanding student-centered pedagogy and how it is applied to teaching practice.

Drawing from the literature of Holism I created my own student-centered pedagogy. My initial understanding of student-centered pedagogy came from authors writing about whole-child education or holistic education. Millbrandt and Millbrandt (2011) and J. Miller (2010) articulate whole child learning as part of enhancing the creative experience in art education. They note that providing students with experiences that engage "...a variety of modalities [and] learning styles" (p. 11) deepens a student's connection to the process of art making. Campbell (2012) discusses student-centered pedagogy as a model wherein knowledge is "...constructed by the student through the process of making connections" (p. 78). Freyermuth (2012) and J. Castro (2012) discuss student-centered pedagogy as a means of increasing student agency and empowerment in the learning process. Palmer (1998a, 1998b) proposes a model that, while inviting the students to be active in the process of creating knowledge, does so through grappling with meaningful and relevant questions.

At the end of this chapter I discuss the pillars of the pedagogical model that I created and how they informed my curriculum. I have also included a brief discussion of

some of the studio activities that I created to reflect a student-centered approach to teaching art education methods.

My interest in Holistic Education began before this project was conceived. I came to the literature of Holism through my interest in ideas concerning spirituality in art education. I was drawn to the literature of spirituality in my attempt to address the longing for meaning that I felt in my teaching and in my life. Holistic Education afforded me a chance to include notions of spirituality in my work while still operating within the bounds of an established pedagogical practice with a body of literature upon which to build my study. In addition, Holistic Education does not evoke quite the same challenges that accompany spirituality as a research topic. It is not conflated with religion, it does not evoke concerns about the separation of church and state, and its use sits more easily within the constraints of research ethics. Yet Holism does embrace the whole of the human condition, complete with spiritual unknowns and a longing for meaning. Millbrandt and Millbrandt (2011) articulate this longing as pathway to greater creativity for students in art education.

London (2007) describes the longing for the spiritual unknown as grappling with “matters of ultimate concern” (p. 1478) and responding to aspects of our human existence that are best explored spiritually and affectively through the arts. Palmer (1998b) frames his discussion of a longing for the spiritual as the need to embed within education deep and meaningful questions that are pertinent to the lives of students and teachers. Ron Miller (1990) posits that holistic education can provide experiences and understanding

that will help students integrate their emotional, cognitive, and spiritual selves and thus live more integrated lives.

### **Themes in Contemporary Holistic Education and Art Education**

In what follows, I present a literature review of holistic education centered on the main themes of holism in theory and practice. From this literature I have culled the themes discussed most often by the authors: connection, spirituality, empathy and compassion. It is important to note that though I have chosen to present holistic education separated into thematic categories for the sake of discussion, the themes do not necessarily exist in isolation from one another.

#### **Connection**

The notion of connection is the first theme of holistic pedagogy I will discuss. Connection is addressed as connection with the self, others, the environment, and the notion of the universal consciousness.

Ron Miller (1990) discusses holistic education in terms of complete integration of the human experience. He contends that the facets of a student's being can not be compartmentalized into meaningless sub-categories. Rather the act of education should work towards connecting all the ways that the student knows about the world.

Campbell (2011, 2012) discusses connection in terms of connecting to meaning, creativity, the self, and others. She situates holism within the greater scope of student-

centered teaching contingent on the activity of students making their own connections through the learning process. However, she posits that what sets holistic teaching practice apart from other student centered pedagogy, is its aim that the student make connections with their own personal identity and sense of self as well as other learning experiences. In her view, helping students make connections to their own self identity through inquiry into issues that have deep meaning to them is the critical starting point of holistic art education. She notes that the teacher must be adept at helping students embrace their own complex identities in relation to a path of artistic inquiry.

Campbell (2012) expands the notion of connection and personal integration to her definition of spirituality which she defines as "...an awareness of the interconnectedness of all life forms." (p. 78). This echoes the discussion by London (2007) of the "... higher and deeper dimensions of our selves..." (p. 1480) that make up the very heart of how we perceive the world and navigate through it. It is through the exploration of these types of questions, London states, which leads to deeper connections and ultimately deeper answers, thus bringing students to a much stronger sense of their place in the world and an understanding of others. The notion of connection in holistic education extends to include the teacher as an integral part of the pedagogy. Teacher presence and mindfulness (Campbell, 2011, 2012; J. Miller, 2006) are crucial components to breathing life into teaching and learning in holistic education. As John Miller (2006) describes most eloquently, "Holistic education occurs in that invisible space between teacher and student." (p. 136).

Discussions of holistic education in practice help to further clarify the importance of teacher presence. Freyermuth (2012) notes that her student became more engaged

with the creative process when she chose to base her teaching on questions of great importance to her students, rather than teacher-lead, skill based approaches that resulted in a series of duplicated products. The sense of connection nurtured a growing sense of collaboration among students in her class. J. Castro (2012) articulates the multilayered connections formed in a holistic classroom as a “network of relationships” (p. 93). Within this network the teacher plays an important role in keeping ideas in motion, helping students make connections through and with their work. It is a classroom not only of deep questions, but of deep respect and individual and community responsibility; contingent on the trust formed through connections.

I now turn the theme of connection slightly to include connection to meaning and self through art making. Stuart Richmond (1998) while not directly discussing holistic education, does posit that art making is a way for children to connect to a sense of self. He believes that art making is a natural and necessary part the human experience. And because of this, Richmond advocates for a greater emphasis on art production in art education. He notes that the impetus to create a work of art is “satisfying the universal urge to create, make a mark, and thus leave a reassuring trace of one’s existence...” (p. 13). Embedded in Richmond’s words is a deep sense of student’s need to connect with a sense of self identity.

The notion of making is also of importance to Freyermuth’s (2012) discussion of holistic art education. When she opened her holistic curriculum up to the personal inquiry of students she also opened up the supply room door. Students were given the freedom to choose what art materials would best help them convey their process of reflective inquiry. Freyermuth’s discussion of student connections to ideas through art is reminiscent of

Zurmuehlen's (1990) observation of children painting, wherein she notes that reflection and contemplation occur between the brush strokes made on a paper. Milbrandt and Milbrandt (2011) also refer to the importance of art making in connecting to meaning. However their discussion of holistic education, which they term as "whole child education" (p. 11), places the notion of connection in the context of meaning making through creative self-expression.

I now shift the theme of connection to include the notion of the individual making connections outside of the self. I found in the literature of holism discussions focusing on the individual making a connection with a higher consciousness or universal truth that may lead to a state of personal and creative transformation. The result of this transformation can manifest in different ways. J. Miller (2006) describes transformative experiences as essential to a sense of connection between human beings and a great sense of compassion that will lead to social justice. Palmer (1998b) discusses the transformative power of universal consciousness as the ability of students and teachers to wrestle with the essential questions of life. In her interview with Halford (1998), Noddings notes that during the school day opportunities for contemplation of sacred and spiritual ideas can be found in mundane activities such as staring out a window.

It is important to note that the definition and form of this higher, external connection varies. John Miller (2006, 2011) presents the idea that perennial philosophy is the underlying assumption of holistic education. He defines perennial philosophy as a belief in the existence of a higher consciousness that at once exists outside of and in connection with the individual. Human beings are intuitively aware of this higher consciousness and long to be connected to it. He contends that the understanding of and



communion with this great, universal mystery is important in that it inspires a level of compassion that ultimately leads to "...social activity designed to counter injustice and human suffering" (2006, p. 16). It should be noted that Miller (2011) expands upon the notion of a higher consciousness outside of the self to include connections to our community and to nature.

The notion of connecting to others also draws from Noddings' (1984) ethic of care. Authors including J. Miller (2006, 2011), Taggart (2001), and Cummings (2012) regard Noddings' ethic of care and her theorizing of the way individuals care for each other as being essential to the development of a holistic education. For Noddings (1984), the notion of caring involves two parties, the one cared-for and one-caring, "It is complete when it is fulfilled in both" (p. 68). This means caring is recognized and reciprocated by the person receiving the care. Thus, if one is claiming to care for another, but the other does not feel cared for; then the cycle is incomplete. This does not imply negligence, simply that there is something missing in the dynamic between the two individuals. However, what is most compelling to me about Noddings' definition of care in relation to this discussion is that she openly rejects the idea "universal love, finding it unattainable in any but the most abstract sense and thus a source of distraction" (p. 29). In contrast to J. Miller's (2006) ideas about perennial philosophy and the human longing to connect with the divine, Noddings (1984) situates the connections of care firmly in the realm of human-to-human relationships.

Moving from one-on-one connections, I shift to the notion of the individual making a connection to the greater community. This is reflected in J. Castro's (2012) discussion of his classroom, wherein the learning environment hinges upon the

connection of the individual and the group. The greater community or universal consciousness is also articulated by Campbell (2012) as the striving for social justice through increased empathy and awareness of others. A key element to the discussion of both J. Castro (2012) and Campbell (2012) is the thread of the individual making connections to the community through self-reflection. Moving from a discussion of connecting to a higher consciousness, I come to the next theme of holistic education: spirituality.

## **Spirituality**

Spirituality is possibly the most troublesome aspect of holistic education. This is due in large part to the associations that are made between spirituality and religious practice. The theme of spirituality evokes concerns about violating the separation of church and state, promoting one religious perspective over another, or embracing a sort of new-aged counter culture world view (Campbell, 2005, 2011, 2012; London, 2007; Halford, 1999; Miller, J., 2006, 2011; Miller, R., 1990, 1991; Taggart, 2001). However the literature of Holistic Education defines spirituality as the awareness of the interconnection of all life on earth, human and otherwise (Abbey, 2004; Campbell, 2005, 2011, 2012; Halford, 1999; London, 2007; Miller, J. 2006, 2011; Miller, R., 1990).

The approaches to this spiritual awareness are varied. Campbell (2012) frames spirituality quite simply as the awareness that each life form on earth is connected to every other life form on earth. She notes that though there are parts of religious practice that include spirituality, spirituality in context of holistic education does not require or

imply religious practice. Palmer (1998b) defines spirituality as the “abiding human quest for connectedness with something larger and more trustworthy than our own egos” (p. 6). Further, Palmer believes that spirituality is not something that necessarily needs to be injected into curriculum because notions of connection and meaning exist at the very core of all education. Rather he suggests that these deep longings for something greater need to be given room to emerge in the classroom, and it is the sense of disconnection between teachers, students and questions that matter that drapes education in sadness. Palmer posits that this sadness is at the root of teacher discontent and student apathy in schools. He posits that the antidote for this malaise is for teachers to anchor education to questions that are “worth wrapping one’s life around” (p. 8) and help students formulate ways of doing the same. Ideas and questions that imbue teaching and learning with a passion for life.

London (2007) moves the idea of spirituality from something that life is wrapped around to that which embodies the very essence of life itself. Spirituality is the conduit to our “higher and deeper” (p. 1480) selves, the aspects of our humanness that bring us joy and sadness, fear, delight and passion. In her interview with Halford (1998), Noddings discusses these very aspects of life. Observing that school is filled with “everyday spirituality...poetry, music, biography, ordinary conversation...letting kids look out the window” (p. 31) and teachers should take time in the day to allow students to experience these things.

However, in an earlier book, Noddings (1993) suggests that what is missing from school is not limited to moments of everyday spirituality, but a deliberate and comprehensive inclusion of religious discussion. She suggests that learning about

religious practices from a critical and academic stand point (not as proselytizing or practice) would help students to become better informed about what they do or do not believe. Within this discussion is the inclusion of existential and metaphysical questions that can lead students and teachers to conversations about spiritual issues. I find Noddings' two ideas about spirituality in public school interesting in that there is a deliberate balance between the cognitive and the contemplative nature of the respective approaches.

Ron Miller (1990) echoes the notion of spirituality within every day life. He frames his discussion of this aspect of holism as a "spiritual world view" (p. 154). This world view holds a belief in something greater than what our rational selves can comprehend. He posits that a spiritual world view is one that embraces connections between all human beings, regardless of geographical, political or cultural boundaries. And thus, according to Miller, it is through making these connections that humanity might find ways to heal the fractured human conditions that exist such as poverty, political oppression, hunger and war. But Miller (1991) also posits a definition of spirituality that goes well beyond the everyday and the mundane. He notes that it is the very inclusion of spiritual that separates holism from humanism. It is spirituality that orients holism and pushes the idea of holistic education and thinking to issues that are "concerned with the largest conceivable context of human existence" (p. 54).

Spirituality in Holistic Education also includes aspects of the human experience that can not be rationally explained; those matters of knowing that we address through intuition and instinct. This includes questions about our existence, our place in the universe, our purpose in life, and the question of life itself. London (2007) observes that

the mysterious aspect of the human experience is the “serious business of our lives” (p. 1484), questions of one’s place in the world, where one came from and where one is going are questions that not only fuel human curiosity but also human artistic endeavor. John Miller (2006) discusses the importance of acknowledging the mystery of existence. He posits that the mysterious and unknown elements of our lives keep us humble; mystery can enable us to feel awe and can ultimately lead to an openness to new understandings that might not have been apparent through rational means. Taggart (2001) describes such experiences as the flashes of insight that a person may have, when one becomes aware of an intuitive understanding of one’s place in the world.

The literature of Holistic Education makes a very clear distinction between religion and spirituality. Campbell (2012) for instance notes that “religion is not at all implied...in holistic art education literature.” (p. 78). Palmer (1998b), who describes himself as a practicing Quaker, makes his stance very clear. He articulates spirituality as a desire to understand and be connected to a deeper sense of meaning in our lives. But states emphatically, “I reject the imposition of any form of religion in public education, including so-called ‘school prayer.’” (p. 6). Yet within the literature of Holistic Education there is the idea of actively developing a form of spiritual practice as a means to access the higher self or draw one to a place of deeper connection. John Miller (2006) discusses ways that teachers can practice mindfulness and relaxation in their own lives as means of quieting down and being more present when they are with students such as including moments of quiet, taking a walk in nature or an unhurried bath. Brown (1999) encourages teachers to practice a state of “contemplative observation” (p. 70) as a way of observing and understanding what is happening in their classroom. And, mirroring the

discussion of teacher presence (Campbell, 2011, 2012; Miller, J., 2006), Brown posits that contemplative observation is a way for the teacher to understand how their actions are impacting the environment of the classroom. Through this self-awareness, a teacher is able to acknowledge and adjust his or her behavior.

Moving from an awareness of the self and the influence of that self on the other within the classroom community, I come to the next theme in holistic pedagogy, that of empathy and compassion.

### **Empathy and Compassion**

The notions of empathy and compassion in holistic education draw from the connections to the self, the community and the higher consciousness inherent in the pedagogy (Campbell, 2005, 2011, 2012; Halford, 1999; Jeffers, 2012; London, 2007; Millbrandt and Millbrandt, 2011; Miller, J., 2006, 2011; Miller, R., 1990, 1991; Taggart, 2001). However, some authors pull these concepts out for specific examination in holistic pedagogy. Campbell (2012) situates the concepts of compassion and empathy within the context of social justice. She contends that empathy, though part of the human experience, is still an aspect that needs to be nurtured in some individuals. She posits that the ability to see ourselves in connection with others, despite our differences, is what allows for growth in empathy. John Miller (2006) suggests that empathy is a transitional state that leads to compassion. Within holistic education practice, Miller suggests that compassion is the deep, visceral awareness of the interconnection among beings. Indeed, Miller describes compassion as having deep roots within one's awareness of human

interconnection. Jeffers (2012) takes a slightly different tact when discussing empathy. She describes empathy as “soulful connectedness” (p. 32) that is an active part of the human experience. Further, she attributes the human ability to understand the world, each other, art, and language to empathy. For Jeffers, empathy is the core of human existence, the ability to generate and interpret meaning, and form relationships.

### **Ron Miller’s perspective of Holistic Education**

I feel it is important to note the work of Ron Miller in the literature of holistic education. His writings do not argue against the other works cited in this thesis; he agrees in structure and content. Rather it is tone of his work that sets him apart from the other authors. Miller’s perspective on Holistic Education is that of social critique and social reform (1990, 1991). In his book, “What are Schools For? Holistic Education in American Culture” (1990), he situates holistic education in direct opposition to mainstream education practice in that it values the individual for their own talents, creativity, and abilities, not as a future cog in a capitalistic economy. He further takes to task the notions of nationalism, Protestant Christianity, scientific reductionism and “restrained democratic ideology” (p. 12) which he defines as the refusal to grant individuals fully realized freedom as that would upset the social and economic structure in the United States. An example of this difference can be seen in two discussions of the New England Transcendental movement. John Miller (2011) presents the movement as monumental in bringing spiritual, ecological, multicultural and feminist issues to the fore of educational discourse. Noting the contributions of Ralph Waldo Emerson, the

discussion revolves around notions of the soul and that education should people develop a sense of expansive connectedness and to become loving human beings. Contrast this with Ron Miller's (1990) description of the New England Transcendental movement as "...the first home-grown movement of radical social criticism..." (p. 81). When discussing Emerson's views on society he notes that "Emerson's anarchism was based on his radical humanism..." (p. 86) The tenor of Ron Miller's work leans more towards educational revolution than reform and he makes a compelling argument that holistic education should be at the fore of that revolution.

The issue of whether one idea about Holism is more right or legitimate than another is not the goal of this thesis. However, his stance offers a compelling alternate lens through which to consider Holistic Education, especially in relation to the evolution of public education in the United States.

### **My pedagogical framework based on the themes of Holistic Education**

Based on my reading of the literature, I took the main themes of holistic education and created a pedagogical framework that informed and directed my research while teaching. My framework is based on four pillars: Balance, Embracing, Making Space and Engaging. Throughout the course of my research I would return to these pillars to give structure to lesson plans and to help me maintain focus on my research goals.



## **Balance**

The first pillar of my pedagogy is balance. I came to this theme through a reflection on the ways in which practicing and pre-service teachers practice self care, how one maintains a work/life balance within teaching practice, and how to mediate the role of being teacher inside and outside of the context of the classroom. Included in this notion of balance are issues of how one's beliefs about the profession of teaching influence who we are and how we act. I address this through the notion of teacher self care and staying grounded in the classroom environment. This aspect is informed by the Palmer's (1998a) discussion of teacher self care and his assertion that teachers should find ways to fulfill their lives that are not solely rooted in their classroom experience. For Palmer, this is the route to finding and maintaining a sense of enjoyment in teaching; to be simultaneously sensitive to and independent of how classroom experiences influence teacher selves. When teachers find a sense of balance between life inside and outside of the classroom Parker (1998b) suggests that they then may better support student inquiry into deep and meaningful questions in the classroom. By allowing themselves space to understand their own inner values and meaning, teachers can better understand how to construct a curriculum that addresses "questions worth wrapping one's life around" (p. 8). This aspect of my pedagogy also draws from Brown's (1998) discussion of the importance of contemplation and self reflection in teaching practice. At the core of Brown's stance is that self-awareness is an important habit for teachers to develop as it allows them to understand the impact of their own behavior on the classroom environment. Brown

contends that through strengthening self awareness, a teacher can begin to see his or herself as part of the intricate web of the classroom.

In his book, *Educating for Wisdom and Compassion: Creating Conditions for Timeless Learning*, John Miller (2006) suggests that how the teacher cares for themselves outside of the classroom – mentally, emotionally and physically - is a crucial component of successful teaching practice.

The second aspect of balance that I have included in my pedagogical framework is that of grounding and building a foundation. This is informed by Palmer's (1998a) inquiry in to the lives of teachers. In this discussion he asserts that a teacher must take into account their inner reflections and their experiences in the classroom as part of building a foundation for future teaching practice. For me, part of understanding my foundation of teaching practice and teacher identity is acknowledging that sometimes the act of teaching is not easy. As with any human endeavor, mistakes are made, misunderstandings happen. And it is important to accept these ups and downs as part and parcel of the teaching experience. This leads me to the second pillar of this pedagogy, that of embracing.

### **Embracing**

The second pillar of my pedagogy is Embracing. This aspect of my pedagogy has two components; the first is acknowledging one's humanity and the humanity of others with compassion and empathy. The second component is realizing that there are aspects

of our knowledge and understanding of the world that are mysterious and intuitive and lie beyond the edges of our rational understanding.

The component of this pillar dealing with the complexities of teacher and student humanity is informed by the work of Palmer (1998a) and his discussion of the paradox of teaching. In this discussion he describes the act of teaching as the intersection of an individual's public and private lives. He also notes that an essential part of this paradox is the fact that one may transition from a successful teaching experience to a dismal teaching experience in the course of five minutes. He notes that a teacher must take these perceived failures as part of the reality of teaching and make a choice about where to anchor teaching practice. One may approach teaching from a perspective anchored in fear of failure and rejection or in hope and caring. The freedom to make this choice comes from the realization that there is a choice to be made. Teachers must realize that though they may feel a variety of emotions towards the act of teaching, they have the ability to take control of this milieu. This is echoed in J. Miller's (2006) discussion that teachers should operate from a very human place, a place that is vulnerable, warm, and capable of making mistakes. Another important part of the humanity of teachers is the ability to engage in caring relationships with students (Noddings, 1984). Care, as described by Noddings is an continuum that is reliant on both the one caring and the cared for to be embracing the act of giving and receiving care.

The other aspect of the pillar of embracing is the notion of mystery or that part of the human experience that lies beyond what one can comprehend through rational means. London (2007) posits that these mysterious aspects of life are often where we anchor our most important inquiry – questions of why humans exist, where we go when we die, what

is the meaning of life. The answers to these questions are not to be found through reason, only through the contemplation of those ideas, and possibly not even then. Some ideas or experiences may simply remain a mystery. Palmer (1998a, 1998b) suggests that when teachers and students choose to grapple with the big questions of life, education may be infused with a sense of purpose and enjoyment in the act of inquiry.

These questions are often best addressed through embracing a notion of the unknown in our world. One finds a similar idea echoed in J. Miller's (2006) assertion that there is much in our world that we do not understand; and that human beings are connected to each other and to the universe in ways that are not easily defined in rational terms. However, one can come to at least a partial understanding of the mysterious elements of life through particular reflective or contemplative practice. London (2007) suggests that it is the study and making of art that can help human beings gain insight into these mysteries. J. Miller (2006) offers that a greater understanding of the mysterious is found in specific contemplative practices such as meditation or yoga. In his discussion of transcendental education, J. Miller (2011) offers that occasional flashes of intuitive insight into life's mystery may be gained through the contemplation of the natural world. Campbell (2011) contends that it is through the deliberate inquiry of the connection between the individual and society that one can begin to understand how life is connected. But characteristic of all of these authors is the notion that one must accept there are mysteries in life that may never be fully understood through rational or scientific means.

## **Making Space**

The third pillar of my pedagogical frame work is the aspect of making space. This describes the notion of deliberately setting aside time in the classroom for reflection and contemplation. This pillar is informed by Angelo Caranfa (2003, 2004, 2007) and his writings about silence. According to Caranfa (2004, 2007) the very heart of all learning and all aesthetic experience grows out of silence. It is in this silence that an individual can come to their own truth and own meaning in relation to the world. He suggests that bringing students to a quiet place in the process of learning helps to counter an educational institution that can be overly rational with an extreme emphasis on cognitive performance. He envisions silence as an active and vital part of the process of learning and teaching. One can see reflections of holistic education practice in his idea of the connecting to the self and then to the community as he notes that the individual must embrace and commune with silence in order to better serve the community. Caranfa (2004) describes silence as that which “reveal[s] the limitations of discourse or dialect.” (p. 212). Thus one can envision silence as the gateway to contemplation or reflection. It is a state of preparation as well as process. Expanding upon this idea of a state of preparation, this aspect of the pedagogy draws from Halford’s (1998) interview with Noddings in which she states that an important aspect of teaching is to remember to slow things down in the classroom in order to set aside time for profound contemplation through silence.

The notion of making space has implications for the act of teaching as well. Brown (1998) believes that teachers should be quiet and contemplative observers of their

own behaviors. His approach is steeped in the idea that teachers should maintain an awareness of his or her own internal workings. By doing so the teacher can begin to understand how their own perceptions, responses and beliefs are impacting the environment in the classroom.

## **Engaging**

And the final pillar of my pedagogical framework is that of Engaging. This aspect can be seen as the interaction one has with the physical world after the inner work of balancing, embracing and making space. This aspect of my pedagogy includes the interaction with materials in the art making process and the interaction between individuals in the classroom.

Engaging in art making is informed by Richmond's (1998) discussion of the importance of art making in the lives of art students. He posits art making as a means of self reflection and self identity through making a physical mark on paper and thus the world. He also discusses the importance of art making as a means for the teacher to invite the student into the discipline of making and to understand a relationship to materials. The development of this aspect of the pedagogy was also informed by Zurmuehlen's (1990) notion of how a student's engagement and thoughtfulness about their art work deepens during the act of making art, noting that "reflective attention may be experienced between one painting stroke and the next" (p. 3). Also included in the act of engaging with materials is the notion of attentiveness or mindfulness. J. Miller (2006, 2011) observes that mindfulness brings the individual fully into the present moment of

what they are doing and enhances a sense of attentiveness to the task at hand. In terms of the art making aspect of this pillar, this is essential to helping students focus on what they are doing and as a means of setting aside anxiety that might arise during art making. One may also articulate this aspect of engagement as “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) in terms of being immersed in the activity of the present moment.

However in terms of engagement with the individuals in the classroom, I draw from Noddings (1984) notion of complete care between teacher and student. Noddings contends that for a teacher to be completely present with the student he or she must put aside distractions and focus completely on what the student is trying to communicate. Thus the notion of engagement equally applies to the teacher as to the student.

These four pillars, Balance, Embracing, Making Space and Engaging were used as a guide as I developed and implemented lesson plans for my class. An example of one of my lesson plans can be found in Appendix 1.

### **The role of the student and the teacher in holistic education**

Student-centered pedagogy as articulated through the literature of holistic education can be seen in the manner that respective roles of the teacher and student are described and how these respective roles influence the classroom environment. Holistic education brings the student’s role in the classroom to the fore by recognizing that all aspects of the student’s experiences contribute to learning (Miller, J., 2006; Campbell, 2012). The shift in the perceived role of the student assumes that he or she has greater responsibility for his or her own learning; and by association contributes to the learning

environment of the classroom (Campbell, 2012; Castro, J., 2012; Freyermuth, 2012; Miller, J., 2006). The notion of student investment is manifested differently in each classroom. For instance J. Castro (2012) describes the increase in student involvement as resulting in a “range of [learning] possibilities not available to any one individual, including the teacher.” (p. 93). In J. Castro’s model, the focus is on creating a rich learning community based on responsibility and interaction between the individual and the group. The focus of Freyermuth’s (2012) discussion of her implementation of student centered pedagogy is on the evolution of student empowerment through taking responsibility for artistic inquiry. Cummings (2012) emphasizes the aspects of peer support, safety and friendship in her conceptualization of student centered pedagogy.

Along with the students, the teacher’s role and responsibilities shift in holistic pedagogy. The emphasis is on creating opportunities for students to connect to personal and universal meaning through their artistic inquiry and through their participation in the learning community. Again, different educators nuance the role of the teacher in the holistic art classroom to suit the needs of their learners. J. Castro (2012) discusses a way that a teacher can guide students to make meaningful connections by “designing constraints that enable artistic inquiry” (p.90). These constraints, he notes, can be the manner in which a teacher guides a line of questioning; one that might cause the students to approach a problem in a new way. Castro’s example of this type of constraint in artistic inquiry is his photography project based on the question, “If I were to be struck blind tomorrow what image of the world would I leave?” (p. 91) which pushed students to carefully ponder the image they chose with a sense of gravity and finality. Castro’s work sits in interesting juxtaposition to Freyermuth’s (2012) discussion of her shifting



role as the art teacher when she adopted a holistic, student-centered pedagogy. With her focus being on students taking control of their own artistic process she describes her need to become more intuitively aware of non-verbal cues from her students as a means of perceiving what was happening in the classroom. She became adept at interpreting non-verbal cues from students that indicated they might need help or redirection. Palmer (1998a) makes a similar comment about his own teaching in which he imagines himself as one of the “all-business Border collies one sees working the flocks in sheep country” (p. 149). He draws this parallel because he sees himself as helping to guide students to metaphorical food and water in the form of engaged and active learning. I mention Palmer’s (1998a) sheepdog metaphor because in addition to guiding students, that role also includes protecting the students. The role of teacher as creating an environment of safety is evident in the discussion of holistic education. Campbell (2012) posits “a democratic, cooperative and safe classroom” (p. 81) as an important emergent theme of holistic education. She contends that an open, inclusive, participatory environment can help nurture a sense of both emotional and physical safety for students. Cummings (2012) echoes this idea when she makes it clear that while she nurtures open, authentic relationships with her students and shares with them her passion for art as a means of artistic engagement; she never forgets her professional role as the teacher. Professional boundaries of safety are kept clearly in place.

The opportunity for growth, creativity and community in art class are evident in these examples. Also, one can observe how each educator nuances the use of student centered pedagogy in holistic education to create a learning environment that is most appropriate to the needs of the student and the teacher.

Holistic education, with its embracing of all the facets of the student's person in the learning process – cognitive, affective, physical and spiritual (Campbell, 2012) does so with an overarching goal of enacting positive change within the student and, by extension, society. This is described as a transformational model of teaching (Campbell, 2012; J. Miller, 2006). This stands in contrast to the transmission model of teaching, wherein knowledge comes from only the teacher, who is the all-knowing expert, to the student (Campbell, 2012; J. Miller, 2006). Transformational learning also deviates from transaction learning. Transactional learning encourages student-teacher interaction but places an emphasis on the cognition and analysis at the exclusion of emotional components of learning (Campbell, 2012; J. Miller, 2006).

It is important to note that while John Miller (2006) posits the transformative model of teaching as a vital part of holistic education practice, he also suggests the notion of “rhythm” (p. 137) whereby the teacher moves between the models of transmission, transaction and transformation depending on the needs of the students and nature of the material being taught. This suggests that the role of the teacher in student-centered, holistic pedagogy is adaptable based on what will help students make the necessary connections that lead to meaningful learning (Campbell, 2011, 2012; Castro, J., 2012; Freyermuth, 2012; Miller, J., 2006; Palmer, 1998a, 1998b)

I used these four pillars, Balance, Embracing, Making Space and Engaging as a guide as I developed lesson plans for my course. As an example, I used the pillars of Balance and Embracing to develop the first two studio activities of the semester: the Personal Path and the Patchwork Self. These activities were anchored in self reflection and developing a sense of identity as teachers. Though these are art activities that can

indeed be modified for an elementary generalist classroom, my focus was on helping my student begin the practice of reflective inquiry. The Personal Path is a reflective map of the decisions and events that lead to the student entering the classroom on the first day of ARTE 201. The format of that map, the media used, and the size of paper were left completely up to the student. The issue of importance was that they begin to build a foundation of self-identity as a teacher. The Patchwork Self worked from a similar reflective process, but in this activity I asked the students to critique the symbols that society had assigned to teachers and the teaching profession, such as an apple, a red check-mark, a ruler, etc. I asked my students to consider if they identified with those symbols, or if they felt there were images that were more meaningful to their individual self-perception. The pillar of Making Space during our painting experiments such as “A Walk in Winter” when imaged a long quiet walk through the snow. Because of the size of the paper we used in this project, the students were spread through out the room with some physical space between each other which further supported the notion of quiet and space by disrupting the normal flow of work-table conversation. The pillar of Engaging was also present in the winter painting and all of the studio activities. I designed the studio component to be an opportunity for the students to engage with materials, ideas and each other. Thus through the studio work I tried to encapsulate the physical and conceptual act of making art and interacting with colleagues in the class. An example of the type of lesson plans I wrote is included in Appendix A.

## **CHAPTER 2: PRE-SERVICE ELEMENTARY GENERALISTS**

My research took place in an art education methods course for pre-service, elementary generalist teachers. It seems a simple and straightforward enough task for art educators; teach and share what we know about a field we love. But an art education methods course is anything but simple. In this chapter, I will present the challenging characteristics faced by the students and the teachers in this type of course as described in the current literature.

Most art education programs offer a methods course for pre-service elementary generalists. These courses are a requirement for elementary teacher certification in most teacher training programs. Though the specific content and sequencing may vary from instructor to instructor the basic goal of this course remains the same: provide pre-service elementary generalists with an introduction to art education pedagogy and hands-on studio experiences that can be used in an elementary classroom (Jeffers, 1993; Kawalchuk and Stone, 2000; Lakey, Manifold, and Zimmerman, 2007; Miraglia, 2008; Mittler, 1974; Smith-Shank, 1992).

For most elementary generalist teachers their art education background consists of elementary art experiences and a single art education methods course taken as a requirement during their teacher training program. Curriculum content for art methods emphasizes hands-on studio projects that can be transferred to the general classroom, an overview of art education pedagogy, curriculum development and lesson planning for elementary art, and stage development theory. The duration of these courses is generally

between two and four hours per week for one semester (Jeffers, 1993; Kawalchuk and Stone, 2000; Lakey, Manifold, and Zimmerman, 2007; Miraglia, 2008). A pedagogical and logistical challenge that must be managed by both the instructor and the students in art methods courses is further illustrated by Carol Jeffers (1993). She notes that within an arts methods course, pre-service elementary generalists are expected to become confident and competent in the multiple roles. They are expected to absorb and understand a broad swath of art education content: art history, aesthetics, art criticism, and methods of art production appropriate for elementary students. In addition, they must also become artists themselves; planning and creating works of art for the first time in what may be decades. Finally, they are asked to apply this newfound knowledge about art and art making to art education pedagogy and theory and develop sound and meaningful art education lessons, units and curriculum. This is a daunting task not only for the students, but for the instructors who are faced with preparing multi-leveled art methods content that fits within the confines of a single semester. Jeffers (1993) conducted a major review of arts methods courses for pre-service elementary generalists in North America and illuminates some of the ways that content is addressed in these courses. She notes that overall there are three major areas of content that are emphasized: the artistic development of children, the function of art within the context of school, and pedagogical approaches to art instruction. She also found that, in addition to stage development theory, the major topics emphasized in arts methods courses were art production, critique of art works, art history, and aesthetic and philosophical issues. These four areas are the disciplines emphasized in DBAE (Efland, 1990). That she found these areas of emphasis is reasonable given that she conducted her study in the early 1990s, at a time when

DBAE was at its height in art education in North America (Efland, 1990). And regarding textbooks she found that the majority of arts methods courses use *Children and Their Art* (Hurwitz and Day) or *Emphasis Art* (Wachowiak) (p. 238). Though her study took place nearly 20 years ago I can confirm from my own experience teaching art methods courses during my graduate studies in the United States and Canada, and confirm that those who have written on this topic agree (Kawalchuk and Stone, 2000; Lakey, Manifold, and Zimmerman, 2007; Miraglia, 2008; Smith-Shank, 1992) these trends appear to have remained the same.

One can develop the finest content for an art education methods course, but it is important to find a way to inspire pre-service generalists to use the content in their own classrooms. Mittler (1974) captures this idea as he pleads for art methods courses that “cultivate positive attitudes about art which will contribute to a desire to teach it” (p. 12). According to the literature, there are several agreed-upon characteristics of pre-service elementary generalists possess: a hesitancy towards making art, a deeply ingrained influence of their own elementary art experiences, and anxiety about their own ability to understand and teach art (Kawalchuk and Stone, 2000; Lakey, Manifold, and Zimmerman, 2007; Miraglia, 2008; Smith-Shank, 1992). I will discuss each of these characteristics in greater detail below. It should be noted that these characteristics are generalizations and not all students fit into these categories, but the majority do.

### **Anxieties about art making.**

Pre-service elementary generalists tend to be fearful of art making and often delay taking an art methods course until the third year of their teacher preparation program

(Jeffers, 1993). As a group they do not see themselves as possessing creative or artistic abilities and are not perturbed by this until they are faced with the possibility of having to teach art (Smith-Shank, 1992). Once they enter a methods course, their anxiety and resistance towards making art comes to the fore. Pre-service elementary generalists often associate making art with the ability to draw. In addition, they assume skill in drawing is measured by one's ability to draw in a photo-realistic manner. And thus if they do not see themselves as having the ability to draw realistically they conclude they do not have the ability to make art. They make a direct correlation between drawing ability and creative ability or talent. Miraglia (2008) specifically notes that these students set themselves up for the impossible because they "classified themselves as beginners yet compared themselves to experts" (p. 58). And though they hold themselves up to an unattainable standard, they do not want their instructors to do the same. They do not want their artwork to be evaluated or judged critically or harshly. They want their methods course to provide them with fun, light, hands-on activities that they can use in the classroom. (Kawalchuk and Stone, 2000; Lakey, Manifold, and Zimmerman, 2007; Miraglia, 2008; Smith-Shank, 1992). In a minority of students this hesitancy and anxiety may erupt into overt hostility and uncivil behavior towards the art methods instructor and may at times be enough to sour the atmosphere of the class (Lakey, et al., 2007; Smith-Shank, 1992).

### **Elementary art experiences**

Many of the attitudes pre-services elementary generalists hold about art education are informed by their own elementary art experiences (Smith-Shank, 1992). The

memories of elementary art experiences tend to fall into two categories. The first category is that of fun, craft-oriented activities that were not graded and likely tied to a holiday or other subject area. The second category is the memories of embarrassing or negative experiences where the teacher either openly criticized or ignored their work in favor of other more talented students. Pre-service elementary generalists spend a lifetime with the memory of these particular experiences when they are then plunged back into art education late in the university work. This is important when framing an understanding of their attitudes and values as it is an indicator of a general lack of exposure to art and art education. For many of them, an art methods course may be the only art class they have taken since elementary school. And they enroll in art methods courses only because it is required as part of their teacher training programs.

### **Anxiety about understanding and teaching art**

Smith-Shank (1992) describes elementary generalists as “a pragmatic lot” (p. 135). They are keenly interested in knowing exactly what should be taught in art and how to teach it. Yet they struggle with what they remember from their own experiences when they realize that it was not what art education is about. And even though they view art as a valuable part of the curriculum (Kowalchuk and Stone, 2000), they are not comfortable with the idea of teaching it. Further, the idea that most pre-service generalists cling to is that of arts integration, they do not see art as something they are comfortable teaching as a distinct subject. (Kowalchuk and Stone, 2000; Lakey, Manifold, and Zimmerman, 2007; Miraglia, 2008; Smith-Shank, 1992). The result is a group of students in an art methods



course whose experience is made complicated by their own experiences and perceptions of the nature of art, art making and the role of art education in the elementary classroom (Lakey, Manifold, and Zimmerman, 2007).

Given what is said in the literature about the nature of pre-service teachers in art methods courses, I knew I needed to be sensitive to the characteristic fearfulness of my students during my self- study. I would not, as any teacher would agree, allow my work to interfere with my responsibility to provide my students with the educational content they would need.

As I created my weekly lesson plans based on my four pillars, I was mindful of the characteristics my students. My research goal was to study the possibilities and impediments of changing my own pedagogy and would do so in the context of teaching these students. My teaching goal was to provide art education content in a student centered manner based on themes of holistic education and do so in a way that was meaningful, applicable and sustainable for my students. In the following chapter I will present the research methods and procedures for my study. The chapter includes a discussion of Self Study (Pinnegar and Hamilton, 2009) qualitative interviews (Keighly, et al., 2012; Tierney and Dilley, 2002; Warren, 2002) as well as the treatment of the data through the use of Grounded Theory Methods.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The essence of this research project is tracking my progress from one pedagogical stance to another by analyzing the themes of my lived experiences within the study. I employed the qualitative research methods of self-study conducted via weekly self-interviews and reflections. I kept a very clear protocol sequence when conducting this research; self interviews were conducted before I looked at any student reflections or class work. This way my recollections of the class were focused on my immediate experience and not influenced by what the students had to say about a particular class. As part of the self study, I used Grounded Theory Methods (GTM) as a means of treating the data and culling emergent themes from the information. The participant interviews were comprised of structured interviews and art elicitation interviews. In what follows I describe these methods and how they informed my procedures and treatment of the data.

### **Self Study**

Self-study research practice is closely related to action research methodology, but is set apart by the issues of researcher positionality and the focus of the change that is being investigated by the researcher (McNiff and Whitehead, 2006; Pinnegar and Hamilton, 2009) and the subsequent contributions to knowledge (Herr and Anderson, 2005). I believe it is important to describe these differences before delving deeper into a discussion self-study.

Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) recognize that self-study and action research share certain characteristics such as positioning the researcher within the environment being studied and the goal of research to affect change to a practice, community or institution. They note that a primary difference is the location of that change. Self-study research focuses on change within the individual through a rigorous investigation of that individual's internal beliefs and motivations that inform his or her behavior. By contrast, action research emphasizes change within "social settings like schools" (p. 74).

McNiff and Whitehead (2006) discuss the differences between action research and self-study in terms of the permeability of the boundary between subject and researcher. Action research, they observe, still attempts a level of objectivity within the environment being studied, where self-study makes no such claims. The boundaries dissolve completely and the researcher is placed "at the center of their own enquires" (p. 11).

Herr and Anderson (2005) echo a similar stance of McNiff and Whitehead (2006) in discussing the difference between action research and self study. In their discussion of action research methodology, Herr and Anderson (2005) present a continuum of researcher positionality in terms of the subject being studied and the contributions to knowledge; their continuum ranges from insider positionality to outsider positionality. They place self-study at the farthest end of the insider aspect of the continuum noting that it contributes to a knowledge base of a field through improving practice and personal and/or professional transformation. As the position of the researcher moves away from self-study to other forms of action research wherein the boundaries between researcher

and subject are less permeable, they note that the contribution to knowledge focuses more on organizational and community transformation.

I chose the Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practice (S-STEP) model proposed by Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) because it allowed me to become more engaged in understanding the pedagogical underpinnings of my teaching decisions through action, reflection and analysis of the action. S-STEP proposes to answer questions about the field of teaching by positing that the answers to questions about teaching are embedded within the relationship of the teacher to their practice. To this end, the idea of ‘self’ in S-STEP is not an independent entity but is very clearly articulated as the embodiment of a relationship, “the self and the other in practice” (p. 12).

According to Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009), self-study emerged in teacher education research and practice in the 1990s. The impetus for the growth of self-study as a research method stemmed from two issues. First was dissatisfaction among social science researchers with the use of a positivist approach to investigate, illuminate and describe the post modern experience. Along with other methods that were coming to the fore of qualitative research at the time, such as auto-ethnography, narrative, phenomenology, life history and action research, self-study was a way to uncover the meaning embedded within the human experience. Pinnegar and Hamilton note that there are many similarities between self-study and these other forms of qualitative research, such as the position of the *I* within the research, the emphasis on revealing the lived experience of that *I*, the significance of time and place where the research takes place and the use of reflection and creative writing conventions. The significant aspect that sets

self-study apart from these other methodologies is that self-study practice in education is specifically undertaken by an individual interested in exploring his or her own teaching practice. The *I* in self-study is situated within and in relation to practice and in relation to the others in the educational setting. The ontological stance of the researcher is seen as a key element that drives the research forward.

The second shift was an interrogation of the role of the researcher as detached and distanced from the subject of study. Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) contend that when research on teaching practice is conducted by researchers outside of teaching practice, they tend to undervalue the “methodology, practice, and the ownership of knowledge” (p. 1) that teacher practitioners hold and know. The result was that the validity of this research was questioned by those engaged in teaching and teacher education. The core of self study as a research method evolved from the growing belief that educational research should have a greater focus on “the moral commitment to improving practice” (p. 68) by placing the researcher at the center of the research. Dialog and interaction become the means of understanding or “coming to know” (p. 68) the ways of teaching and teacher education. To this end, the practice of self-study research gives greater weight to the ontological stance and understanding the nature and meaning within the experience. This is in contrast to research methods that take an epistemological stance and strive to uncover new knowledge.

At the heart of self-study research is the desire to improve teaching practice for the teacher educator, the teachers being trained and their future students (LaBoskey, 2004; Hamilton and Pinnegar, 2000; McNiff and Whitehead, 2006; Pinnegar and Hamilton, 2009). Implicit in this statement is the notion that S-STEP research results in

some type of change within the teacher's practice. This approach is informed by the idea of living educational theory (McNiff and Whitehead, 2006; Whitehead, 1993; Whitehead and McNiff, 2006). According to McNiff and Whitehead (2006), a living theory is one that is held by an individual person and grows and changes as the person grows and changes. They assert that living theory is the desired outcome of qualitative research into teaching practice action research because it informs new theory and new and improved practice. The idea of a living theory was introduced by Jack Whitehead in the mid-1970s (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006). Living theory, according to Whitehead, is based on the assumption that teaching practice is "a form of real-life theorizing." (p. 32). Living theory is based on the process of making deliberate observations of and reflections on one's teaching practice, understanding that practice by researching it and making assertions, "knowledge claims" (p. 32) about that understanding. Validity is tested through the input and "critical feedback" (p. 32) of others. Claims of validity are established by demonstrating that evidence is authentic, explaining methods of analysis in clear and simple terms and by showing that the claims being made are realistic. Living theory stands in opposition to other theoretical frameworks. Propositional theory, for instance, is based on a search for what is certain. It is a clear-cut, black and white view of the world. It assumes the existence of a definitive answer a theoretical 'one right way' that can be applied to all individuals and generate the same expected outcome. Propositional theory anchors validity to the accuracy, logic and non-contradictory nature of how the material is presented. This theory is concerned with the "logical inference" (p. 40) of statements. At the other end of the spectrum is dialectical theory. These theories are completely fluid and "grounded in contradiction." (p. 31). Within the realm of dialectical theory, there is

no certainty; all events and experiences contain contradictions. This theoretical stance is most commonly used in narrative forms of inquiry; wherein the participants tells his or her story and the data is gleaned through the inherent and expected inconsistencies.

Hamilton and Pinnegar (2000) have been writing about self study research methodology for over a decade. They began their work on the premise that the voices of teacher educators, who work daily in colleges and universities training students to become teachers, were not being heard. Hamilton (1998) contends that through carefully planned self-study research much of the living educational theory within teaching practice could be revealed.

Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) conceive of self-study of teaching practice as a human endeavor that grows from identifying gaps in practice. These can be gaps between words and actions or between how one perceives and action and what is reflected back from someone else. In my research the gap was the space between my teacher-centered, transmission style teaching practice and my desire to change to a more holistic, student-centered pedagogy. Using S-STEP, I attempted to discover the meaning embedded in this relationship in a clear and rigorous fashion. This is what moves S-STEP out of the realm of ‘navel gazing’ and into the realm of careful and reflective consideration and analysis of the aspects of teaching. Thus the knowledge produced by practitioners in the field is equally as important as research from outside of classroom practice. More importantly, S-STEP research places the “ownership of knowledge” (p. 2) with the teacher. Through the constant give and take between action and observation and theory and practice, understanding of one’s teaching practice is brought into the light. In addition, S-STEP research is particularly useful as method for researching teaching

practice in that it frames knowledge as “living” (Pinnegar and Hamilton, p. 51) and thus open to change and growth. S-STEP research as a method emphasizes the construction of knowledge through the interaction between the inner world of the researcher and the outer world of the classroom and everything that encompasses the relationship between these two worlds. Further, the engagement and mindfulness of S-STEP can help the researcher reveal their own professional identity through the interrogating one’s practice and how one interacts with students (LaBoskey, 2004). According to Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009), self study is situated at the intersection of context, content and process. "This kind of inquiry involves questioning all three of these aspects from our perspectives while simultaneously accounting for the experience of the others within our practice." (p. ix)

The challenge is to make sense of these three perspectives simultaneously within the classroom. The authors refer to this as the “stream of experience we act within knowing that action generates new relationships, new practices, and new understandings of reality.” (p. ix) How one positions oneself in teaching practice determines the orientation of a self study research project. This orientation effects how well research unfolds, how the research is framed, and the focus of the inquiry.

Pinnegar and Hamilton’s (2009) model for S-STEP research aims to help teachers reveal tacit knowledge about their practice. This is done through the following steps: the study of the experience, the creation of new theories in practice, application of theory to practice, and finally observing how theory and practice are shaped through experience. This idea is anchored in the notion that teachers construct theory and practice



simultaneously. And therefore through the careful observation of our experiences, we may be able understand and reveal the meanings within.

### **Examples of other self-study research projects**

Self-study research has been used to improve teaching practice in direct and indirect ways. For instance, Samaras (2011) presents a self-study conducted by a 9<sup>th</sup> grade English and writing teacher in Springfield, Virginia. The teacher was specifically interested in changing her curriculum and teaching pedagogy to better engage students who were struggling with writing their first formal term-paper. Through an analysis of her core problem – lack of student engagement - and a reflection on her teaching decisions and actions, the teacher discovered ways to help students identify writing topics that would engage their interests, not just fulfill the course requirement.

Self-study has also been utilized in higher education to analyze and improve teaching practice. Haigh (2012), whose forty-eight year career as a researcher and historian in academia included mentoring beginning researchers at the University of Auckland in New Zealand, conducted a self-study to investigate how different phases of his career informed what he believed about teaching and research. Haigh wanted to understand the ways that he might improve his teaching practice while helping new researchers develop their skills and abilities. He concluded that a life time of experiences and “wearing a range of academic hats” (p. 700) pushed him to go beyond what he simply found in the literature; allowing him to test theories in practice.

Researchers Brandenburg and Gervasoni (2012) conducted a self-study of their own research ethics. After completing the supervision of a self-study research project with the math instructors at a local elementary school, they were preparing to present the findings at an international conference in Greece. The principal of the elementary school made the comment that they were “going to Greece on the backs of my teachers” (p. 184). This caused Brandenburg and Gervasoni to investigate the nature of their own beliefs about research, ethics, and reciprocity, and how those beliefs informed how their research was written and presented. The initial research that Brandenburg and Gervasoni conducted was a form of collaborative self-study and different than the investigation I conducted. However the subsequent self-study of their research practice raises important questions about the impact of individuals that come into contact with a self-study researcher and how those interactions are dealt with in the interpretation and presentation of self-study research.

### **Issues of concern with self-study as a research method**

There are two particularly challenging issues that must be addressed when conducting self-study research: validity and trustworthiness (Craig, 2009; Hamilton and Pinnegar, 2000; Feldman, 2003; Pinnegar and Hamilton, 2009; Samaras and Freese, 2009). I believe it is important to present a discussion of these issues and how I dealt with them in my research.

Feldman (2003) describes validity as “the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific topic” (p. 26) that is being investigated. He notes that

though the presentation of a self-study investigation may be convincing; that does not prove that what has been written is true. Feldman (2003) further describes validity and truth as the crux of understanding one's own practice. He posits that there is nothing to be gained from stretching the truth to glamorize or glorify the role of the self-study researcher, "Odes to ourselves are of little value to those whom we want to help" (p. 27). Hamilton and Pinnegar (2000) echo a similar notion of self study when they recommend that it is best approached with a willingness "to act with complete integrity" (p. 238) and nurture a sense of "humility" (p. 239) that will aid the researcher to pursue self-study with care. The seriousness with which Hamilton and Pinnegar speak of self-study research is anchored in the notion that in addition to improving teaching practice, self-study research should result in a teaching practice "that stands as an embodied testament to our belief" (p. 238).

As a means of addressing these issues, Craig (2009) proposes that self-study research should include a clear presentation that the investigation takes place in "contextually embedded" (p. 24) real-life situations such as a classroom. She also notes that embedded within the narrative of the self-study should be evidence of "developing knowledge" (p. 24) which reflects the constructivist stance of self-study research (Feldman, 2003; Pinnegar and Hamilton, 2009). How one achieves a level of trustworthiness and validity in self study is anchored to the intentions and beliefs that the researcher holds about self-study in terms of his or her practice.

Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) suggest that self-study researchers must be open to presenting an honest picture of him- or herself in research and practice, even if doing so does not "offer a flattering portrait" (p. 161) of the researcher.

The issues of trustworthiness and validity in my self-study research are addressed in the following ways. First, my research question, “What are the possibilities and impediments for an experienced art teacher to change pedagogies in mid-career?” is designed to help me identify my struggles and possible negative experiences during the process of change. I am opening the scope of my research to the ways that I might not succeed. Second, the use of weekly self-interviews and the pre-determined self-interview questions provide a consistent and structured focus on my teaching practice. Third, participant interviews with former students help to counterbalance my perceptions of experiences within the classroom. And finally, as the narrative of my self-study unfolds, I present instances when I was not the best teacher; moments when I was afraid, vulnerable or overwhelmed. It is uncomfortable to present my failings as a teacher, but I believe the inclusion of this information is crucial to understanding how I cope with change and how best to convey that understanding.

### **Issues of Power I negotiated in this research**

There are two areas in which power is addressed in this research. The first is in the area of self-study as a research method. The second is in my role as a teacher in the classroom and how changing my pedagogy shifted that sense of power.

At the most basic level, self-study research as articulated through Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) is centered on the collapsing of the space between the researcher and the subject. Self-study research in the S-STEP model is concerned with the act of research within teaching practice, rather than research conducted on teaching practice. Therefore,

Pinnegar and Hamilton release notions of objectivity in research, owning that when teachers research their own practice it is fraught with bias, but that does not impact the validity or value of what is found. Craig (2009) expands upon this notion of power by asserting that validity in self-study practice is grounded in trustworthiness rather than truth. The core idea this is that the self-study research illuminates in a believable way the experience of who the teacher is.

Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) also discuss issues of institutional power in relation to self-study. They note that in terms of research and impact on policy, it is normally the academic institutions that hold the power over the teachers in the schools. In this aspect of power, despite my personal feelings of allegiance with art teachers and elementary generalists, and despite studying my own practice as a teacher, I must recognize that I have moved into the role of teacher educator at a university.

The second aspect of power is that which lies within the relationships between the teacher and students in the classroom. This is a challenging area because the very notion of shifting from a teacher-centered pedagogy to a student-centered pedagogy implies a shift in power and a change in how I relate to students. This is a more fundamental and challenging aspect of power. I have grounded my notion of power in a combination of student-centered pedagogy and holistic education taken in balance with the professional expectations of my role as an art methods instructor.

Drawing from John Miller's (2006) discussion of the teacher presence in the classroom, I conceived power as an ebb and flow between the teacher and the students. Cummings (2012) echoes this idea in her discussion of building relationships in the classroom. She describes her connection to students as sharing her passion for art and

engaging in authentic dialog with her students. However, she maintains clear boundaries in her relationships with her students. She states, “As I engage in meaningful and valuable dialog with my students, I never lose sight of my role in their lives – I am their teacher. I acknowledge and respond to the responsibilities and expectations that come with this role.” (p. 200).

Palmer (1998a) echoes this notion of professional responsibilities in the classroom, although his discussion deals with the topic of assigning grades. Palmer suggests that there are issues of power in the classroom that can never be completely resolved because the teacher is required to evaluate student performance and assign grades. But he refutes the claim that a learning community can only exist in a state of pure and equal power. He asserts that the notion of a classroom without inequities of power is an abstract ideal that can never exist. He states that within any group of individuals there will emerge some differences in power. Further, he believes that within a learning community there are certain differences in power that exist as a means to keep the classroom functioning “...such as the leadership task of maintain the boundaries and upholding the standards that define community...” (p. 138). Reflecting on these ideas of the professional responsibilities of the teacher, the idea of personal responsibility begins to emerge. Campbell (2012) specifically discusses the importance of a “democratic, cooperative, and safe classroom” (p. 81). Thus part of the power the teacher holds is the responsibility to protect the human beings within the classroom; and to model ways for the students to understand what is or is not an acceptable way to treat another human being. I find this a crucial aspect of how a teacher educator conducts themselves in the realm of teacher training. As a methods teacher, I am modeling not only how to teach,

but how to form a relationship with students, and how to maintain a long-term teaching practice for my students. This aspect of power in practice is grounded in the notions of how teachers draw identity from their roles. To this end I turn to the work of John Miller (2006) and Parker Palmer (1998a).

John Miller (2006) notes that for teachers to become more fully aware of their own role in the classroom they need to “work on themselves through various practices to become more present, mindful and caring” (p. 135). This idea echoes that of Palmer’s (1998a) notion of how a teacher constructs an undivided sense of self. Palmer describes the divided life as what happens to teachers when they are unable to reconcile their inner beliefs, longings and values within the power structures of the educational institution. This may result in a teacher anchoring their teaching practice in a sense of fear and competition. He suggests that part of what contributes to this division emerges when teachers fail to “nurture a sense of self that both does and does not depend on the responses of others within the classroom” (p. 73). He describes this as the “true paradox” (p. 71) of education. He further suggests that the way for a teacher to mend this division is to seek ways to nurture the self outside of the academic institution. This idea branches off from the notions of teacher identity being constructed through emotional responses to the culture of the classroom (Day and Gu, 2009; Kaniuka, 2012; Kelchtermans, 2009; Zembylas, 2010).

Drawing from these notions of power issues as aspects of my self-study as well as the power structures and shifting ideas of power; I ground my ideas of power as a series of balancing acts. First, the power I draw from my identity is balanced between my existence as a teacher and my existence as a human being. While I construct a large part

of my identity as a teacher based on my work in the classroom; I actively seek ways to nurture this sense of self outside of the classroom. Second, I balance my role as a student-centered teacher with that of my professional responsibilities to provide a methods course. I conceive the classroom as a community of co-learners and students make valuable contributions to the content and direction of that learning, however the university has charged me with providing a methods course and so there are parts of the curriculum that I must ensure are included and covered. In regards to sharing power with students, I balance what I feel will offer them a relevant, authentic opportunity to learn from my own experiences; with a need to honor my own boundaries as a professional and a person.

### **Qualitative Interviewing**

The three interview methods I used in my research (self interview, structured participant interview and art elicitation interview) are part of the family of qualitative interview methods. Qualitative interviewing is a constructivist process, the purpose of which is to generate meaning through interpreting an event (Warren, 2002).

According to Tierney and Dilley (2002) the field of education has utilized the qualitative interview as a major source of data collection more than any other area of social science research. For many years the qualitative interview has been used as the basis of research into educational theory and the development of educational policy. It is particularly suited to the field of education as it offers a depth of understanding not found in other forms qualitative research. While surveys may generate large quantities of data



and observations reveal insights into behavior, qualitative interviews provide an inner narrative of the participants' actions. Qualitative interviews in education explore experiences that take place in educational settings by illuminating the participants' point of view in relation to their experience.

### **Self-Interview**

Keighly et al., (2012) posit that self-interview as research method is useful in that it allows for the natural pauses, non-linear contemplations and occasional interruptions that occur while one is recollecting an event. To this end it is emerging, especially with the use of video and digital recording technology, as a way of capturing data at the subject's preferred pace and in their natural environment. They also suggest that because of the absence of a traditional interview structure, self interviewing allows for richer and more meaningful responses through reflection of the interviewee in a comfortable, familiar environment away from "the discursive demands of a conventional interview" (p. 12).

### **Participant Interviews**

According to Warren (2002) qualitative interviews empower the respondents in a number of ways. It gives voice to their perspectives and value to their interpretations of an event. The participants in a qualitative interview are seen as helping to contextualize and generating understanding of an event. The responses of the participants are given

this importance because the respondents are considered meaning makers in dialogue with the interviewer. Both the interviewer and respondents interact with each other from shifting perspectives throughout the interview. For instance, when speaking to another person, one might shift through the different perspectives of student, adult, spouse, parent, or male or female in order to fully describe the experience. Our different perspectives inform our experiences and act as filters through which meaning is generated. How meaning is constructed is further explored by Silverman (2006). He suggests that the importance of the relationship between the interviewee and interviewer is of utmost value in the construction of meaning in the context of the interview. He cautions against the assumption that questions and answers within the interview are “passive filters” (p. 118) that lead the researcher to the truth. Instead the interviewer and the participant are engaged in constructing a particular world view, together, in a particular place and time in reference to a particular event. Wengraf (2001) echoes this idea, framing it as a “co-production” (p. 25) between the interviewer and the interviewee. It is a conversation. And as such, it can be difficult to untangle this co-production to isolate the contributions that the participant is making.

I chose to use a semi-structured and art elicitation formats for my participant interviews. Semi-structured interviews use a predetermined set of questions but permit the interviewer to ask follow up questions and probe the responses of the interview participants. Although this format does not require the interviewer to be purely objective and rapport with the participant is considered helpful, the interviewer does not lose sight of the goal of the particular research project (Silverman, 2006). This format is best suited to the needs of my research. I wanted to hear what the participants had to say about

particular aspects of the course, but I wanted to do so in a warm, friendly manner. I was able to capitalize on the strong rapport with the participants to gently redirect the conversation back to the interview questions when necessary.

Another factor to consider is the epistemological framework of the interview. The choice of epistemological stance is crucial to how the interview format is chosen, how the data will be gathered and how the world view that is created from the interviewer/participant relationship is interpreted (Silverman, 2006). The epistemological stance I took during the participant interviews was constructivist; because through the interview process the participants and I were able to construct meaning out of our shared experiences in the course. According to Silverman (2006) “interviews are treated as *topics* rather than as a research *resource*.” (p. 119). A constructivist approach rejects the idea that there exists any reality to be discovered or uncovered. Nothing is hidden. No pure, untouched experience. Reality, as such, is in a constant state of interpretation and reinterpretation.

According to Warren (2002) the participant interview uses three types of questions: the main question, the probe, and the follow-up. These three types of questions allow the interviewer to remain flexible and open-ended. The ability to remain flexible is important because it allows the interviewer to recognize irrelevant data and redirect the interview. Equally as important to what is being said, is what is being felt, seen and experienced during the interview. The elements of empathy and appreciation for the respondent’s thoughts, words, feelings and meanings are an important part of the qualitative interview process. As Silverman (2006) notes, part of understanding how meaning is constructed within the interactions of the interviewer and interviewee is to

give equal attention to not only what is being said but how and under what circumstances it is being said.

In general, one of the challenges in qualitative participant interviewing is finding an appropriate number of respondents. I experienced this particular challenge when recruiting interview participants. It took two rounds of requests before I was able to identify four individuals willing to participate in an interview. Despite the empowering nature of the qualitative interview many individuals are still uncomfortable with the idea of being interviewed. Silverman (2006) notes there remain an inherent hierarchy and social structure to human interaction that must be considered during the qualitative interviewing process. Yet another challenge for the interviewer is to remain keenly aware of the direction of the interview and to recognize when the participant may be going off track and gently nudging them back to the topic without breaking the pacing and energy of the interview.

One possible way to mediate the anxiety of the participant is the use of the consent form. Warren (2002) observes that Internal Review Board (IRB) procedures may be seen as too strict given the open ended needs of qualitative interviewing and the role of the participant as co-creator of meaning; ultimately, these procedures are in place to protect the participants from “invasion of privacy, breaches of confidentiality or anonymity, and distress caused by topics raised in the interview” (p. 89). However, these issues are generally seen as a greater problem in long-term, repeated interviews that deal with very sensitive or uncomfortable subjects.

I emailed a request for an interview to all of my former students after the semester had ended and I had given my grades to the Chair of the Department of Art Education. In

the email I explained that I wanted to conduct interviews with former students to discuss certain aspects of my teaching during the semester that they were my students. Attached to the email was the consent form that included the questions that would be asked of the participants, informing them that they were free to choose their own pseudonym for the interview, and requesting that they bring their class portfolio to the interview as we would be conducting part of the interview based on the work in the portfolio. I also informed them that I would be photographing their art work as part of the study. A copy of this consent form is included in the Appendix C.

### **Art Elicitation Interviews**

I conducted art elicitation interviews with the participants based on the two-dimensional artwork in their class portfolio. While we did discuss the three dimensional artwork, the clay sculptures and puppetry, those projects proved to be fragile and difficult to transport to the interview.

In their general discussion of elicitation techniques in qualitative interviews, Johnson and Weller (2002) note that the purpose of elicitation techniques is to help the respondent recall tacit information that might otherwise go undiscovered by the researcher. The aim of these techniques used to "uncover unarticulated informants knowledge" (p. 491).

Because the interviewer has no prior knowledge of how the respondents may understand the particular piece of artwork, art elicitation may reduce the level of interviewer bias during the interview.

Elicitation may be useful at different stages of research, depending on what its purpose may be. It can be used to help develop theory, generate supplemental information, test various hypothesis or to help in constructing models of understanding.

A consideration in using an elicitation technique is that it may be best if the researcher has little information about the topic at hand. For if the researcher is viewed by the participant as ‘the expert’ the interview process may feel like a quiz about a particular topic. This could lead the participant to bend their answers to meet the perceived needs of the interviewer. Also, the interviewer, out of familiarity with a topic, could over-look a crucial piece of information or omit a question. I attempted to mediate this issue by using the art elicitation interview as a means to help the participants focus on how they were feeling during a particular art making activity.

### **Research Ethics and Procedures**

My research followed the following ethical procedures to ensure that my self study research would not compromise my professional responsibilities as an instructor. My research passed Scholarly Review (Appendix B) and I completed a Summary Protocol Form (SPF) (Appendix C), that was reviewed by the Department of Art Education. As part of the ethical protocol for this research, I committed to cause no harm to any participants, including myself. I also promised that the goals and requirements of the course as mandated by Concordia University and Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport would not be compromised or altered.

The format of the participant interviews is described in the SPF. When I emailed a request for an interview to my former students (Appendix C), I included a copy of this consent form (Appendix D) for their perusal. In the form addressed issues of coercion, noting that the interview would take place after the course grades had been submitted to the University. The consent form also addressed the participants' choice of anonymity, assured that no harm would come to them physically or emotionally and made them aware that they were free to withdraw from the interview at any time.

### **Research Procedure**

Preparation for this project began a year in advance of when I began teaching in January 2012. I spent nearly six months preparing a pedagogical approach to my teaching based on the literature of Holistic education. Once I developed a pedagogical underpinning, I began work revamping my curriculum. I had taught four sections of this type of art education methods course during my Master's work at Purdue University and one section during the Winter 2011 semester at Concordia. I looked through my old course outlines and materials and made adjustments to how I would deliver content, what texts I would use and what studio activities would be taught.

Once the course began, I established and followed a routine of conducting the self interview after the class had ended but before reading any student reflections or assignments from that class. I did not want student reflections or content of homework assignments to influence my perceptions of the events of a particular day. I wanted my self interview data to be as accurate as I could possibly manage. Of course, as would be

expected of any teacher and in keeping with holistic practice, after I read student reflections I would attempt to incorporate their questions, ideas or observations into the subsequent classes if at all possible. After the first class session, I went to my office at to conduct the first self-interview. As I began retelling the events of the class and particularly my emotional responses to my teaching decisions, I was overcome with a wave of fatigue. I began to cry as I spoke about how nervous I had been that day. I had not considered that the self-interview might in and of itself trigger an emotional response. Yet, I had maintained a collected demeanor in front of the students for four hours, so it made sense that I have an emotional release afterwards. However, my tears made me feel me feel embarrassed and nervous that someone might see me. After that day, I conducted the self interviews at home where I felt more emotionally secure and comfortable. Sitting at my kitchen table, I would pull out a copy of my questions and make an audio recording with the recording software on my laptop. The audio self interviews averaged about 30 minutes in length and once transcribed, generated 103 pages of data.

The weekly self-interview consisted of the following questions:

1. What did I do today, what were my observable actions?
2. What motivated my decision to take those actions?
3. What aspects of holistic pedagogy were reflected in my actions?
4. What were my emotional responses to my teaching decisions?
5. What were my cognitive responses to my teaching decisions?
6. How did my behavior in class reflect a change in my teaching pedagogy?
7. What can I learn from these observations?



I created these questions after reading a photo-voice analysis strategy presented by Caroline Wang (1998) in her work with a women's health initiative in Yunnan, China. This model, itself based on an earlier work by Wallerstein (1987), photographs are analyzed based on what was observed, what was actually happening, what problem or strength can be identified, and what can be done about the problem. What I liked about this model was the way it used a systematic set of questions to delve into the multiple layers of meaning embedded within a single event. I used this model to develop questions that would help me observe and record: what was happening, my reactions to the occurrence, emotional and cognitive responses to the experience and what can I do or learn from the experience.

After the course was completed, I conducted interview with four former students from the class. These interviews were a combination of semi-structured question-and-answer interviews and art elicitation responses based on artwork created during the course. I met with each participant at place of their choosing, usually a coffee shop near where they lived. Before we settled into the interview, I bought coffee and a snack for each of us. The interview was conducted over my open laptop, which I used to audio record of the interview. The participant interviews lasted on average 50 minutes including the art elicitation interview. The audio of these interviews, once transcribed generated 70 pages of data.

This group of interviews was rewarding and challenging. I felt the class had gone very well, and that I had built a strong and positive relationship with the students. Thus I had to be careful to navigate the line of "too much rapport" (Seidman, p. 81), meaning that their responses might be colored by the positive relationship we had built together

rather than striving to give an objective and personal answer. Keightly, et al., (2012) also discuss interviewer/participant relationships, noting that often interviewees will structure their answers in according to what they perceive are the interviewer's expectations. Thus, I had to listen very carefully during the interviews and allow the participants enough time to talk through their initial nervousness at being interviewed and their hesitancy to make constructive criticisms about the class. As a means of mediating this challenge, using the portfolios as an art elicitation process was very useful. It allowed the participants to recall and discuss the creation of that work and become more attuned to their own experience. To a certain degree this lessened the influence of my presence with them. It was during the art elicitation interview that the participants were most open about the nervousness and confusion they felt in the class and their anxiety about what was expected of their art making ability. This will be described in greater detail in Chapter 6, a discussion of the participant interviews and their responses to the course.

### **Treatment of the data: Grounded Theory Method**

For this study, I employed Grounded Theory Method (GTM) in the treatment of data. Grounded Theory is most commonly used when there is no specific theory that is being tested during research, rather a set of theories emerge during the analysis of the data (Birks and Mills, 2011; Bryant and Charmaz, 2007; Stern and Porr, 2011). More specifically, an agreed upon point in conducting GMT is that the researcher should not embrace a hard and fast set of preconceived notions before going into the research. Through rigorous and repeated mining of the data, core assumptions and theories begin to

emerge. According to Bryant and Charmaz (2007) it is crucial for the researcher to maintain ongoing engagement with the data as theoretical analyses emerge. This method dovetailed well with self-study because I am not testing a theory; rather I am trying to identify certain theoretical underpinnings of an experience. Through the use of grounded theory method I have the flexibility to identify and analyze experiences that I had not anticipated would occur.

The key characteristic of the Grounded Theory Method is the active engagement of the researcher with the data. It is through this engagement that themes and theories begin to emerge. This is done via a repeated fine-and-coarse grained analysis of the data at hand and the careful awareness of not entering into research with any preconceived ideas about theory or findings (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007). The analysis of the data and collection of the data happen simultaneously, and while this process is not linear it does allow for the exhaustion of all possible epistemological interpretations. Once the researcher is no longer able to identify new themes within the data the interpretation is considered saturated (Birks and Mills, 2011; Bryant and Charmaz, 2007; Dey, 2007; Lempert, 2007; Star, 2007; Stern and Porr, 2011).

The strength of grounded theory is that it allows the researcher to investigate phenomena imbedded in everyday life. In my case, I was sifting through the lived experience of changing my pedagogy. This is done through a method of constant comparison wherein the researcher combs back and forth through the data as a means of seeing it with fresh eyes (Star, 2007). Butler-Kisber (2010) describes this process as an “accordion” (Figure 1) because it involves pulling data apart into large thematic categories and then pushing it back together again through making more specific

connections. Through repeated looping of the data the researcher becomes intimately familiar with the material. This familiarity helps one gain an understanding of the broad themes or the “plot” (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, and Bertsch, 2003) of the interview. From the plot categories of the interview, I created large categories based on what Maxwell and Miller (2008) refer to as the similarities in data, meaning these categories are based on “resemblances or common features” (p. 462). These are surface descriptions of the data and are part of the expanding accordion of Butler-Kisber (2010). The most common form of broad analysis is “coding” (Buter-Kisber, 2010; Maxwell and Miller, 2008) and this is how I was able to separate and keep the data organized. I literally pulled apart the data. I made photocopies of my self interview transcripts. I listened to the audio while reading along with the transcripts and highlighted particularly charged or interesting phrases. I then cut up a copy of the transcripts and organized them on a large chart to follow the ‘narrative’ as it flowed over thirteen weeks of class.



*Figure 1:* The ‘expanded accordion’ of data. This image illustrates the how I pulled apart the coarse-grained analysis of the self interview transcripts. I divided the data horizontally by weeks and vertically questions.

Once the data was pulled apart, connections based on meaning and context could be made. These types of connections are based on “contiguity-based relations” (Maxwell and Miller, 2008) and they are derived from the context and meaning behind the data, not merely surface similarities. So what might at first appear to be separate categories based on the characteristics of the data may later be revealed as being closely related in terms of context or meaning. For example, one might create data categories of “fear”, “delight”, “joy”, and “anxiety” and place pieces of data within these categories based on shared similar characteristics. But the same experience could generate the feelings of fear,

delight, joy and anxiety at the same time. Thus, data pieces that do not share similar, descriptive characteristics can in fact be connected by contiguity as the same context gave rise to them. I repeated this cycle of listening, pulling the data apart into large, course grained categories and then working it through a fine grained analysis to identify major themes until I found no new information. The analysis took roughly three months, the summer immediately following the semester of research.

Key to the process of grounded theory method is the use of a memoing as a means of data interpretation. Memos create a conceptual map that help the researcher identify themes, categories, and eventually theories that are held within the data (Birks and Mills, 2011; Bryant and Charmaz, 2007; Dey, 2007; Lempert, 2007; Star, 2007; Stern and Porr, 2011). Memos are written continuously through the research process as a means to help conceptualize the data that will eventually reveal theory. The ongoing and often uncertain nature of memo writing can present challenges to the researcher. One might hold too tightly to a pattern that appears to be emerging very early in the analysis or possibly attempt to force an analytical framework on to the data too soon. It is suggested that both of these challenges are typical of researchers unfamiliar with grounded theory method (Lampert, 2007). To mitigate the impact of my newness to the use of GTM, I proceeded with great caution when pulling apart and sifting through the data. I listened to the audio recording of my self interview with the written transcripts in front of me three times, using colored pencils to code the data in the transcript log and to make notes. Once I pulled the data part in coarse-grained analysis, I read through the transcripts a fourth time to check for themes or ideas that I might have missed. I worked with the transcripts physically as well, moving blocks of texts. I found that changing the physical

format in which I viewed the data allowed me to begin to trace patterns and themes through out the semester.

Because GTM requires that the researcher have no preset ideas about a theoretical framework, it raises the question of the role of the literature review. Lempert (2007) and Dey (2007) openly address this problem. Both suggest working with the literature as a means of validity-checking to see not only how well the theory is grounded empirically in the data but also conceptually with the established literature of the field. Lempert (2007) specifically notes that working with the literature helps one understand the theories being revealed and helps the researcher fill in gaps in their own understanding of the literature. She states, “what may seem like a totally new idea to me (an innovative break through in my research) may simply be a reflection of my ignorance of the present conversation” (p. 254). Stern and Porr (2011) also discuss the use of two literature reviews. They suggest a preliminary review that helps to set the foundation for the research and an “evolving review” (p. 50) that grows as the data is being analyzed. The evolving literature review should provide clarification of and validity to the data.

In this thesis I used a preliminary literature review of holistic education and pre-service elementary generalists to inform the creation of the pedagogical framework that I would use during the research. The evolving literature review grew as themes began to emerge from the data during analysis.

In the following chapter I will present a week-by-week description of the research project. The description will provide further context for the time and space in which the research took place. Embedded in the description is the balancing act of shifting notions of power. Using content from my self interviews, I will reflect on my motivations and aspects of holistic pedagogy and will offer a small scale discussion of the main themes of each week.



## CHAPTER 4: DESCRIPTION

In this chapter, I present a week-by-week account of what happened in the course in which my research took place. I include the salient details of the study as they pertain to my actions, the class discussions and activities and studio activities. I used the transcripts from my self-interviews to construct a description of the events of the semester. My goal is to offer insight into how I was able to enact my pedagogical model in my own classroom. I observed that the degree to which I was able to enact my proposed changes was predicated on my perceptions of how the students were responding to my teaching. My perceptions offer insight into the ebb and flow that is characteristic of how change takes hold over time. Immediately following the description of each class, I present a discussion of my motivations for the actions I took on that day and the aspects of Holistic education that informed those actions.

This course took place during the 2012 Winter Semester. We convened from 9:00am until 1:00pm on Wednesdays. The class was held in the Undergraduate Studio located in the Engineering, Computer Science and Visual Arts Integrated Complex (EV Building) of Concordia University's Sir George Williams Campus. The Undergraduate Studio is a shared space and as such, can become a little crowded with art works in progress and a little rushed as the classes are scheduled very tightly throughout the day. Because of the tight schedule I was happy to have been assigned the first class of the day.

I prefer to arrive at the classroom early to set up and take a few moments to gather my thoughts before the students arrive.

In the room are work tables of varying sizes, generally able to accommodate between three and five students. Along one wall are windows; below the windows are low storage cabinets that run the length of the windows. The top of these cabinets double as work space or a place to keep three-dimensional work in progress. There is a large, metal drying rack that is shared among all the studio classes. The back wall of the studio is covered in a soft particle board where studio work can be hung for in-class critiques. The studio also has a large, double-basin wash sink, cabinets for palettes and water dishes, and a second set of storage cabinets opposite the window that hold art prints, magazines, and newspapers. This cabinet is the cutting area and stays relatively clean, so this is where I ask students to place their coats and backpacks during class. The classroom is also equipped with a computer console that attaches to a projector, so one can show PowerPoint presentations or other media. There is also a double-sided chalk board. Despite being a fairly large room, it can feel a little crowded, especially during painting or printmaking activities.

Adjoining the classroom is a supply room and additional storage space for each instructor. Each student in a studio course pays a \$20 studio fee that helps to offset the cost of art supplies. The art materials are fairly standard: tempera and acrylic paint, watercolor paint, dry media such as pencils, oil pastels, crayons and colored pencils. There are also assorted papers, fabric, buttons, cloth and yarn. The classes also have access to a nice selection of clay and clay tools; inks, brayers, linoleum blocks and plexi-glass for printmaking.

In my course there were 27 students, four male and 23 female. The majority of these students were in teaching or education related majors. Twelve were in Early Childhood/Elementary Education and 8 were students enrolled in Child Studies. Because this class could also be taken as an elective, some of the students were enrolled in fields not directly related to teaching. In the class there were four Design students, one Anthropology student, one student from Arts and Sciences and one from Etudes Français.

### **WEEK ONE: January 4, 2011**

We began with an index card.

I asked my students to write one or two words about how they were feeling at that exact moment. I participated in the activity as well. The goal of this exercise was to include the voice of the students from the very first moment of class. It offered them a chance to voice how they were feeling and also to hear what their classmates were feeling. There were giggles and shuffling of chairs after the sixth time I read the word “Nervous”.

After this initial exercise I told the story of my first day in 10<sup>th</sup> grade art with Georgette Griffith. *She had stood next to my desk, chatting idly with me before class. And as the bell rang, she put her hand on the desk, smiled, and said, ‘I’m glad you’re here.’* Coming back to the present moment, I said to the class, “In case you haven’t heard it from anyone this week, ‘I’m glad you’re here.’” And rolling the cart of art supplies to the center of the room, we started our first art project.

I wanted to begin with art projects that related to something in the lives of my students: their personal lives, their professional lives, their lives as young teachers, or their lives as new artists. I explained the first art project would be an illustration of the personal path, a map of how we arrived in this classroom at this moment. We looked at a PowerPoint that I had prepared with images of different kinds of maps: a treasure map, a map of the human heart, a road map, and a map drawn on a person's hand. I explained that the map the students would make could take on any form, any color, any shape, or any design. Their maps could begin at the point in their life, but they needed to end in this art class. While the students were working I noticed they looked very tense, their shoulders were high and their faces appeared very stern and drawn. They hunched over their work in stony silence.

After they completed this project, we took a break and when we returned after 15 minutes, we reviewed the syllabus. Once we were finished with the syllabus, I reviewed the assignments that would be due the following week. I asked the students to write a two page reflection on their own elementary art experience: Was it positive or negative? What kinds of projects did they make? In what ways did those early experiences inform how they thought about making art and teaching art now? The rationale behind this assignment was to encourage the students to think about the factors that have shaped their values and beliefs about art education. The second assignment was to bring in an object, or picture of an object, that made them feel powerful. This was the first of the out-of-class assignments. We would use this object of power as part of a discussion of ways to stay grounded when teaching.

Once we finished with the discussion of the assignments we moved on to the final project of the day, The Patchwork Self. I chose this title because it conveyed a notion of constructing identity as a teacher; of pulling together pieces of ideas or feelings into something new and personal. We discussed what symbols are associated with teaching - a red apple, a check mark, the numbers “1,2,3” or the letters “ABC”. I asked the students to reflect on whether they felt those symbols represented them. Did they accept the symbols that society had created for their profession? I asked the students to think about what symbols might represent how they felt about themselves as teachers. Working with felt, they created a set of personal images that they believed represented what it meant to be a teacher. I had anticipated they would be very hesitant during this project because it seemed more abstract, possibly more daunting because of cutting fabric, making patterns, and creating a symbol. I was pleasantly surprised by how engaged they were with the fabric. They were visibly happier and more relaxed. Their shoulders were down, they were talking happily with each other and they worked solidly and diligently for nearly 2 hours.

The use of written reflections at the end of class was a new procedure for me. I felt it would offer me a better connection to the students as well as give them a direct line of communication with me. I asked the students to reflect on their thoughts and feelings about the class, or ask questions.

### **What motivated the actions I took today?**

My goal was to begin every class with a studio project in order to pull myself away from the tendency to lecture and talk. Story telling is a great love of mine, but I am aware that the more stories I tell the fewer I am able to hear. This research is about adapting my teaching to encourage more participation and interaction with the content of the course. The decision to include very specific, minimum fifteen minute breaks was an attempt to subvert some students from the use of texting and Facebook during class by actually designating a specific time for social media.

When I looked through my previous studio projects for this methods course I was struck by how much I used the elements of art and principles of design. The decision to work with the felt pieces for the “patchwork self” project was a way into a different media and working modality, for the students and for me

The use of written, daily reflections was a new format for me. I have never used daily reflections in my classes. However, I took a class that required a written reflection at the end of each week’s class. I realized how meaningful it was for me as a student; and so I decided to try it with my class.

### **What aspects of holistic pedagogy informed my actions?**

The notion of connections was the aspect of holistic pedagogy that was crucial today. Starting with the one/two word responses and Georgette’s story, I was attempting to lay the groundwork upon which to build connections to my students through our

common understanding and feelings about an experience. This idea is reflected in J. Castro's (2012) description of the art classroom as a "network of relationships" (p. 93) that hinge on the interconnection of the individual and the group. It also echoes John Miller's (2006) discussion of connection as an essential element of learning, framing it in the idea the simultaneous connection of the self with the others and with a universal consciousness that thus nurtures a more compassionate perspective. And it echoes Campbell's (2011, 2012) discussion of the importance of connection in facilitating better communication within the classroom and orienting students towards a stance of self reflection. I chose the stories, activities and studio experiences to set the tone of my teaching as open and warm. This is a reflection of how Palmer (1998a) describes the act of teaching as generous and hospitable act towards students. And it was my attempt at striving towards the state of care described by Noddings (1984) wherein the care is an active process between the one giving care and the one receiving care; each reciprocating the actions of the other. In Noddings cycle of care, it is the act of reciprocity that strengthens the connection between the one giving care and the one receiving it and encourages further acts of caring.

The Personal Path and Patchwork Self studio activities were designed to allow the students a chance to reflect on their own life experiences as pre-service teachers and to use art to facilitate these reflections; bringing their experiences into a physical form. This echoes Richmond's (1998) notion of art making as a way that students reassure themselves of their own existence. Freyermuth (2012) also reflects this idea when she discusses how her students were careful in choosing art materials in order to adequately convey the meaning of an experience.

The spiritual aspect of holistic pedagogy was a part of what happened today. I was trying to observe my responses and reactions in the class. I studied the non-verbal cues from the students and decided when to speak and when to remain quiet. This reflective of Brown's (1998) discussion of the need for teachers to be observers of their own actions in order to better understand their impact on the classroom environment. Palmer (1999) and J. Miller (2006) both echo this idea in their discussions of the importance of teacher presence in the classroom. Both advocate the need for teachers to be aware of how their own thoughts and feelings influence actions in the classroom.

## **WEEK TWO: January 11, 2012**

This morning I introduced materials that came from of the reflections from the previous week's class. One student asked me about the rationale for the course, for my teaching style, and for the art projects that we were doing. So I gave a brief introduction to my current teaching philosophy and my rationale for teaching an arts method class. What I presented was based on the themes in my research proposal, the four pillars of Balance, Embracing, Making Space and Engaging. I realized I viewed my students as young teachers that I hoped would stay in the profession for 20 or 30 years, and therefore my rationale for the course was based on three things: meaning, applicability, and sustainability. I wanted to teach art methods in a way that could sustain these students throughout their career, not just demonstrate an art project that would work for 30 minutes on a Friday afternoon. I told the students that I wasn't going to emphasize the concept of 'burn out'; because I felt like that would be giving up on them as teachers



before they had even started their career. I explained that each class was going to be somehow connected to one of these four pillars; because I did not view this as simply a methods course, but also as an older teacher interacting with younger teachers. I wanted to not only share methods of art but also ways of finding strength and joy in the profession of teaching. To this end, I noted that it was more important to me that my students be open to experiencing making art, and not worrying about issues of perfection.

We then took some time to look of student examples of art that were based on or derived from the art projects they had done last week: the Personal Path map and the Patchwork Self of teacher symbols. Then we moved into the first studio project of the day, watercolor technique. What I planned for this project was to simply experiment with watercolor paints, to give the students a chance to see how watercolors could be used in different ways. I began by demonstrating ways of using watercolor paints, explaining that watercolors have a reputation of being very simple to use when in fact they are not. I gave the students some time to work with the watercolors before moving on to the next part of the activity. I asked the students to use the watercolor paint to express six adjectives and/or verbs using only colors, lines, and shapes – no words. To help the students get started, I had two baskets with words printed on small slips of paper inside each; one basket contained verbs and the other contained adjectives. As the students progressed through the project, I moved through the room offering assistance where needed, but like last week, I tried to allow the students some space to work on their own.

We had a short discussion on the general developmental characteristics of early elementary students. I showed images of artwork from some of my former students so they could get a general idea of typical elementary student work. We then had our first

student driven discussion on classroom management. We began this discussion by addressing the question, ‘What is a classroom and how do you perceive it to function?’ And from that question I asked the class to describe a well managed classroom and offer ideas about what they might think are the particular challenges in art class. It was quite a good discussion, the students had a variety of perceptions about classroom management what a classroom is and how it should function properly. One student in particular described the classroom as a living thing and therefore customized space for teacher and students. However, there were some simple answers such as, ‘a place to learn’ or ‘a place to ask questions’. After that discussion, we divided into seven groups. I then handed each group a page on which I’d written a classroom management ‘disaster’. Each group was tasked with reading through the scenario, describing what they perceived was happening with the teacher, what was happening with the student and what would be the best way to handle it or prevent it from happening in the future. What I did not reveal at the beginning was that each of these scenarios came from my own first two years of teaching, when I was fresh out of college. I did not realize how difficult it would be to listen to a class of young pre-service teachers criticize the decisions that I made during my early teaching career. In my self interview I describe my emotional response to that activity, “I could feel my body tensing as the first few scenarios were critiqued. And then as it [the discussion] continued I wanted to shout, ‘What do you know? You weren’t there!!’”

The idea to do this activity came from Parker Palmer’s (1998a) discussion of teachers sharing their humanity and the experience of teaching with students. It also ties with his idea of the paradox of teaching, where things can go so smoothly and perfectly

one minute and turn into an unmitigated disaster the next. I also felt that using examples from my own teaching experience might provide a more realistic perspective on classroom management, mostly through the sheer banality of the particular instances. I recalled from my own university methods courses on classroom management, the presentation of extreme cases of discipline issues in the classroom. And of course those extreme cases do happen, but not every day. I felt there was no need to tell war stories to my students; they will face enough battles of their own in the future. After each group had presented its perception and solution of the particular scenario I revealed to them that it was in fact me, I was the teacher in every single case. From there we begin to discuss ideas such as discipline vs. punishment, redirecting and the importance of routine and relationships in the classroom. A couple of the students were coaches and had a lot of first-hand experiences of their own to add to the discussion.

We then took our break. When they came back we discussed the objects of power that they had brought to class. This was their first out of class assignment: bring an object or an image of an object that made them feel strong. We talked about the need to have a relationship with power in the classroom, and what power means in the classroom. What does it mean to share power? And also, especially at this point in their careers, I wanted to introduce the concept of building a reservoir of ideas or objects or concepts that make them feel strong as a means of managing the sometimes bumpy transition that is the first few years of teaching. Each student made a short presentation to the class on why they chose this particular object as a symbol of personal power. I enjoyed the variety of the objects and how different students conceptualized the idea of power. One student brought in a passport, noting that it represented the power of freedom and the ability to

move and learn. Another student wore a ring from her grandmother because it represented the power of family. And another student, a swimmer, brought in a picture of a starting block used in a swim meet, because they loved the feeling of physical power when they swam.

We then began the symbolic self portrait project. This is based on a very old art project, the portrait project wherein the teacher draws the student's silhouette on black paper, and then the student cuts it out and glues it on white paper. I remember doing this activity when I was in Kindergarten. This time there would be no black silhouettes, no blank shadows; the students would fill these portraits with personal symbols about their own identity, their interests, their goals and their values. They portraits could be completed in watercolor paint, color pencils, oil pastel, colored pencils or crayons depending on what each individual student preferred. To begin, I set up a chair in the back of the classroom and the students took turns sitting in the chair. While one student sat in the chair, another student held a flashlight and cast a shadow of that student onto a paper hanging on the wall next to the seated student. I traced a quick silhouette on white paper, and then once each student had their own silhouette, they were to fill it with representations of themselves. This activity was a continuation of the self reflective process we began the week before.

### **What motivated the actions I took today?**

The choice to use my own teaching experience as the subject of the classroom management discussion was taken from an idea of sharing the ups and downs of teaching

that I had read in Palmer's (1998a) *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. Palmer (1998a) discusses the importance of being authentic and human when sharing the experience of teaching. So I thought I would try a different approach to opening the discussion of classroom management in art than I normally would. I wanted the class discussion to be based events that really happened and were challenges they might face in a typical classroom environment.

The decision to share my teaching pedagogy and philosophy was based on a direct question about my teaching philosophy asked in one of the written reflections. It was a valid question; the student was essentially asking "So what?" And I believe the best way to answer that question is to be open about it.

The object of power activity was focused on a notion from Palmer (1998a) wherein he notes that teachers need to form a sense of identity outside of the classroom. This activity was meant to stand in a bit of juxtaposition with the Patchwork Self – which dealt with symbols of teaching. In this activity, the students were focused on an object that made them feel powerful personally. The idea that I related to the class was the importance of finding a sense of strength and belief in one's self would help them navigate the tougher times in the classroom.

It may be noted that the activities in this course can still be considered teacher directed. I would like to address my reasons for approaching the curriculum in this manner. First is the issue of the pre-service generalist population. This group of students typically has little to no experience looking at or making art and this makes them anxious upon entering an art education methods course (Jeffers, 1993; Kawalchuk and Stone, 2000; Lakey, Manifold, and Zimmerman, 2007; Miraglia, 2008). I was trying to help

them learn to make and approach art in a way that would help them feel successful at what they were doing. Secondly, this was an art education methods course and there was still content that I was required by the University and the Province of Quebec. And thirdly, the thrust of my research was about changing to a more student centered pedagogy. As will be discussed further in the Analysis Chapter, Trigwell, et al., (2005) posit that there is a continuum that exists between a teaching pedagogy that is completely teacher centered and on that is completely student centered. My research is an investigation of how I navigated my way across that continuum, without any formal training in or living models of student centered pedagogy. Bearing these three factors in mind may help explain and contextualize my use of what may be considered teacher directed activities.

### **What aspects of holistic pedagogy informed my actions?**

During this class session I tried to pull myself further into the idea of connection with my students and to provide them with more agency in contributing to the content of the class. Drawing from J. Castro's (2012) notion of the need for personal investment of students and teachers in the classroom, I asked my students to discuss and analyze classroom challenges that I faced as a young teacher. In doing so, the students were able to apply the experiences they've had thus far in the classroom to scenarios drawn from real-life experiences. In offering my students a look at an aspect of my own life as a young teacher, I was striving for the openness and vulnerability that Palmer (1998a) describes as existing at the intersection of the private and public realms of teaching. This

also describes an aspect of holistic education discussed by John Miller (2006) about the importance of being human in the classroom; realizing and accepting that the teacher might not have all the answers.

### **WEEK THREE: January 18, 2012**

When the students arrived they continued work on their symbolic self portraits. After they worked for about an hour we regrouped to discuss a few aspects of what was required for their written work. I handed back their first written assignment, the reflective essay. We reviewed the assignment sheet for the second writing assignment, the art criticism paper.

I had prepared an activity for our museum trip. In the past, when I took my art methods classes to a museum I initiated an activity based on elements of art and principles of design. It was a basic “search and identify” activity: find a yellow triangle, find a wavy line, find an artwork that was symmetrical, etc. This would be followed by my choosing a painting, gathering my students around it and demonstrating the steps to satisfactorily complete an art criticism paper based on Feldman’s (1967) model - description, analysis, interpretation and judgment. It was, even for me, quite boring. This time I instead developed a “sensory scavenger hunt” that would give the students an opportunity to find works of art that elicited in them different emotional responses. I gave each student a piece of paper with six things to find at the museum:

1. Find an artwork that makes you want to travel, and to where.
2. Find an artwork that you would like to have in your home, and in what room.

3. Find an artwork that makes you feel safe, and tell me why.
4. Find an artwork that makes you want to giggle, and tell me why.
5. Find an artwork that is creepy or disturbing, and tell me why.
6. Find an artwork that could be your best friend, and tell me why.

I participated in this activity as well, as interested in my own response to the works of art as I was in theirs. As I walked through the museum I was impressed with how seriously they took the assignment. I quietly joined different groups of students as they moved through the museum.

When we returned to the classroom, the students shared what they ‘found’ at the museum. I enjoyed listening to the discussion and was happy with the positive and fun manner that the students spoke to one another. If one student discussed a piece of artwork, another might say “Oh, I saw that too!” or “Oh really - where did you see that?” I collected all of the responses from the museum and after the students completed their reflection papers they went home for the day.

I had scheduled an appointment with a student after class that day. Their partner had been sick, in and out of the hospital, awaiting surgery. This student was going to have to miss several classes and we were making arrangements to help them keep up with the work in class. I would have at any point in my career taken time to speak with the student, to listen to them, and to help them. I remembered something that I read in Noddings (1984), that to be in a state of caring with a student is to put our external issues aside during the interaction and give the student one’s full attention. So I was more mindful of listening to this student today. So when my student sat down, took her glasses



off, and said, “I just need to tell you what’s happening.” I did not interrupt. I did not give advice. I did not make any comments like, “Oh, I know exactly how you feel.” I simply gave my full, focused, undivided attention.

### **What motivated the actions I took today?**

As I read through their first written assignment [the Reflective Essay – assignment one] I noted many formatting errors, lack of citations and so forth. In addition there were four or five students that did not turn in the assignment at all. I felt part of what I should do was to help students understand what is expected in the written portion of the course.

Being firm about the importance of writing and following the academic format indicated in the syllabus is a practical as well as professional issue. This is a university course and as students they need to be able to write in an academic format. These students are also training to be teachers and there is a level of professional writing and keeping deadlines that is involved in the teaching profession. Reviewing these issues did not feel holistic to me, but it felt necessary.

My motivation for the museum visit was that I think students in methods courses should have the opportunity to look at works of art in real life not just online. Many of these students have not taken an art class before and several have never been to a museum. Luckily the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts is close by and so we are able to view art in the community. That is another nice aspect of going there; it is a part of the local environment. The motivation for the Sensory Scavenger hunt was to give the

students and opportunity to engage with artwork in an evocative and non-threatening way.

I found myself struggling to find the balance between the firmness and the openness that I perceived as being part of holistic art education pedagogy. I feel a strong sense of accountability because of the nature of a methods course. The awareness that I am the one and only art course they will have in their professional training and I have thirteen weeks to organize what I believe they need to know to teach art. This is a particular conundrum. This is a methods class and I am the professional, the source of knowledge, the expert. Yet, I am trying to apply a student-centered pedagogy with students that have no experience in art education. To hold that tension was a bit of a challenge.

### **What aspects of holistic pedagogy informed my actions?**

This session was informed by Palmer's (1998a) notion of bringing a big idea about a subject to the center of inquiry in the class. In this case the big idea was the relationship of my students to works of art at the Montreal Museum of Fine Art. My action of designing the questions to be used during the activity is a reflection of J. Castro's (2012) idea of "designing constraints that enable artistic inquiry" (p. 90). Castro describes this as one of the ways a teacher helps students to make connections when interacting with art – in this case the viewing of art rather than the making of art. I would also suggest that the very act of planning the trip to the museum alludes to a designed constraint based on the fact that several of my students had never been to the museum as

an act of leisure or learning. Within this context I acted as teacher, guide and touchstone as my students navigated their way through this new experience. Another aspect of the lesson was informed by the notion of Jeffers' (2012) empathic connection to and through art. My hope was to guide students to individual emotional responses to the works they saw. As the students and I worked together in the museum, one can see echoes of J. Miller's (2006) and Palmer's (1998a) discussion of teacher presence. I was not absent from the process, rather I was engaged simultaneously with my students in pondering the same set of questions. This is reminiscent of the discussion by both J. Castro (2012) and Freyermuth (2012) regarding the engagement of the teacher and the students in the act of inquiry and contributing to the content of teaching and learning in the classroom. Another aspect of the class session was the increased level of student responses to each other during and after the field trip. This aspect of connection reflects J. Miller's (2006) discussion that greater community connection between students can lead to deeper meaning and a sense of joy in the classroom. This notion is repeated in Noddings (1984) notions of complete care; J. Castro's (2012) discussion of a strong network of relationships; and Freyermuth's (2012) observation of increased levels of student support for each other's learning process in holistic pedagogy.

And finally there was an aspect of holistic education reflected in my behavior as the teacher. By identifying when to transmit information such as reviewing the next assignment, participating in the scavenger hunt, but also stepping into the role of guide when the students had questions, this is an example of John Miller's (2006) rhythm in holistic teaching.

## **WEEK 4 – JANUARY 25, 2012**

Today we opened with an exercise in painting with non-traditional tools. Using, tempera paint and brushes, sticks, sponges, burlap, forks and spoons, crumpled paper; anything that would engrave texture into the paint; the students experimented with textures and colors. We then moved into a discussion of art history. We began with a group discussion based on the out of class assignment questions: “Why is the history of anything important?” and “Why do we keep stuff?” In sharing their responses to the out of class assignment, we entered into a discussion of how the students perceived history, their place in history and their stance on how history unfolds and feeds the future. This led us to then consider how one’s individual responses might influence what they did or did not include in their own art history curriculum one day. After the group discussion I made a short PowerPoint presentation on ways to incorporate art history into the classroom: thematically, culturally, style/medium or technology and chronologically.

Class ended with another painting project with the theme, ‘A quiet walk in winter’. First we took some time to imagine a walk through the snow. What would their walk look like? Were they walking through a city? Were they in a forest or rural area? Was it windy? After we took some time to think about what the walk might look like, I talked about how paint behaves. I framed the painting as an experiment, versus trying to learn to use tempera paint. I wanted them to get a feel for the medium. I also suggested the use of different colors of paper or different sizes of paper when working with elementary students. Each of the students took an over-sized piece of brown paper for their work. Both because of the large pieces of paper and the large number of students in

the course, students needed to spread out – working on the floor or side areas to accommodate the size of their paintings. I chose to work large to give the students an experience using a different size format for their artwork. I chose brown paper because it would show through the white paint and create a shadow effect as the students experimented with using water to change the opacity of the white tempera paint. The finished pieces were done in white paint on brown roll paper, with crayons used as needed for details.

### **What motivated the actions I took today?**

The students asked in the reflections for specific activities they could do with their students, many of them referenced how much they enjoyed the museum activity and wanted to learn about similar activities. They perceived an activity such as the Sensory Scavenger Hunt as something they could envision themselves doing with their own students. I was interested in finding ways to help students build a relationship to art; which is how I framed the art criticism, art history and aesthetics aspects of the course. It is a way of building a relationship to art and keeping it personal, as opposed to a disciplinary action [as in a discipline of art]. It was difficult to completely step away from the basic structure DBAE, it was as if it was imprinted onto my pedagogical DNA. But as I moved further into the study, I found ways, such as the Sensory Scavenger Hunt or the Personal Paths to slowly refocus how I perceived teaching art.

In our discussion about why we keep things in relation to history, some of the students mentioned that objects help to tell stories. Others noted that objects held the power of memory and that is why these objects should be kept.

### **What aspects of holistic pedagogy informed my actions?**

Through the use of the out-of-class assignments I was able to bring more of the students' experiences and perspectives into forming the content of the class discussion. This echoes J. Miller's (2006) and Campbell's (2011, 2012) discussion of connecting the classroom content to student experiences. Student contribution to class content is also reflected in J. Castro's (2012) discussion of a "robust complex learning system" (p. 94) by requiring each member of the classroom – students and teacher alike – to contribute to the learning of the community. This also echoes Freyermuth's (2012) discussion of increased student empowerment in relation to learning.

The holistic aspect of making connections is evident as well. By connecting the idea of history and art history to student perceptions of history and historic value, the students find themselves able to make more and stronger connections to the content. This reflects Campbell's (2005, 2011, 2012) idea of helping students make connections to their own sense of self and their own values through the practice of inquiry. Campbell contends that through this type of self-reflection, students are able to make connections not only to content but to each other.

The use of art historical images was reflective of Freyermuth's (2012) discussion of art historical images as points of inquiry into discussion of the human relationship with

and through art. The studio activities, dealing with physical and emotional aspects of painting, were informed by Richmond's (1998) discussion of the importance of art making practice in the classroom. In it, he posits making art fulfills a need to create and helps to reaffirm a sense of the self in the world. He also observes that key to the experience of art making is the pleasure of using tools and materials and engaging the physical senses in the process of creating.

## **WEEK 5 – FEBRUARY 1, 2012**

Today I arrived early and prepared for the quiz. It was an application quiz, so no memorization and they could use their notes if they wanted. This required the students to take a stance on a topic we had discussed in class. An example of a question from Application Quiz 1: "Based on our class discussion and your knowledge of teaching thus far, what do you believe are two of the most important factors in classroom management in art? Please support your answers." The students finished the quiz in about an hour.

After the quiz, we discussed the out of class assignment: Images of Heartbreaking Beauty. This was how I decided to tackle aesthetics, coming to art with the heart. I had asked each student to find an image of heartbreaking beauty to send to me. I put each image into a PowerPoint presentation, in the order I had received the image. The discussion began with each student talking about why they felt the image was beautiful. I was struck that no one said their object was beautiful exclusively based on color or shape. Each image, though beautiful, was linked to an event or a person that the student remembered fondly. It was the relationship to the memory that made the object beautiful.

The studio project was a flat-loom weaving activity. We looked at examples of different types of weaving across styles and cultures. I lead them through the entire activity from measuring and cutting the loom, to wrapping the warp and starting to weave. This project took us through the end of the class session.

### **What motivated the actions I took today?**

I wanted my student to participate in generating content for the classes as much as possible. The decision to include the Images of Heartbreaking Beauty grew from this desire to include not only the voices of my students but images that they chose as well.

The pedagogical decision behind the quiz was simply to provide another way for them to convey what they know; and to convey knowledge about themselves and of themselves to me. Though it is a quiz-format, it is in reality just a brief discussion. It is a way for me to know how the students are processing the information of the class. I chose the weaving project because I have observed in my past teaching experience the tactile experience of working with yarn in combination with the repetitive, meditative movements of weaving can be quite soothing for a group of students.

### **What aspects of holistic pedagogy informed my actions today?**

The main holistic theme of this class session was the inclusion of images that the students found beautiful and using those images as the basis of our discussion in class. This is reflected in J. Miller's (2006) discussion of the importance of recognizing all



aspects of the students' abilities and interests in the classroom. It also echoes what Campbell (2012), J. Castro (2012) and Freyermuth (2012) discuss in terms of increased student agency over their own learning.

## **WEEK 6 – FEBRUARY 8, 2012**

The original lesson plan was to begin with a continuation of the weaving lesson from last week, but the students were at many different stages of completion on that lesson. I decided to open with a drawing lesson. I felt that it would be a more cohesive way to begin the class session if we started on something together. The project was drawing vessels. A number of the students had written in their reflections that one of the things they wanted to learn in this class was how to improve their drawing skills. So I devised a drawing lesson that I thought would be suitable to pre-service generalists – a way that they could experience drawing that did not include the pressure of drawing in a realistic manner. When I first mentioned that we were going to draw, many of the students became very uneasy. There were audible sighs and some frowns. It is curious because, according to the written reflections, a majority of the students wanted to learn how to draw. Yet when I made this first attempt to teach some drawing basics, I was met with some very unhappy groans and eye-rolling; one student slumped in her chair and crossed her arms in front of her.

The lesson began with a few warm-up exercises; scribbling a series of loose ovals on newsprint. I wanted the students to get the feeling of moving a pencil across paper. I suggested that when they felt ready, the students could take that same movement and the

same shape and begin a drawing on white drawing paper. This initial movement created an ellipse. I explained the idea of an ellipse and how the students could build around it to form a vessel. We then drew a vessel that represented how we thought about teaching. The students came up with many interesting ideas: a bird bath, one became a shower spout connected to the trunk of an elephant. Many drew some very beautiful flower vases and there were a few tea pots. One student drew a most exquisite blue and white China tea-cup and she had all completely set in a black and white tiled kitchen.

I was happy to observe the imagery and style of the finished artwork reflected the personality of the student that created the art. I explained that I had never before taught this lesson in this way. I had taught it as ‘we’re all going to draw a hat or we’re all going to draw a fishbowl’ and then whatever is coming out of the hat or living in that fishbowl was left up to the student. The vessels they drew were beautiful.

The students had an out of class assignment due on this day, it was to identify and briefly discuss an educational philosophy or theorist that they related to as a teacher. They worked in groups, on large white pieces of paper illustrated the philosophy or philosophies that were represented in their group. Each group then presented their information to the class. The discussion wasn’t all that I wanted it to be; I felt we did not engage deeply with the different teaching philosophies represented by the groups, and that was my fault. I would like to improve my skills in discussion facilitation.

I gave a short PowerPoint presentation about how philosophical movements in education related to art education philosophy and pedagogy. I included major movements in art education. I photographed those posters and emailed the images to the class so everybody would have the notes from each group. We then talked about their lesson plan

ideas and posters for their final project. And then we prepared two of the plates for the printmaking session that would happen the following week. I ended the class with some additional images and resources about weaving because a number of students had written in the reflections how much they enjoyed the flat-loom project and wanted to know more.

### **What motivated the actions I took today?**

The original lesson I wrote was to open with a continuation of the weaving project. I had always begun my classes by finishing what was left undone from the previous week. However, the students were at all different stages of completion with the weaving project that I thought it would feel disorganized and result in a lot of down time for some students. I decided to start with a drawing lesson so that we all begin together as a community. I think that is something I need to work on with this group: we need to begin together. Mornings can be a bit hectic and I felt like I needed to pull us all together as a group when we arrive. I think I'm going to move any continuation and catch up to the end. There is something about starting together on a fresh project.

The motivation for starting the printing plates today was that I wanted there to be an element of surprise to the day of printmaking. And from a pragmatic standpoint, it gave the collograph plates a week to dry.

## **What aspects of holistic pedagogy informed my actions?**

My decision to begin the class together as a cohesive whole was informed by the aspects of spirituality and connection. The spiritual aspect was drawn from J. Miller's (2006) notion of being present with the students and Brown's (1999) discussion of being aware that a teacher's intuitive understanding of the classroom. The vessel drawing activity itself reflected J. Miller's (2006) discussion of mindfulness in that it drew the students' focus onto the single act of drawing ovals on the paper. And it echoes Richmond's (1998) thoughts that to engage in art making can bring students to a state of "intense interest and effort" (p. 14).

Similar to last week's lessons, the student's contributed to the bulk of the content that was discussed in terms of pedagogy and teaching theory. This is reflected in J. Castro's (2012) discussion of the increased investment of all members of the class to help form a "robust complex learning system" (p. 94). The use of the out-of-class assignments also echoes Castro's notion of role of the teacher to help students make connections to content and culture. Campbell (2012) also addresses this idea of helping students make connections by drawing out their experiences, in this case from other education courses, and applying these previous educational experiences to what is being learned in art class. This also echoes Palmer's (1999) idea of bringing an idea to the center of inquiry and allowing the students and the teachers to analyze the topic from their respective points of view. It should be noted in Palmer's view, the idea, not the teacher or the student, should hold the place of primary concern in the classroom.

## **WEEK 7 – FEBRUARY 15, 2012**

We started today with a printing project using the printing plates we had made last week. I arranged several different ink stations and they made a cut paper print, a glue line print, and a chine-collé print. After we cleaned up we reviewed the details of the final assignment. I had prepared a handout describing the final poster session and the unit of art lessons they were to make. I proposed that the final project be a poster session because it would allow the students to choose a variety of ways to present their work. I incorporated a way for each student to give and receive feedback on their final project. I noticed that many of the students appeared upset by the notion of a ‘poster session’. Many had furrowed brows and were looking at each other and shaking their heads and shrugging their shoulders. So I opened up the option of the students proposing a different format for the final project. However I did ask that any new ideas be sent to me within the week. I was nervous because we were rapidly approaching the end of the semester. In addition, we would not meet as a class for the next two weeks owing to winter break and my attending the National Art Education Association conference. Because of this, or maybe for other reasons of which I was not aware, the students were feeling anxious and some of them spoke to me in a manner that I perceived as confrontational about the final project. Several students openly challenged the idea of having to write a rationale for the unit, telling me that they had never been required to write a rationale for other classes. A few of the students that were not in teaching related fields were confused about how to write a lesson plan or even what one was. To make matters worse, I had scheduled this day for each student to write a lesson plan in class, so that I could be available to answer

questions that might arise. Because of this, I had asked the students to please have an idea for their final project in mind so we could work together during this class period. More than half of the class had not prepared their idea and so I was left scrambling to get the class prepared to begin work on their lesson. The behavior escalated into a lot of talking and giddiness and comments whispered under their breath as I spoke. It created a difficult environment in which to navigate. I was hoping that the final studio project might bring every one back to quiet, calm place. The second studio lesson, the “tree of your life” was a project idea that I borrowed from Carroll (2004) and Aileen Pugliese Castro (2004, 2012). I saw the lesson originally in *Toward a Holistic Paradigm for Art Education* (2004), Carroll had developed the lesson for pre-service and practice art educators and A. P. Castro had developed it for elementary students. A. P. Castro published a subsequent version of the lesson in *The Heart of Art Education: Holistic Approaches of Creativity, Integration, and Transformation* (2012). I was impressed with the way that both of these art educators had conceived and implemented the lesson and hoped it would draw out similar responses from my students. I attempted to start the drawing lesson in the same fashion that I had done with the vessel drawings the previous week. We began with gesture drawing on newsprint, making long, vertical, curved lines. I encouraged the students to use their entire arm in the process. Once they were feeling warmed up, they then took that basic motion and used it on white drawing paper. The motivation for the lesson was the notion that if a tree was planted on the day you were born and grew along with you each day of your life, what would your tree look like? Put simply, the lesson did not work. The students appeared to me to be incredibly unhappy; they were not paying attention to what they were doing, they talked and laughed through the whole

exercise, they drew cartoons and silly things on their trees. The lesson as Carroll (2004) and A.P. Castro (2004, 2012) conceived it was sound, but I did not teach it well. It had been a difficult day and I was struggling to maintain an air of calm. I also believe the lesson should have taught at the beginning of the class instead of the end. By the time we got to it, the students were ready to leave for break and there was little energy left for focusing on artwork.

### **What motivated the actions I took today?**

I opened with printmaking because of the element of surprise that came from seeing the prints from the plates we made last week. I had not revealed until that moment what we would do with the plates, so there was a nice element of excitement to pulling the prints. However, there were a few problems in the printmaking process. I had arranged five or six ink stations set up around the room. We had some difficulties with old, warped brayers and some inks that were dried out. These issues were small and nothing out of the ordinary, but they caused some frustration for me and a few of the students.

I wanted to review a lesson plan in class because, based on the previous writing assignments, this particular group tended to procrastinate in getting their work completed. Writing one lesson together was my attempt at circumventing the possibility of a barrage of emails a week before the project was due. In addition, I had several students that were not education majors and were not familiar with lesson plan writing. I felt this might be a good way to introduce the process of lesson writing with me present to assist as needed.

The motivation for the tree drawing was to repeat the positive drawing experience that the student had when drawing the vessels. The students seemed very happy with their drawings of the vessels. I wanted to see if lightening would strike twice. It did not.

The sequence of the class felt choppy to me. The students expressed a lot of anxiety about the final project. I tried to be very supportive throughout the semester. I sent email reminders about work that would be due the following week, or if there was going to be a special project we would be doing in class. Perhaps I should not help so much as it might make the students feel like I am fussing over them.

It did not work to try to bring that energy down into an introspective studio project. I think the students were more comfortable and calm on the previous day when we drew the vessels. The vessel drawing was also the first project of the day, not the last one. Maybe the sequencing is the key component; maybe we should start quiet and end loud. Maybe the drawing should have happened first as a warm up and then transition in to the class, rather than the printmaking which was messy and a bit troublesome.

Maybe there was simply too much stress today. The printmaking project did not go smoothly; the attempt at discussing the final project and creating a lesson together was hectic. I think I need to pay closer attention to the sequence of the class. Today reminded me of what Lackey, et al (2007) wrote about the ability of a small number of students to have a negative impact on the atmosphere of an art methods class. Though there were only eight students out of twenty-seven who were behaving in a way that I perceived as disrespectful, it was enough to make it difficult to feel positive about my teaching experience.



### **What aspects of holistic pedagogy informed my actions?**

This printing lesson was informed by Richmond's (1998) notion of the importance of practice and connecting to a sense of self through art making. This is reflected in Campbell's (2011, 2012) ideas of collaboration within the classroom, as the students needed to work in small teams and help each other during the printing process.

The review of the final project and writing the lesson plan in class was reflective of J. Miller's (2006) idea of the rhythm of teaching wherein the teacher moves from transmission to transaction to transformative models as the situation in the classroom warrants. According to Miller, there are some types of content that need to be delivered in a transmission style of teaching.

As mentioned in the description, the life with a tree lesson was informed by the work of Aileen Pugliese Castro (2004, 2012) and Karen Carroll (2004). It was intended to encourage students to reflect on their life thus far and create an image that best reflected that journey. In the actual execution of the artwork, students were free to choose what materials they felt would work best for their finished product. This reflects Freyermuth's (2012) notion that as part of her holistic classroom, student were free to choose the type of materials they felt best conveyed the meaning of the work.

### **WEEK 8 – MARCH 7, 2012**

Before I begin the description of today's class, I will describe some of the socio-political events taking place in Montreal and throughout Quebec. Many students were

involved in a provincial-wide student protest in response to proposed tuition hikes in Quebec. The student organizations called this movement a strike, whereas the university referred to it as a boycott. I refer to this as a student strike, as that is how it was commonly referred to by the students and in the media. Not all students chose to go on strike; it differed by school and department. At this moment in time, the Fine Arts students at Concordia had chosen to go on strike, the students in the Department of Education had not. This put my class in an interesting position; ARTE 201 is listed as an Art Education class, but the majority of the students in the course are from the Department of Education.

Two days prior to this class session I began receiving emails from my students asking if my class would continue and what actions should they take if they were blocked from the building or otherwise confronted by striking students. The matter was made more complicated by the mixed messages that were being issued via email by the Graduate Student Association, the Department Chair, and the University Administration regarding what was happening in terms of how the strike would impact non-striking students, faculty and staff and individuals trying to enter university buildings. There had been rumors of confrontations with campus security and altercations between students. I read on one student website that the striking students were effectively barring professors and instructors from the classrooms. Later, instructors in Art Education received word from the Department Chair that professors, instructors and non-striking students were permitted into the classrooms and could not physically be blocked from entry. The Graduate Student Association (GSA) website posted a letter stating that instructors and professors should be allowed to enter the building and the classroom. The GSA website

suggested that instructors and professors print the letter and keep it on their person. Should instructors or faculty be met with resistance, it was advised that we show this letter to the striking students to ensure our passage into the classroom. I was struck by the idea that I was attempting to research how to change my teaching pedagogy with the possibility that my class may go on strike. I was very nervous. Responding to my students' concerns, I sent an email stating that we would take things one day at a time and that I respected whatever choice they made concerning the strike. However their safety was of primary concern to me and I asked that they not put themselves in harm's way. The emails I received in response seemed indicate my students wanted to come to class.

It was in this context that my class resumed after a two week hiatus. Unsure of what situation I might face trying to enter the building, I arrived early, at 7:30am. As I began to prepare for class I began to wonder events might unfold that day. As I stated in my self-interview, "Shit! What if we can't get out?! [of the building]"

I had not seen my students in two weeks and I wanted to spend the day making clay sculpture as a way of coming back in to the rhythm of our class. At 8:15am, a student who had missed several classes because of medical problems with their spouse came in to work on the printmaking project. The rest of the students arrived at about 9:15am. The Art Education Office Administrator had printed a letter indicating that the students attending this class were from the School of Education and not on strike; therefore they should not be interrupted by any student strike activity. This letter was taped to the door of the classroom. This was also the day that I had planned to teach without making a Power Point presentation.

Once the students arrived and were settled, I checked in with everyone to see how they were feeling. This is a standard procedure for me, but today it seemed more necessary than usual. We then began our day of clay work.

The conceptual sequence of the class was to work from small and intimate to larger pieces, but still keeping within the limits of amount of materials we had available. We began with a very small pinch pot project. We talked about clay and we talked about how to form it with your hands. We took time to focus on how clay feels in your hands and how it smells. It was a calm and centering activity. And we discussed the idea that they could take this standard lesson for kindergarten kids and very simply form a handle or a spout or a neck and it can become this very personal piece of art. Some of the students were anxious about working with the clay and forming a pinch pot. A few students mentioned to me that their work 'didn't look right'. I think this anxiety reflected a combination of low level anxiety about making art coupled with an unrealistic standard of perfection, as reflected in the research of Smith-Shank (1995). There anxiety may also have been some stress in response to the strike activity that was happening, but I can not be sure of that. And I was aware that I was likely projecting some of my own anxiety as well.

After the students had formed their pinch pots in the way they felt worked for them, we moved on to a second clay project, low relief. This project involved rolling slab of clay and cutting it into a shape of their choosing. We then took different materials such as fabric, buttons, feathers, twigs, shells, puzzle pieces, clothes pins, plastic forks and whatever else I could find in the storage cabinet and used these to press textures into the clay slabs.

After this lesson, we took our break and I prepared for the final clay project. During the break, four of representatives from the striking students association came to the classroom and asked if they could talk to the group. I pointed out the letter on the door that indicated these were students from the Department of Education not Fine Arts. In my nervousness I completely forgot that I had students from other majors in the class, including Fine Arts. The leader of the group gave me a wary glance and said she didn't understand; this was an art education course so these had to be fine arts students. I explained that actually this was a methods course for education students and once again pointed the letter on the door. After a few moments, she asked if she could come in to speak with my students about an undergraduate student meeting that was happening later that day. I told her that the group was on break, but we would reconvene at 10:30am. And we would be happy to listen to any information she would like to share, provided she behaved with respect towards my class. When my students returned from break at 10:30, the strike representatives were right on the heels of the last student to enter the room. I was struck by this precision. I introduced the representatives to the class and said these women would like to speak to them about what's happening on campus. As a precaution I added that we would all listen respectfully. I had three reasons for making this statement. First, I had overheard a few heated, albeit whispered, disagreements among my students about the strike and I did not want any heated emotions to erupt into something I could not handle. Second, I wanted to signal the strike representatives that I felt that they should be treated with the same respect I asked them to show my students. And finally, I felt the need to assert a level of authority in the room. I realized that the essence of the strike was pushing against the authority of the university as an institution;

but this was still my classroom and I felt a level of responsibility towards its functioning safely and smoothly.

The strike representatives made a short presentation about a meeting of undergraduate students that would take place, handed me some pamphlets, thanked us for our time and left. There were no raised voices or arguments, but I was still relieved to see them go.

Our final project with clay was a reflective activity. I asked the students to create an image of the face they wear for the world or the face they wish they could wear for the world. I included some information about how to form the curve of a face by molding the clay across one's knee, and how to score, slip and blend the clay when attaching pieces together, and techniques for cutting away or building up the clay to form an image. I deliberately did not want to phrase the project as a mask as there are certain implications with that word – such as African masks, Halloween masks – and I wanted to steer the project inward towards reflection. However they could choose a human or non-human form for their face.

### **What motivated the actions took today?**

This was first time I have taught without a PowerPoint. As I stated in my self-interview, “This is a big deal for me!” I wanted to see if I could do it; if I could teach with just me, the students and a bag of clay. It was an experiment in relating purely to my undergraduate students in a way that I would with my elementary students. However, I intend to prepare a PowerPoint for the following class as I have come to rely on the

PowerPoint as an agenda for the class. It keeps me on track and keeps me from forgetting smaller details of what I want to teach.

The motivation to work with clay for an entire day was that we were coming back together as a group after two weeks. And it felt like such a long time away. I felt that working with clay would be earthy and grounding. I think it reflected more of how much I missed my students.

### **What aspects of holistic pedagogy informed my actions?**

In regards to my interactions with the strike representatives my actions were informed by ideas of openness, mindfulness, safety and respect. Campbell (2012) specifically references the notion of mental and physical safety in regards to the classroom. And reassuring my students via email and in person was a top priority for me. This kind of community connection between students and the teacher also echoed in the work of J. Miller (2006) and his notion of compassionate connection to others. My actions also are reflective of Campbell's (2012) notion of demonstrating connection to social justice. Regardless of my personal feelings about the strike, the students were working through a very specific form of social justice and I did respect that. And I wanted to demonstrate to my students a manner of teaching that showed respect for others.

The studio lesson about sculpture techniques was informed by Richmond's (1998) discussion of the importance of working with art materials as a means for students to reflect and fulfill to create. It also reflects Campbell's (2011, 2012) discussion of making

connections to and through the use of materials. It also echoes a state of mindfulness and attention to activity that is posited by J. Miller (2006).

## **WEEK 9 – MARCH 14, 2012**

I had noticed students were less engaged with the studio portion of the class than in previous lessons. I was concerned about this and thought I would try a philosophical/spiritual approach. I opened class with a quote from Ellen Dyssanyake, about the making something with human hands, calling an object into existence and paying attention to the act of making.

*“For the perceiver, a made object implies not only a hand, but a person with hands – someone mortal like ourselves who fashioned this object, brought it into being.”* (Ellen Dissanayake, from [www.ellendissanayake.com](http://www.ellendissanayake.com))

I arrived early to meet one of the students who needed to complete some make-up work. I prepared for today’s lesson about culture and multiculturalism. On the back of the chalkboard, out of sight of the students, I wrote cultural identifiers for myself (Appalachian, over forty, working class, Polish, veteran teacher, and Doctoral student), I wrote my hopes (peace, love and abundance) and my fears (economic crisis, loneliness, unemployment and family illness.)

We began the class by painting the clay faces first so that if they wanted to glue fabric or buttons onto the sculpture it would be dry enough for the glue to adhere



properly. We painted the small pinch pots as well. We then paused in the painting and moved into our group discussion for the day.

To begin, I gave each student an index card and asked them not to write their names on it, but to write three words on it: one word to describe their culture, one word to describe their hopes and one word to describe their fears. I collected the cards and slowly turned the chalk board around so they could see what was written on the back. I then read through the cards: first the cultural identifiers, then the hopes, then the fears. And after I did so, I pointed out to them that we had nothing in common culturally, at least in terms of how we self-identified. However we did in fact share similar hopes and fears and that was a way of forming common ground. I also mentioned that there is a fairly strong likelihood that their future students would be of a cultural background or culturally self-identify in ways different from their own. I then attempted to move us into a class discussion based on the out of class assignment they had written for this class. The questions were: “What does the word culture mean to you?” and “How do you feel about teaching people of a cultural background different from your own?” I made the decision to have a large group discussion rather than a series of small group discussions because I thought the students might feel more comfortable doing this. Only three or four students participated in the discussion, despite the fact that they had their answers prepared as part of the assignment. I felt frustrated by the lack of responses, but I continued to try and engage the class in a discussion. I presented a few ideas about finding common ground and then reviewed some ways of dealing with cultural differences in the classroom as far as practicing empathy, compassion and respect. The students were silent on the subject and it was frustrating and I felt very helpless. It was the first time in a long time that I so

little response from a group of students. I collected the written assignments about culture and we transitioned back into painting the clay sculpture for the rest of the class period.

What they did want to talk about was how the strike activity for the following week would impact their quiz. After some discussion, I moved the quiz to another week.

### **What motivated the actions I took today?**

I included the quote by Ellen Dissanayake because I wanted reinforce to the students that what they are doing is special and that it matters. The artwork they made didn't exist before they made it and that is an incredible and wonderful thing to think about. They should care about what they make and attend to the task at hand.

I was hoping to frame the discussion of multiculturalism in terms of common ground and how to find it with a group of students with whom you may not share obvious common ground. I wanted them to reflect on how their cultural upbringing might impact their future students by sharing how I reflected on my own cultural upbringing and being from the United States in a Canadian classroom, how that impacts how I approach this class. I think is, because I am new to a Holistic or student-centered approach, I am not adept at facilitating discussions. Possibly I am not patient enough or I don't ask the right questions or my questions aren't interesting. I hoped to provoke a discussion about how we as teachers can formulate an inclusive cultural environment in the classroom. I wanted to engage the students in a discussion about reflecting on our own identity and from there reaching out with empathy and understanding towards how others self identify.

## **What aspects of holistic informed my actions?**

Sharing the quote by Ellen Dissanayake was informed by the spiritual themes of holistic education. I wanted to encourage the students to see that what they were making was indeed unique, and a mark of their very existence, as echoed not only in Dissanayake, but also Richmond (1998) who speaks of the urge one has to create as equal to the urge to prove to the world that one exists. For me, when a student creates a work of art, when they cause something to exist, it is profound and special to me as a teacher. I wanted to convey the depth of my feelings about art making and reference my feelings in the broader context of art making via Dissanayake. Also the notion of connection as described by Campbell (2011, 2012), Freyermuth (2012), and Millbrandt and Millbrandt (2011) that posit that a students' art is a part of them, it is connected to them as a representation of a feeling or experience.

My actions also reflect Palmer's (1998a) notions of teacher openness and sharing one's own reality with students. In a similar vein is Campbell's (2012) notion of helping students build empathy for individuals or groups that are different from their own. Through reflection on their individual sense of identity, it was my hope that the students could come to a deeper understanding of and connection to what may be the cultural reality of their future classroom. Making these deep connections is reflected in London's (2007) discussion of helping students come to an understanding of how they perceive and navigate the world. In sharing some of my notions of how I perceived myself culturally, I was hoping to strike a chord of openness. This idea is similar to J. Miller's (2012) observation that teacher presence can be revealed by teachers sharing their humanness

with students. Palmer (1999) speaks to this notion of teacher humanness as well, when positing that teaching happens at the intersection of a teacher's private and public worlds. By making some of my inner identity public, I pulled further into the middle of that intersection.

I would also note that ultimately, when the students were reluctant to respond to the topic at hand, I changed directions. This is reflective of Brown's (1999) writing on the importance of teachers to be aware how their own actions are influencing the responses of the students and to recognize when a negative response from students may be a result of how the teacher's behavior is being perceived by the students.

#### **WEEK 10 – MARCH 21, 2012**

I arrived early, about 7:30am and prepared for the art integration session. We would be talking about integrating visual art with literature, science, math and history. I prepared three studio projects, a science integration lesson, a math integration lesson and a literature integration lesson. We opened with the science integration lesson on balance and symmetry. This was the first time in the semester that I included any sort of rote, process based art making. The science lesson consisted of symmetrical butterfly drawing. I showed the students how to fold a square piece of paper and draw half a butterfly on one side along the fold. Afterwards they worked at the windows to trace the butterfly through to the other side of the paper, the end result being a symmetrical butterfly. They were excited at this project; there is an element of surprise and fun to it. It gave them a feeling of immediate success. When they finished, I asked them to take all

the butterflies to the back of the room and lay them out on the floor. We then talked about ways that we could further integrate science through grouping – so grouping by size, by color, by wing shape, by antennas, and shape of the eyes.

We moved on to math integration with a collage project about radial symmetry and fractions. They worked with paper cut into 8”, 4”, 2”, and 1” squares.

After what I perceived as my unsuccessful experience with group discussion during the previous weeks, I had decided to tighten up the discussion component of the class by giving the students a specific task to complete in-class as a group. I asked the students to divide into four groups and to be sure that at least one person in the group had a laptop or some other way of accessing the internet. Each group was assigned a subject area – math, science, social studies, and language arts. They were tasked with finding three art lessons integrated with their assigned subject area. Once they found the lesson they were to critique it based using the following criteria: What would a student learn about art from these lessons? What would the student learn about the other subject area from these lessons? What did they like about the lesson and what could be improved? Each group then shared their critique of the lessons with the larger group. I asked them what they had noticed about arts integration. The general observations were that art touches a lot of subjects, but it was not formulaic; it just depends on what you are doing and how you’re doing it. I thought this was a good observation. I pointed out some of the difficulties in trying to teach integrated art lessons, such as making sure there is content being taught about both of the subject areas. I reminded them that it might be necessary for a generalist to teach an art program in a school if there is no art specialist; and art integration is one solution to that challenge.

We then took a break and started the final studio project of the day: working with metaphor in images. I presented several song lyrics about shoes and we talked about the metaphorical meaning behind each one: greed, freedom, loneliness, the unexpected, etc. Each student then designed a shoe that was a metaphor that could represent the power and strength.

### **What motivated the actions I took today?**

It has been difficult to reestablish a routine after the two week break in the course. The rhythm and pacing of the class had been disrupted by this gap, the stress from the student strike and the pressure of competing commitments that accompany the semester coming to a close. I felt I needed to pull the group back together a bit more tightly. I realize this was an issue of my reasserting more control of the content and the structure of the class, but I made the choice based on the time it was in the semester and the work we still needed to accomplish. So I opted to provide a very structured group exercise that would be helpful for the students in their final project as well as their future work. I also brought the studio lessons back to a more structure approach. I think these decisions were a bit of a knee-jerk reaction to feeling so completely out of control during the past two weeks. I tried to change too much about my teaching style too quickly and I did not feel comfortable. I felt like I was a bad teacher. My attempt to lead a discussion on multi-culturalism was dismal in that a majority of the students would not join in the conversation. Attempting to teach without a PowerPoint presentation was unnerving because I have come to rely on a PowerPoint presentation to help keep track of the

sequence of the class. And while my interactions with the women representing the students that were on strike was not confrontational or negative, it was frightening to me. I believe these factors shook my sense of confidence to a point that I sought security in my previous teaching style.

### **What aspects of holistic education informed my actions?**

The class session reflects the notion of the paradox of education as discussed by Palmer (1999) “To become a better teacher, [one] must nurture a sense of self that both does *and* does not depend on the responses of others...” (p. 73). Thus the activities of this day were designed to reestablish a sense of balance and connection with the students. Echoing the notion of the importance of relationships to the holistic classroom as discussed by J. Castro (2012), Campbell (2012), J. Miller (2006), I attempted to bring the class back into focus by reestablishing a kind of routine. The studio activities and the group were intended to provide structure to direct the students back into relationship with the content of the course. This is reflective of J. Castro’s (2012) idea of “constraints that enable” (p. 90) in terms of the teacher designing lessons that help lead students to make connections between themselves and content. J. Miller (2006) describes the role of the teacher in the holistic classroom as needing to recognize the balance between structure and spontaneity and become cognizant to when each approach may be needed.

At a much broader level, relationships, connections and structures I put in place during this lesson were informed by a particular aspect of Noddings (1984) discussion of care. An aspect of caring is that the actions of the one giving care are informed by a

concern for the long-term wellbeing of the one, or ones, receiving the care. My actions were based on feeling that what was best for the students at that moment was to come back to an activity that could reinforce the relationship structure already established. I was, in a sense, inviting them back to a place of inquiry with me. Cummings (2012) addresses this head on in her discussion of teacher-student relationships. While she believes in the importance of open, honest human relationships with students, she notes that one should never forget the professional responsibilities that come with the role of teacher. This responsibility includes engaging students with the act of learning.

## **WEEK 11 – MARCH 28, 2012**

Class started late as the student strike continues to disrupt students trying to get to class. A majority of my students drive to class and an early morning march had caused traffic delays in the downtown area. Once everyone was seated and focused we attended to the first order of business which was the second quiz of the semester. After the students finished the quiz we moved into our puppetry unit. I prepared a PowerPoint presentation about the origins of puppetry and twentieth and twenty-first century puppetry, including images of Indonesian shadow puppets and Chinese puppets along with images of contemporary puppets and muppets. My presentation also included information on the use of puppets in non-traditional settings for conflict resolution.

I developed a studio activity for three styles of puppets. I asked how they would like to approach this, should we make one puppet at a time or if they would like me to demonstrate how to make all three and then we work as an open studio for the day. They



opted for an open studio approach. The three puppet lessons were: sock puppets that incorporated sewing and gluing; shadow puppets that incorporated movement; and finger puppets that could be used in small, table-top theaters.

It was nice to have an open studio. The students seemed to enjoy working through the three activities. Amicable chatter was punctuated with laughter as the puppets took shape and were endowed with movement and voice. I had brought in a bed sheet and built a shadow puppet theater in the back of the room where I demonstrated all the shadow puppets, so that each student could see their own work in action.

The only slight stress today was when I administered the course evaluations. I handed them to my proctor and waited outside. Very soon, the proctor came out to tell me that when she opened the envelope of evaluations, she found four of the evaluation sheets written on. She handed me the evaluation forms in question. I asked her to please wait with the class and I took the forms to the Department Chair and the Graduate Program Assistant to see what could be done. The Graduate Program Assistant went into the classroom to speak with the students and proctor the course evaluation process. Since four evaluations sheets could not be used during this class meeting, the Graduate Program Assistant asked for four students to volunteer to come to her office the following week at the beginning of class to complete a course evaluation.

By the time I returned to the classroom it was 12:45pm and the students had left without writing a reflection. That felt very strange because I look forward to reading those. One student waited behind because she had some questions about her lesson plan.

### **What motivated the actions I took today?**

I wanted to be sure we had a solid block of time to work on puppets. It was nice to have an open studio structure with them. It freed me to walk around the room and help as needed. I was available if they needed help or technical advice on how to make something stick or stand up or move. There were about half a dozen students who didn't know how to sew on a button, or thread a needle or work a needle and thread. I made a note that when I teach this class again next term, I should include a section on sewing.

### **What aspects of holistic pedagogy informed my actions?**

This lesson reflects the aspects of connection in holistic pedagogy. In the opening discussion we investigated the origins of puppetry, the role of puppetry in the development and expansion of cultural ideas. We briefly examined materials and methods used to make puppets. This is reflective of concepts of connections discussed by Campbell (2012) wherein students develop new perspectives on culture and themselves through the connections they discover while making art. The puppetry lesson also reflected Richmond's (1998) observations about the importance of art making practice to students' ability to connect to themselves and to each other. The open-studio aspect of the lesson echoes Freyermuth's (2012) discussion of allowing students to choose materials that best suit their needs for personal inquiry and expression. While making the puppets, the students actively sought help not just from me but from each other. This echoes the notion of J. Castro's (2012) learning community in the art

classroom and it also reflects Freyermuth's (2012) observation of the way in which holistic art education practice encourages students to help one another solve problems.

## **WEEK 12 – APRIL 4, 2012**

Today was the budgeting and assessment session. I prepared the parameters for the group discussion regarding budgeting for art class by writing the following on the chalk board:

*You have \$250 to buy art supplies for the year. What will your art program look like? You have 27 students, 36 weeks of school, one hour of art required per week. Your school has no art specialist. You have a sink in your room and the school has a paper cutter, a hole-punch and a laminating machine that you may use.*

On a single PowerPoint slide I provided websites for art supply companies. I let the students choose their own groups and asked to be sure they had internet access. At first they didn't know to begin. I suggested they think about what they wanted to teach and then figure out how best to equip those ideas. This was probably the most fun we had as a class since the museum visit.

It was a wonderful opportunity to find gaps in knowledge about materials, explaining sixty-pound paper or gouache versus watercolor or whether or not that inexpensive bag of 'yarn remnants' is really a good bargain. Listening to their conversations about art supplies and art lessons provided me with a snapshot of how and

if their thinking about art education had changed. For instance, one group was trying to implement painting, printmaking and weaving; another wanted to make pencil holders out of toilet paper tubes. At one point, a student slapped his hands on the table and declared, “I think it’s just cheaper if we don’t teach art at all!” His tablemates were horrified that he would make that statement in art class. Yet I was rather relieved at both his honesty and his realization of the cost of art supplies. After they had worked on their budget, I talked to them about ways of stretching the money. I gave them some tips on smart ways of ordering supplies and where to find internal and external support for art.

After a short break we came back to discuss art assessment. This conversation evolved into a larger discussion about grading in general and what, if anything is an accurate indicator of student progress.

The final part of class was given over to the preparation of their portfolios and finishing studio work. I had several students who had enrolled late and three other students that had been participating in strike activities, so that necessitated some extra time for portfolio work.

### **What motivated the actions I took today?**

I began this semester by telling my students that I wanted our work in this course to be relevant and useful. I realized that in the past I would discuss funding very abstractly in terms of where to look for funds, how to solicit from local businesses, how to engage parents and so forth. What I had never done was to show them an art supply catalog; let them look at the price of materials; or give them the practical exercise of

budgeting. I wanted them to think about what it would be like if they had to plan an art program. I am not sure if these students had ever thought about the cost of running a classroom.

### **What aspects of holistic pedagogy informed my actions today?**

This lesson was inspired by Palmer's (1998a) notion that a big idea should be the center of the inquiry for students. And in this case, the students grappled with the very real issue of budgeting in public school education. The structure of the lesson echoed J. Castro's (2012) discussion of the teacher's role in building lessons to help student connect to larger ideas. This lesson encouraged my students to view classroom teaching from another perspective which is an important element of Campbell's (2012) discussion of connections to empathy, compassion and social justice. The lesson brought to the fore issues of funding, fairness and the barrage of responsibilities that teachers face in the classroom. Encouraging the students to expand their ideas of what would be a solution to the problem was reflective of notions of group support and problem solving. Freyermuth (2012) noted that often, students working together could arrive at a solution faster than if she tried to address each question individually.

### **WEEK 13 – APRIL 11, 2012**

Today was the final class and the students presented their units and their posters to the class. I had organized it as a poster session to try something different than two

days of students presenting 10-15 minute presentations. Each student had five minutes to present their poster and an overview of the lessons. While one student was presenting, the others each had small slips of blank paper upon which they would provide feedback to the presenter. After all the presentations were finished, the students did a walk around of all the posters and left their feedback in an envelope I had provided to each student. At the end of the class everybody had feedback from their classmates along with the eventual feedback they would receive from me. I'm not sure if all worked because there was no way for me to verify that each student provided feedback. Some things we must leave to faith. I was very pleased with how the students supported each other during the presentation. They were attentive, helped if someone needed assistance holding up a poster or some other item, and applauded wildly after each presentation. I appreciated their goodwill towards one another.

Another surprising and pleasing aspect of the poster session was the variety of topics that were chosen by the students, only one of which dealt with the elements of art and principals of design. This made me reflect on how limiting a curriculum anchored to the elements and art and principle of design might truly be. When I had taught this course previously the studio component of my curriculum was heavily informed by design elements. The result would be a few topics such as color wheels and textures and patterns divided amongst a class of 25 or 30 students. This class was different. The final projects included Andy Goldsworthy, photography, Gothic Art, seasons, folk art, web page design, and sewing. For me it served as a lesson that pre-service generalists were capable of much more creative and engaging lesson planning that I had at one time assumed.

The course that began with words of fear and anxiety written on an index card, ended with words of encouragement and support written on an index card.

### **What motivated the actions I took today?**

I wanted to try a new approach to a final project that would give the class a sense of closure and a sense of community. Spacing presentations out over two days always seemed difficult to me as the students that present first are largely forgotten the next week, and the students that present on the final day are seen as closing out the semester. When the students are all present on the same day, they are all together in that moment of saying goodbye.

I also hoped that by allowing the final presentations to be in any form it would be more fun and engaging for the students to produce and present. I called it a poster session, but they could use any form or media they wanted. I was inspired by a methods class I took included an end of semester exhibition where each student visually represented what they learned during the course.

### **What aspects of holistic pedagogy informed my actions?**

Most strongly the theme of connection to the classroom as a community was evident on the final day of class. Echoing J. Castro's (2012) discussion of a "robust complex learning system" (p. 94) I designed the index card response activity to direct each student's attention to the work of their colleagues.

In this chapter I have related the experience of changing my teaching pedagogy during the act of teaching. I have presented the ebb and flow of challenges and successes as I attempted to understand and integrate this new teaching style into my classroom practice. In the following chapter I discuss a few of the specific changes that I made to my curriculum and reflect on the impact of those changes on my of an art education methods course.



**CHAPTER 5:**  
**CHANGES IN MY CURRICULUM BASED ON**  
**CHANGES IN MY TEACHING PEDAGOGY**

Writing a pedagogical model was the first part of the process of changing my teaching pedagogy. I also needed translate that pedagogy into practice. There were two major components that I felt were necessary to shifting my pedagogy into practice.

First I needed to redesign how I taught the course to encourage more student participation and dialog within the class. I changed the sequence of the class. In previous years, I would open each class session with 1.5 – 2 hours of lecture, we would take a break and then move on to studio work. This decision was predicated on my perceived need to deliver the information to the students in as concise and immediate manner as possible. By contrast, for the purpose of this research, class meetings opened with a studio activity; this included the first day of class. I moved lectures and group discussions to the middle of the class period. Then the class would close with either a continuation of the opening studio activity or a new project. I also included written daily reflections at the end of each class.

Changing the sequence of the class meetings served two purposes. First, opening with studio activity put the students' artistic process in a position of importance in the chronology of the class. And second, I disrupted my own habit of wanting to lecture by scrambling my ingrained style of teaching enough to make me more aware of my own

behaviors. It quieted my own voice in the classroom by curbing my natural tendency to proceed directly into a lecture.

I recognized that during many years in the field, lecturing has become my preferred style of teaching. I believe this style developed from both my own learning preferences (solitary, lecture based course-work) and the time and logistical pressures of day-to-day teaching in elementary school. Shifting to a holistic pedagogy necessitated the release of my attachment to the dominance of the teacher's voice in the classroom. I devised activities that encouraged and supported participation of my students in the class. My rewritten curriculum included the following activities to encourage more student participation during class sessions:

### **One or Two Word Activities**

These were quick, one word responses to an experience or an idea. The semester opened with a one word activity: *Write down one word that describes how you are feeling right now.* I originally conceived this as a way for the students to hear how the other members of the class were feeling about a particular issue. It served as a way to show that more than one person in the class might be feeling equally as nervous or excited or tense about a topic or idea.

### **Out of Class Assignments**

These were short visual or written assignments that the students would complete and we would use as a basis for the lecture during class. The Out of Class Assignments were:

1. *Bring in an object, or picture of an object that makes you feel strong.*
2. *Why is the history of anything important? Why do we keep things?*
3. *Send me a picture of something (not a person) you think is heartbreakingly beautiful.*
4. *Based on everything you know about teaching so far, what theory or pedagogy do you think suits you best and why?*
5. *What does the word culture mean to you?*

Using the out of class assignments, students often worked in groups to come to a consensus and share with the class as a whole. Each out of class assignment, though short and rather innocuous in nature, was ultimately tied to information that would be covered on a given day. My goal was that this approach would encourage the students to share their thoughts about a specific issue such as power, aesthetics, art history, culture, or pedagogy and do so in a way that was directly related to their own experiences.

### **Daily Individual Reflections**

While I had used weekly reflections once or twice in the past, the use of immediate written reflections at the end of a class session, before the students left for the week, was new. This was done to open up lines of direct and personal communication with students. They were free to make comments, ask questions, express concerns or confusion in the daily reflections. I read and responded to each individual reflection.

### **The Reflective Essay**

This was not a new addition to my curriculum, but it fit well within the parameters of student-centered pedagogy. This was an essay that the students wrote about their own elementary art experiences. I asked them to reflect on these experiences, good

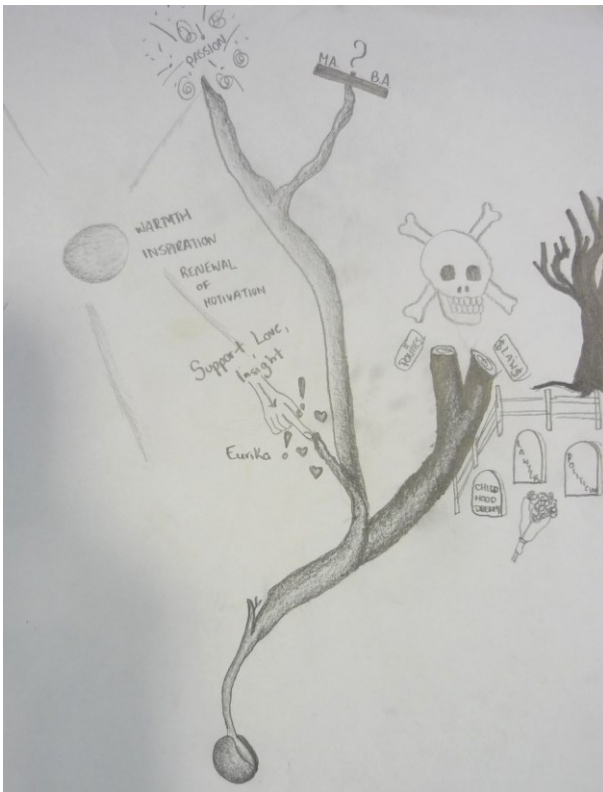
or bad, and contemplate how those early experiences might have informed how they feel about making art and teaching art in the present day.

Perhaps the most crucial change was made to the studio aspect of the course. Previously, I devised studio experiences for pre-service elementary generalists that were accessible, non-threatening, and utilized materials commonly found in an elementary classroom. My rationale was that if the projects were straightforward enough and not too frightening, it would increase the chances of pre-service teachers using these lessons once they entered the classroom. These lessons were strongly anchored in the elements of art and principles of design. From my observation, and judging by my previous teaching evaluations, this approach was successful. However, I have to admit that the studio projects bore no connection to the lives of my students or their future students. I still wanted my students to see the applicability of art education to their own future-classrooms; but I also wanted to teach art methods in a way that might be more meaningful and fulfilling as a creative art experience (Campbell, 2011; Kind, et al, 2005; Millbrandt and Millbrandt, 2011; Miller, 2006; Palmer, 1998a; Richmond, 1998). Some of the new studio projects included the following activities:

### **The Personal Path**

Our first project of the semester, the personal path (Figure 2) was a way for the students to reflect upon the events and decisions that lead them to being in the ARTE 201 class on that day. Before we began to draw we looked at a variety of maps: treasure

maps, a map of the stars, old shipping maps, a map of the human heart, etc. The students could formulate any format for their personal path. I asked them to think about the type of road they traveled – was it narrow sometimes? Did it get bumpy or dark or treacherous? Were there u-turns? Was it wide and smooth? I encouraged them to think as metaphorically as they wished. They did not need to include an explanation, their map was their own. It was their reflective tool.



*Figure 2: Personal Path, by C. Pencil on paper. 9”x 12”.* This image illustrates the reflective art activities I included as part of the shift in my pedagogy.

### **The Patchwork Self**

The focus of the patchwork self (Figure 3) was a reflection on the symbols that are associated with teaching. We discussed several common symbols such as an apple, a

ruler, a school house. I asked the students to think about if those symbols resonated with them. And if not, what symbol would they take for themselves? Working with felt and glue, the students drew and cut symbols out of fabric and arranged them on their felt background. The use of the felt, while similar in method to collage, lent a tactile aspect to the process and reinforced the idea of our experiences as patch-worked together.



*Figure 3:* The Patch-work Self, by J. Fabric and felt marker. This image illustrates the reflective art activities I included as part of the shift in my pedagogy.

### **Experiments with Paint**

There were several paintings projects that we did during the course of this research project. Each one was framed in the notion of ‘just an experiment’. Given what I knew about working with pre-service generalists, I knew that painting could be a fearful activity for these students. Therefore, the painting activities were geared to give these

students an opportunity to see how paint behaved and to see how it felt moving a brush across paper. The main painting projects were experiments with emotions and actions with watercolor paints (Figure 4) wherein the students could choose – or draw from a hat – a verbs or adjectives and see how they could express those words visually.



*Figure 4: Watercolor Experiment, by B. Watercolor on paper. 9” x 12”.* This image illustrates the reflective art activities I included as part of the shift in my pedagogy.

They also painted with non-traditional tools and tempera paint – using brushes, sponges, tree branches, cloth, tooth brushes, forks, knives and whatever else I had available in the storage closet that might be used to apply paint (Figure 5). This gave the students an opportunity to work in a completely free state to learn how to manipulate paint without the pressure of having to render an object



*Figure 5:* Experimenting with non-traditional tools, by E. Tempera paint and various painting tools. 12” x 18”. This image illustrates the reflective art activities I included as part of the shift in my pedagogy.

And the final painting project was informed by my pilot project about silence – it was based on the idea of a walk in winter (Figure 6). We reflected on what a walk through the snow might be like – where were they walking? What did they hear? What did they smell? What did they see? This painting project was done with white tempera paint on brown paper. I gave a short demonstration about how using water with the tempera paint would change the opacity; but beyond that I only stepped in if they asked specific questions.





*Figure 6: A walk in the snow, by J. This image illustrates the inclusion of the concept of quiet into the art activities for this art education methods course.*

### **Experiments with Drawing**

Similar to the painting experiments the drawing experiments were designed to help the students engage with the physical act of drawing. This was a slightly more tricky approach because of the value that pre-service generalists place on the act of drawing, specifically drawing in a realistic fashion. I included two drawing activities in the revamped curriculum.

The first was a drawing of a vessel (Figure 7). I began by guiding them through a series of warm up exercises drawing smooth ovals on newsprint paper. I asked the student to try to focus on using their whole arm as they were drawing and notice how that felt. Could they feel any resistance in the lead of the pencil as they moved it across the paper? Once the students had settled into that movement, I suggested that when they were ready, they take that same movement and transfer it to the white drawing paper and draw

just one oval. Once the ovals were drawn on white paper, we then created a vessel that represented them or how they were feeling that day. I stepped in only as needed and I let the students use whatever dry media they wished for this project.



*Figure 7:* Vessel drawing, by C. This image is an illustration of the first drawing activity I conducted with the art education methods course.

The second drawing project was borrowed from a lessons developed by Carroll (2004) and A. P. Castro (2004, 2012) that utilized a tree as a metaphor for a student's life. I began the project in a similar fashion to the vessel project, with a gesture drawing. We made large, swooping vertical lines on news print as a warm up; this shape would eventual inform the trunk of the tree. Then I asked the students to reflect on the idea that a tree was planted the day they were born and has grown along with them for their entire life (Figure 8). What might that tree look like now? What shape might it be having lived through all the ups and downs that you have endured?



*Figure 8: My Life as a Tree, by E. This image illustrates the second drawing activity I conducted with the art education methods course.*

### **The Sensory Scavenger Hunt – Montreal Museum of Fine Arts**

This activity was how I chose to frame our trip to the museum. It was designed with pre-service generalists in mind realizing that they might not feel competent in looking at art and analyzing it from a formal perspective. The goal of this assignment was to free them from the notion of art has something that was beyond their ability to comprehend. The questions in the scavenger hunt were based on feelings or ideas that were not necessarily related solely to art.

That afternoon, after the self interview, I read through the student responses to the scavenger hunt. I feel this is one of the most successful points in the semester. The insight that that one single activity afforded me as the teacher was astounding. The responses to the artwork were sincere, vulnerable, and sometimes quite poignant. One student describe the painting, “Toilers by the Sea” by Chirstian Mieren, as reminding this student of friendship because, *“Just the hard working struggle portrayed among the team...made me think of a friend you go through the challenges of life with.”* And another student wrote about the sculpture, “She was a Big Success” by Valerie Blass, *“... this artwork would be my best friend because having a best friend to me is a big success...it also reminds me of Lady Gaga and how creative and out of the ordinary she is. She went from being a zero to becoming a super star... I would love for her or someone like her to be my best friend.”*

I was touched by the candor and honesty these students conveyed in these responses. It showed a certain level of trust in me as their teacher to share with me these feelings. Responses like these added depth to how I perceived and understood the students in my class. There were aspects of their lives that I found relatable: working through a tough time in the company of friends or the pang of loneliness that is not having a really close friend. I realized that it was only through the reflective and interactive nature of the activity that I was able to gain such insights.

But there is another very important aspect of the Sensory Scavenger Hunt in relation to the pre-service elementary generalist population, and that is the notion of ownership and authority in their relationship to art. This population, as has been discussed in this these, have an uneasy relationship to art and art making. But by

reframing how they interacted with art in the museum, by making it more personal and based solely on emotions and experiences that were commonly relatable, they were able to take ownership of that experience. I am reminded of Freyermuth's (2012) discussion of student empowerment in art. My students, some of whom had never been to a museum, found a way to feel like they belonged there. The experience of the Sensory Scavenger Hunt achieved at some small level what a straight art criticism activity might not have, and that was to begin to help these students build a relationship to art.

### **Images of Heartbreaking Beauty**

This activity was interesting because it revealed to me how the students perceived beauty on their own, away from any input from me. What I mean is when the student described why they thought the image was beautiful, the reasons were by and large emotional. They object reminded them of a happy moment or a person or it was an image from an especially good vacation. The physical design or characteristics of the object was of little relevance to how they perceived its beauty. This was the day that I realized that I had made a break with the elements of art and principles of design. I remember thinking how strange that no one was mentioning the aspects of color, or line, or texture. My example, that I'd shown the day before, was a photo I had taken of a white, 1957 Ford Thunderbird, which I think is an aesthetically pleasing automobile design. The happiness I feel looking at that car is derived from my admiration of the shape, color, proportions and overall design. But I have no emotional attachment to the Thunderbird. But the degree to which my students' equated emotional attachment with beauty was

quite telling to me as an instructor. Again, I wondered about my former students in art methods courses, when I did not include an opportunity for them to speak about their own perceptions of beauty. What information did I miss as an educator?

### **The Budget Exercise**

It seems odd that I would include this seemingly non-reflective idea of budgeting in the body of student-centered curriculum. However judging by the verbal feedback and written feedback in the student reflections, this was a terrifically engaging exercise to do with pre-service teachers. The students told me that they had not really worked with budgets before and so it was an interesting activity for them on a practical level. In addition, many had not taken the opportunity sit and think about the possibility of having to run an art program, no matter how small. So they had no idea of how to find supplies or what things cost. There were several aspects of this activity that I found quite compelling as an instructor. The first was that it provided an interesting opportunity to fill in gaps of information about art materials that I may have missed. Because the students were working with art supply websites, they were encountering materials that they had not seen before - 60lb paper, serigraphy ink, lost wax materials, etc. It opened up sub-conversations about choosing the most appropriate materials for early elementary students. So much so that my students asked if I would make a list of all the 'extra' things we talked about and email them the information. Secondly, this activity has tremendous possibility for use as a form of assessment of what pre-service elementary teachers have taken away from an art methods course. I would not recommend using it as an individual

grading mechanism, but certainly as a way for the instructor to understand where the students are by the end of the semester. For instance, my students were divided themselves into five groups. Once each group completed their budget and had ‘ordered’ their supplies, they shared with the rest of the class how they chose to put their art program together. It was very telling when one group did most of their ‘ordering’ from the dollar store. Their projects included ‘wrapping toilet paper tubes in yarn and making pencil holders’. And this was after they had had thirteen weeks of a methods course that included painting, printmaking, sculpture, puppetry, drawing, weaving and sewing. The reason they cited, they remembered doing that project when they were in elementary school. It calls into question whether or not a methods course based on reflective art making was useful to these students. But to be fair there were other groups that did include many of the studio lessons we had done in class. And I also think that the budget activity gave my students a small taste of some of the real-world, budgetary challenges that are faced by teachers. One of the interview participants, C, described the activity in this way:

“I found that tough...there were still disagreements on ... ‘well I think this is more important so I think we should spend money on this’ and then it was interesting to see how people, the value people placed on different materials...it was really hard to reach a consensus with the budget, it was so hard. It’s different, different opinions, different ideas about where the money should go.” (C, personal communication, May 1, 2012).

I believe part of this student’s surprise stemmed from the fact that she was working with a group of friends that she had sat with all semester. And despite the camaraderie and

positive rapport, the group still struggled to agree on what their art program should look like.

At a somewhat less poetic but no less important level, incorporating the use of daily reflection writing in my class proved invaluable to me as a teacher. So much so that I wonder how I ever taught without daily student feedback. It created such a consistent and meaningful line of communication with my students that on the final day of class we laughed about writing one just for 'old times sake'. And I admit the reading of their reflections had become such a part of my routine that I felt a little lonely when I had none to look through after the semester ended.



## CHAPTER 6: STUDENT FEEDBACK

In this chapter I will review student responses to the course. The data used for this section is culled from participant interviews and student evaluations of the course. In addition I will look at evaluations from an art education methods course I taught prior to my research that utilized a teacher-centered teaching method.

### *Participant interviews*

After the course had finished and the grades had been submitted, I invited my former students to participate in an informal interview that combined semi-structured questions and an art elicitation interview using the artwork from their class portfolios. Four former students agreed to participate in an interview, all female, three were elementary education majors and one was a design major. The interviews took place within one month of completing the course. Participants were interviewed individually. The interviews took place at public coffee shops in the Montreal area. The interviews were audio recorded and the art work discussed in the interview was photographed.

The design student admitted that this course had been taken as an elective and she had no intentions of ever teaching. The other three participants were on track to continue their studies in elementary education and had completed at least one internship placement.

## Participant profiles

Before beginning my discussion of my interviews, I would like to present a brief sketch of each of the young women who were participants. The profiles are presented in alphabetical order (B, C, E, and J) and are accompanied by the symbolic self-portrait that each made during the second week of the semester (Figure 9, Figure 10, Figure 11, Figure 12).

### B.



*Figure 9:* Symbolic self-portrait, by B. 12" x 18", mixed media

B was the first participant to respond to my email request for an interview. She asked if we could meet in the part-time instructor office on the fifth floor of the EV Building as she had an appointment in the same area of Montreal later that afternoon. She arrived on time and was upbeat and happy to talk about the course.

B was one of four design students that took my elementary art education methods course as an elective. Our interactions in class were originally focused on her dramatic use of line and color in her work and evolved into broader discussions of art and design. She was bright, vivacious and talkative young woman in her mid-twenties. B had a very good rapport with her classmates and was helpful and positive towards her peers during studio activities. Though she came to the course with a background in design, she experienced a certain level of anxiety when faced with the prospect of making art by hand. During the interview she jokingly described her nervousness, “I’m used to doing everything on the computer and you’re telling me to draw with a pencil! <laughs> I kind of freaked out a little bit!” (B, personal communication, April 25, 2012).

In addition to her university studies, she worked as a freelance graphic artist and web designer. As might be expected, she had to work hard to keep the many aspects of her personal, professional and academic life in balance. She mentioned a particular incident when during the “My Life as a Tree” project,

“I started to scribble all over the place. I remember things going on with my other classes that were really frustrating me and I guess this was how I took all of my anger out. It was just one of those days.” (B, personal communication, April 25, 2013).

During the interview she told me about making crafts with her mother and her job at a toy store that allowed the customers to build individual stuffed animals. Specific to my course, she mentioned that she enjoyed getting out of the “design bubble” (B, personal communication, April 25, 2012) that consisted of having her work heavily

critiqued. B. mentioned that she had considered teaching, but much later in her career and most likely college aged students.

C.



*Figure 10: Symbolic self-portrait, by C. 12" x 18", mixed media*

C lived in Boucherville, a small suburb located across the Saint Lawrence River, south-east of Montreal. I drove there and met her at a noisy coffee shop. C arrived in a large white, pick-up truck with dealer plates. She worked at her brother's car dealership and had borrowed the truck to come to our meeting.

C was studying early childhood and elementary education, but she had already completed a degree in political science and was considering pursuing a master's degree education. In her late twenties, she was a happy, positive and conscientious student

whose gentle demeanor belied her inner focus and intensity. She held herself to high standards in all her university studies. This caused her a certain level of frustration during studio activities as she struggled to try and match what she was making to the image she held in her mind. My first one-on-one interaction with C was while she was working on her symbolic self portrait. I noticed her trying to achieve a gentle gradation of shading with her pencil and I offered that a blending tool might be useful. Our in-class interactions were usually focused on technical questions as she was eager to experiment with different art media. She would often lose herself completely in her art-making, and sometimes the intensity of her own work was a surprise to her, as in the case of her personal path map that included images of a skull-and-crossbones, a cemetery, and a dead tree, “That [reflecting on her personal path] was actually what I was focusing on, but then I realized, ‘Oh this is kind of dark and creepy!’” (C, personal communication, May 1, 2012).

C valued manners and respect. She was imminently polite to her classmates, even when asking another student to please lower her voice, she was very courteous. Recounting a moment in during the budget discussion, when another student said to me that it would be easier financially if schools didn’t teach art at all, C was aghast, “I couldn’t believe he said that! I could NOT believe he said it!” (C, personal communication, May 1, 2012).

It seemed to me that her enjoyment of the class was anchored in her amazement at the many possibilities that art education had to offer elementary teachers, “I just felt like...Oh my gosh, there are endless things that you can do with art!” (C, personal communication, May 1, 2012).

**E.**



*Figure 11: Symbolic self-portrait, by E. 12” x 18”, mixed media*

E and I met for our interview at a locally-owned coffee shop near her home in the Montreal borough of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. E was in her early twenties and studying early childhood and elementary education. She had an affable and relaxed personality, but was serious and conscientious about her academic work and she maintained an active yoga practice in her personal life. E was soft-spoken, but she observed the class and me very closely. Her end of class reflections were often quiet long and elaborate queries into something that happened in class or about something I had said during a lecture. I grew to

appreciate her attentiveness. Our relationship in class developed from our long written exchanges as I would respond in detail to her written reflections.

Not one to make a statement or decision in haste, E often pondered a long time before taking action. Our interview was punctuated with long pauses as she considered her answers before speaking. She enjoyed the reflective aspect of the studio activities. She described the personal path project in this way, “I loved that part, reflecting, mapping our journey; but...drawing! Ugh! <laughs>” (E, personal communication, May 8, 2012). E also mentioned that the reflective aspect of making art was very calming for her and she felt that was something important to include when teaching art to young children, “Even if they think they are not good at art...it might help them calm down or deal with other things that are going on.” (E, personal communication, May 8, 2012).

In terms of making art, E liked to know all the steps ahead of time so she could have an idea of where the project was headed before beginning her work. She was a bit troubled when the class made their plates for printmaking the week before we printed. She described her discomfort about that project during our interview, “I didn’t like it because I didn’t know what was going to happen. I guess I was questioning ‘Am I doing it right? Is it going to look cool when I finish?’” (E, personal communication, May 8, 2012). Though her expectations about the course were pragmatic- she wanted to learn basic art lessons that she could teach to young children – E also noted with a smile that she had more creativity and artistic ability than she had assumed.

**J.**



*Figure 12: Symbolic self-portrait, by J. 12” x 18”, mixed media*

J lived with her family near the village of Oka, Quebec. She and I met for our interview at a coffee shop near Concordia University’s EV Building in downtown Montreal. J was studying early childhood and elementary education. She was in her mid-to-late-thirties, married, with two daughters, one in middle-school and the other just starting high school. In class J was a pleasant, happy person. She was close friends with E and C; they sat together during class and took their coffee breaks together.

J and I built a strong relationship during the semester. I believe this was due in part to our relative closeness in age. I also got to know a personal side of J as she would share with me her struggle to help her husband recover from a severe back injury. This recovery required frequent visits to the hospital and J missed a number of class sessions



in order to be with him. She stayed in communication with me during this time and made arrangements to come in early to complete her studio requirements for the course.

Fond of collage and making scrap books, she enjoyed any art project that involved cutting and gluing. However, she was timid when it came to drawing, rendering and coloring so lightly that it was difficult to capture a clear photograph of her artwork. She kept her artwork folded in a binder, which also made it difficult to photograph the larger work because they were creased. Yet she felt that her own feelings of nervousness were important for her as a future teacher,

“I found that this course really helped me to be put in the child’s place and to think about how it might feel to be given a blank piece of paper and be told to draw something. This course, opened my eyes to the need to practice [warm up before drawing]...to get into the flow first and then try to draw something.” (J, personal communication, May 2, 2012).

J was an interesting mix of hesitancy and independence. She wanted to know what was expected of her in terms of making art, but preferred the freedom to develop her own ideas. She told me that when she was making her personal path, “I was thinking, ‘What does she want?’ and later I started to think, it’s not about that [the teacher expectations] it’s about me, it’s about what I want.” (J, personal communication, May 2, 2012). She also described looking at art from her daughters’ elementary art classes, “If they [her daughters] had the same teacher they’d do the exact same product, exact same color, exact same form. I thought it didn’t really allow them to be individuals.” (J, personal communication, May 2, 2012).

J hoped to find an elementary teaching position in the Province of Quebec after completing her program.

### **Interview responses and analysis**

There were certain broad similarities among the three education students that reflected the findings in the literature. First, they were all looking for an art teacher who would be friendly, positive, supportive, and understanding of their lack of art education experience. This is similar to what Lackey, et al, (2007) found was important to pre-service elementary generalists in art method courses. Secondly, the participants perceived themselves as non-artists and lacking in artistic ability, especially drawing. This echoes what other researchers have found in regards to this population (Lackey, et al, 2007; Kawalchuk and Stone, 2000; Miraglia, 2008; Smith-Shank, 1992). And also similar to what Smith-Shank (1992) found in relation to the need for independence in the pre-service generalist population, the participants voiced a preference to be given a set of ideas or skills that they could then determine for themselves the level of applicability and usefulness in the classroom.

#### ***1. How did the ARTE 201 course affect your perceptions of teaching art to young children?***

All the participants noted that the course had a positive effect on their perceptions of teaching art to young children. They all agreed that the course provided them with practical ways to incorporate art into their classrooms, citing topics as classroom logistics, experiences with different media and have the opportunity to look at works of

art and feel like their opinion about art mattered. And they all made similar comments about being opened up to new ways of thinking about art in the classroom.

## ***2. What did you discover about your own abilities to teach art?***

The participants all made mention that the course has helped them discover that there were aspects of art education that they did enjoy, and might not have discovered otherwise.

They addressed this issue from different perspectives. C, discovered that she enjoyed researching how artwork was a part of daily life. E, who comes from a yoga background, mentioned that she found making art to be a way that she could relax during stressful moments in the semester. And J, found the class to be a way of facing her fears of art making for the benefit of her future students.

## ***3. In what ways did the course increase or decrease your desire or motivation to teach art?***

The general consensus was that participation in the course had increased both their desire and motivation to teach art to students one day. The each noted that they did not believe they were the very good artists, particularly in terms of drawing and painting, but that understanding that art could be taught as a process and as an experience was very liberating and exciting for them. C put it this way, "...that's what I want to focus on when teaching art. I really want children to focus on their experience of learning a

different skill, experimenting with different materials.” (C, personal communication, May 1, 2012).

***4. What do you wish you would have learned in the course?***

Though the participants predominantly felt that they course was comprehensive and offered many learning opportunities, they did make a few suggestions that they felt would be good additions to the course content. C and E suggested that more time be spent discussing contingency plans for elementary students that were not motivated to participate in art lessons. J suggested the inclusion of more technology and computer based art making in the course.

***5. Please describe, as honestly as you can the style of teacher that you as a student prefer.***

The participants all said they preferred a teacher in education to have experience in the classroom and be able to convey real life experiences to students. They spoke of personality characteristic such as friendly, open, supportive, warm, approachable, flexible and kind. As students, the participants preferred a teacher who could provide a variety of methods through which the students could learn about the topic. J and C in particular spoke about the need to feel like they had a relationship with the teacher, that there was a level of caring in the relationship that they felt increased their motivation to perform well in a course. Yet they all three wanted to feel like there was a level of individualism in their learning; that a teacher would give them the freedom to experiment with ideas and

methods. They wanted a teacher that had experience, expertise and understanding, but who did not presume that the students in the class knew nothing.

***6. How is my teaching style similar to those that you've experienced in teacher education?***

The participants by and large agreed that my teaching style was quite different to that which they had experienced in teacher education courses. E noted that yes, the other instructors in her courses had classroom experience and often used PowerPoint during lectures but felt that was where the similarities ended. J noted that my teaching style was similar to the style of the instructor in a computer methods course in that we both encourages students to experiment with new knowledge and apply hands-on practice to learning. C stated, "I thought you were definitely more approachable...It just seemed like you were one of us. I mean, you were the teacher, obviously, but I just felt really, really comfortable" (C, personal communication, May 1, 2012).

***7. How is my teaching style different from those that you've experienced in teacher education?***

The participants cited my passion in the classroom set me apart from the other teachers they had experienced in teacher education. They each noted that they felt they had a very good relationship with me in the classroom and that I made them feel

comfortable about making art. E mentioned that she like my real life approach to the subject of teaching,

“A lot of teacher are more ‘professors’ or ‘researchers’. It feels like they’re just spitting out what they know; like they’re the experts. Where with you it was more down to earth, I felt I could relate. And it was more about the kids and the teaching and getting through to them.” (E, personal communication, May 8, 2012)

#### ***8. What steps might I take to improve my teaching?***

The participants felt that there were no specific things that I should do to improve my teaching. J repeated that she felt more technology would be a good addition to the course content, but she didn’t feel there was anything wrong with my teaching. The other participants, B, E and C had no suggestions for improving my teaching.

#### ***9. In what ways did my teaching methods support your learning?***

The participants felt that my teaching methods supported their learning during the class. E and J both mentioned that it was interested to be ‘put in the place of the child’, meaning that the nervousness they felt about making art might be similar to the nervousness that their future students might one day feel. They felt this would be a good thing to remember when they were teaching their own students one day. C noted that she felt supported during the studio activities when I would move through the class to make

comments and offer advice about using different media. All three mentioned that my teaching methods made me approachable and they felt motivated to come to class.

***10. In what ways did my teaching methods hinder your learning?***

None of the participants could name any ways in which their learning was hindered by my teaching methods.

**Main themes of the art elicitation interviews**

A theme that emerged from the art elicitation interviews was how much the participants valued drawing as a mark of artistic ability. E especially seemed fixated on what she perceived as her inability to draw. To the extent that when I asked her about what she liked about working with felt and fabric she said, “If it’s not drawing, I’m pretty happy.” (E, personal communication, May 8, 2012).

The participants all expressed feelings of happiness about not being judged during art making. They liked that they were able to experiment with media and learn new art making methods without the pressure of making things perfect or beautiful. Related to this was the appreciation for the use of reflection in the art making process. They felt that it made the work more their own, more personal. In J’s opinion, the reflective nature of the studio experiences helped her realize that the important thing was the personal meaning she put into the artwork, not what it looked like.

The participants expressed appreciation for how I approached teaching drawing methods with the ellipse and the tree. They noted that they enjoyed the gesture drawing as a warm up to the drawing activity.

During the course of the art elicitation part of the interview, the participants discussed other aspects of the course as well and it gave an added dimension to the perspective I had on part of the course. For instance, E was discussing the multi-cultural discussion that I had tried to facilitate with the class. She said she remembered how quiet it was that day and suggested that maybe my approach to the class structure had something to do with why the discussion did not go as planned. I had thought that since the students had pre-written their answers for homework that it might be easier if they shared out individually. E disagreed; she felt that I should have stuck with a small group format,

“People...they don't want to step on anybody's toes...say the wrong thing. Yeah, it would be interesting to see how that would have worked in the small group and another one of the topics [out of class assignments], maybe in a whole group. Because it might have different.” (E, personal communication, May 8, 2012)

C also expressed an appreciation for small group work especially in the context of difficult topic such as multiculturalism and the budget discussion. She felt that with difficult topics the students should be allowed to choose their own groups because it is important to work with a comfortable, known group of classmates. J also felt that the



group work was important but sometimes interfered with her ability to loosen up and enjoy her project because she was comparing her work with that of her tablemates.

Overall the participants seem very satisfied with the course and with my teaching. They felt my teaching methods helped them feel comfortable within an art methods course. They enjoyed the class, the real life anecdotes and the way I used humor. They each felt they had a good student/teacher relationship with me and were glad that they had taken the course. The three of them voiced a belief that they would indeed use the information and art methods covered in the course.

“initially coming into this class I thought art was going to be an easy class...a ‘Mickey Mouse’ class...and I find this is one of the classes I’m really going to remember” (C, personal communication, May 1, 2012).

“And honestly, from the bottom of my heart, I really feel that this art class opened my eyes to do more and to learn more and not to be maybe so close minded.” (J, personal communication, May 2, 2012).

“I was so nervous going into this, I was like ‘OK, let’s get this over with’...But coming out of it changed me...You brought amazement to it...the passion that you hold and share with the class in the way you taught” (E, personal communication, May, 8, 2012).

## **Course evaluations from the Winter 2012 research semester**

The written comments from the anonymous course evaluations support what the interview participants said about my teaching. I was described as “approachable”, “genuinely caring”, “knowledgeable”, and “an excellent teacher” (CUFPA Student feedback form, April 2012). The content of the course was described as “practical”, “relevant”, “interesting” and “an awesome learning experience” (CUFPA Student feedback form, April 2012). Did this mean that the participant interviews were not being influenced by our relationship, was this really the better way to teach? To attempt to find a contrast, I reviewed the course evaluation from the previous year, when I taught using a very teacher-centered pedagogy, Winter 2011. These evaluations reflect similar student responses to my teaching and to the content of the course.

In terms of culling specific information about my teaching, the only particular piece of data that countered my perceptions of the class came from E in her discussion that a small group format would have been more appropriate for a discussion of difficult material. Otherwise, I am left with the understanding that my teaching was sound and relevant and that my students feel comfortable with me as their teacher.

Reflecting on what the participants said about specific aspects of the class confirmed much of what I discovered in the literature. The first was that despite my best effort to set a tone of warmth and openness during the first class, there was still nervousness surrounding the process of making art (Kawalchuk and Stone, 2000; Lakey, Manifold, and Zimmerman, 2007; Miraglia, 2008; Smith-Shank, 1992). While the participants noted that they enjoyed the reflective aspect of the Personal Paths, it was still

a project that was based on drawing, and that fact alone was enough to cause anxiety. The participants voiced concerns about not being able to draw, about wanting to know what I wanted or expected of them. This seemed especially acute in J. who mentioned several times during the interview that she was trying to figure out what I wanted her to do. Interestingly, J. was also the one participant who voiced a strong desire for freedom during the studio portion of the course and preferred a sense of independence. This reflects Smith-Shank's (1995) notion that pre-service generalists prefer to experiment and judge for themselves what art activities have merit.

An important thing that I did glean from the interviews, it seems that though most of my semester I spent teaching through a state of nervousness and anxiety about changing my pedagogy, the students did not seem to notice. This answers the concern I voiced in Chapter 3 about my research having negative consequences on my teaching, it appears it did not.

## CHAPTER 7: ANALYSIS

In this chapter I present the emergent themes and findings from my research. Arranged by broad categories of emotional and cognitive responses to the experience, I discuss coarse-and-fine grained analysis to show the trajectory of my thinking and how I arrived at my findings.

### **Analysis of emotional responses**

As I began sort and compare the emotional responses I had during the thirteen week study I worked with two broad categories of analysis that directly addressed my research question: ‘impediments’ - those feelings that implied a resistance to change or a perceived challenge to change through a negative response to the situation; and ‘possibilities’ – those feelings that implied a movement towards or an openness to change through a positive response to a situation. Through a course grained analysis of emotional themes based on similar characteristics (Maxwell and Miller, 2008), I made my initial pass through the data.

## **Vulnerability based on newness of the pedagogy**

A new pedagogy creates an unfamiliar landscape for teaching. In this instance, vulnerability stems from a lack of experience with a particular set of teaching habits. In shifting from a teacher-centered pedagogy to a student-centered pedagogy, I had changed the sequence of the class. In addition, I changed where I stood in the classroom and I changed the style in which I previously interacted with the students. And I had rewritten the studio activities. One might liken this to learning to drive a standard transmission car in rush hour traffic. Before one begins to deal with traffic, one has to have a firm understanding of the vehicle itself. I did not understand this vehicle of student-centered pedagogy; therefore I had no way of anticipating what could happen as I slipped into the driver's seat. An example of this type of vulnerability was my feeling awkward during moments of silence while waiting for students to respond to a question or assignment. I also struggled to understand what my role should be in terms of how much direction I should provide students during discussions and studio work. And the studio work also evoked this type of vulnerability in me because the structure of the studio activities emphasized self-reflection and self analysis. I recall a moment where I was worried that the students would think that the course was "flaky" because so many of the studio activities were about personal symbols and personal reflection instead of elements of art and principles of design.

## **Vulnerability based my perceptions of the student responses to me the teacher**

This particular feeling of vulnerability is one step beyond the feeling that I do not understand the mechanics of the pedagogy. Vulnerability based on how I perceive the students is, for me, tangled with the feeling of responsibility I have for guiding pre-service generalists through what may be their first art class and likely their only art methods course. To revisit the car analogy, it is worrying that the other drivers will realize you don't know what you are doing. I carried with me the notion that as a teacher I am supposed to have all the answers. I need to be able to handle everything that comes up during the class. The worst feeling is fear that the students may find out that I didn't fully understand what I was doing. And in particular with the pre-service generalist population, who come to art methods courses already anxious, I feel challenged to make them feel secure and relaxed when I was feeling neither of those things. An example of this type of vulnerability became apparent in reading one of the early self interview transcripts, when I indicated some concern that the students might think that doing so many self-reflective studio lessons would be "weird". In the following sentence I wrote that I felt "awkward and dumb and out of control". I struggled with the new pedagogy and of not feeling competent in it while at the same time worrying about what the students would think of me as their teacher teaching the pedagogy.

## **Amplification of stress**

The stress of changing pedagogy and the vulnerability that comes with this change lessened my ability to cope with additional stressors of teaching. Because of the tremendous amount of mental and physical energy involved in making a change to pedagogy, there is very little left in one's reserve to full cope with other often uncontrollable factors that impact the classroom environment. The prime example of this was the 2012 Student Strikes that affected most of Quebec, including Concordia University. There were several instances of disruptions within the art education classes and clashes between students on opposite sides of the issue of tuition increases. What I noticed during this time was that the thought of an interaction with the strikers caused me intense anxiety bordering on panic. In my self-interview I described my feelings in that moment, "my preference would have been to shut the door, lock it and stay super insulated...but I faced down the fear." When I reflect upon this I realize that much of my exaggerated emotional response was largely mitigated by my simply having invested all of my energy and coping ability into changing pedagogies. I had nothing left over to help me bounce back from this unrelated event.

## **Mental and physical fatigue**

When I designed this research project I had not anticipated the intense physical and mental fatigue that I would encounter during the semester. I was forcing myself to think, speak and respond in a way that was largely contrary to how I had done so in my

past years of teaching. I developed physical reminders to help keep me on track. For example, I would casually press a finger across my lips to remind myself to remain quiet while the students were working. I changed the sequence of the class, moving to a studio-lecture/discussion- studio format from the lecture-studio structure that I'd used in the past. I borrowed a remote control for the PowerPoint so that when I did use a slide show I was not forced to stay at the front of the class. These two structural changes helped push me out of older lecturing habit. Yet the feelings of vulnerability, the stress of learning a new pedagogy while teaching, the systematic reflection on my progress left me physically, mentally and emotionally exhausted.

As I reflect on the semester, I notice the work it took to support the change in my teaching pedagogy. Within those efforts I come to the notion of quiet. I have worked with this idea before in reference to Caranfa's (2004, 2007) ideas of aesthetic silence and utilizing quiet in the classroom. Silence and contemplation also informed the development of my pedagogy. But what I observed was that it became a part of this study in a very different way than I had previously conceived it. In the past I had dealt with silence as part of the curriculum, part of what needed to happen for the students to succeed creatively and academically in my course. But silence came to me now as quiet, and not as an aspect of the curriculum per say, but as a part of the way of coping with and supporting the deep changes in my pedagogy. I was quieting my voice so I could listen to the student. I was not silencing myself, because I still spoke and interacted with my class, but I did so in a manner that, I hope, encouraged a strong learning community. The notion of quiet was also critical to my own emotional reaction to the changes around me. It took effort to keep my thoughts quiet, to keep from feeling completely afraid during



this process. By focusing on quiet, I allowed myself the objectivity to pay attention to what I was doing. I was able to recognize the tremendous vulnerability that came with this process, which sometimes pushed me to the very edge of what I thought I could manage cognitively, emotionally and pedagogically.

### **The weight of the work**

A broad theme in regards to the question of emotional responses to the progress of the research was the constant awareness of the weight of the work before me in regards to the doctoral thesis. So coupled with the sheer exhaustion of the act of doing this particular research, there was also the reality of formulating doctoral work and the constant awareness that this was my only opportunity to implement this project, get results and have enough data to write into a thesis. The Student Strike and the impact that it might have on the course of my research was a concern.

### **Process of learning a new pedagogy**

One thing I didn't anticipate, though upon reflection seems quite reasonable was no matter how extensive the literature review may be, it is not until I put the pedagogy into action that I began to fully understand how to teach in a student-centered manner. I am not sure that I fully came to comprehend holistic/student centered pedagogy until after the research project had completed. For example, when I review and reflect upon my self-interview transcripts and I observe moments when I struggled with the idea of

Holism in relation to rigorous cognitive learning. I conflated the notion of holism with a very soft, form of learning that asked little in terms of intellectual and academic rigor. I am reminded of Ron Miller's (1990) discussion of holistic education. He posits that holistic education is at its core a radical departure from contemporary, test-driven, competitive contemporary education practice that much has been done politically to ensure that holistic education is "reduced to a caricature , and...roundly condemned as ineffective" (p. 151). While I by no means dismissed holistic education practice, I believe carried some of the misconceptions Miller alluded to in his observation. I lacked a certain objective understanding of holism and student centered teaching. Changing pedagogies, especially in mid career, requires a certain acceptance of the inevitable misunderstandings that come from learning.

A particular tendency that I observed in my transitioning through this pedagogical change was my effort to try to understand my new teaching style in reference to my old teaching style. I would often note that I was trying to strike a balance between the two positions, not really ready to completely let go of one nor fully embrace the other. There are certainly still remnants of Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE) structure seen in the syllabus and curriculum. I still addressed the areas of art history, art criticism, aesthetics and art production. However, what I was attempting to do was not to reconfigure the notions of DBAE, but to rework how I thought about pedagogy and teaching. Therefore, working from the only model I knew and understood, I created my own pedagogical model that also included four pillars: Balance, Embracing, Making Space and Engaging. This was not an intentional act, but was likely informed by a lifetime's worth of experience with the notion of four pillars in a pedagogical model.

I also observed during the semester where I would seek a sense of safety in transmission style teaching. This would usually happen after I took too big of a step away from transmission style teaching, such as when I tried to teach completely without a PowerPoint presentation, I would invariably over-reach my ability to manage. This type of over-reach would ultimately lead to my swinging back into a transmission style of teaching in order to regain a sense of balance. This type of shelter-seeking would also occur during moments of emotional duress. During a change of this nature I was putting so much energy into focusing on my own change and upheaval that I had nothing left to deal with the social and political upheaval around me. I would find myself pulling back towards purely transmission style teaching. This reminds me of Keltchermans (2005) discussion of vulnerability. He notes that teachers feel unsure or frightened by a change they will employ a coping mechanism to reestablish a sense of safety and control.

This speaks to the need to change in increments, as Guskey (2002) notes, change “requires both time and effort” (p. 386). Though it was thrilling to challenge myself with diving into the deep waters of change, it ultimately did not get me very far as I ended up further back than where I started. For example, I taught the lesson on integrated art lessons in a style very similar to my old teaching style. As I note in the description of that day, I believe it was due to the stress of the previous weeks and my perception that I attempted to change too much too soon in my teaching.

## **Finding a sense of balance – learning how to do a new pedagogy**

One of the unexpected positive experiences of making a shift to a new pedagogy is realizing that there is a space to learn a new way of teaching. The very process of learning that allowed for mistakes also allowed for opportunities. I could take the time to distance myself from the stress I could reengage myself as a learner. All the reassurances that I gave my students about taking their first art class and learning that new pedagogy applied to me as well. Entering into a space of relearning was liberating in that mistakes were allowed and expected. New territory, while disconcerting, was also exciting. This was a very different notion of ‘making space’ than clinging to the idea that this was only a research project that would be over soon, which was an act of self-protection. Instead, this particular way of finding space within the new pedagogy was about engaging fully with what was happening. In this instance, I trusted the flow of the process; I did not hide within it.

## **New experiences – new insights**

A tremendous possibility of changing pedagogies in mid-career is the completely new experience of moving through the classroom and the curriculum in a different way. While this was frightening for me it was also exhilarating. The analogy is as simple as looking in a different direction gives you a different view. At one point during the research I mentioned to my advisor that I had never had a class so communicative before; but maybe my students were always communicative, I’d just never given them the space

to communicate. I realized that by giving over some of the power to generate class content to the students, I began to learn more about the individuals in my class. My understanding of how to provide opportunities for students to give input about materials, ask questions, generate problems increased. Trigwell, et al., (2005) speak to this experience. They note that teachers who take a more student-centered approach to teaching, with the goal of helping students make a conceptual change through learning, are more apt to develop new and different understandings of the subjects they teach. This is opposed to teacher-centered/transmission style teaching which generally does not generate a significant change in how the teacher understands the subject matter. I agree with Trigwell, et al. as I began to see the new pedagogy working and in terms of student involvement, my satisfaction with the process grew.

Moreover, Trigwell, et al., have proposed a continuum of teacher-centered and student-centered teaching styles among academics. The continuum is broken down into four categories: teacher focused pedagogy with the intention of transmitting information requiring little to no student engagement, teacher focused pedagogy that utilizes different methods of transmission of discipline based information that requires student engagement, student focused pedagogy with the intention of conceptual development and finally, student focused pedagogy with the intention to help student make a conceptual change about an idea or experience. Trigwell, et al, found that when teachers use a student focused pedagogy with the intention of helping students make conceptual changes about a subject, the teachers experienced a change in how they felt about the subject they taught. I fall into the category of teachers who made fundamental changes to their theoretical views of the subject. I found that I was not even compelled to want to

teach the elements of art and principles of design, which were long standing staples of my art education methods repertoire. Instead I began to conceptualize my pedagogy not in terms of transmitting methods, but of supporting the development of young teachers and their creative growth. My priorities shifted from teaching art lessons that I knew worked because I'd taught them hundreds of times to developing content that I hoped that my students could carry with them through their art making process. I began to think in terms of a methods course that was not sequential recipe for an art project, but an experience of the relevance, applicability and sustainability of art in the lives of my students.

**Don't discount what you know in the face of change.**

This was a rather curious outcome of this project. Often, when I am thrown into a state of change my immediate response is to assume I do not know anything, I lose all my bearings and feel frozen. In the act of teaching, I had little time to invest in worrying about what I did or did not know in a given learning curve. And no matter how much I planned and applied those plans, the nature of the classroom is not static. Plans go awry. Students respond in unexpected ways. While transitioning through this change and reinventing myself as a teacher, certain elements of my practice still held strong. And so one day, even after planning to open the class with a continuation of the previous week's lesson; I made the intuitive decision that to begin each class with an activity we would do together. What I noticed as I moved through the semester is that the idea of community became very important to me. So I decided near the mid-point in the semester that each class would begin with a new studio activity, so that we were beginning together. There

would be time to catch up and finish up at a different point in the class. The idea being, I did not lose control of my past experiences during this process. I did not relinquish responsibility to the new learning process and claim I had no idea what was happening so therefore I could not function. A key point I needed to remember when changing pedagogies is that the process of change does not delete the previous experience. I prefer to think of it like a palimpsest, layers of experiences and ideas resting on top of each other, with the under layers still visible and palpable.

I now move from coarse-grained to fine-grained analysis through relationships in the data based on contiguity. Maxwell and Miller (2008) define contiguity in reference to data as "...seeing actual connections between things, rather than similarities and differences" (p. 462). The researcher looks for connections across categories of data. Contiguity-based analysis allows for a much richer and complex picture of my emotional responses while changing my pedagogy to emerge. I began to wonder if I was actually dealing with two categories, impediments and possibilities, separated only by perception. Many of the factors that I faced could be viewed contextually as both positive and negative, both an impediment and possibility. I am reminded Palmer's (1998a) discussion that education should not be so attached to the idea of dualities because teaching encompasses multiple, sometimes divergent truths. Was the overarching theme of the case study simply change and everything else a mere subset of data? I arrived at what I think is the first major theme of the research – vulnerability.

## **Vulnerability**

The predominant theme of the within the context of emotional response to changing teaching pedagogy is vulnerability. I believe that nearly all of my emotional responses stemmed from a state of vulnerability. Because I changed everything within my pedagogy – sequencing of class, inclusion of more student input in to content, revamping of the studio projects – I had no landmarks along the way. I was simultaneously trying to teach and learn. I was feeling empowered and unsure, delighted and frightened, sound in my ability as a teacher and completely lost in the new pedagogical approach. And as I wondered how this could be, I found very similar findings reflected writing about teachers’ emotional lives in the context of the classroom and in the face of educational reform. (Blase, 1988; Bullough, 2005; Kelchtermans, 2005; Nias, 1996). These authors agree that a teacher’s sense of identity is inextricably connected to their particular teaching practice, their perceived role in the classroom and their self-perception of being a good teacher. For me the first day was the most difficult. I felt nervous and vulnerable and completely out of my element. I realize that I have a compulsive need to talk, to constantly be lecturing, to pack every minute of every class with data. So while the students were working, I would find myself moving through the room and making observations and offering assistance, but mostly keeping a finger over my mouth to remind me to stay quiet. I sensed that were I to constantly talk it might disrupt the reflective nature of the artwork. I also felt similar to what Parker Palmer (1998a) describes as a kind of professional ethic, that of not wanting to let my students



down or let them leave the course without learning every single thing there could be about art education methods.

Another major theme of my research is the way in which I responded emotionally to the change in pedagogy. My emotions were often emerging from the feelings of vulnerability, fear and shifting power. This helped me to recognize the edges of what I am able to cope with during the transition and also come to a better understanding of how student-centered pedagogy works. I entered into the project believing in a dualistic approach, that shifting from a teacher-centered to student-centered pedagogy meant that I should not take myself into account as part of the classroom. What I believe now is that a student centered pedagogy does not mean that I need throw away of all levels of self protection. An example of this is the discussion of classroom management scenarios. To listen to the students critique the mistakes I made as a young teacher was something that I perceived would be helpful. However, in doing so I put myself in an unnecessarily vulnerable position, not realizing how it might impact me emotionally. My feelings were hurt and I felt defensive as I listened to my current students criticize the decisions made by my younger self. During this exercise, I attempted to apply Palmer's (1998a) notion of sharing the challenges of education and neglected that the teacher is part of the holistic classroom (Miller, J., 2006). My intentions were good, but I did not consider the amount of stress this activity would cause me.

Another example of how vulnerable and fearful I felt was during my interactions with the representatives of the student strike. While in some ways the student strike was an extenuating circumstance, it can also be viewed as simply how life goes on around the classroom, for better or for worse, and teachers and students cope with these occurrences

as best they can. However, I will admit to being a coward. I don't like when situations escalate into conflict, it puts me on edge. Despite my fear of dealing with the student strike, I made the decision to face my fear and allow those two women into my classroom to speak to the students. In both the instances, the classroom management exercise and the interaction with the student strike representatives, I am glad that I made the choices I did. It was indeed difficult emotionally to handle at the time, but I believe it I was able to work through my fears and prove to myself that I could cope with not being in complete control of everything. In terms of the classroom management activity, I believe it was worth sharing with my students real life examples. A more mundane example of sharing power is illustrated by my releasing of all the PowerPoint presentations after each class. I chose to loosen my grip on those notions – as evidenced in my sending the class slides to the students each week. By the end of the semester I began to understand that being an authentic, open, warm and human teacher did not mean that I had to put myself in a position of mental or emotional harm.

When change happens, be it in the form of an educational policy change a province wide student strike or a self-directed change in pedagogy, that change is perceived as a threat depending upon how deeply the teacher sees it impacting his or her ability to function in the classroom. And thus when a change impacts the classroom, the teacher's perceived role in the classroom and their teaching pedagogy, it is also impacting the teacher's sense of self because that sense is tied to "...the dynamic and complex reality in which teachers have to live their professional lives." (Kelchtemans, p.1005). In this sense, vulnerability may be defined as the state of perceived powerlessness and having no control of the actions taking place in the classroom. This certainly reflects my

experience during my study. One reaction to my state of vulnerability was an over reaction to outside stressors. Things that occurred completely unrelated to my work, but I responded with far more anxiety and worry than I may have, had I not been changing pedagogies and not been conducting research about the change in pedagogies. I believe that what I was experiencing came from my feelings of vulnerability pushing against my physical exhaustion. The collision of these two phenomenon resulted in an amplification of my emotional responses to situations that may have felt like an outside force pushing in on my teaching. As a result I noticed that I began to look for ways to insulate myself. I felt very protective of my classroom space, possibly even territorial. Often I arrived as early as 7:30am for my 9:00am class, just to be in the room and arrange it in the way I wanted. I felt myself becoming tense if someone would enter the room during my class time, as if I needed to own the space during the time I was there. And when the student strike began I was wrought deep worry. The day that the student strike representative came to speak to my class about strike activities, I forced myself to swallow what I can only describe as ice-cold panic.

It is also noted by Kelchtemans (2005) and Blase (1988) that when faced with upheaval in the classroom, teachers will employ coping mechanisms in an attempt to create a sense of protection from the perceived threat of change. These coping actions, such as a refusal to fully implement or delay implementation of a new curriculum, are categorized by Kelchtmans (2005) as “micropolitical” (p. 1004) in that they are informed by the beliefs and values of the teacher in the context of the values of the school environment. In my case, my coping mechanism was to hold to the thought that it was a research project. That if it didn’t work, that would produce valid data as well. I found that

at moments when the project was feeling especially uncomfortable, I could find a sense of distance in focusing on what I was doing as a self study about teaching. It was as if I was taking one step back from the actual act of teaching. This small mental exercise allowed some breathing space within the pressure of research.

J. Miller (2006) and Palmer (1998a) speak to the issue of the vulnerability in teaching. They both recommend a teacher seek respite outside of the world of the classroom; to balance the complicated teacher identity and the individual human identity. Miller and Palmer posit that in order to sustain good, effective teaching, teachers must find ways complete their sense of identity that are anchored to life outside of the classroom. The reason being that no matter how tightly one identifies with being a teacher, there are always constraints that may force us to behave or act in a way that is not congruent with certain beliefs we may hold. This might be in the form of the district-wide adoption of pedagogy that the teacher may not consider effective or valid. Or it may be that certain personal or spiritual beliefs must remain in check due to the professional and legal requirements of the job. Parker (1998a) in particular contends that a teacher form an individual identity outside of the school in order to function as a more complete and happy person. This idea stands in particular contrast to Kelchtermans' (2005) notion that teacher identity is completely, almost fatefully, entangled with teaching practice and life in the classroom.

Based on my reading of the literature, my experience during my research and my lived experience as a teacher, I am inclined to agree with Palmer (1998a) and J. Miller (2007). I believe that teachers must maintain a sense of self and a sense of identity outside of the classroom. The colleagues I know who were able maintain a life outside of

the classroom were much more successful at staying positive, happy and healthy people. I experienced a similar need to maintain a balance of life outside of my research. Especially because I was conducting my research alone it was necessary to spend time with friends and take a break from the role of teacher and researcher during the weekend.

### **Accepting the process of change**

A final theme that emerged from the contiguity-based analysis was the interconnection between the impediments and possibilities; often they could be drawn from the same experience. There is a sense of necessity to this theme. It was as if I couldn't have the possibility without experiencing the impediment. Let me restate the initial categories from the coarse-grained analysis. The first category describes the new experiences within my teaching, increased interaction with my students and experienced a rethinking of the subject of art education methods. The second category was that of struggling to learn a new pedagogy that I did not fully understand. And finally, I found a sense of ease that allowed me to learn the new pedagogy as I progressed through the research process. These three categories were created when I collapsed the broader categories of possibilities and impediments. But the fluidity and space that at once made learning the new pedagogy an impediment – misunderstanding holism, not knowing exactly how to respond to a particular classroom incident, feeling lost and vulnerable – also presented tremendous possibilities for growth in my understanding of my students and my teaching practice. As stated previously Trigwell, et al. (2005), find that when teachers use a student centered pedagogy they are more likely to come to new

understandings of their subject. And new understandings in this case came from choosing to change my pedagogy. Interestingly, I began to discover another aspect of vulnerability in this state of fluid acceptance. The very act of teaching puts the teacher in a vulnerable position. (Bullough, 2005; Kelchtermans, 2005; Nias, 1996; Palmer, 1998a) The same vulnerability that signals in us a perceived threat to our identity, our pedagogy, and our classrooms is the same vulnerability that helps us relate to our students, to be open, honest and authentic. Teachers are reliant upon interactions and relationships with students to complete the act of teaching. We hope for the students to respond to us. We hope they grasp our subject enough to be active and participate in the formation of knowledge. We hope that they like us and we are hurt when they do not. It is a precarious place, this place of teaching. But to gain the true satisfaction we must be willing to put ourselves in a position where we could be hurt emotionally. So crucial is vulnerability that Kelchtermans (2005) describes it as a “structural condition in education” (p. 997) that must be fully embraced as part and parcel of our lives as teachers.

### **Analysis of cognitive responses**

When I began the analysis of my cognitive responses to the new teaching pedagogy I was unsure that I would find any new data, because the emotional responses to the pedagogy were so overwhelming. The major themes that I found in my cognitive analysis illustrate a way of thinking through the adoption of a new pedagogy

My biggest challenge cognitively was trying to understanding how student-centered pedagogy worked in practice. I had no experience or practical training in the specifics of student-centered pedagogy and this caused a level of confusion and anxiety about what I should expect of my students and myself. I had only theory. Kaniuka (2012), in his study of how an urban school adopted a new remedial reading program, notes a similar hesitation and discomfort among teachers charged with implementing a new curriculum in the classroom. Among the concerns voiced by this group of teachers were specific worries about the teacher's ability to implement the new curriculum. This echoes the doubts I had in my own ability to implement a new pedagogy. I also struggled to understand my role as a teacher in a student-centered pedagogy. What should I say? What is my role? Do I take a completely hands-off approach? Palmer (1998a) observes that in reaction to authoritarian teaching methods, student-centered pedagogy at times marginalizes the teacher's role in the classroom. So in transitioning from teacher-centered to a student-centered pedagogy, there was a struggle to find a middle ground in my assumptions that student-centered teaching had no role for the teacher and teacher-centered teaching had no role for the student. J. Miller (2006) addresses this issue in his discussion of holistic education practice and timeless learning. The classroom environment, he contends, is made up of all the beings within it, including the teacher. He notes specifically the importance of teacher presence in the classroom as helping create a "...psychologically safe atmosphere where students were willing to share their thoughts and feelings..." (p. 136). J. Miller also speaks about maintaining a rhythm in the classroom, moving from one mode of teaching to another: lecture, discussion,

contemplation, hands-on activity. Thus, in his perception of student centered learning, the teacher and the students share in teaching and learning.

What was happening at a very fundamental level was a change in how I perceived student learning. Korthagen (2004) concludes that how teachers think and what they believe determines their actions in the classroom. Furthermore, teachers commonly fall back on perceptions of teaching that they themselves experienced as students, which is most commonly transmission based, teacher-centered delivery of information. This seems to fit with my struggles with student-centered pedagogy; I had been immersed in teacher-centered pedagogy for most of my academic life. I had taken that model as an example of good teaching and as a structure for the way that teaching and learning works. During my research I was working against decades of learned experience. However, Trigwell and Prosser (1996) take this idea one step further. While they concur teacher perceptions of teaching and learning influence teacher behavior, but they also note that shifting toward a student-centered pedagogy is an important factor in helping teachers change their own perceptions about teaching. Transmission style, teacher-centered pedagogy affords the teacher very little leeway in terms of changing pedagogy. In choosing to study student-centered pedagogy, I was unknowingly facilitating my own change in perceptions about teaching and learning.

Another struggle I faced was the pressure of teaching a methods course in particular. Palmer (1998a) discusses the same pressure of teaching a methods course; he describes it like this,

“I often hear an inner voice of dissent: ‘But my field is full of factual information that students must possess before they can continue in the field.’ This voice urges



me to do what I was trained to do: fully occupy the space with my knowledge, even if doing so squeezes my students out.” (p. 120).

I had 13 weeks to teach the students about art education methods such as studio experiences, introduction to materials and media and their uses, curriculum development, classroom management, and a myriad of other things that are important to know when teaching art to young children. I felt a level of professional pressure to make sure that the students in this methods course received and understood the content they would need to teach art in their own classrooms. The temptation to use transmission teaching methods was very strong, if for no other reason that I was operating within a very small window of time. This particular internal conflict may never be fully resolved. As an instructor, I must operate within the existing institutional structures of academia. These structures require that my students meet certain competencies and acquire a specific skill-set in a methods course and that I quantify learning into the form of a grade.

However, not all of my cognitive responses were struggles with the new pedagogy. One aspect that I observed was that I determined the level of successful teaching based on perception of the student response to and mastery of class content. I note specifically that when the students were engaged with and responding positively to the material, I determined that to be a cognitive success. However, when the students did not respond or were not engaged with the material, as in our discussion of culture, I described this phenomenon in the self-interview as a cognitive failure. Furthermore, I commented about the need to reflect on student responses as a way of redirecting my teaching style, or making small corrections in the trajectory of the class. What began to

happen as I proceeded through an unfamiliar pedagogy style, I relied on my perception of student responses as a way of navigating my way through the transition and determining my success.

It has been noted that during a pedagogical shift, teachers will use perceptions of student behaviors, academic performance and engagement with the new material as a measure of their own success implementing a new pedagogy or curriculum (Day and Gu, 2009; Kaniuka, 2012; Kroath, 1989). Moreover, Kanuika (2012) posits that when teachers perceived student progress in the new pedagogy as positive, they were more apt to view themselves as well as the new pedagogy as being successful. But there is another layer of aspect of teacher identity that influences how teachers manage change and that is the extent of professional experience.

As I became more comfortable with student-centered pedagogy, I began to enjoy the process of the students facilitating their own learning. The museum trip was thrilling for me. I was far enough into my research that I could see some of the progress I had made in changing my pedagogy. But as with any change, this was fraught with mixed emotions. While delighted in what I perceived as increased level of student engagement, I was having a difficult time understanding what my role should be. I stated simply during a self-interview, "I feel irrelevant." (January 18, 2012). It was strange to observe my own responses. While I was thrilled for the experience that the students were having I felt somehow sidelined and excluded from that experience. The newness of my experience with student centered pedagogy manifested in a series of mixed emotions. Yet, I struggled with adjusting to my role in a student-centered pedagogy. I realized that it was not me the teacher that was irrelevant, but the role I previously inhabited. And

there is a kind of mourning that happened during this change. In addition to vulnerability, fear and excitement that came with this change of pedagogy, there was sadness for the part of me that I left behind.

Day and Gu (2009) in their study of veteran secondary teachers, note that the manner in which a teacher copes with change is at least in part, predicated on their cumulative experiences in the classroom. The authors note that positive experiences in the classroom form an emotional and intellectual reservoir that helps the teacher in times of particular stress or change. They define the ability of teachers to cope with change as resilience which was directly linked to a sense of purpose and the ability to derive satisfaction from student performance. Both of these factors helped veteran teachers cope with changes in their professional lives. Additionally, Day and Gu draw attention to the fact that veteran teachers have experience with change. They do not imply that change is easy for veteran teachers, only that there is value in having weathered change over time. Drawing from Day and Gu, I am free to embrace my own extensive professional experience as a factor that helped me tackle a change of this magnitude. My positive experiences in teaching art far outweigh my negative ones. Thus I had unknowingly equipped myself to cope with changing my own pedagogy.

I also began to openly question my previous teaching practice. This may be attributed to a few factors of the study. First, Trigwell and Prosser (2005) contend that when a teacher moves towards a student-centered pedagogy he or she experiences a shift in how they think about the subject matter being taught. This was happening to me. Because I shifted away from pedagogy of pure transmission, I began to review the information that was previously being transmitted. Kelchtermans (2005) discussion of

vulnerability informs this act of questioning of my previous teaching practice. It was through the experience of extreme vulnerability that I was pushed far enough out of my learned teaching habits that I could come to place to question them. Had the status quo remained, there would have been no observing and questioning of my teaching practice.

For example, I began to rethink the relevance and value of certain pieces of information such as the elements of art and principles of design. How was a student's perception of art education changed by learning how to show repetition in a work of art? Another area of my curriculum that I began to ponder were discussion topics that were predicated on classroom experience, such as classroom management and interdisciplinary art lessons. The students were able to make some connections with the material, at a theoretical level, but I was left with feeling that our discussions were just filling time until they found their first teaching job.

However, it was interesting to observe the connection between my struggle to understand student-centered pedagogy in practice and their struggle to understand classroom management or interdisciplinary art lessons as they have had no practice. What then would provide their structure when they finally entered the classroom? Would our discussions somehow stay with them? This echoes J. Miller's (2006) discussion of compassion growing from a deep sense of interconnectedness with people. This realization enabled me to realize a clearer understanding of what pre-service teachers struggle with when taking an art methods course.

During the course of the semester, I would find myself grappling with how to understand a student-centered pedagogy in the context of a methods course that required large swaths of content to be taught to students in a very short amount of time. There

was the awareness that this was my only opportunity to teach these students what they would need to go forth and incorporate art education into their generalist classrooms one day. I knew from experience and the literature that the pre-service generalist population came to art education methods courses with their own set of competing professional pressures – they wanted practical art lessons that they could apply to their classrooms one day while simultaneously being afraid of their own perceived lack of ability to teach art (Kowalchuk and Stone, 2000; Lackey, et al, 2007; Miraglia, 2008; Smith-Shank, 1995). I think this is a tremendous challenge in a methods course: trying to help students prepare to become teachers in the future while focusing on their needs as students in the present moment. For instance, a characteristic of student centered pedagogy is that the teacher should provide multiple ways for the students to convey what they know (Campbell, 2012; J. Miller, 2006). This is a present moment need. But I know, from personal experience, what they will need professionally in the future is the ability to speaking in front of groups, the ability to write a lesson plan and measurable objectives in a very specific way. So when a student who is training to be a teacher does not want to speak in front of a group because they are shy or have anxiety issues, I needed to find a way to balance that student's needs as a learner with their needs as a future teacher. I had to navigate multiple levels of pressure and fear without letting it pull me backwards into transmission-style teaching.

It was in these times that I relied on my understanding of John Miller's (2006) discussion of teaching styles as a kind of rhythmic understanding of the classroom. Miller posits that there are times when a teacher may find it necessary to utilize a transmission style of teaching or a transaction style of teaching in conjunction with transformative

teaching practice. This understanding was helpful in dealing the generalist population, many of whom had not taken an art course before or had any experience looking at or making art. Miller's discussion of the rhythm of teaching methods allowed me to transmit information if there was some specific information that the students needed and to not feel like I had failed at student-centered pedagogy.

In summarizing this analysis I note that the emergent themes of my work appear to fit with what the literature confirms happens to teachers when are in the midst of a change in pedagogy. My conceptualization of my own process of change was aided by Keltcherman's (2005) notions of vulnerability and realizing the ways that I responded to and occasionally resisted my own self-imposed change. The discussion by Prosser and Trigwell (2002) of the benefits of student-centered pedagogy gave me hope that what I was attempting would ultimately benefit my teaching practice. These reflect important aspects of how my work is grounded in the literature. What I will present in the next chapter is what has emerged from my research into what I believe will be an important contribution to the discussion of how teachers, specifically art teachers, change.

## CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION

In this final chapter in this thesis, I will present the contribution my research offers the field of art education, a model for holistic, self-directed change. I will discuss the components of this model, how it grew from my research and the implications for further application in art education. I will also discuss the trajectory of my future research bases on notions of change and mid-career art teachers.

In this chapter I present and discuss my model for holistic, self-directed change in art education pedagogy (Figure 14). In developing a model, I situate myself in response to authors on change in teacher practice (Bishop and Mulford, 1999; Fullan, 2007; Guskey, 2002, Richardson, 1990, 1998; Webster, 2013) and particularly those who have called for a model to help teachers make and sustain changes in their practice (Fullan, 2007; Guskey, 2002; Richardson, 1998; Webster, 2013). My model offers one possibility for making sustainable change to teaching practice and is grounded in the particular characteristics of the professional life of an art educator. I conceptualize change through four phases: Initiating change, navigating change, integrating change and degree of change accepted into practice.

### **Teachers and change**

The literature of change in teaching practice categorically agrees that change is an inevitable part of the lives of teachers, policies change, curricula change, administrations

change, funding structures change, students change and ultimately, teachers change (Day and Gu, 2009; Fullan, 2007; Guskey, 2002; Keltchermans, 2005; Palmer, 1998a; Richardson, 1998; Webster, 2013). To change teaching practice is a difficult, time consuming, exhausting, frightening and stressful endeavor (Guskey, 2002; Keltchermans, 2005; Palmer, 1998a; Richardson, 1990, 1998). It is suggested by some that teachers don't change (Webster, 2013). However, Richardson (1990) posits the difficulty in understanding the issue of teachers and change may be attributed to the tendency in the literature of education and teaching practice to define change as "teachers doing something that others are suggesting they do." (p. 11). And, based on a reading of the literature, many teachers do not do as they are suggested to do, rather they will find ways to avoid or subvert change because they perceive it as threatening their teaching practice (Day and Gu, 2009; Fullan, 2007; Guskey, 2002; Keltchermans, 2005; Palmer, 1998a; Richardson, 1998; Webster, 2013).

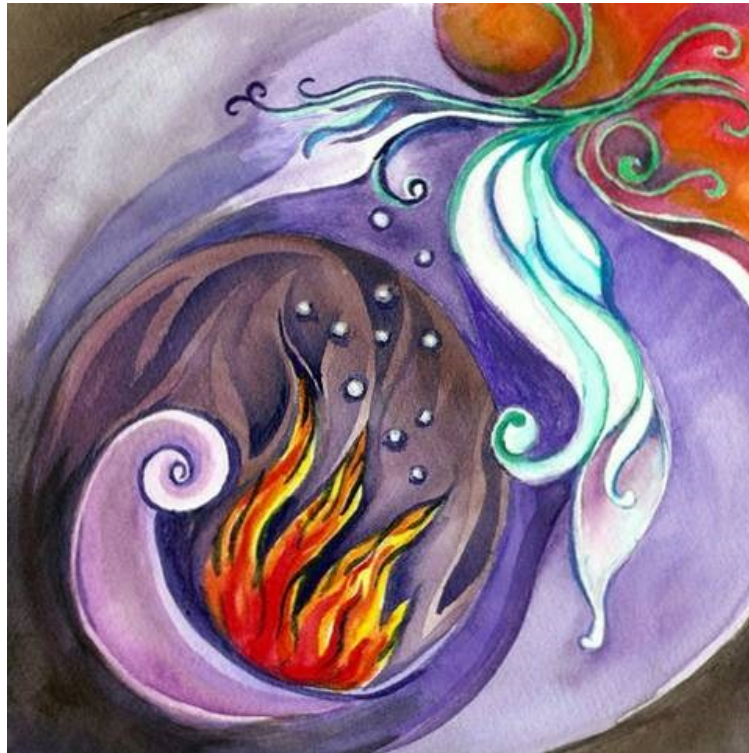
### **A model for holistic, self-directed change in art education pedagogy**

What I suggest is not a way to lessen the cognitive or emotional impact of change on a teacher or a way of avoiding change in teaching practice. Rather, I offer a model that will help teachers manage the process of change as it is happening to them. I consider my model self directed because it assumes a level of ownership of the process of change. I have come to believe that owning the process of pedagogical change may enable a teacher to develop a sense of stability during the process. My model is also holistic in that it addresses the physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and creative aspects that



accompany changing art education pedagogy. In what follows I will discuss each aspect of my model separately and then describe how I conceive these separate aspects working together to result in the acceptance of change.

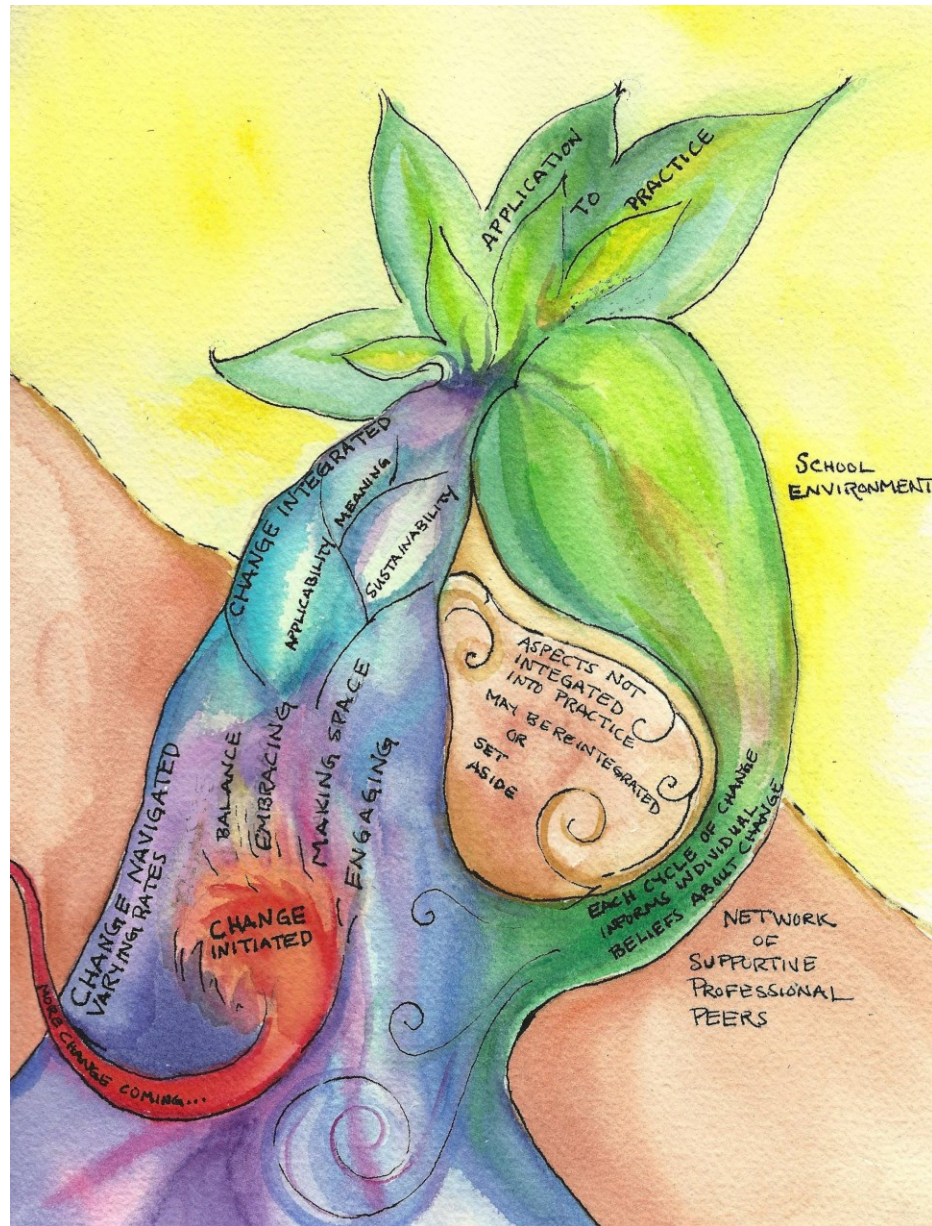
Reflecting upon the best form for my model I came upon a small watercolor painting that was made in the spring of 2009 (Figure 13) shortly before my move to Montreal to begin doctoral work.



*Figure 13.* Untitled, watercolor by P. Chambers-Tripunitara. 2009, 8'' x 8'', watercolor on paper This figure shows the inspiration for my model of holistic, self-directed change in art education pedagogy.

The painting, it seemed to me, contained the major components for holistic self-directed change. It had elements of growth and transformation, the fire within resulted in transformation above. There appeared to be elements of the fire being integrated into what would become new growth. And the image seemed to imply that this change was

situated in an environment that allowed and supported the change to take place. Keeping the organic, plant-like lines and shapes, I simplified and abstracted this painting into a working model for change (Figure 14).



*Figure 14:* This image illustrates my proposed model for holistic, self-directed change in art education pedagogy.

### **Rates of integration and simultaneity**

Before discussing the components of this model, I want to present the two overarching notions that are critical to its functioning. The first is the idea that an individual does not navigate and integrate change at a constant rate. There are moments when an art teacher might have more difficulty with a particular aspect of a change and need to spend more time working to understand that aspect of the change. For instance, when I attempted to teach without the use of a PowerPoint presentation; that was too far removed from my previous teaching style and I needed to slow down my rate of absorbing that change. However, slowing down or pausing the process is not a termination of change. Had I chosen to stop the research completely I could not have unlived the experience. I was not going backwards; I was simply navigating my way forward more carefully. The second key idea of this model is the notion of simultaneity. All areas of the model are operating at the same time, though not necessarily at the same rate. Change is constantly being introduced into the art teacher's life and navigated; decisions are made in regards to the level at which the change is integrated and applied to teaching practice. I will now present the different components of this model.

### **The school environment and a network of supportive professional peers**

This model rests within the school environment and a network of supportive professional peers. The network of professional peers and the school environment have an important influence on an art teacher's success or failure of attempting change in

practice (Fullan, 2007). The school environment includes the colleagues, principals, students, administration and staff within a school. The school environment generates a set of values and beliefs that inform the direction of the organization and the social culture of the school (Fullan, 2007; Richardson, 1990; Palmer, 1998a). Networks of supportive professional peers are the individuals who are able to provide feedback, input, assistance and camaraderie to an art teacher and the art program during times of pedagogical or curricular change. Fullan (2007) describes the importance of peer support in relationship to change, he notes, “There is no getting around the primacy of personal contact. Teachers... need to have one-to-one and group opportunities to receive and give help and more simply to converse about the meaning of change.” (p. 139). Fullan (2007) suggests that teacher interaction is crucial to the success of implementing change, noting that, “the degree of change was strongly related to the extent to which teachers interact with one another” (p. 138). The notion of professional peer support presents a particular challenge to art educators who are normally the only art practitioner in a school community. However being the only art specialist does eliminate the possibility of a network of supportive professional peers within the school environment. I can speak to my experience as a K-8 art teacher who found strong support among the other non-generalists, i.e., the music teacher, computer teacher, and the Spanish teacher. The dotted- line between the areas of ‘school environment’ and ‘network of supportive, professional peers’ is an indication that these two categories may or may not be found in the same place.

As I reflect on my own research process I note that I was able to make significant changes to my teaching pedagogy, changes that I have carried through to subsequent

teaching, without a the support of a direct community of practice. But I question if this was the most appropriate way to make these changes. What I suggest is that art educators create professional peer support based on similar experiences, with individuals outside of the immediate school community if necessary. I can offer a few examples. The first examples come from my research. I met with my thesis advisor and discussed particular difficulties during the research. Also during my research I regularly spoke with former colleagues and mentors about the process of changing my pedagogy. Though these individuals, with the exception of my advisor, were not directly involved with my research, they would offer support, encouragement and a sense of connection that I needed during the more challenging times.

### **Navigating change**

My pedagogical pillars of Balance, Embracing, Making Space and Engaging are conceptualized as flowing through and around change as a means of navigating an understanding of it. I chose to illustrate these four concepts without delineation between them to indicate the connection between and reliance one upon the other. Though I will discuss each aspect as they relate to four ways of navigating change, this does not imply that one aspect is more important than the other or that they necessarily operate in a sequence. Rather, as stated at the beginning of this discussion, balance, embracing, making space and engaging operate simultaneously and at varying rates, slowing down or accelerating depending on the individual undergoing change.

It is during this phase that an art teacher may begin to develop a sense of moving forward through a particular change. While moving through this phase of the model the art teacher may come to a deeper understanding of his or herself as human being, complete with talents, flaws and idiosyncrasies.

## **Balance**

Navigating through change begins with understanding how art teachers respond to change in our classrooms. Change can not be avoided or controlled necessarily, but how a teacher copes with that change can be viewed as a balancing act. There is a balance of how much of a change in pedagogy can be incorporated at one time. An important aspect of balance is for art teachers to be aware of how difficult and painful a change of pedagogy can be and make sure that they are taking care of themselves. Balance is also finding ways of staying grounded and taking care of oneself through the turmoil of change; this may include physical activity, spiritual practice, making art, gardening, or playing music (Miller, 2006; Palmer, 1998a).

Finding balance was a bit difficult for me during my research. It was a very stressful time and I was not finding much peace in activities like sewing and needlework. My study was conducted in the heart of a Montreal winter, so I could not retreat to my garden, the place where I generally find comfort and relaxation. Instead, I learned to ice-skate. I found that the physical exertion of ice-skating helped to dissipate the anxiety surrounding my work and cleared my head of any concerns beyond staying up-right and moving.

## **Embracing**

The second aspect of navigating change is how an art teacher embraces their own humanness during the process. The literature on change in teaching practice reveals that change is difficult and can result in feelings of vulnerability, fear, sadness, or anger (Day and Gu, 2009; Fullan, 2007; Guskey, 2002; Keltchermans, 2005; Palmer, 1998a; Richardson, 1998; Webster, 2013). It is important to realize that these responses are all part of the complexities of being a teacher in the throes of change. I suggest that art teachers attempt to treat themselves with compassion, humor and respect during times of change. While conducting my research there were many times that I categorized a particular experience as an “Epic Fail!” and it was not. It was simply a moment in time when I was struggling to understand the nature of the change I was experiencing.

## **Making Space**

This aspect of navigating change is to understand that changing one’s teaching pedagogy will take time and space and energy, and I suggest that art teachers make deliberate efforts to create space to become acclimated to change. The act of making space may be setting aside time to discuss ideas or difficulties with other peers, or investigating the literature about change, or simply allowing time to develop new teaching habits. One aspect of my research that was particularly helpful as I was

changing my pedagogy was to incorporate changes in the sequence of how I conducted my class. While this may sound like a simple, almost inconsequential action, but in breaking my routine I was able to make room in my teaching practice for change. I also found reminding myself that I did not need to change everything about my teaching all at once was very helpful. I gave myself the space and the permission to move slowly when the change felt overwhelming.

### **Engaging**

The fourth aspect of navigating change is that of actively engaging in the change in the art room. I suggest that art teachers approach a change in teaching practice in the same way they might approach starting a new work of art, with an attitude of openness to a new experience and the possibility of new insight into their own practice. I can confirm from my self-study of pedagogical change that during the process I began to view my work very differently. I have become convinced that reflective practice in art education methods offered me insights into my students and renewed a sense of purpose in my teaching. I would not have learned this had I not embraced the unknown of change.

### **The Process of Integrating Change**

I posit the process of navigating a change in pedagogy as the aspect of the model that helps teachers manage a state of change while it is happening. The phase of integrating change I have articulated as being part of a teacher's increased comfort with



change. It is this increased familiarity and comfort that enables art teachers to incorporate change over an extended period of time. The three aspects of this phase address how an art teacher views the results of navigating the process of change in both personal and practical terms – is the change meaningful, is it applicable and is it sustainable. These three aspects of integrating change are linked to the experience or experiences the art teacher had when navigating the change. In addition, the art teacher, when contemplating these questions, must give serious consideration to how well these new changes will integrate into the school where they are teaching.

### **Is the change meaningful?**

This aspect of integrating change addresses emotional responses to change and how the art teacher feels about the change at a personal level. Questions embedded in this aspect include: In what ways did making a change to teaching practice have a positive impact on teaching practice? Has the change in teaching practice improved the art teacher's self-perception of being a good teacher? Has making changes to teaching pedagogy encouraged growth in the practice of teaching art? Has the change in teaching practice been intrinsically rewarding to the art teacher?

As Palmer (1998a) notes, teaching is the intersection of the internal landscape of the teacher with the external world. Therefore in order to integrate change into teaching practice the change must at some level feel congruent with the internal values and beliefs about teaching that are held by the teacher.

### **Is the change applicable?**

This aspect of integrating change addresses the issue of applying what has been learned from change to practical use in the classroom. Has the change that the art teacher has just navigated resulted in new skills or understanding that will work on a day-to-day basis in the classroom? Will the students benefit from these changes in pedagogy? It has been noted that when teachers are able to see improvements in student performance, or an increase in student engagement with content, then they are more apt to maintain change over time (Day and Gu, 2009; Kaniuka, 2012; Kroath, 1989, Young and Erikson, 2011). Thus an important part of integrating change into teaching practice is the realization that the change has resulted in a positive outcome, but how long will this outcome last? That is an issue of sustainability.

### **Is the change sustainable?**

This final aspect of integrating change into teaching practice addresses the art teacher's perception of how they see themselves maintaining the change over time. Are there particular materials that are needed for the new pedagogy that are difficult to acquire? Is the particular change in pedagogy attached to a limited or one-time funding source? What level of emotional and mental energy is needed to continue on a particular pedagogical path?

### **Application of change to practice**

In the final phase of this model addresses to what extent the art teacher has accepted the new pedagogy as meaningful, applicable and sustainable and has incorporated the new pedagogy into teaching practice. This acceptance is reflected in the level to which the teacher trusts the new pedagogy is effective and their belief in their competence to implement the new pedagogy. This acceptance may take time to evolve and art teachers must be given the time to learn and practice the new pedagogy. I can confirm from my own research on changing my pedagogy that I needed a year, and a subsequent semester of teaching an arts methods course, to feel like trusted the new pedagogy and was feeling more competent in teaching in a more student centered manner. The need for time and practice in the integration and application of new teaching pedagogy is confirmed by the literature as well (Day and Gu, 2009; Fullan, 2007; Guskey, 2002; Palmer, 1998a; Richardson, 1998; Webster, 2013).

### **Aspects of change that are not integrated into practice**

This model does not assume that all aspects of a given change will be integrated into practice by the art teacher. There may well be components of a change that are not deemed by the art teacher to be meaningful, applicable and sustainable. I have illustrated this concept as the area that lies outside of change being integrated and change being applied to practice, but still within the cycle of change. This is not to imply that nonintegrated aspects are completely forgotten, sometimes they may linger only to be

reintegrated and applied to practice in a different manner. An example of this type of reintegration was my development of The Personal Path studio activity. In its original incarnation, I taught that project as a non-objective line drawing with no other connection to meaning or learning. The lesson was simply to draw a thick line, fill up the paper, and color the negative space. I used it because I perceived it as a non-threatening and gentle way to introduce pre-service elementary teachers to making art on the first day of class. However, for my transition to a more student-centered/holistic style of teaching I wanted present an art activity that would be meaningful and reflective, but might still feel non-threatening to student that were fearful of making art. The Personal Path drawing retains elements of the non-objective line drawing in that in most cases maps include a line, but it is reconceived as something anchored in the meaningful moments in the lives of my students.

This model also acknowledges that some changes that are not integrated into practice may be set aside for a period of time or possibly indefinitely. Non-integrated change plays an important role in this model because, along with integrated change, it informs the art teacher's beliefs about future change.

### **Experiences of change inform beliefs about future change**

This model incorporates the idea that each cycle of change that an art teacher completes informs his or her beliefs in their abilities to navigate, integrate and apply change in the future. This model is fluid in that it assumes that more change is always entering the life of an art teacher, human beings are not static and certainly school

environments are not static. It also assumes that each cycle of change may be used by an art teacher to gain a deeper understanding of his or her particular ways of navigating change. This can be used to feel positive in one's abilities to cope with change, but also, one can identify ways in which he or she may better navigate change. As an example, what I came to realize about myself during my cycle of change is that I need to pay better attention to taking care of myself during the navigation phase. I believe that in devoting more attention to self-care within the aspects of balance, embracing, making space and engaging will make the future changes to my teaching practice more positive and fruitful.

### **Contributions of this model to the field of art education teaching practice**

My model for holistic, self-directed change in art education pedagogy offers a strategy for art teachers to take ownership of the process of pedagogical change in their teaching practice. Further, it offers a map for initiating change in teaching practice if they so choose. What has emerged from my research and subsequently informed the development of this model is that change in pedagogy must be taken deliberately and with careful planning to ensure the art teacher has adequate time and space to make the change.

### **Implications for future research**

Reflecting upon my research I find several areas related to change, teacher training, and mid-to-late career art teachers that I am keenly interested in studying. I

believe that research in these areas will proved beneficial to understanding how art educators and art education can weather future changes.

### **The voices of mid-to-late career art educators**

During the course of my study, I was curious to know how much research was being done regarding the professional lives and teaching practice of mid-to-late career art teachers. I surveyed the major data banks of doctoral theses: *ProQuest* which is the repository for theses in North America and the *Index to Theses and Abstracts*, which is the repository for Great Britain and Ireland. In addition I search theses from Queensland University in Australia. I found a gap in the literature in regards to these teachers. I believe that the field of art education would benefit greatly from understanding the lives of art teachers who choose to stay in the field for multiple decades. I suggest that there is much that we can learn from this group, such as: What factors support an art teacher's decision to remain active in teaching? How have they weathering pedagogical change? What struggles have they faced? What changes have they attempted in their own teaching pedagogy? What keeps their teaching practice alive and active? What has helped these teachers avoid burn out – or have they already burned out but have chosen to remain in the classroom for other reasons? An understanding of the professional experiences of mid-to-late career art teachers could provide valuable insight into the factors that keep art teachers in the classroom and help them grow and thrive there. In addition, I propose that the information gained about the lives of mid-to-late career art teachers could inform how young art teachers are trained. What ways of navigating a long career as an art teacher

can be imparted to beginning teachers to help them understand how to remain in the career for the long term? What can mid-to-late career art teachers share with young art teachers about managing change?

### **Further Field Testing the Model for Holistic, Self-Directed Change**

I believe the model may be of great use in helping pre-service early career art teacher adapt to their new roles as art teachers. I feel that in helping young teachers gain a deeper understanding about the experience of making a profound change to full time teaching will help pre-service and early career art teachers better manage that transition. This model has applications for my immediate transition into academia and managing the stress of change beyond the realm of classroom and pedagogy.

As part of my further study of my model, I use it to help integrate the changes I will encounter as a new assistant professor of art education in the Fall of 2013. In partnership with a colleague who will also be starting her first semester as an assistant professor of art education at another university, we have will attempt to help each other understand the process of change in our respective roles. We will study our capacity to act as supportive professional peers though we geographically far apart. My research informs my component of the study in two ways. First is the notion of that a completed cycle of change informs beliefs about future change. I feel confident in my ability to successfully navigate the change from doctoral student to assistant professor because I have already successfully navigated a significant change to my teaching. And second, I have a better understanding of my ability to navigate, integrate and apply change.

Through the use of interviews, journaling and art making we will attempt to articulate our experience of change to one another and respond to one another in kind. This particular aspect of my future research is near to my heart because part of what I want to accomplish is to develop an active art practice. It is my hope that working with the support of a trusted, professional peer I can find a way to reclaim an art practice as my own.

### **Vulnerability and pre-service and early career art educators**

Through the course of my research I've become quite interested in notions of vulnerability, especially as "a structural condition in education" (Keltchermans, p. 997). How might it benefit pre-service and young art teachers to understand and be aware of issues of vulnerability and fatigue that they will surely face as they begin teaching? Might an understanding of these phenomena lessen the stress and isolation that young teachers feel? What are the ways that teacher education program directly address these challenges in the lives of young teachers?

### **Longitudinal studies**

A drawback of my research was that it was limited in scope and I was unable to determine the long term impact of holistic or student-centered pedagogy in the training of pre-service elementary generalists. I would like to conduct longitudinal studies that might illuminate what parts of pre-service training that elementary generalists receive is



actually carried forward into professional practice. Does using a student-centered pedagogy in an art methods course help instill a desire in elementary generalists to teach art in their classrooms? I believe similar a question can be asked of early career art teachers in terms of what parts of their training is carried over into teaching practice in the art classroom.

### **Teacher training and professional development that incorporates change**

Regardless of the number of years that a teacher has taught, it is crucial for him or her to understand ways of navigating, integrating and applying change in teaching practice. Consider the massive changes that pre-service teachers undergo during the process of student teaching or in the early years of practice; or the upheaval in the lives of mid-to-late career teachers when faced with budget cuts or a change in educational policy. I believe it is short-sighted to assume all that can be offered to these teachers is sympathy and support, though both of those things are *very* necessary and important. Teacher training and professional development programs must offer a solid, strategic way for teachers to navigate, integrate, apply changes so that they have a way of better understanding their own capacities to cope with change. Equipping teachers to understand change has potential implications beyond the classroom, I believe it will help sustain school and district-wide change.

## EPILOGUE

*It is a rainy afternoon in Montreal. From my desk I have a view of my garden. Wet from the rain, the plants have the deep green sheen of late spring. I am writing the last piece of my dissertation. I will be gone before summer arrives.*

*What has soaked into my awareness during my research is a realization of my own strength in making a monumental change to my teaching style. The rigorous inquiry of self-study revealed parts of my practice that had gone unnoticed, such as clinging to a form of teacher-centered pedagogy that no longer fit my needs as a teacher or a person. And it empowered me to nurture the parts of my teaching practice that held courage, joy, and compassion.*

*My mind wanders back to that sixth grade painting class. I wonder how I might apply what I know now to make that lesson more meaningful for my students. What might I do differently? Would I have the students write reflections about their work? Would I bring in pine boughs and stones to look at, smell and touch for inspiration? Would I make what is sacred and special to the students be the impetus for the art work?*

*I realize I have momentarily forgotten the value and beauty of that class period. That was the very moment in time - as a glint off a passing car shot across the ceiling - which nudged me toward better understanding of myself as an art teacher, scholar and person. I have made mistakes in the telling and the retelling of the story of the sixth grade painting class. But one mistake I will not make is forgetting that it transformed my life, and even in my imagination, I should not change a thing.*

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APPENDIX: A  
SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

**One/Two word exercise:** Once the students have come in and taken a seat. I will give them a note card and ask them to write down one or two words on it that describe how they feel about taking the course. No names, just the immediate word response. I will also write one or two words about how I am feeling. The students will then decide if we should individually share our words with the whole group or if they would prefer to have me collect the cards and read the words aloud to the class. The goal of this activity is to allow the students to hear that their feelings about the first day of class are likely not exclusive and that likely there will be more than one nervous, excited or worried person in the room. The activity ties to the following holistic themes in the following ways:

- *Grounding:* This activity situates the course, from the very first words, in the emotional and social context of what the individuals in the room. Additionally, it will provide me with a view, albeit a small view, of where the students are on that first day and this will inform how I proceed with them.
- *Compassion/Empathy:* We will acknowledge and respect our feelings and the feelings of others and in doing so, work to support each other through the process of learning about art education.

**Georgette's story:** After the One/Two Word exercise, I will tell them the story of Georgette Griffith, my high school art teacher. This story is my recollection of my very first day in a formal art class. It illustrates the impact that this teacher had and continues to have on my life and my teaching. I tell this story for two reasons: One, it illustrates how one simple word from a teacher can change the course of a life. And two, the

profession of teaching holds an element of lineage, of passing forward the words and wisdom of the elders, of the past. These pre-service teachers will become part of that lineage, part of my lineage. And this is my welcoming them into my world. Georgette's Story:

*I remember the first day I was in her class; I was a nervous and insecure 14 year-old. I had never been in the art room before and it seemed like a whole different world. Georgette was a tall, thin woman with elegant hands - I especially remember her hands. She was chatting with me before class began. She asked me if I liked art. I told her that I had taken some lessons at the community center and really liked it and that I drew a lot at home. She stood and pressed an elegant hand on my desk. With an almost conspiratorial smile she said, "I'm glad you're here."*

*I was surprised. No teacher had ever spoken to me with warmth and kindness like Georgette did. Thirty years after she said those words, Georgette and I still communicate through email and phone calls.*

When I begin a course with a new group of students I pass on to them, those important words that Georgette said to me. So in case you are not sure: *I'm glad you're here.*

This activity ties to the following holistic themes in the following ways:

- *Compassion and Empathy:* This story illustrates that what we do as teachers does matter, that what they will do as teachers will impact students even if they think they are not getting through or making a difference. It also illustrates an appropriate way of allowing one's humanity to emerge in a classroom setting through allowing one's

simple, authentic self speak. (The “simple, authentic self” refers to Georgette and me as well as the ARTE 201 students.)

- *Grounding*: This story sets the foundation for the students to begin their relationship with me as their teacher. I want to clearly communicate to them that: Yes, I *am* glad they are there.
- *Intuition*: Georgette acted on her intuition that day. I will tell this story because I feel in my gut this is what this particular population needs on the first day. In my experience, they need a bit of comfort and reassurance that first day. Many have never been in the E.V. building; they don’t know their way around, and they are feeling completely overwhelmed.

**Personal Paths (studio)**: This lesson has been modified from a lesson on non-objective art that I would use to open the semester. It is a non-threatening way for pre-service elementary generalists to have the experience of creating something, often for the first time. Previously nick-names the ‘noodle’ or ‘string’ drawing, the student would begin by drawing a circle about the size of a nickel on 9”x12” white paper. Then they would extend the side of that circle, forming a ‘noodle’. This noodle would then wind throughout the paper, overlapping, splitting off in different directions and so forth.

What I have chosen instead is to open with the notion of cartography and present different ideas of maps: old sea faring maps, stylized road maps, the piece from Woman’s Day Weekly “map of the heart”, palm reading, treasure maps, etc. I will ask the students to think back over the past 3 or 4 years, CGEP until present day. How did that path look? Narrow? Wide? Smooth? Bumpy? Would it look different at different times? Were there switch-backs, U-turns, dead-ends, rough patches? How did it feel to travel that path and

how could they choose colors and lines to convey that feeling? What would their map look like?

A variety of drawing media will be available. We will start with 12" x 18" paper, but they can change that shape if they like. Newsprint will be available if the students would like to work out their ideas before "committing" to good paper.

The image is still non-objective; there is no need for any detailed rendering of objects if they don't want to do so. But in contrast to the past, when this lesson was just a non-objective exercise, it is now framed in the context of personal experience. It becomes a way to share our journeys as teachers and how we arrived at this place. To that end, after the Personal Paths are completed, we will share the images with the group. The students will decide if they wish to talk about their images or not.

This activity ties to the following holistic themes in the following ways:

- *Creating*: This activity allows students to practice using art to describe a personal experience in a visual format that is open-ended and does not require them render in a representational fashion. The emphasis is on the individual experience and there is no set expectation of what the image should look like. Instead the emphasis is on what the image means to the individual.
- *Contemplation*: This activity hinges on students thinking carefully about their own lives; how has the journey to 'teacher-hood' been so far? They might discover that they have their own "Georgette Story" along the way. This is as much a tool for their own reflection as it is for the sharing and bonding with the group.
- *Attentiveness*: Art making requires a level of attentiveness; one needs to watch what one is doing. The students will not just be doing something for the sake of doing it,



but there will be an attention paid to choice of materials, to shape of the paper, to what they include or exclude from the design.

**\*\*Break/ Administrative Housekeeping: Review of the syllabus, studio fees, portfolio\*\***

**Out of Class Assignment 1:** Bring an object, or picture of an object, that makes you feel

powerful or strong. This will be the basis of part of our class discussion next week.

**Reflective Essay (written assignment – homework):** This is the first written assignment. To complete this assignment the students will reflect upon their own elementary art education experience and write a two-page reflection on those experiences. The essay should include the following components: What were their elementary art education experiences? In what ways were their experiences positive or negative (or both)? In what ways do they think those experiences may have influenced how they think about teaching art in their own classrooms?

The goal of this essay is not to lay blame on anyone in the student's past for a negative art experience; but rather to see that we all are the sum of our experiences. To that end I will share with them my **Ceramics Story** about my own negative art experience with my ceramics teacher during my undergrad work. He and I were simply not compatible. He was a very sarcastic teacher who would often use mocking and harsh jokes to get his point across. I had such a difficult time in his course that I – to this day – will not work on a potter's wheel. I feel too insecure and tense about throwing pottery. I

know the mechanics of how to do it; but it is very stressful. This is my own human foible and I understand that I have short-changed myself and my students by not working through this art hesitancy. But what I have managed to do is to forgive myself and my instructor and view the experience as two people doing the very best they could in a given situation.

This activity addresses the following holistic themes in the following ways:

*Grounded/Grounding:* This activity helps the students see how their beliefs about teaching art may be tied to very early experiences in art. This activity allows them the opportunity to look at and name those experiences and begin to recognize how they contribute to the ways they view art education.

*Compassion/Empathy:* This is an exercise in open and honest communication. It is a chance for the students to take a look at themselves and their experience and express these experiences in words. This is also an exercise in non-judgment and self-acceptance.

*Contemplation:* This activity ties to contemplation by requiring the students to reflect on their past experiences and also to present attitudes and investigate if there may be a connection.

**A Patchwork Self (studio):** John Miller and Parker Palmer have caused me to think a lot about teacher self-care. I will be deliberately including many opportunities to discuss and investigate ways our identities as teachers and to share ways to take care of ourselves. The Patchwork Self addresses the idea that one's identity as a teacher is multifaceted and growing and changing as we grow and change throughout our careers.

What the students will be doing in this lesson is just the beginning of the investigation of this patchwork of self. The use of the word Patchwork reflects both the idea of identity and the act of sewing that they will engage in during this activity. There is a nurturing aspect to working with cloth; the tactile experience can be quite soothing. We will talk about the ways we feel about teaching, about the pressures and about the excitement. We will talk about what we bring to the classroom as teachers AND as human beings. We will talk about developing visual ways to show these feelings that are particular to each of us.

Symbolic or metaphoric thinking can be quite challenging for beginning artists and so we will discuss symbolism, or possibly I will introduce the idea if they are not sure what it is. I will tell them that nearly any object or thing in our world can be imbued with meaning. I will pause and ask them if they are familiar with the idea of “imbued with meaning” because sometimes I forget that just because I talk a certain way does not mean that I’m being understood. I will show them a red apple. Does this mean “teacher” to them? But does it represent how they see themselves as a teacher? It is difficult sometimes to sort through all that we are told teachers are supposed to be and what is supposed to represent us (a red apple, a school bell, a yellow #2 pencil, the letters “Aa, Bb, Cc” scrawled in chalk) versus who we truly are, what we think and what we would like to represent us as teachers. I will encourage them to go beyond the obvious smiley-face or sad-face. Think and feel deeply about it and find something that is true to them as the person who will be teaching.

Materials provided: 12” x 9” pieces of felt, scissors, thread, needles, beads, assorted fabric scraps. If the students would like help with a specific technical part of

this project I will provide technical assistance as needed. Students will create three or four symbols that represent how they see themselves as teachers, cut these from fabric and either sew or glue the pieces together. As was done with the Personal Paths project, the images will be shared with the group in the manner that the student feels most comfortable.

This activity ties to the following holistic themes in the following ways:

*Creating:* Making an object that will communicate how the student feels about his or herself as a teacher.

*Care for Ourselves:* Claiming a symbol that more truly and authentically represents the individual teacher, not simply accepting an idea or symbol that has been attached to the profession.

*Grounding:* How the students perceive themselves as teachers is an important part of how they will construct their lives as teachers.

*Contemplation:* The students will reflect on how they want to represent themselves symbolically.

*Attentiveness:* The repetitive action of sewing can be almost meditative. And the level and intensity of attentiveness is influenced by the use of a needle and thread which forces one to work more slowly and methodically.

APPENDIX: B  
SUMMARY PROTOCOL FORM



**Summary Protocol Form (SPF)**  
**University Human Research Ethics Committee**

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Office of Research – Ethics and Compliance Unit: GM 1000 – 514.848.2424 ex. 2425

**Important**

Approval of a *Summary Protocol Form* (SPF) must be issued by the applicable Human Research Ethics Committee prior to beginning any research involving human participants.

The University Human Research Ethics Committee (UHREC) reviews all Faculty and Staff research, as well as some student research (in cases where the research involves more than minimal risk - please see below).

Research funds cannot be released until appropriate certification has been obtained.

**For faculty and staff research**

Please submit one signed copy of this form to the UHREC c/o the Research Ethics and Compliance Unit, GM-1000. Please allow one month for the UHREC to complete the review.

Electronic signatures will be accepted via e-mail at [ethics@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:ethics@alcor.concordia.ca)

**For graduate or undergraduate student research**

- If your project is included in your supervising faculty member's SPF, no new SPF is required.
- Departmental Research Ethics Committees are responsible for reviewing all student research, including graduate thesis research, where the risk is less than minimal. In Departments where an ethics committee has not been established, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Unit.
- In cases where the student research is more than minimal risk (i.e. the research involves participants under the age of 18yrs, participants with diminished capacity, participants from vulnerable populations or participants from First Nations), an SPF must be submitted to the

UHREC, c/o the Research Ethics and Compliance Unit, GM-1000, by the Course Instructor/Supervisor on the student's behalf.

## Instructions

This document is a form-fillable word document. Please open in Microsoft Word, and tab through the sections, clicking on checkboxes and typing your responses. The form will expand to fit your text. Handwritten forms will not be accepted. If you have technical difficulties with this document, you may type your responses and submit them on another sheet. Incomplete or omitted responses may cause delays in the processing of your protocol.

Does your research involve

- Participants under the age of 18 years?
- Participant with diminished mental or physical capacity?
- Aboriginal peoples?
- Vulnerable groups (refugees, prisoners, victims of violence, etc.)?

## 1. Submission Information

Please provide the requested contact information in the table below:

Please check ONE of the boxes below :

- This application is for a new protocol.
- This application is a modification or an update of an existing protocol:  
Previous protocol number (s): \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Contact Information

Please provide the requested contact information in the table below:

Principal Investigator/ Instructor (must be Concordia faculty or staff member)	Department	Internal Address	Phone Number	E-mail
Lorrie Blair	Art Education	EV 2.749	848-2424 ext. 4604	<a href="mailto:lblair@alcor.concordia.ca">lblair@alcor.concordia.ca</a>
Co-Investigators / Collaborators		University / Department		E-mail
Patricia Chambers-Tripunitara		Art Education		ptripunitara@yahoo.com

Research Assistants	Department / Program	E-mail

### 3. Project and Funding Sources

Project Title:	What are the possibilities for and impediments to an experienced teacher changing pedagogies on her own?
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In the table below, please list all existing internal and external sources of research funding, and associated information, which will be used to support this project. Please include anticipated start and finish dates for the project(s). Note that for awarded grants, the grant number is REQUIRED. If a grant is an application only, list APPLIED instead.

Funding Source	Project Title	Grant Number	Award Period	
			Start	End
N/A				

### 4. Brief Description of Research or Activity

Please provide a brief overall description of the project or research activity. Include a description of the benefits which are likely to be derived from the project. Do not submit your thesis proposal or grant application.

The student will conduct a self-study investigation of how deliberately changing teaching pedagogies impacts an experienced teacher, including the challenges and possibilities inherent to this process. To conduct this study, the student researcher will create a pedagogy infused with elements of holistic education.

This case study will take place in a thirteen-week arts methods course for elementary generalists offered at Concordia University. The broad goals of this course are to familiarize pre-service elementary generalist teachers with ways to incorporate art education into their general education curriculum. The goals and requirements of this course as mandated by the University and Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) will not be compromised or altered as the research during the course itself will be done as a self study and personal inquiry. Student work, behaviors and responses during the course are not the subject of study; however I will review and reflect on these things as any teacher would normally be expected to do.

The student researcher will write or audio-record extensive personal reflection throughout the process. This represents the bulk of the data for the project.

This research project will include interviews of students that took the class with the researcher. After the course has completed and the grades have been submitted to the University, a letter will be e-mailed to former students asking for volunteers to participate in a post-course

interview. The format of the interview will be open-ended and will utilize the artwork the participant made during the course to elicit responses. The artwork made by the participants will be photographed and these images along with audio recordings will be the data collected from the interview.

The purpose of these interviews will be to gather information on student perceptions of the student researcher's performance as a teacher and the overall quality of the course.

This study will contribute the field in the following five ways.

First it will contribute to the literature on self-study and teacher education practice. Second, it will add my voice to the body of research on pre-service elementary generalists and how we train them in art education methods. Third, it will add to the further exploration of who art educators are and how our identities are formed. Fourth, it will serve as a powerful, self-reflective tool for improving my own teaching practice. And finally, research will explore holistic education as a teaching method and how it does or does not contribute to the needs of pre-service elementary teachers.

## 5. Scholarly Review / Merit

Has this research been funded by a peer-reviewed granting agency (e.g. CIHR, FQRSC, Hexagram)?

Yes Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

No If your research is beyond minimal risk, please complete and attach the Scholarly Review Form

## 6. Research Participants

a) Please describe the group of people who will participate in this project.

1. The primary participant is the student researcher. A third-year doctoral student in Art Education. She is over 18 years old and poses no risk to herself.
2. The interview participants are volunteers who have completed the session of ARTE 201 (art methods for elementary generalist teachers) that the student researcher will teach in the Winter 2012 semester. They are all over 18 years old. At the time of the interview they will no longer be students of the researcher and will be free to discontinue participation in the interview at any time.



- b) Please describe in detail how participants will be recruited to participate. Please attach to this protocol draft versions of any recruitment advertising, letters, etcetera which will be used.

Participants will be recruited via email. They are former students so the student researcher will already have their email addresses in her possession. (See recruitment letter attached.)

- c) Please describe in detail how participants will be treated throughout the course of the research project. Include a summary of research procedures, and information regarding the training of researchers and assistants. Include sample interview questions, draft questionnaires, etcetera, as appropriate.

The student researcher will conduct open-ended, art elicitation interviews with volunteer participants. The participants will be interviewed one-on-one. Because the interviews are open-ended, the participant will set the pace of the interview, but it is estimated the average time of the interview not to exceed three hours.

The student researcher will ask the participants to bring the artwork they created during the ARTE 201 course and the art will help form the basis of the interview. As part of the consent form, participants will allow their artwork to be photographed.

The interview will focus only on the participant's experience in the ARTE 201 course (Winter Semester, Wednesday mornings, 9am – 1pm.)

Procedure :

Interviews will be conducted in a neutral setting : cafe', park, etc.

Interviews will be audio recorded.

Artwork will be photographed.

Participants will be asked to discuss their experiences in the ARTE 201 course and its impact on their feelings about teaching art.

Sample questions :

- 'How did the ARTE 201 course affect your perceptions of teaching art to young children?'
- 'What did you discover about your own abilities to make and teach art?'
- 'In what ways do you feel this course increased or decreased your desire and/or motivation to teach art?'
- 'What do you wish you would have learned in this course?'
- 'Please describe, as honestly as you can, the style of teacher you, as a student, prefer.'
- 'How is my teaching style similar to others you have experienced in teacher education courses?'
- 'How is my teaching style different to others you have experienced in teacher education courses?'
- 'What steps might I take to improve my teaching?'
- 'In what ways did my teaching methods support your learning? In what ways did they hinder your learning?'

## **7. Informed Consent**

- a) Please describe how you will obtain informed consent from your participants. A copy of your written consent form or your oral consent script must be attached to this protocol. *Please note: written consent forms must follow the format of the sample consent form template provided for you at the Ethics and Compliance webpage*

A copy of the consent form will be sent with the recruitment email so that the participants may review it before arriving at the interview. Participants will sign the informed consent form upon their arrival at the interview.

- b) In some cultural traditions, individualized consent as implied above may not be appropriate, or additional consent (e.g. group consent; consent from community leaders) may be required. If this is the case with your sample population, please describe the appropriate format of consent and how you will obtain it.

Not applicable.

## **8. Deception and Freedom to Discontinue**

- a) Please describe the nature of any deception, and provide a rationale regarding why it must be used in your protocol. Is deception absolutely necessary for your research design? Please note that deception includes, but is not limited to, the following: deliberate presentation of false information; suppression of material information; selection of information designed to mislead; selective disclosure of information.

There is no deception. The recruitment letter states simply and clearly the intent of the interview.

- b) How will participants be informed that they are free to discontinue at any time? Will the nature of the project place any limitations on this freedom (e.g. documentary film)?

Participants will be informed in writing on the consent form that they may discontinue at any time. The student researcher will also inform them verbally at the beginning of the interview that they may discontinue at any time.

## **9. Risks and Benefits**

- a) Please identify any foreseeable risks or potential harms to participants. This includes low-level risk or any form of discomfort resulting from the research procedure. When appropriate, indicate arrangements that have been made to ascertain that subjects are in “healthy” enough condition to undergo the intended research procedures. Include any “withdrawal” criteria.

No risk.

- b) Please indicate how the risks identified above will be minimized. Also, if a potential risk or harm should be realized, what action will be taken? Please attach any available list of referral resources, if applicable.

No risk.

- c) Is there a likelihood of a particular sort of “heinous discovery” with your project (e.g. disclosure of child abuse; discovery of an unknown illness or condition; etcetera)? If so, how will such a discovery be handled?

No likelihood.

## **10. Data Access and Storage**

- a) Please describe what access research participants will have to study results, and any debriefing information that will be provided to participants post-participation.

Interviewees will be allowed full access to the results of their own interview. They will also have access to the thesis that will be written as a result of this study, as that is a matter of public record.

- b) Please describe the path of your data from collection to storage to its eventual archiving or disposal. Include specific details on short and long-term storage (format and location), who will have access, and final destination (including archiving, or any other disposal or destruction methods).

Self-study:

Data collected from video recording and written reflections will be stored on memory cards as well as on an external hard drive on my home computer. The information will be password protected and only I will have access to the information from the self study.

Interviews:

Data collected from interviews will be stored on memory cards and on an external hard drive on my home computer. Participants will be granted access to transcripts from the interview as well as to photographs of their work.

The final destination of the data will be the home of the student researcher and in her personal possession until it is permanently erased.

## **11. Confidentiality of Results**

Please identify what access you, as a researcher, will have to your participant(s) identity(ies):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Fully Anonymous	Researcher will not be able to identify who participated at all. Demographic information collected will be insufficient to identify individuals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous results, but identify who participated	The participation of individuals will be tracked (e.g. to provide course credit, chance for prize, etc) but it would be impossible for collected data to be linked to individuals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pseudonym	Data collected will be linked to an individual who will only be identified by a fictitious name / code. The researcher will not know the “real” identity of the participant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confidential	Researcher will know “real” identity of participant, but this identity will not be disclosed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disclosed	Researcher will know and will reveal “real” identity of participants in results / published material.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Participant Choice	Participant will have the option of choosing which level of disclosure they wish for their “real” identity.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please describe)	

- a) If your sample group is a particularly vulnerable population, in which the revelation of their identity could be particularly sensitive, please describe any special measures that you will take to respect the wishes of your participants regarding the disclosure of their identity.

Not applicable.

- b) In some research traditions (e.g. action research, research of a socio-political nature) there can be concerns about giving participant groups a “voice”. This is especially the case with groups that have been oppressed or whose views have been suppressed in their cultural location. If these concerns are relevant for your participant group, please describe how you will address them in your project.

Not applicable.

## 12. Additional Comments

- a) Bearing in mind the ethical guidelines of your academic and/or professional association, please comment on any other ethical concerns which may arise in the conduct of this protocol (e.g. responsibility to subjects beyond the purposes of this study).

- b) If you have feedback about this form, please provide it here.

## 13. Signature and Declaration

Following approval from the UHREC, a protocol number will be assigned. This number must be used when giving any follow-up information or when requesting modifications to this protocol.

The UHREC will request annual status reports for all protocols, one year after the last approval date. Modification requests can be submitted as required, by submitting to the UHREC a memo describing any changes, and an updated copy of this document.

**I hereby declare that this Summary Protocol Form accurately describes the research project or scholarly activity that I plan to conduct. Should I wish to add elements to my research program or make changes, I will edit this document accordingly and submit it to the University Human Research Ethics Committee for Approval.**

**ALL activity conducted in relation to this project will be in compliance with:**

- ***The Tri Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Subjects*** [http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2/TCPS\\_2\\_FINAL\\_Web.pdf](http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2/TCPS_2_FINAL_Web.pdf)
- **The Concordia University Code of Ethics: Guidelines for Ethical Actions**

**Signature of Principal Investigator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Note that SPF's with electronic signatures will be accepted via e-mail

APPENDIX: C  
LETTER REQUESTING INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

April 19, 2012

To: Former ARTE 201 Students  
RE: Request for interview

Hello everyone,

I hope that the school year has wrapped up nicely for you.

During our time together I was conducting a self-study of my teaching methods for my doctoral research. This means that the subject of my research was me – not you or your performance in class.

At this point, I would very much like to interview some of you to hear your feelings about the course. I am looking for honest and open dialog between us. I have already submitted your grades to the University, so rest assured that your participation (or choice to not participate) will have no impact on your grade for the course.

Should you choose to participate, here are the details about the interview:

1. Please bring your course portfolio.
2. The interview will be audio recorded and artwork in the portfolio photographed.
3. We will arrange to meet in a neutral place: a park or a café' or restaurant.
4. The interview material will be used in my PhD thesis; therefore, you may choose to use a pseudonym if you prefer not to reveal your identity.
5. I do not anticipate the interview to last more than 2.5 or 3 hours.
6. You may end the interview at any time.
7. Coffee and snacks are on me!

All research participants must sign a consent form and I will have them ready for you to sign when you arrive. However, if you prefer to look at it before hand, I have attached a copy to this email.

This is a very exciting project and I do hope that some of you will consider being interviewed. If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Have a terrific summer!

Pattie

APPENDIX: D  
CONSENT FOR FORM FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN :**

What are the possibilities for and impediments to an experienced teacher changing pedagogies on her own?

I understand that I have been asked to participate in a program of research being conducted by Patricia Chambers-Tripunitara of the Art Education Department of Concordia University. Contact information: 514-623-0475, p\_tripun@live.concordia.ca.

**A. PURPOSE**

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows: To determine the impact that a holistic art education curriculum has had on my perceptions about teaching art.

**B. PROCEDURES**

- I understand that this interview will take place *after* my grades for ARTE 201 have been submitted to Concordia University and that my participation in (or choice to discontinue) this interview *will not* influence or impact my grade for the course.
- I understand that this interview will take place at a neutral location (ie: café', park, restaurant) that will be mutually agreed upon by myself and Ms. Chambers-Tripunitara.
- I understand that I will bring my portfolio of artwork created for ARTE 201 and that for the purpose of data collection, this artwork will be photographed.
- I understand that for the purpose of collecting data, this interview will be audio recorded.
- I understand the content of this interview will focus only on the time I spent in the section of ARTE 201 that Ms. Chambers-Tripunitara taught during the Winter 2012 semester.

**C. RISKS AND BENEFITS**

- I understand that participation in this interview poses no risk to me physically, emotionally or academically.
- I understand that participation in this interview will benefit the body of research on the use of holistic art education curriculum to teach elementary generalist teachers about art.

**D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION**

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.
- I understand that my participation in this study is : Voluntary.

- I understand that I may choose the level of confidentiality I would like to maintain in this study. I may choose to reveal my identity or may request a pseudonym.
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT.  
I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

If at any time you have questions about the proposed research, please contact the study's Principal Investigator: Lorrie Blair, Email: [lblair@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:lblair@alcor.concordia.ca), Ph: 574-848-2424, ext. 4604

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 [ethics@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:ethics@alcor.concordia.ca)